



9th Annual Books and Badges Community Event

Thursday, July 13th 2023, 6:12 PM EDT

<https://www.snnv.com/story/49194023/annual-books-and-badges-community-event>

SARASOTA (SNN) - "This is an initiative that we partner with Housing Authority. This helps the kids gear up for the school year. And it's something that we do to align with the housing authority as well within the city. So everybody here has a really good time doing this every year. They're, the smiles are fantastic and they're really happy to see us again. we do get a lot of hello's and thank you and a lot of bright smiles and faces that are excited to see us." – says Patrick Comac, Community Action Team Sergeant

"A lot of public housing communities. Historically have been considered book deserts So, the first goal is to eliminate that situation and provide all of our families who have kids their own children's book library in their unit." – says Russell Williams, CEO, Sarasota Housing Authority

"There's a much better community relationship there between the police department and our residents here. They've come in and read with our kids after school. The National Book Foundation, they're the ones that provide the books to us every year as part of a book rich environment program. The county public library has also been a huge partner with us in terms of our book rich environment events, of which this is one of them." – says Williams.

"It means a great deal, especially when we're out here, um, engaging the public, particularly kids. As you see, we're going to be walking, uh, this, this project here. And getting kids involved in reading. And that's, that's extremely important. Especially nowadays. We have books being banned in schools and so on. So, to get out here and show the kids the importance of reading. And, uh, the importance of books. Uh, it means a great deal." – Mayor Kyle Battie

"We really appreciate housing authority every year for taking their time out and doing this or whatever. But the books can be passed down as well too. So then after one of my sons finished with it, I can switch. But in order for my kids to play or to be in outside or to do any of that, I Did you read a book? Let's go read a book. You wanna play the game? That's fine. I don't mind playing the game. They still need to play and everything like that. But education is always first. Education school, that's important. And that always comes first. It just shows that they are, you know, focused. They are willing, they want to learn, they want to better themselves." – says Shinece Davis, Mother of four.