

Readers



LEADERS

A Partnership of



A guide to helping improve literacy
in Volusia County

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About The Project

The Readers to Leaders initiative was born out of the Chair's Challenge to Leadership Daytona Class XLIII in 2023.

Daytona Regional Chamber of Commerce Chairperson Nellie Lupoli, ICI Homes, challenged the class to bring awareness to Volusia County's business community about the lagging literacy levels amongst 3rd graders in our community.

The goals of this challenge were to understand the factors impacting literacy levels, identifying key stakeholders that can address the situation, and developing a strategy to mobilize them in a coordinated fashion to use the Community's collective resources to raise awareness of this issue and in turn positively impact literacy levels.



Why Support Literacy?

A child's successful transition into and through the K-12 system and life depends heavily on their readiness to read. The development of early literacy skills provides the foundation that supports a child's ability to read at or above grade level by third grade.

A child's components for early literacy are developed beginning at birth. When children fail to have early opportunities to build vocabulary - words that they understand and can use - they are at a disadvantage that becomes increasingly difficult to overcome as they progress through their educational careers.

Offering opportunities to build a durable foundation from birth increases the likelihood of on time promotion and reading at grade level by third grade.

After third grade, children are expected to apply their reading skills to learning. Instead of learning to read, they are reading to learn. If students do not adequately learn to read by third grade, other subject areas may begin to suffer, leading to higher failed grade matriculation and eventually, higher dropout rates.



How Can You Help?

Time

Do you have a few hours a week, a month, or even a year to give back to your community? Statistics show that a child that has experienced adverse childhood experiences or trauma, can have their whole trajectory changed by having one positive person in their life. Reading with children truly can make a difference!

Talent

Maybe you are an expert in your field, or you have past experience planning programs or raising funds. Lending your expertise and leadership to participate in planning and ongoing support for literacy programs is crucial to their sustainability and success.

Treasure

The success of many literacy programs is dependent on both in-kind and monetary donations. Individual donations, business sponsorships, and large gifts are fundamental to the sustainability and growth of many programs. The need for literacy programs continues to grow and the available funding does not always align.



Program Overviews



Help Me Grow promotes the early identification of developmental, behavioral, or educational concerns through FREE developmental and behavioral questionnaires for children 6 weeks through 8 years old. Families are then connected to community-based services and supports at no cost.



The 3Ts (Tune In, Talk More, Take Turns) are FREE powerful tools and tips parents can use to enhance their child's brain development and language skills (ages birth to 3 years).



Grade-Level Reading Campaign aims to break the cycle of poverty by focusing on on-track development by the end of kindergarten and grade-level reading by the end of third grade.



Program Overviews



Babies Rock



Babies Rock volunteers are assigned an infant classroom to visit for at least one hour each week. While visiting, background checked volunteers will rock, play, read and sing with infants. These interactions provide extra one on one love and attention that babies need!



Dolly Parton's Imagination Library provides local children (ages birth to 5 years) with a free, age-appropriate book each month by mail. These books are a great way for families to bond with their child while building early literacy skills.



When businesses support families, everyone wins. Bosses for Babies is a statewide initiative of The Children's Movement of Florida, designed to engage business leaders in boosting their workforce and contributing to community prosperity through family-focused practices.



Program Overviews

Community Reader



Participate in one of our literacy initiatives as a volunteer reader for a local child care center or elementary school. Visit a local classroom and read to children through initiatives such as Read for the Record, Josh the Otter, or Community Reader!

Superintendent's Reading Challenges



The Superintendent's Reading Challenges are offered throughout the school year. These challenges encourage students to read a set number of minutes in order to earn prizes. Our top readers are recognized at school board meetings. In order to encourage students to read, we offer prizes, often the prizes are tiered based on how many minutes were read.

Battle of the Books



Battle of the Books is a quiz bowl style competition. Students in Grades 3-12 are able to compete against other schools about details from each year's Sunshine State Books. This competition takes place in the Spring and close to 300 students participate and over 60 volunteers help to make this event successful.

New Worlds Reading Initiative



New Worlds Reading is a free program for eligible VPK through fifth graders who need extra support in reading and developing literacy skills. New Worlds Reading mails eligible students 9 FREE books and reading activities each school year through fifth grade to strengthen literacy skills and foster a lifelong love of reading. Plus, eligible kids stay in the program even if their reading scores improve!



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Leadership Daytona Class XLIII

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Halifax Health
Team Volusia
AdventHealth
Daytona Regional Chamber of Commerce
City of Daytona Beach
SMA Healthcare, Inc
City of Daytona Beach
TCT Advantage, LLC
Primerica
NASCAR
VCARD
VyStar
VYPG
Hilton Daytona Beach Oceanfront Resort
Daytona State College
Daytona Beach Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
Halifax Health
AdventHealth
Wharton-Smith, Inc
Daytona College
Fairwinds Credit Union
Brown & Brown Insurance
Brown & Brown Insurance
AdventHealth
Coldwell Banker Commercial Benchmark



Resources & References

Register to Volunteer



Follow the Progress

Since the 2022–2023 School Year, the percentage of students reading on or above grade level as measured on standardized assessments has increased from 50% to 57%. It is terrific progress but significant work remains.

Chair Lupoli's vision of improving these scores aligns directly with the Florida Chamber's FL 2030 goals toward 100% of 3rd graders reading on grade level.



<https://thefloridascorecard.org/>



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Thank you for supporting the future
of our youngest learners