

# SPARKPLUGS 2011

for Parent Involvement | Exemplary Practices



sponsored by

**Florida  
PTA**  
*everychild. one voice.®*



Florida Department  
of Education

# SPARKPLUGS 2011

---

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Sparkplugs, the Florida Department of Education's annual publication of exemplary practices for family involvement. The programs described in Sparkplugs reflect only a few of the many innovative practices used across the state to recruit, train and recognize parents and other family members. Each program was nominated for the 2011 Parent Involvement Award by its school district.

The purpose of the Award, sponsored by the Florida PTA, Department of Education and State Farm Insurance, is to promote and recognize exemplary school practices that increase family involvement. All entries must be school projects that focus on a specific school-initiated parent/family involvement program or strategy, including those taking place in the workplace, faith-based institutions, and other convenient locations.

Based on nationally recognized standards for parent and community involvement in education, the programs address the key strategies of communication, parenting, student learning, volunteering, school decision making and advocacy, and collaborating with the community.

Regional winners were selected based upon the programs':

1. Impact on family involvement
2. Ability to be replicated
3. Relationship to school goals and objectives
4. Parent/family participation in planning and implementation
5. Uniqueness and innovation
6. Impact on school improvement
7. Ratio of parents to program capability
8. Cost
9. Collaborative efforts

For further information or assistance in implementing any of these unique family involvement programs, please write or telephone the listed Program Contacts.

# SPARKPLUGS 2011

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### **Region 1: Primary/Elementary School Winner**

S.S. Dixon Primary School .....	5
---------------------------------	---

#### **District Winners**

Parker Elementary School .....	6
Ferry Pass Elementary School .....	6
St. John Elementary School .....	7
Ruediger Elementary School .....	7
Shalimar Elementary School .....	8

### **Region I: Middle/High School Winner**

Ferry Pass Middle School .....	9
--------------------------------	---

#### **District Winners**

Rutherford High School .....	10
Raa Middle School .....	10
Lewis School .....	11

### **Region II: Primary/Elementary School Winner**

Taylor County Elementary School .....	12
---------------------------------------	----

#### **District Winners**

Central Ridge Elementary School .....	13
Eastside Elementary School .....	13
Loretto Elementary School .....	14
Callahan Elementary School .....	14
Durbin Creek Elementary School .....	15

### **Region II: Middle/High School Winner**

Mandarin High School .....	16
----------------------------	----

#### **District Winners**

CREST School .....	17
Landrum Middle School .....	17

### **Region III: Primary/Elementary School Winner**

Jupiter Elementary School .....	18
---------------------------------	----

#### **District Winners**

Sawgrass Bay Elementary School .....	19
Palm City Elementary School .....	19
Waterbridge Elementary School .....	20
Lakeview Elementary School .....	20
Keeth Elementary School .....	21
Windmill Point Elementary School .....	21
Westside Elementary School .....	22

### **Region III: Middle/High School Winner**

Sanford Middle School .....	23
-----------------------------	----

#### **District Winners**

Cocoa High School .....	24
Northport K-8 School .....	24
Creekside Middle School .....	25

# SPARKPLUGS 2011

---

## **Region IV: Primary/Elementary School Winner**

Explorer K-8 School .....26

### **District Winners**

Lake Park Elementary School .....27

Hugo Schmidt Elementary School .....27

G. Weaver Hipps Elementary School .....28

Gulf Highlands Elementary School .....28

Medulla Elementary School .....29

## **Region IV: Middle/High School Winner**

Golden Gate Middle School .....30

### **District Winners**

Dolores S. Parrott Middle School .....31

Chamberlain High School .....31

Caloosa Middle School .....32

## **Region V: Primary/Elementary School Winner**

Cutler Ridge Elementary/Assurant Satellite Learning Center .....33

### **District Winners**

North Side Elementary School .....34

Key Largo School .....34

Poinciana Elementary Math, Science & Technology Magnet School .....35

## **Region V: Middle/High School Winner**

Western High School .....36

### **District Winners**

David Lawrence, Jr. K-8 Center .....37

Okeehelée Middle School .....37

## **SANTA ROSA**

### **Haystackular**

S.S. Dixon Primary School  
4560 Pace Patriot Boulevard  
Pace, Florida 32571

Program Contact: Debbie Anderson  
Phone: 850-995-3660

**Mission:** *To establish a tradition of collaboration between school and community through a fun and educational event.*

Haystackular is a unique, month-long program geared to increase math and science skills amidst the towering bales of a hay maze. On the weekends, Haystackular's goal is to attract the community to a fun, family-friendly fall activity that will both increase parent involvement at the school as well as raise funds for the PTO. In addition to the maze, peripheral activities—such as a pumpkin catapult built by the middle school, a zip line, and bounce houses—entertain families from all over the county.

While the maze is closed to the public during the week, field trip groups from every corner of the Santa Rosa district flock to Haystackular to learn valuable science and technology skills by navigating through the maze with handheld GPS devices, finding hidden geocaches along the way. Inside these hidden treasures are math puzzles each student group must solve before exiting the maze, thereby strengthening math skills as well as technological literacy.

Parent and community volunteers plan and staff the project, garnering support from the Pace business community, designing and building the maze, repairing fallen walls, providing security, and guiding student groups through the labyrinth.

Through sponsorships, donations, and admission charges, this year the month-long event raised more than \$31,000 for technological upgrades to the school.

Grade Levels: PreK-12  
Budget: \$20,000 (Gross Revenue: \$51,700)  
Parents Served: 2,267  
Students: 5,743

## **BAY**

### **Technology Thursday**

Parker Elementary School  
640 South Highway 22A  
Panama City, Florida 32404

Program Contact: Lisa Burson  
Phone: 850-872-4570

**Mission:** *To increase computer skills and program awareness.*

After survey results showed that students and their families had minimal access to technology at home, Parker Elementary established Technology Thursday. For two hours on select Thursday evenings, the school opens its computer lab so students can access vital academic support programs—such as VMath, Ticket to Read, and FCAT Explorer—and parents can log in to Parent Portal to check their children's grades. This program allows students to supplement the school's curriculum, and gives parents the opportunity to encourage their students' academic and technological growth while expanding their own knowledge of school-sponsored programs and technologies.

