



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**January 19, 2010**

**CONTACT: SUSANNAH KEREST 207.775.0105**

## **Burnham Trust gives \$4,000 to support Literacy Volunteers in Westbrook Family Literacy efforts**

**WESTBROOK** – “Research shows that one of the keys to academic success is the involvement of parents in their child’s education. Reading and doing homework together is one of the most effective ways to support at-risk children – most particularly those at the earliest of developmental levels,” according to Phyllis de Fano, Executive Director of Literacy Volunteers-Greater Portland.

A \$4,000 grant from the Margaret E. Burnham Charitable Trust will make it possible for Literacy Volunteers-Greater Portland (LVGP) to expand partnership in the Westbrook Family Literacy Initiative. LVGP is intensively recruiting volunteers to participate. Tutors will be matched with parents of at-risk elementary school-age children, work closely with the LVGP Director and the Westbrook School’s Family Literacy Coordinator to directly assist the family to achieve literacy goals.

Orientation for tutors begins Saturday, January 23 at LGVP headquarters in Portland, in the LearningWorks building at 181 Brackett Street. Registrations will be accepted until Wednesday, January 27. Interested volunteers should register through de Fano by calling 207-775-0105 or emailing [lvportland@learningworks.me](mailto:lvportland@learningworks.me).

The Westbrook Family Literacy Initiative combines home-based and site-based literacy services for parents and children of English as a Second Language and low-income families for a comprehensive family literacy program. Adult family members, through LGVP, will strengthen their parenting skills while working toward their personal literacy goals, GED and high school diploma courses of study, for example, and have a transition plan in place when academically ready. A projected 10-20 families may participate, depending on the availability of volunteer tutors interested in the Westbrook project.

Literacy Volunteers-Greater Portland aims to maintain 150 pairs of students and tutors throughout the Portland area during the year. Students are from a great variety of countries, primarily Iraq, Congo, and Somalia, but also such places as Russia, Romania, Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan and Ethiopia. Literacy Volunteers-Greater Portland is a program of LearningWorks, a school serving at-risk youth, the immigrant community, and low-income families throughout Southern Maine.