

Board of Directors

Howard Veltz, Chairman
Andrew Minor
Jennifer Passmore
Linda Guritz
Dr. Carla McGill
Dr. Robin Thompson
Patrick Cassella
Rob Bell
Joseph Miller
Rachel Kendzior
Diane Neeves
Lupita Wells
Dr. Sharon Otis



Board of Directors

Dr. Kathy Stuckey
AmyLynn Ananicz
Caroline Halfacre
Mary Beth Wehnes
Kathy Patreka
Angela Gilmore
Deborah Ludwig
Debbie Kibler
Beverly Williams
Tim Pye
Madison Wells White
James R. Chatham M.D
Len Tabicman
Paul Sharff, CEO

CONTACTS: Darrell King
Phone: 941-757-2900, Extension 212
Email: dking@elc-manatee.org

NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release
September 13, 2016

LAKEWOOD RANCH COMMUNITY FUND AWARDS \$1500 GRANT TO THE EARLY LEARNING COALITION FOR RAISING A READER PROGRAM IN MANATEE COUNTY

Palmetto, Florida, September 13, 2016 – The Early Learning Coalition (ELC) of Manatee County, Inc. has been awarded a \$1500 grant from the Lakewood Ranch Community Fund of the Manatee Community Foundation. The grant is for the continued implementation of the nationally renowned "*Raising a Reader*" program, whose network offers an evidence-based early literacy and parent engagement program that has demonstrated improvement in the reading readiness skills of children from birth to age five. This is the third successive year the fund has supported the ELC's "*Raising a Reader*" program, with the most recent funding being used to benefit children who attend Faith Preschool in Lakewood Ranch.

The program engages parents in a routine of daily book reading with their children to foster healthy brain development, parent-child bonding, and early literacy skills critical for school success and connects the family to local libraries. The program addresses the community need for children to be ready for school and impacts the children's ability to read at grade-level, upon entering kindergarten.

Each child entering the program will receive approximately 100 books per year. The Early Learning Coalition's nationally-certified coordinator will train preschool teachers and parents on how to engage their child by sharing a book. At the culmination of the program, families will be connected to the public library of their choice to continue the practice of borrowing books and reading.

The "*Raising a Reader*" program is aligned with the community's Campaign for Grade-Level Reading that is spearheaded by the United Way of Manatee County, the Manatee Community Foundation, the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee, and Manatee Public Schools.

In 2000, the Lakewood Ranch Community Fund was developed to serve the people and interests of the Lakewood Ranch community, and allow donor-allocated funds to stay in our region, serving a variety of charitable interests. The Lakewood Ranch Community Fund Mission: To enhance the quality of life in and near our community by promoting philanthropy, responding to community needs and granting funds. The Fund is set up under the umbrella of the larger Manatee Community Foundation to reduce management costs and allow more assets to remain in the community.



600 Eighth Avenue West, Suite 100
Palmetto, Florida 34221
Telephone (941) 757-2900
Fax (941) 757-2916

A Board of Advisors is responsible for seeking out donations, reviewing grant proposals and distributing funding. Since 2002 the Fund has awarded \$1.1 Million in grants to 100 local nonprofit organizations.

The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County, Inc. is a multi-service agency dedicated to helping children develop skills that they will need to be successful in school and life. The agency's focus is on high quality school readiness opportunities for all children and their families, understanding that it is in the first years of life that a child's future educational success is determined and the critical role of parents, as their child's first and most important teacher. To learn more about Coalition's services, go to www.elc-manatee.org or call 941-757-2900, extension 212.



600 Eighth Avenue West, Suite 100
Palmetto, Florida 34221
Telephone (941) 757-2900
Fax (941) 757-2916