Grade Levels: K-5  
Budget: \$300 per event  
Parents Served: 20  
Students Served: 20



## **ESCAMBIA**

### **Gang Awareness, Stranger Danger, and Personal Safety**

Ferry Pass Elementary School  
8310 North Davis Highway  
Pensacola, Florida 32514

Program Contact: Cathy Ray  
Phone: 850-494-5605

**Mission:** *To make parents and students aware of gangs and dangers within the community.*

This easily replicable project from Ferry Pass Elementary is actually a two-for-one presentation: while local law enforcement shares information about gangs with parents, a martial arts center teaches students about stranger danger and self-defense. Members of Escambia County's Gang Awareness Task Force educate parents about nationally affiliated gangs in the county, explaining signs, traits, and activities that can help parents identify gang presence in their neighborhoods. While parents discuss these issues with the officers, a martial arts school teaches students to keep themselves safe from danger by training them to be aware of their surroundings and to use a number of self-defense techniques.

Grade Levels: K-5  
Budget: \$100  
Parents Served: 106  
Students: 114

## **GADSDEN**

### **Spokes of Hope**

St. John Elementary School  
4463 Bainbridge Highway  
Quincy, Florida 32351

Program Contact: John Govans  
Phone: 850-627-3442

**Mission:** *To support the school's mission and goals by surpassing curriculum guidelines in educational, recreational activities.*

Spokes of Hope provides a multifaceted approach to boosting student achievement through increased parental involvement and greater extra-curricular opportunity for students. The program sponsors a Kindergarten Resource Night, during which students are given free vision screenings and parents talk with business partners and community officials about insurance options, minimizing at-risk behaviors, and strategies to help pre-kindergarten children prepare for school. Spokes of Hope also conducts a NASCAR career field trip where students meet a driver, learn about various professions, and watch a race. The program also focuses on staff, providing funding for professional development. To increase parent and faculty participation, the program offers various incentives, including tickets to a popular play and college sporting events.

Grade Levels: K-5  
Budget: \$3,000-4,000  
Parents Served: 289  
Students: 289



## **LEON**

### **Together on Tuesdays**

Ruediger Elementary School  
526 West 10th Avenue  
Tallahassee, Florida 32303

Program Contact: Melissa Fullmore  
Phone: 850-488-1074

**Mission:** *To build communication and cooperation between school and home, build parent capacity, and create a school community by partnering with local businesses to help stimulate our local economy.*

This program brings school staff, students, and their families together twice a month in order to strengthen the school community, supplement parent involvement funding, and provide parents with strategies to encourage their students academically. On the first Tuesday of each month, Ruediger Elementary families dine at local restaurants, which give a portion of the proceeds back to the school. On the third Tuesday of the month, families come to the school for an afternoon of refreshments, student performances, and teacher-run workshops on topics ranging from FCAT Math to CPR/First Aid. These events inspire greater family involvement at both school and home, and improve students' public speaking and performance skills.

Grade Levels: PreK-5  
Budget: \$3,000  
Parents Served: 250  
Students: 350

## OKALOOSA

### **Annual Family Math and Science Night**

Shalimar Elementary School  
1350 Joe Martin Circle  
Shalimar, Florida 32579

Program Contact: Sheila Lightbourne  
Phone: 850-833-4339

**Mission:** *To strengthen math and science applications, problem solving, and communications skills.*

Shalimar’s Annual Family Math and Science Night encourages students and their families to explore math and science concepts through a series of fun and challenging activities. Parents and students travel through the cafeteria and media center, earning a stamp in their “Passports” for each hands-on math puzzle—leveled appropriately for each grade—they complete. The participatory science lab is open all evening so families can stop in and try their hand at an experiment. Science fair projects inform and entertain parents and students as they broaden their experiences with these integral subjects.

Grade Levels: K-5  
Budget: \$450  
Parents Served: 1,000  
Students: 575



## **ESCAMBIA**

### **Dream Flag Ceremony**

Ferry Pass Middle School  
8355 Yancey Avenue  
Pensacola, Florida 32514

Program Contact: Tara Noble  
Phone: 850-494-5650

**Mission:** *To bring students, parents, teachers, school staff, and community together to take part in a national project titled "Dream Flags."*

The Dream Flag Project, an international poetry/art/community connection project for students of all ages, combines the dream poetry of Langston Hughes with the tradition of Nepalese prayer flags. Project activities begin on February 1st, Langston Hughes' birthday, and run through National Poetry Month in April. Ferry Pass Middle has the largest Dream Flag program of any school outside of Philadelphia, where the program began.

During the project, students learn about Langston Hughes and the Harlem Renaissance in their classes and then write their own "Dream Poems" which are inspired by Hughes' poetry. The students also create original artwork to illustrate the poems they have written. The poetry and artwork are displayed on flags created by each student.

For the Dream Flag Ceremony all the student flags are displayed throughout the school's courtyard for the students, faculty, and community to view and admire. During grade-level ceremonies, student poets read their original poetry, the chorus and band perform songs based on the poetry of Langston Hughes, and a Spoken Word Poet presents a poem written for and dedicated to the students. In addition to students and faculty, these ceremonies are attended by parents, district administrators, and community members. Additionally, events of the day are covered by local media.

Dream Flag festivities continue into the evening in an event designed to celebrate student work in all areas of the curriculum, as projects in science, history, math and technology are displayed. The PTSA and community partners provide dinner for students, their siblings, and parents who enjoy an extension to the celebration of the students' multicultural and academic success.

