



Olympic medalist-turned-Tulsan helps promote early literacy at 'Together We Read' event

Published: October 24, 2024 | Tim Stanley, *Tulsa World* Staff Writer, and Stephen Pingry, *Tulsa World* Staff Photographer

To help children reach new heights in literacy, local advocates enlisted the support of an Olympic pole vaulter.

Katie Moon, a gold-medal-winning Olympian who only recently began calling Tulsa home, was one of several volunteer readers who participated Thursday in CAP Tulsa's celebration of the 13th annual "Together We Read" literacy campaign.

Moon was joined by her husband, Hugo Moon, a rowing coach at the University of Tulsa, to read to children at the CAP Tulsa Disney Early Childhood Education Center.



Children at CAP Tulsa Disney Early Childhood Education Center hug Olympic gold medalist Katie Moon on Thursday.

Reading events were held Thursday morning at all CAP Tulsa Early Childhood Education Center locations, with participation from more than 80 readers and other volunteers.

Joining the Moons to read to children at the Disney center were Tulsa's two mayoral candidates, Karen Keith and Monroe Nichols, and officers from the Tulsa Police Department.

Karen Tilkin, CAP Tulsa executive director, kicked off the event at Disney by thanking the readers for supporting the event, which is held in conjunction with Jumpstart's "Read for the Record."

"You are all part of a wonderful early literacy event that's being celebrated, really, all over the world," Tilkin said. "We're all reading the same books to the children on the same day."

"Piper Chen Sings" by Phillipa Soo and Maris Pasquale Doran was the book chosen for children in 3- and 4-year-old classrooms, while infant, toddler, and 2-year-old rooms enjoyed readings from "Thank You, Mama" by Linda Meeker.

Katie and Hugo Moon read "Piper Chen Sings" to a class of 4-year-olds.

Before starting, Katie Moon introduced herself to her young listeners.

"My name is Katie, and I am an athlete," she said. "I actually got to go to the Olympics this past summer, and I won a silver medal. And this is Hugo. Hugo is a coach at the University of Tulsa. He's a rowing coach. You guys know rowing at all — rowing a boat?"

Katie Moon, originally from Cleveland, Ohio, won her silver medal in pole vault at the 2024 Paris Olympics. She won a gold medal at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Hugo Moon, in his third year at TU, said afterward that while he is usually happy to let his wife be the center of attention, it was good to be at her side Thursday and help read to children.



University of Tulsa rowing coach Hugo Moon and his wife, Olympic pole vaulter Katie Moon, read to CAP Tulsa Disney students to help promote early literacy. Experts say reading to a child for just 15 minutes a day is one of the most important things an adult can do to prepare a child for future school success.

“It’s not something I’ve ever gotten to do,” he told the Tulsa World. “She’s pretty used to speaking to fans and doing various engagement stuff. I’m normally on the side taking photos and stuff. So this was fun.”

Katie said she hadn’t been familiar with the annual event before but that she was glad to support the mission of promoting early literacy.

“I love working with kids,” she told the Tulsa World. “They’re so fun. They were just so excited to just sit there and listen to us read a book.

“I have been so fortunate to have a lot of support from the communities I’ve lived in, and Tulsa is no exception to that. So anytime I can be a part of something to kind of give back, I’m happy to do it.”

She said that now that the Olympics are over she’s finally getting a chance to get to know Tulsa better.

Thursday’s event allowed her to make some new friends.

“It’s nice to just have the chance to meet people in the community, and we’re getting to do that today,” she said. “We haven’t had a ton of opportunities to do that yet. Hugo was working a lot, and I was always traveling. We hope to do more of this and meet more people.”

Millions of adults and children worldwide participate in the annual event, promoting early literacy and increased access to high-quality children’s books, officials said.

Experts say reading to a child for just 15 minutes a day is one of the most important things an adult can do to prepare a child for future school success. If a child starts out behind, it’s very challenging to catch up.

For more information about CAP Tulsa and its work, go to captulsa.org.

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