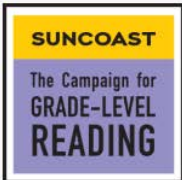


Posted: October 18, 2016

<http://www.gradelevelreadingsuncoast.net/sarasota-housing-authority-recognized-as-an-industry-leader-in-the-campaign-2/>

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## SARASOTA HOUSING AUTHORITY RECOGNIZED AS AN INDUSTRY LEADER IN THE CAMPAIGN

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WILLIAM RUSSELL, PRESIDENT & CEO, SARASOTA HOUSING AUTHORITY

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OCTOBER 18, 2016

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NO COMMENTS

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CAMPAIGN FOR GRADE-LEVEL READING, CHILDREN FIRST, COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF SARASOTA COUNTY, EDUCATION FOUNDATION, SARASOTA COUNTY SCHOOLS, SARASOTA HOUSING AUTHORITY, SUNCOAST CAMPAIGN FOR GRADE-LEVEL READING, U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT

On September 30, 2016, the [Sarasota Housing Authority \(SHA\)](#) was recognized by the national [Campaign for Grade-Level Reading](#) as one of the 12 housing authorities nationwide and the only one in Florida as a “bright spot” for addressing chronic absenteeism. This summer, the [U. S. Department of Housing & Urban Development](#) similarly recognized SHA as one of 11 housing agencies nationwide playing a leading role in the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading.

What started out four years ago as an effort to crack down on truancy for some of our kids, has now morphed into a real focus on chronic absenteeism. We watched the [Statistics Lottery](#) and became aware of research that shows chronic absence predicts poor attendance and academic performance as early as pre-K and is an indicator of long-term academic and life success. In fact, by 6th grade, chronic absence is a leading predictor that a student will drop out of high school. We also know children from low-income homes tend to miss more school than their peers. These factors severely limit our kids’ prospects for academic achievement and life opportunities — we had to do something.

SHA has become a true Campaign disciple and embraces its unique opportunity to support our families and children in being prepared for school, attending school every day, and not experiencing summer learning loss. Even though SHA receives no specific federal funds to provide such programs, SHA has launched a number of programs to address the three key Campaign goals listed above — with help from a grant from the [Community Foundation of Sarasota County](#). These programs include:

- > Partnering with Sarasota County Schools to monitor and track attendance data
- > SHA staff participating in School-Wide Support Team (SWST) meetings with SHA children who are chronically absent to identify remedies and strategies for getting the child to school on time or to reduce and eliminate absences from school
- > Offering an after school homework club, with intensive reading coaches (certified Sarasota school teachers) and a computer lab with learning software provided by the Education Foundation
- > Providing on-site, quality Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten at two family housing campuses
- > Providing on-site Early Head Start for 1–3 year-olds run by Children First
- > Providing a Summer Enrichment Camp that includes two hours a day of academic work with teachers and field trips
- > Hosting a Summer Learning Academy for children ages 2–4 years old
- > Participating in Book 'Em — Cops & Kids book giveaways (to coincide with National Summer Learning Day) to address the lack of children's books in homes

SHA believes that we have a key and growing role to play in helping children growing up in low-income housing to have the opportunity to succeed in school and have numerous life opportunities that will break the cycle of poverty.