Grade Levels: 6-8

Budget: \$1,365

Parents Served: 400

Students: 950

**BAY**  
**RHS-RAMS Outreach Program**

Rutherford High School  
1000 School Avenue  
Panama City, Florida 32401

Program Contact: Vera Banks  
Phone: 850-872-4500

**Mission:** *To increase parent, student, and community participation within the school.*

The RAMS Outreach Program strives to foster a positive relationship between Rutherford High School and the surrounding community by providing information about the school's many programs. This outreach enables the school to recruit students from every feeder school in the community, offering invaluable facts and counsel about the many academic, extra-curricular, athletic, and artistic opportunities, as well as the technology, health career, and scholarly programs offered at the school. In addition, RHS representatives reach out through community service. This year, students, parents, and staff collectively logged more than 32,000 hours volunteering as mentors, assistants, and student-teachers in elementary feeder schools, and by working with organizations like the American Cancer Society, Habitat for Humanity, and the Boys and Girls Club.

Grade Levels: 9-12  
Budget: \$200  
Parents Served: 742  
Students: 1,378

**LEON**  
**Grandfriends' Day**

Raa Middle School  
401 West Tharpe Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32303

Program Contact: Sha Maddax  
Phone: 850-488-6287

**Mission:** *To involve grandparents and other special senior friends of Raa students in our school.*

Grandfriends' Day draws more than 100 grandparents and senior friends to Raa Middle School each year. To kick-start the event, student hosts enjoy a breakfast buffet, provided by parent volunteers, with their grandfriends before taking them on a tour of the school. The many performances by student groups—including the steel drum band, drama club, piano and guitar students, dancers, and various choirs and instrumental ensembles—are the highlight of the day. The grandfriends find their students' talents delightful! The principal always invites the honored guests to visit the school any time they wish, and provides concrete ways they can attend performances, purchase tickets, and volunteer.

Grade Levels: 6-8  
Budget: \$200  
Parents Served: 100 grandfriends  
Students: 150

## **OKALOOSA**

### **Annual Falcon Festival**

Lewis School

281 Mississippi Avenue

Valparaiso, Florida 32580

Program Contact: Andrea Hill

Phone: 850-833-4130

**Mission:** *To provide family fun and community service to our newly created K-8 students and the neighboring Air Force Base.*

In 2009, the community around Lewis Middle and Valparaiso Elementary decided to combine the schools' declining populations into one K-8 institution. The community's divided sentiments called for an exciting opportunity to bring everyone together to support the new endeavor, so the PTA organized the first annual Falcon Festival. The festival features Army Rangers and their training snakes from nearby Eglin Air Force Base, jumping houses, as well as a hay ride, cake walk, silent auction, fishing booth, ring toss, and dunking booth complete with a soggy school principal. The end result was a fun, lucrative event which not only renewed the community's bonds, but added new layers of support from local restaurants, business owners, and military personnel.

Grade Levels: K-8

Budget: \$1,260

Parents Served: 300

Students: 600



## TAYLOR

### **Volunteers in Public Schools (VIPS)**

Taylor County Elementary School  
1600 East Green Street  
Perry, Florida 32347

Program Contact: Shelly Strickland  
Phone: 850-838-2530

**Mission:** *To create an environment that welcomes and encourages those who wish to volunteer in the elementary school.*

The primary mission of the Volunteers in Public Schools (VIPS) is to push the boundaries of traditional parent-teacher collaboration in the school community. In the spirit of "It Takes a Village to Raise a Child," VIPS strives to include and train all who help students achieve success, including parents, grandparents, caregivers, neighbors, teachers, school staff, and community partners.

VIPS' most essential component is the action plan for the school year: at the outset of the year, VIPS plans most of its events, outlines fundraising opportunities, and enlists volunteers to lead each project. In addition, VIPS advertises as many of these activities as possible in a brochure which is widely distributed in the community. This allows partners to plan for, volunteer with, and participate in activities throughout the year.

All of VIPS' initiatives and projects support the School Improvement Plan and the district-wide Positive Behavior Support programs in place. Most notable among the many academically oriented programs are the Accelerated Reader Store (at which students can trade AR points they have earned for gifts and prizes), the school-wide Writing and Science Fairs, and storytelling at Family Fun Nights. VIPS also sponsors luncheons for parents and students with perfect attendance and/or excellent citizenship, teacher and staff celebrations, and character education word of the month activities and rewards. VIPS' dedication to recruiting and training new volunteers increases the number of participating stakeholders in student success. Furthermore, their innovative and meticulously planned approach to connecting stakeholders to the school positively impacts student learning and school improvement.

Grade Levels: 3-5  
Budget: \$4,000-6,000  
Parents Served: All  
Students: 668

## CITRUS

### **Bed Time Stories**

Central Ridge Elementary School  
185 West Citrus Springs Boulevard  
Citrus Springs, Florida 34434

Program Contact: Marsha Phillips  
Phone: 352-344-3833

**Mission:** *To involve students, parents, grandparents and the community in a highly engaging experience of read-aloud practice through modeling, motivation, and book choice.*

Bed Time Stories, an imaginative evening of storytelling and reading strategies, entertains students and teaches parents about concrete ways to help their children become better readers. Teachers dress up as characters from a book, enthusiastically reading the story while modeling active reading techniques, such as making predictions and inferences. Families are encouraged to participate in this read-aloud, learning how to reenact the roles of reader and audience at home. The night concludes with ice cream sundaes and free, leveled books that students can take home and read with their families.

Grade Levels: PreK-5

Budget: \$0

Parents Served: 125

Students: 175



## COLUMBIA

### **Family Reading Nights**

Eastside Elementary School  
256 SE Beech Street  
Lake City, Florida 32025

Program Contact: Andrea Cox  
Phone: 386-755-8220

**Mission:** *To provide parents and guardians with time to read and take Accelerated Reader tests with their children.*

The twice-monthly Family Reading Nights open the media center so parents can help their children do homework, research, read A.R. books, and access the materials on hand in the library. Families with more kids than parents receive help from paraprofessionals so a child is always paired with an adult reader. The evening ends with giveaways and coupons provided by local business partners. The wild success of this program has led the school to schedule other parental involvement functions on the same night in order to increase participation in these events as well. In addition, more students achieve their A.R. goals each year the program operates.

