



Date of Council Meeting: August 9, 2016

**TOWN OF LEESBURG  
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**

**Subject:** Virginia Municipal League's Stairway to Success Program

**Staff Contact:** Betsy Arnett, Public Information Officer  
Kate Trask, Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation

**Council Action Requested:** Adoption of the attached resolution in support of early childhood education.

**Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends that the Council adopt the attached resolution and authorize staff to submit an application for VML's Stairway to Success program.

**Commission Recommendation:** Not applicable.

**Fiscal Impact:** None.

**Executive Summary:** The Virginia Municipal League (VML)'s Stairway to Success is a friendly competition among VML member localities that seeks to increase local governments' role in early childhood education. Participants will be recognized during an awards program at the VML annual conference in October.

**Background:** VML's Stairway to Success program awards participating communities points for activities that promote early childhood education. Communities will be recognized in three categories (bronze, silver and gold) based on the number of activities and the number of total points. Gold status requires a minimum of 5 activities and 50 total points.

Localities can receive points for activities we are already doing, such as our "A Room to Grow" preschool and other classes and program aimed at preschool aged children. In order to achieve Gold status, the only actions required are the adoption of the attached resolution and the addition of some links on the Town website.

# STAIRWAY TO SUCCESS

SUPPORTING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



STAIRWAY TO SUCCESS is a friendly competition among VML member localities. The program seeks to increase local government's role in early childhood education, which in turn, builds a qualified, well-educated workforce. The competition awards points to localities for specific actions that enhance the early childhood experience.

Participants will be recognized during an awards program at VML's Annual Conference on October 11 in Virginia Beach.



## Steps to participate

- Step 1** Go to the Stairway to Success web page at [www.vml.org](http://www.vml.org) to review the details and rules.
- Step 2** Adopt a resolution on the importance of early childhood education.
- Step 3** Download the digital application form and begin tracking your points.
- Step 4** E-mail your completed application form to VML at [mfields@vml.org](mailto:mfields@vml.org) by August 25, 2016



## Who's eligible?

Eligible participants include cities, towns and counties, but partnerships with other local government and regional agencies and with the private sector are encouraged.

## What's the application deadline?

Completed applications must be e-mailed to [mfields@vml.org](mailto:mfields@vml.org) no later than August 25, 2016.

The form is available at [www.vml.org](http://www.vml.org).

## Awards Categories

### BRONZE READY

- Adoption of a resolution on the importance of early childhood education
- **1** or more activities totaling a minimum of **20 points**

### SILVER SET

- Adoption of a resolution on the importance of early childhood education
- **3** or more activities totaling a minimum of **30 points**

### GOLD GO!

- Adoption of a resolution on the importance of early childhood education
- **5** or more activities totaling a minimum of **50 points**

## Checklist of Activities

Complete details on the checklist of activities that will earn points toward the award are available on the application form at [www.vml.org](http://www.vml.org). Creative activities are encouraged. The common denominator is early childhood education. City, county and town officials are encouraged to develop their own approaches to supporting early childhood education.

The activities below can get you started and/or help you gauge the number of points that comparable activities would merit.

Also, **you can claim points for activities you are already doing**, such as participation in Read Across America, or support for storytelling programs at the local library, but VML encourages you to enter into new programs as well.



### Five Points

Five point activities are designed specifically to encourage participation in the program and to take very little staff time to develop. Examples of activities that will earn five points include establishing a station for collection of donated art supplies, displaying preschoolers' art projects in public buildings or other activities of similar scope. Remember, too, you can receive credit for activities you are already doing.



### Ten Points

Hold an art competition for preschoolers, recognize local preschool educators or provide financial support for the Virginia Preschool Initiative Program or Head Start, or undertake similar activities and you will earn 10 points.

### Fifteen Points

Develop some creative programs on your own such as a nature program targeted at preschoolers, literacy initiatives and programs aimed at the parents of young children (such as CPR or effective parenting), and you will earn 15 points.



## What happens if we win?

Winners in all categories will be notified by September 15. All winners will be honored during the awards presentation at the VML Annual Conference on October 11 in Virginia Beach.





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## For more information

Questions? Got to [www.vml.org](http://www.vml.org) for details and/or to download the application form. For further information, call Mary Jo Fields at (804) 523-8524 or e-mail [mfields@vml.org](mailto:mfields@vml.org)

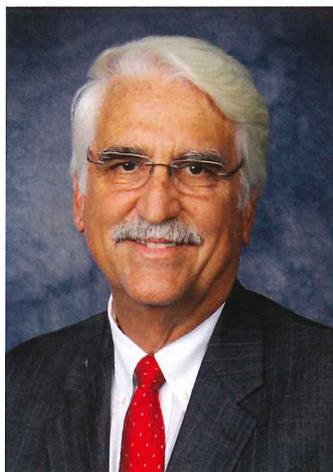
## Stairway to Success Advisory Committee

Gina Patterson, Executive Director, Virginia School Boards Association

Anita James Price, Council Member, City of Roanoke

Tim Taylor, Mayor, Town of Strasburg

Pat Woodbury, Council Member, City of Newport News



*"I am advocating that we find ways to enhance the early childhood experience to build a strong, resilient community able to successfully meet the demands of the future. Stairway to Success recognizes initiatives, tailored to our communities, that will allow our children to have a better chance of entering the school system on an even playing field. It is designed to give all our children the tools to be successful."*

Ron Rordam, VML President, Mayor of Blacksburg

PRESENTED AUGUST 9, 2015

RESOLUTION NO. 2016-

ADOPTED \_\_\_\_\_

A RESOLUTION: IN SUPPORT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

WHEREAS, children's experience in their earliest years have a large effect on their entire lives; and

WHEREAS, early childhood education can particularly help children who are born with risk factors, whether economic, psychological, or physical; and

WHEREAS, children who have access to high quality early childhood education programs are better prepared for kindergarten and for success in school; and

WHEREAS, school readiness has economic and social benefits not only for the children who attend these programs but for all Virginians; and

WHEREAS, children who are kindergarten ready are more likely to make the most of their educational experience; and

WHEREAS, a successful kindergarten experience is the start to a successful completion of high school and preparation for a successful career; and

WHEREAS, since 1993, the Town of Leesburg's Parks and Recreation Department has operated "A Room to Grow," a preschool program licensed by the Virginia Department of Social Services; and

WHEREAS, the preschool staff work in conjunction with Loudoun County Public Schools to identify developmental needs of the students by accessing programs such as Child Find and Head Start; and

A RESOLUTION: IN SUPPORT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

WHEREAS, the Parks and Recreation Department offers a variety of educational programs that introduce young children to nature, art, physical movement and science, as well as social and emotional development.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the Town of Leesburg in Virginia hereby recognizes the importance of early childhood education to children's future success in school and in life; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, the Council of the Town of Leesburg in Virginia commends the teachers, volunteers, parents, community leaders and students involved in early childhood education for their contributions.

PASSED this \_\_\_\_ day of August 2015.

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David S. Butler, Mayor  
Town of Leesburg

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of Council