

# Stories



WILLIAM CASPAR GRAUSTEIN  
MEMORIAL FUND

Originally published in the Norwich Reminder News, May 4th, 2007  
Story and Photos by Karissa Campbell

ReminderNews

## Learning at 'Truck Day'

**F**rom fire engines and Army trucks to school buses and talking robotic utility vehicles, the variety of vehicles on display this past Saturday made for an exciting day for children and parents who attended the first Truck Day event.

The event was sponsored by the Children First Norwich/ School Readiness Council Collaborative and held at the Mohegan campus of Three Rivers Community College.

Designed to act as an outlet for educating and informing area families on the importance of school readiness, Truck Day also served as a celebration of the tenth year of the area's School Readiness program. "It's the week of the young child," commented Norwich Children First Coordinator Sherry Filiatreault. "We wanted to do something great to capture the week."

Also showcased at the event were area childcare centers such as the TVCCA Head Start program and the Norwich Family Resource Center and the many services they provide to the community. Each family received a bag full of information sponsored by the National Institute for Literacy, No Child Left Behind and other literacy organizations.

Trucks were donated for the day by several area organizations, including the City of Norwich Police and Fire Departments, the National Guard, Safe Kids Buckle Up, the Humane Society of Connecticut, Norwich Public Utilities and more. Also in attendance was the Rotary AMBER Alert Child ID Program of Stonington, CT. At their booth, parents were encouraged to obtain complimentary wallet-sized, laminated identification cards for their children.

Food, ice cream, balloons and entertainment were provided during the event. Children lined up to not only see the array of trucks, but also to see the clown, to get their faces painted or have a balloon made for them.

All proceeds for the event, including those from the sale of children's books on display, went towards the Norwich Children



*The fire engine was one of the many trucks on display.*

First and School Readiness Council Collaborative. Part of the money raised will go towards the distribution of books to Norwich-area school readiness programs.

School Readiness Liaison Ann Jerome commented on the importance of literacy and reading to young children. "We hope that this event will help families to know just how important it is to read to your children," said Jerome.

Truck Day was specifically created to attract more fathers in the Norwich area to the event. "What we are trying to do by bringing in the truck stuff is to hopefully reach fathers, and let them

To learn more about Children First Norwich, visit their website at [www.norwichcfi.org](http://www.norwichcfi.org).

know what school readiness is and the importance of it,” said Filiatreault. More than 100 families attended the event.

The Children First Norwich/School Readiness Council was created to provide an early-care and education agenda that fully engages parents, schools and the community to improve life outcomes for children. Presently, the collaborative sponsors two events a year, which includes the new Truck Day event as well as Family Day in September.

For more information, contact Sherry Filiatreault at (860) 823-3782. ■

*The William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund works collaboratively to improve education for Connecticut’s children by supporting school change, informing the public debate on educational issues, and strengthening the involvement of parents and the community in education.*



*Truck Day was specially targeted towards fathers and children.*