Grade Levels: PreK-5

Budget: \$0

Parents Served: 109

Students: 126

## **DUVAL**

### **FCAT Nights with Publix**

Loretto Elementary School  
3900 Loretto Road  
Jacksonville, Florida 32223

Program Contact: Sharon Miller  
Phone: 904-260-5800

**Mission:** *To integrate reading and math skills into real life situations.*

This year, Loretto Elementary set improving their students' math FCAT scores as a top priority. In order to encourage the entire school community—faculty, students, and families—to buy into the goal, the school created FCAT Nights with Publix. On these three evenings, students receive a packet of word problems that require them to follow a map of the store, find the real-world information necessary to complete the mathematical challenges, and solve them using age-appropriate math skills. After finishing their packets, students find the “checkout counter,” where they earn a prize donated by Publix.

Grade Levels: 3-5  
Budget: \$0  
Parents Served: 350  
Students: 500



## **NASSAU**

### **T.E.A.M. Success Needs You!**

Callahan Elementary School  
449618 US Highway 301  
Callahan, Florida 32011

Program Contact: Abbyjane Kimbrel  
Phone: 904-879-2121

**Mission:** *To promote student success within the home and build educational partnerships.*

T.E.A.M. Success Needs You is a decathlon of academic proportions! This educational evening encourages students to use their academic skills in fun and exciting ways, while teaching parents specific games to play and strategies to use at home with their children. The event takes place in the transformed school cafeteria, now an athletic arena complete with a number of sporty stations involving reading, writing, vocabulary, and math. For example, students roll dice and count the totals in a “Race to the Endzone.” “Grand Slam Writing” helps older students write complete paragraphs. At the “Kick a Fluency Goal” center, students read passages aloud for one minute while parents time them and learn how to test their child’s fluency at home. After a night of fun, families leave with concrete ways to encourage their students’ academic growth when they return home.

Grade Levels: K-2  
Budget: \$1,300  
Parents Served: 254  
Students: 287

**ST. JOHNS**

**TEAM Durbin—Healthy Body, Healthy Mind!**

Durbin Creek Elementary School  
4100 Race Track Road  
St. Johns, Florida 32259

Program Contact: Reisha Rust  
Phone: 904-547-3880

**Mission:** *To get kids excited about fitness and challenge them to work their minds and bodies.*

Inspired by the NFL’s Play 60 campaign, this football-themed program gets the entire school rarin’ for reading, excited about exercise, and mad for math. A pep rally kicks off the year’s festivities and challenges, including grade level Capture the Flag (for the top Accelerated Reader class) and Capture the Trophy (for the top Accelerated Math class) competitions. In addition, students learn about healthy eating and lifestyles. “Tailgating Durbin Style” brings families together for an evening of fun-filled, family exercise including funny bike races, obstacle courses, ball throwing challenges, and Zumba lessons. Students are encouraged to play for an hour each day, whether during recess at school, in sports practice out of school, or through less-structured play like those wacky games demonstrated at the tailgate.

Grade Levels: K-5  
Budget: \$1,000  
Parents Served: 300  
Students: 800



## **DUVAL**

### **Mentoring Mondays**

Mandarin High School  
4831 Greenland Road  
Jacksonville, Florida 32258

Program Contact: Cynthia Grissett  
Phone: 904-260-3911 x1022

**Mission:** *To increase the percentage of students making learning gains in reading, and to prepare students to make rational, informed decisions as they enter adulthood and become lifelong learners.*

Mentoring Mondays make a difference. This mentoring program was collectively designed by parents, student volunteers, school staff, and community members to encourage academic and personal growth in students who performed in the bottom 25% of the FCAT Reading test.

The program's focus is three-fold: mentoring, preparing for standardized tests, and building character. During monthly breakfast meetings students and mentors discuss community service opportunities and experiences, identify the value of college entrance exams like the SAT, ACT and CPT, and practice test-taking skills and scenarios for these exams as well as for the FCAT. In addition, each month's mentor-mentee conversation is crafted around Stephen Covey's 7 Habits of Highly-Effective Teens. The relationships formed, topics discussed, and skills practiced help students make significant gains on FCAT reading scores as well as on students' investment in education and their future prospects.

Grade Levels: 9-11  
Budget: less than \$400  
Parents Served: 16  
Students: 16

## **CITRUS**

### **Box Tops and Labels for Education**

CREST School

2600 South Panther Pride Drive

Lecanto, Florida 34461

Program Contact: Susan Castorina

Phone: 352-527-0303

**Mission:** *To support positive behavior incentives.*

This program maximizes the benefits of corporate-sponsored education initiatives, namely Box Tops for Education and Campbell's Labels for Education. Volunteers set up collection sites at CREST, partner businesses, and organization sites, and also encourage parents to take collection boxes to their workplaces. One parent combs the internet to find various related offers, such as sponsors who double the amount of labels, and regularly updates and requests additional resources from friends online. Through this program, thousands of labels and box tops have been converted to hundreds of dollars to fund the school advisory council.

Grade Levels: PreK-12

Budget: \$0

Parents Served: 180 families

Students: 180



## **ST. JOHNS**

### **Fall Family Night**

Landrum Middle School

230 Landrum Lane

Ponte Vedra, Florida 32082

Program Contact: Dana Chapman

Phone: 904-547-8410

**Mission:** *To encourage family, student, and community involvement.*

Family Fall Night draws students and families together for dinner and an evening of fun. Community and business partners sponsor the food and donate baskets and cakes to be raffled off later in the evening. The gym is transformed into a dynamic game center where students run through an inflatable obstacle course or play a number of games, including Minute to Win It, miniature golf, ring toss, and basketball shoot-out. After winning tickets at the games, students can trade them in for prizes at the popular tiki hut. Parents peruse the school's book fair and lurk around the "Perking Lot"—a coffee bar for parents and sponsors—when they aren't shopping, playing, or helping the event run smoothly.

