

PHOTO SPECIAL TO THE SUN

East Tennessee State University student Cierra Linka leads Peppy, a horse in the equine program at Holston Home for Children. Linka has written a children's book based on her experiences with Peppy as an intern at Holston Home

Holston Home Internship Inspires ETSU Student To Pen Children's Book

Cierra Linka, a Roan Scholar at East Tennessee State University, has written a children's book inspired by her interactions with a horse at Holston United Methodist Home for Children.

Linka, a South Greene High School graduate, has written "Peppy: The Easy-Going Racehorse" based on her experiences at Holston Home through the Roan Scholars Leadership Program, which provides its participants out-of-the-classroom experiences to grow and develop as future leaders, according to a news release from ETSU.

To celebrate the publication of the new book, families and children are invited to a free community celebration Thursday. "It's a Peppy Party!" will begin at 5:30 p.m. at the Bonnie Kate Theater, 115 S. Sycamore Street in Elizabethton.

The first 100 families at the event will receive a free copy of "Peppy: The Easy-Going Racehorse." In addition to activities and free snacks for children, attendees will have a chance to meet the author, the illustrator and Peppy the horse, the release stated.

The book's main character, Peppy, is based on a horse Linka met while completing an internship at Holston Home. As part of the Roan Summer of Service, she worked with youth and staff in the equine therapy program and wrote the book to celebrate children's differences and to share the importance of always believing in yourself, the release said.

"Peppy is a special horse who taught me a lot," Linka said. "I hope kids and adults will read this and be inspired to try hard and be themselves."

Linka, who is majoring in social work, became interested in early childhood literacy as a result of the Roan Scholars Leadership Program's focus on the topic during the 2018-19 academic year. She and other Roan Scholars were challenged to find ways to make a positive impact locally.

Drawing upon her experience with Peppy and the children at Holston Home, Linka began writing last fall. Fellow Roan Scholar Clara Reynolds, of Kingsport, drew the illustrations for the book.

Individuals and businesses in the community donated more than $2,500 to print the book and distribute it to children throughout the region for free, the release stated.

Tickets to the community event and book release party are free but limited and must be reserved in advance. To reserve tickets, visit www.peppyparty.eventbrite.com.

AWARDS

FROM PAGE 1



Cierra Linka was named an Honorable Mention in the Individual Division/College Category of the Volunteer Spirit Awards for her service to the Holston United Methodist Home for Children's adventure-based program. Presenting the award to her is Greeneville Sun Publisher Gregg K. Jones.