

Police officers give free books to kids in low-income areas in Sarasota

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The Sarasota Housing Authority partnered with the Sarasota Police Department for their annual Books and Badges Literacy Event.

In honor of national summer learning week, Sarasota Police Department officers on Tuesday handed out hundreds of books to children in low-income housing communities in north Sarasota.

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“We’re making sure all kids get some books, so they can maintain their reading over the summer, so they can be reading on grade level so they can be ready for the first day of school,” said Sgt. Eric Bolden of the Sarasota Police Department.

The event’s goal was not only to mitigate summer learning loss, but also have the kids, ages 6 through 12, experience a positive interaction with police officers.

“This is a perfect event to build on two key initiatives — fostering positive relationships between police and our families, and early childhood education, as a way to equip our children to succeed in school and life,” said William Russell, CEO, Sarasota Housing Authority in a press release.

“Attendance Works,” a separate Sarasota Housing Authority program focused on improving school performance, earned it an Award of Excellence from the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials last year.

Books and Badges was supported by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, Education Foundation of Sarasota County and Sarasota County Libraries, and the books were provided by Algonquin Books for Young Readers and Workman Publishing, Candlewick Press, Hachette Book Group, HarperCollins Publishers, Macmillan Publishers, Penguin Random House, Scholastic and Simon & Schuster.



At the Books and Badges Literacy Event on Tuesday, Sarasota Police officers handed out hundreds of books to children in low-income housing communities in north Sarasota. [Herald-Tribune staff photo / Anna Bryson]