Grade Levels: 6-8

Budget: \$1,750

Parents Served: 125

Students: 335

**BREVARD****Jupiter Homework Night**

Jupiter Elementary School  
950 Tupelo Road, SW  
Palm Bay, Florida 32908

Program Contact: Laura Canup  
Phone: 321-952-5990

**Mission:** *To work cooperatively with our community to nurture each child's potential by providing families the tools and support needed to create a study area at home.*

When Jupiter Elementary's PTO and School Advisory Committee noticed that limited access to transportation prevented families who lived in the Madalyn Landing apartment complex from participating in evening family events at the school, they collaborated to initiate Jupiter Homework Night, an onsite workshop to help parents support their students' schoolwork while at home. This parent training brings school faculty and staff, including bilingual interpreters, to parents and students and works in conjunction with school-based programs in reading, math, writing, and science to foster parent-to-school connections and to help students achieve academic success. The evening begins with a pizza dinner to attract families and provide an informal time to get to know school faculty and staff. Then, school staff identifies the importance of student learning at home and possible family roles in supporting their child(ren)'s development. Homework Night primarily focuses on building a Special Study Area (SSA) in the home. Families make and take a portable SSA from supplies purchased through Title I and donations from the Palm Bay Police Department, including glue, tape, colored pencils, pens, erasers, pencil sharpeners, crayons, markers, post-its, index cards, highlighters, rulers, notebook paper, graph paper, binders, and dictionary/thesauruses.

Not only do the evening's activities strengthen the connection between parents and the school, parents feel more confident helping their children at home. This collaboration among student, family, and school contributes to greater student success.

Grade Levels: PreK-12  
Budget: \$485  
Parents Served: 30  
Students: 50

## **LAKE**

### **GRIP Room Parent Resource Center**

Sawgrass Bay Elementary School  
16325 Superior Boulevard  
Clermont, Florida 34714

Program Contact: Dolores Compean  
Phone: 352-243-1845

**Mission:** *To educate, support, and provide advocacy for families with students in our school.*

The GRIP (Giving Real Ideas to Parents) Room Parent Resource Center provides educational games, books, and electronic devices, manipulatives, and hands-on kits for students to take home in order to reach grade-level standards. The GRIP room provides Spanish-language translation, conducts weekly English classes, and encourages strong parenting through instructional resources like books and videos. Parents, teachers, and staff all have input regarding what is purchased for the center and what events would be most beneficial for the school community. To help students learn a particular skill or concept, teachers can write prescriptions for resources in the GRIP room which the child can check out and use at home to master standards.

Grade Levels: PreK-5  
Budget: \$11,000  
Parents Served: 250  
Students: 300



## **MARTIN**

### **Panther Book Club**

Palm City Elementary School  
1951 SW 34th Street  
Palm City, Florida 34990

Program Contact: Lori Salmon  
Phone: 772-219-1565

**Mission:** *To develop and encourage family and community participation in every child's education.*

The Panther Book Club encourages students to share their reading experiences with family and community members. The club provides four fun and challenging books to participating students each year. Students are encouraged to take each text home and read it with parents, siblings, extended family members, even neighbors. A few weeks later, everyone who has participated gathers at the school for an entertaining evening of book-related competitions, skill challenges, and activities. The Panther Book Club strengthens community and family bonds, emphasizes the importance of literacy, and hopes to set a pattern for families to follow long after they have left Palm City Elementary.

Grade Levels: PreK-5  
Budget: \$300  
Parents Served: 36  
Students: 18

## **ORANGE**

### **Family Math in Your Neighborhood**

Waterbridge Elementary School  
11100 Galvin Drive  
Orlando, Florida 32837

Program Contact: Jessica Steelman  
Phone: 407-858-3190

**Mission:** *To engage parents in the role of teacher and supporter of academic knowledge acquisition.*

During Family Math in Your Neighborhood, students and their families navigate Publix, a local community partner, to solve real world math problems based on grade level benchmarks. Students and parents must interact with other families, community members, and Publix staff in order to answer all the questions correctly. After completing their math problems, students return their form to the check in table to enter a prize raffle. The event is an annual success as parents appreciate the fun and practicality of teaching their children about everyday math.

Grade Levels: K-5  
Budget: In kind  
Parents Served: 80 families  
Students: 80



## **OSCEOLA**

### **Reading Under the Stars**

Lakeview Elementary School  
2900 5th Street  
St. Cloud, Florida 34769

Program Contact: Janice Mogensen  
Phone: 407-891-3220

**Mission:** *To encourage parents to use classroom strategies to help their children with reading.*

Reading Under the Stars, a night of reading strategies and entertainment, kicks off a year-long celebration of reading at Lakeview Elementary. The initial evening brings families to school where they watch staff members dramatize a story, listen to celebrity readers, read by flashlight as tiny lights mimic the stars in the sky, and meet book characters in full costume. In a monthly program during the school year, teachers read books at the complex's daycare while students create a corresponding arts and crafts project. During the summer, the school sponsors a book exchange at the two apartment complexes where students are encouraged to stop by and trade in books they've read for new ones.

