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I must admit the day before when I saw the Big Cheese Reads on my calendar, I thought, “Do I really have time to do this?” I left the school very thankful for the opportunity to get out of the rat race and spend some time with a great group of kids.

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— Michael Olivieri, American City Business Journals



The Big Cheese Reads

The Big Cheese Reads Initiative, a sponsorship program linked to our annual Gala, connects business and community leaders with middle-school students in order to emphasize the important link between literacy and career success. Since its inception in 2004, nearly 150 corporate and community leaders have visited classes to support the initiative. “Big Cheeses” have included Earvin “Magic” Johnson, Keith Lockhart, Ron Logue, Mayor Thomas Menino, Governor Deval Patrick, and Liz Walker.

“Big Cheeses” visit a middle school classroom at least once during the school year to read a short selection aloud to the class, give a brief personal account of the ways reading and learning have impacted their lives and career achievements, and respond to questions from the students. A Big Cheese Reader’s time commitment is 45 minutes to one hour in the school, plus the time that it takes to travel to and from the school.

Sponsorship helps us continue to provide quality educational assistance and positive adult role models to our city’s school children by matching them with trained volunteer academic mentors.

