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## Physician assistant initiates reading intervention program

Keith Whitaker, Hoopeston Regional Health Center Physician Assistant, went on a health-care mission trip to Haiti last summer and came home with a new program that will be used in the Hoopeston and Cissna Park Medical Clinics.

While the mission trip was deeply moving on a personal level, it was also beneficial to both communities because another participant introduced Whitaker to the "Reach Out and Read" program. Anita Berry, who has been heavily involved in setting up similar programs, talked with Whitaker about the benefits of the program. He felt it would be beneficial to offer it locally.

Once he was back in the states, Whitaker attended formal training so that he could train other providers on the program before the January 2007 implementation date.

The program is based on the belief that literacy should become a standard part of pediatric primary care, so that children grow up with books and a love of reading. Parents are encouraged to read with their children starting at an early age. Developmentally appropriate books are given during each well-child exam for children six months to five years, for a total of 10 books per child.

During exams providers also discuss the benefits of reading with parents and educate them that they are the



**Keith Whitaker, Physician Assistant, PA-C, AT-C, explains the Reach Out and Read program to Melissa Blakey and her daughter, Lyndsie, at Charlotte Russell Medical Center.**

*Photo contributed*

key to a successful program. Reading aloud is important because it fosters language development, promotes reading skills, motivates a child to love books and prepares a child for success in school.

Studies have shown that a child's language evolves primarily through their parent(s) and that by age two, a child's language skills will likely correlate with later cognitive performance. This program provides informa-

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## Police News



A 35-year-old Watseka man reported at 5:30 p.m. Sunday that he left his wallet at Casey's General Store, 1022 W. Penn. and when he returned for it, it was gone. The wallet contained identification, an undisclosed amount of money and other personal documents.

## Obituaries

**RIFE** - Norma Lucille Rife, 87, of Rossville died at 5:16 a.m. Monday April 23, 2007 at home. Arrangements are incomplete at the Wolfe Funeral Home in Rossville.

## Court Dispositions



**March 15**

**Keith A. Whorrall**, Hoopeston, failed to appear at status hearing; case to be registered with Vermilion County Circuit Court, Danville.

**Karen M. Heath**, Hoopeston, new status hearing April 19.

**Steven J. Akins**, Hoopeston, failed to appear at sentencing for two cases, fined \$230 on each; status hearing April 19.

**Robert G. McCrory**, Hoopeston, failed to appear at sentencing, fined \$230; status hearing April 19.

**Christopher T. Ford**, Hoopeston, fined \$230; status hearing May 17.

**Cyndi Houston**, Hoopeston, case continued to April 19.

## Reading continued from other side

tion and materials so that parents can learn how they can positively influence the child during this development period.

For more information on this program, contact Charlotte Ann Russell Medical Center at (217) 283-5644.

## Weather



Chance of thunderstorms today. High 71. Tonight, rain. Low 54. Tomorrow, rain. High 61, low 49.

For current weather conditions, call Hoopeston Weather Service, (217) 283-6221.

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## HELP WANTED

City of Hoopeston will accept applications for part time seasonal help at the cemetery. Applications may be picked up at City Hall. Return completed apps to City Hall by 4 pm. Thursday, April 26. EOE

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