Grade Levels: K-5  
Budget: \$5,000  
Parents Served: 155  
Students: 280

## **SEMINOLE**

### **All-Pro Dads at Keeth Elementary**

Keeth Elementary School  
425 Tuskavilla Road  
Winter Springs, Florida 32708

Program Contact: Mike Akerson & Craig Ancel  
Phone: 407-320-5350

**Mission:** *To encourage dads to be involved in school-wide activities.*

Keeth Elementary's All-Pro Dads is a chapter of the national program started by former NFL football coach Tony Dungy. Four times a year, dads attend a breakfast at school with their children. During the morning's program, dads and kids talk about an assigned topic, such as bullying, motivation, integrity, or hope. After breakfast and discussion, the All-Pro Dads coordinators discuss the theme for the day, such as the power of encouragement, watch related videos and talk about their contents. According to school climate surveys, this program has made parents—especially dads—feel more welcome and more encouraged to participate in school activities than ever before.

Grade Levels: K-5  
Budget: \$300  
Parents Served: 125  
Students: 125



## **ST. LUCIE**

### **Student Led Conferences**

Windmill Point Elementary  
700 SW Darwin Boulevard  
Port St. Lucie, Florida 34953

Program Contact: Traci Wilke  
Phone: 772-336-6960

**Mission:** *To enhance family involvement by ensuring academic excellence, and by preparing students for life, through the fostering of self-confidence, instilling responsibility, and developing leadership skills.*

Rather than implement traditional parent-teacher conferences, the semi-annual Student Led Conferences at Windmill Point Elementary remove barriers and focus on student learning and communication. Since students are at the center of this process, each child creates a personal data binder with help from their teacher. These binders—containing mission statements, progress monitoring charts, work samples, and academic, personal, and behavior goals—are updated regularly. Before each Student Led Conference, students write personal cards inviting their parents. At the conference, students share their binders with family members, confidently showing the adults their goals and accomplishments. Through this initiative, students become motivated and empowered by their successes and seek to achieve more.

Grade Levels: K-5  
Budget: \$3,000  
Parents Served: 890 families  
Students: 890

**VOLUSIA**

**Family Astronomy Night**

Westside Elementary School  
1210 Jimmy Ann Drive  
Daytona Beach, Florida 32117

Program Contact: Judith Watson  
Phone: 386-274-3400

**Mission:** *To increase parental involvement by providing high quality, inviting activities that both family and staff will learn from.*

The PTA at Westside Elementary realizes that on their own, families cannot always offer the experiences that provide students with the background knowledge necessary to comprehend informational text at higher levels of complexity. Family Astronomy Night attempts to bring these experiences to Westside’s students through fun, interactive activities related to earth and space science concepts. After a hearty pasta dinner provided by the PTA and business partners, participants are divided among five rotating stations where they learn about seasons and the earth’s rotation, launch and learn about rockets, interact with NASA websites, and star gaze through telescopes provided by Emery-Riddle Aeronautical University’s Astronomy Club.

Grade Levels: K-5  
Budget: \$270  
Parents Served: 74  
Students: 125



## **SEMINOLE**

### **R.I.C.H. Program**

Sanford Middle School  
1700 French Avenue  
Sanford, Florida 32771

Program Contact: Richard Burkett  
Phone: 407-320-6160

**Mission:** *To encourage students to be responsible, have integrity, care, and be honest.*

The R.I.C.H. program is designed to encourage students to make positive choices and embody the mission statement: R=Responsibility, I=Integrity, C=Caring, H=Honesty. Students that perform R.I.C.H. acts (for example, cleaning up after others, holding doors, turning in lost items, being especially kind in class) earn R.I.C.H. bucks, which can be given out by any teacher, administrator, or adult who witnesses a positive act at school. R.I.C.H. bucks can be redeemed for items only available at the PTA's R.I.C.H. store, including snacks, front of the line passes, and Sanford Middle School book bags, pencils, dog tags and folders.

Students with no discipline referrals are also invited to the semi-annual R.I.C.H. carnival. Sponsored by the PTA and organized by community partners as well as school faculty and staff, the carnival rewards R.I.C.H. students with music, games, and food.

Furthermore, each Wednesday students participate in a character building R.I.C.H. activity via a school-wide video that addresses topics such as anti-bullying, civility, courage, honesty, resisting peer pressure and other positive elements of strong character.

This project is largely funded by community restaurant nights throughout the year. Restaurant partners encourage school families to eat with each other at their establishment and return a percentage of the night's proceeds to Sanford. This community and parental support hopes to reduce discipline referrals and to encourage students to enR.I.C.H their lives by being better citizens.

Grade Levels: 6-8  
Budget: \$2,000  
Parents Served: 30  
Students: 1,500

**BREVARD**

**Parent Resource Center**

Cocoa High School  
2000 Tiger Trail  
Cocoa, Florida 32926

Program Contact: Dr. Stephanie Soliven  
Phone: 321-632-5300

**Mission:** *To create a space for parents to gather, collaborate, and support student learning.*

The Parent Resource Center provides a warm, welcoming workspace that concentrates resources—including videos and books on parenting, computers, and information from social services—so parents can take full advantage of them. The center also provides a workspace from which the active parent group can host parent involvement events, including Family Fun Trivia Night, an Effective Communication workshop, Bring Your Parent to School Days, and Insurance Night. Thanks to these events and the community partners who help sponsor them, the resource center recorded more than 16,000 volunteer hours by the spring semester, a powerful increase in parent involvement at the high school.

Grade Levels: 9-12  
Budget: \$3,000  
Parents Served: 100  
Students: Over 100

**ST. LUCIE**

**Loving Literacy Through Living History**

Northport K-8 School  
250 NW Floresta Drive  
Port St. Lucie, Florida 34983

Program Contact: Lynne Gruszka  
Phone: 772-340-4750

**Mission:** *To provide an innovative program for students to promote literacy, patriotism, and collaboration between students, families, and the community.*

By introducing students to veteran and current members of the armed forces, Loving Literacy Through Living History strengthens literacy skills through practical, patriotic means. Students strengthen listening, interviewing, and speaking skills by organizing an annual memorial to the children who died on 9/11. Collectively, the students sponsor a local Marine hero, sending cards and care packages while learning about the Marine Corps through videos, books, and guest speakers. In addition, local military personnel, a gold star mother, and community veterans—many of whom are family members of children who attend Northport School—teach living history lessons through their stories and experiences. This program enriches student academic performance while connecting them to their community and teaching invaluable lessons about citizenship.

