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| **PRESS RELEASE** | Contact: Julie Linder |
| For Immediate ReleaseDecember 28, 2021 | (573)268-0639JLinder@TogetherCU.org  |

 **Community Organizations Band Together to Support *Pages for the Holidays
Pages for the Holidays is a metro-wide literacy initiative designed to encourage reading during Winter Break***

**ST. LOUIS, MO** – Together Credit Union has partnered with five leading St. Louis organizations to ***Pages for the Holidays***, a literacy initiative designed to introduce young readers to St. Louis authors and foster the love of reading through holiday-themed events and activities this holiday season. This initiative is led by [Holidays in St. Louis Foundation](https://holidaysinstl.com/) and achieved in partnership with St. Louis Public Library, Turn the Page STL, St. Louis Black Authors of Children’s Literature, NinePBS, and Ameren Missouri.

“Reading inspires dreams, and we are proud to empower youth with resources to nurture their literacy skills,” said Bob McKay, President & CEO of Together Credit Union. “There is no greater holiday magic than the power of these dreams for the youth in our community.”

***Pages for the Holidays***, which runs until January 1, 2022, supports children’s literacy throughout the St. Louis Metropolitan Area through reading programs and book drives, and focuses on creating opportunities for children who would otherwise not have access to books.

“Literacy is the foundation for all learning, and students who are proficient readers by third grade are more likely to graduate from high school, go to college, and successfully enter the workforce. We know when St. Louis families read, our community will succeed,” said Lisa Greening, ***Pages for the Holidays*** Coordinator and Project Director for Turn the Page STL, a St. Louis city-county wide literacy initiative dedicated to increasing the number of children who are reading at or above grade level by the end of third grade.

***Pages for the Holidays*** activities include a [Winter Reading Challenge](https://www.slpl.org/) hosted by the St. Louis Public Library, a [Virtual Book Drive](https://www.eyeseeme.com/collections/festival-of-lights-book-donations) through Eye See Me Book Store, and a [Coloring & Essay Contest](https://holidaysinstl.com/kids-contest/) based upon “Changing Seasons”, a children’s story written by local author, Mon Trice. Grand prize winners\* of the Coloring & Essay Contest were announced during the Ameren Missouri Festival of Lights and named Junior Grand Marshals of the 2021 Ameren St. Louis Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Literacy tents were also available during the [37th Annual Ameren Missouri Festival of Lights](https://holidaysinstl.com/festival-of-lights/), held at Kiener Plaza, with resources and prizes. NinePBS, whose mission is to provide innovative means to support public education, aided ***Pages for the Holidays*** by promoting the initiative in the local market and donating 40 PBS Kids Playtime Learning Pads as prizes and giveaways for participants.

For more information regarding this announcement, please contact Julie Linder, Public Relations & Events Strategist, by calling (573) 268-0639.

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\*A list of Coloring & Essay Contest Winners can be found on the next page.

Photo Caption: *Pages for the Holidays Coloring & Essay Contest Winners Announced at Ameren Missouri Festival of Lights. Photo Courtesy of the Holidays in St. Louis Foundation and William Greenblatt, UPI.*

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***Pages for the Holidays* Coloring & Essay Contest Winners**

Three finalists were named from each of the following groups for the ***Pages for the Holidays*** Coloring & Essay Contest.

Coloring Contest – Kindergarten through 2nd Grade

1. Sydney C., age 5
2. Isabelle C., age 5
3. Charlie S., age 5

Essay Contest - 3rd and 4th Grades

1. Dominic G., age 8
2. Laticia R., age 9
3. Edward F., age 9

Essay Contest - 5th and 6th Grades

1. Anna S., age 11
2. James R., age 10
3. Michael T., age 10

Essay Contest - 7th and 8th Grades

1. Jojo M., age 12
2. Dominique H., age 12
3. Sophie T., age 12

Grand Prize Winners

* Sydney C., age 5, Coloring Contest
* Isabelle C., age 5, Coloring Contest
* Dominic G., age 8, Essay Contest
* Anna S., age 11, Essay Contest