

United Way group provides books to young children

By **Tamryn Waters**
DEMOCRAT STAFF WRITER

Nearly 20 Pre-K students sat on a blue circular rug, chiming in every time their teacher read a passage they liked.

Books with characters and catchy phrases were read Tuesday morning at the Gooden-Russell Center, formerly known as Wesson Elementary School. But, the children were able to take home a hint of the day's excitement since they got to keep a book of their own.

The books were provided through the United Way of the Big Bend's African-American Leadership Out-

KEEP TALKING

■ Go to Tallahassee.com and keep the conversation going.

reach, which is a group that aims to help the needs of the black community. More than 520 books were given to children at elementary schools throughout Leon County Tuesday, and close to 380 books were previously delivered to students in Gadsden, Jefferson and Madison counties.

"It's about getting books into the hands of our youth," said Alan Williams, a member of the outreach

group and United Way board member.

The outreach group collaborated with Affiliated Computer Services, and employees collected more than 600 books in their fall book drive.

Martha Fletcher, director of the Early Childhood Programs for Leon County Schools, said the children are going to get a kick out of taking books home. Since many of the children are developmentally delayed or have language impairments, Fletcher said this initiative is going to help.

"We want them to enjoy

Please see **BOOKS, 4A**



Special to the Democrat
Alan Williams, United Way of the Big Bend African-American Leadership Outreach member and UWBB Board member, talks with a pre-K class at Wesson Elementary School after giving each child a book as part of ALO's Awesome Book Crusade (ABC).