Grade Levels: K-8  
Budget: \$0  
Parents Served: 75  
Students: 1,283

**VOLUSIA**

**Literacy Festival**

Creekside Middle School  
6801 Airport Road  
Port Orange, Florida 32128

Program Contact: Diane Coleman  
Phone: 386-304-5500

**Mission:** *To engage students in all kinds of literacy.*

An evening of diverse, hands-on literary experiences awaits parents and students at Creekside Middle's Literacy Festival. Together, families navigate a series of stations: they listen to stories about the community's black heritage, write their own "I Have a Dream" speeches, read favorite poems, trade novels, hear personal narratives in both English and native tongues, face off in a round of Presidential Jeopardy, and get into character and perform readers' theater on the school stage. This exciting, academic festival gives many students a chance to shine in front of their parents and the school community for the first time.

Grade Levels: 6-8  
Budget: \$0  
Parents Served: 252  
Students: 238



## **HERNANDO**

### **Family Share Night**

Explorer K-8

10252 Northcliffe Boulevard

Spring Hill, Florida 34608

Program Contact: Jennifer Reid

Phone: 352-797-7094

**Mission:** *To enrich the Explorer K-8 community by helping school families who are less fortunate.*

After observing that some students and their families did not have enough warm clothes this winter, Explorer's PTSA and SAC formed Family Share Night—an opportunity to outfit those in need. In addition to serving the school's disadvantaged families, Family Share Night informs students, staff and the community about the important benefits of helping others in need, promotes family involvement and awareness, and increases literacy within the school community.

The evening includes a low-cost spaghetti dinner for families and the opportunity to “shop” for no-cost, unlimited clothing. Shoes, clothes and outerwear are collected through a school-wide drive the previous month, and sorted, folded and arranged by student volunteers days before the event.

Another important aspect of the night is the “Give a book – Get a book” swap. Families are encouraged to bring previously read books and exchange them for new books to enjoy. This component encourages the importance of literacy and provides a no-cost way to renew family libraries and student interest in reading.

Parents can also meet with Career Central Counselors during the evening, and can actively and easily seek employment by submitting applications on laptops before the night is over. The program's success has inspired Explorer K-8 to repeat the event in years to come.

Grade Levels: K-8

Budget: \$0

Parents Served: 50

Students: 150

## **COLLIER**

### **Celebrate Literacy at Lake Park**

Lake Park Elementary School  
1295 14th Avenue, North  
Naples, Florida 34102

Program Contact: Suzanne Clarke  
Phone: 239-377-7200

**Mission:** *To create a collaborative learning community that inspires success for every student, every day.*

Celebrate Literacy at Lake Park features a number of events that gathers parents and families of students at the school to enjoy literature and reading. A core team of parents serve as Junior Great Books Leaders, meeting with students on a weekly basis and leading them in book discussions. During two Family Reading Nights, students share (at least!) one book with their families and take computer-generated comprehension tests to score Accelerated Reader points. Students lead parent-teacher conferences, sharing their test data, progress monitoring, and goal setting. The program culminates in Reading Renaissance Day, where students play outside and redeem AR points for popcorn, snow cones, lemonade, books, and other treasures.

Grade Levels: K-5  
Budget: \$1,500  
Parents Served: 500  
Students: 542



## **HILLSBOROUGH**

### **Munchie Math Night**

Hugo Schmidt Elementary  
1250 Williams Road  
Brandon, Florida 33510

Program Contact: Angelette Green-Lewis  
Phone: 813-651-2110

**Mission:** *To make a real world connection to math skills learned in the classroom, and to involve parents and the community in increasing student achievement.*

Munchie Math Night draws students in pre-kindergarten through 5th grade to a local Publix in order to encounter and solve math problems with their families, earning goodies along the way. Upon arrival, students receive grade-appropriate questions they must answer by scouring the grocery store. Parents and other community members eagerly help students solve the puzzles, often finding that the students are math experts! Once they complete their mathematical scavenger hunt, students exchange their work for a bag full of school supplies, coupons, popcorn, and cookies. Since shopping in a grocery store is part of everyday life and everyday math, students do not quickly forget this experience and its lessons.

Grade Levels: PreK-5  
Budget: \$400  
Parents Served: 250  
Students: 250

## LEE

### **All Pro Dads/IMOM Dinner**

G. Weaver Hipps Elementary School  
1200 Homestead Road, North  
Lehigh Acres, Florida 33936

Program Contact: Matthew Ziemer  
Phone: 239-368-7042

**Mission:** *To facilitate lasting relationships between parents, students, and our school.*

The All Pro Dad/IMOM Dinner allows parents and students to interact with school administrators in a friendly, informal environment. After a free dinner and faculty introductions, parents introduce themselves and their children, giving a reason why they are proud of their sons or daughters. Each All Pro Dad/IMOM Dinner features a discussion topic selected by student feedback, such as perseverance. The discussion is preceded by a short movie about the topic, then families are given a series of questions to keep the conversation flowing. Dinner ends with a challenge for families to spend quality time together—like going to a ball game, doing community service, or taking a trip—and share their experiences at the next All Pro Dad/IMOM dinner.

Grade Levels: PreK-5  
Budget: \$100  
Parents Served: 125  
Students: 125



## PASCO

### **Gator Academy**

Gulf Highlands Elementary School  
8019 Gulf Highlands Drive  
Port Richey, Florida 34668

Program Contact: Dawn Scilex  
Phone: 727-774-7700

**Mission:** *To increase parent involvement with children at home and at school.*

Gator Academy encourages parents to “Be There” for their students by offering parenting workshops and providing incentives for parental attendance at events. The academy helps parents strengthen skills in time management, family budgeting, goal setting, problem solving as a family, and making connections with the school. In addition, the academy sponsors an active parenting class. Each Monday the media center opens early so parents can check out books with their children. A number of communication outlets—including phone calls, emails, and a newsletter—make these opportunities available to parents.

Grade Levels: PreK-5  
Budget: \$800  
Parents Served: 284  
Students: 142

**POLK**

**Take Your Parent to School Night!**

Medulla Elementary School  
850 Schoolhouse Road  
Lakeland, Florida 33811

Program Contact: Heather James  
Phone: 863-648-3515

**Mission:** *To improve FCAT scores and student achievement through parent awareness and parent at-home participation.*

Take Your Parent to School Night teaches parents a number of tips and strategies for helping their children succeed on the FCAT. After sharing a meal provided by a business partner, families rotate through exciting, hands-on curriculum stations leveled by grade. During each 20 minute session, teachers help families conduct science experiments, play math games, share writing and reading strategies, and teach parents the same FCAT tips that their students learn in school. A Spanish-speaking translator makes the event meaningful for the school's ESOL population. Parents are grateful for the explanation of FCAT expectations and the numerous concrete ways to help their children at home.

Grade Levels: 3-5  
Budget: \$2,230  
Parents Served: 177  
Students: 132



## **COLLIER**

### **Get Help Clinic**

Golden Gate Middle School

2701 48th Terrace SW

Naples, Florida 34116

Program Contact: Kathi Schweikhardt

Phone: 239-377-3800

**Mission:** *To provide basic services to students and their families.*

The goal of the Get Help Clinic is to provide basic health and legal services to the 90% of students and families in the Golden Gate Middle School community living below poverty level. The Clinic provides much-needed flu shots, mental health help, legal aid, and dental, hearing, and vision screenings at no cost. Focused on family, the school also encourages the participation of feeder elementary schools as well. Informational flyers in English, Spanish, and Creole are sent home, and the Clinic serves a range of participants from grandparents to infants.

This event is possible through the voluntary efforts and donations of many community partners. In addition to the health and legal services provided, these community organizations also gave out popcorn, snow cones, hot dogs, and Tootsie Rolls at the event, and gathered or donated canned goods, vitamin-enriched rice meals, fresh vegetables, gently-worn jeans, hygiene kits, toothbrushes, and toothpaste for the underprivileged families in attendance. One group even donated 70 handmade quilts. All services and goods are completely free to participating families—more than 600 people in all. This year the Get Help Clinic was such a success that Golden Gate Middle School plans to host two clinics each year.

Grade Levels: 6-8, plus K-5 feeder schools

Budget: \$0

Parents Served: 250+

Students: 450+

## **HERNANDO**

### **Breakfast of Champions**

Dolores S. Parrott Middle School  
19220 Youth Drive  
Brooksville, Florida 33601

Program Contact: Nancy Vasquez  
Phone: 352-797-7075

**Mission:** *To stress the importance of students' hard work in relation to student academic achievement and success.*

Breakfast of Champions, held at the end of each nine weeks, celebrates all students who earned at least a 3.0 GPA for the marking period. By special invitation only, these students and their parents enjoy an entertaining morning of music, socializing, breakfast, learning and door prizes. Not only does this gathering honor the students' hard work and their parents' support, it allows the administration to disseminate important information and interact positively with parents. Since the program's inception, the school has noted a 20% increase in student achievement and attitude as students motivate themselves to earn a quarterly invitation.

Grade Levels: 6-8  
Budget: \$400-\$600 per event  
Parents Served: 175  
Students: 400



## **HILLSBOROUGH**

### **Freshman First Orientation**

Chamberlain High School  
9401 North Boulevard  
Tampa, Florida 33612

Program Contact: Amy MacDonald  
Phone: 813-975-7677

**Mission:** *To allow parents and guardians of incoming Chamberlain freshmen to become familiar with the school and to encourage parent involvement.*

The Freshman First Orientation strives to ease the transition into 9th grade. At the orientation, students receive their schedules, watch a "Do's and Don'ts" fashion show, and meet guidance counselors, teachers and staff. Later, families tour the campus, view club, class, and athletic displays, and enjoy refreshments, games, and the chance to socialize with other almost-freshmen. Students have the opportunity to buy school "gear," have their ID pictures taken, get a locker, and familiarize themselves with the campus and the location of their classrooms. This all-morning orientation also provides the PTSA with a chance to encourage parents to join and stay actively involved with their children's school community.

Grade Levels: 9  
Budget: \$444  
Parents Served: 400  
Students: 400

LEE

**Caloosa Middle School Literacy Nights**

Caloosa Middle School  
610 Del Prado Boulevard, South  
Cape Coral, Florida 33990

Program Contact: Roberta White  
Phone: 239-574-3232

**Mission:** *To involve students and parents in projects together.*

Literacy Nights is a series of events designed to promote reading strategies, foster greater parent involvement, and demonstrate the use of literacy across academic areas. At Mysteries in the Middle, students perform a mystery play which the audience is encouraged to solve using important reading strategies. Seventy-eight teams dash around the school in The Amazing Literacy Race, deciphering clues and solving problems that range from brain teasers to algebraic equations. Science Literacy Night lets families conduct science projects, such as constructing spaghetti towers, creating lava (not wara), and launching straw rockets. During Reading is What's in Fashion, students, teachers, and family members model items donated by Belk, then showcase their favorite books at the end of the runway. Proceeds from a silent auction raise enough funds to cover expenses for all four literacy nights.

Grade Levels: 6-8  
Budget: \$300  
Parents Served: 600  
Students: 889



## **MIAMI DADE**

### **Grandparents as Resources**

Cutler Ridge Elementary/Assurant Satellite Learning Center

20210 Coral Sea Road

Miami, Florida 33157

Program Contact: Norma Sanchez-Zick

Phone: 305-235-4611

**Mission:** *To promote and encourage grandparents as resources and volunteers in classrooms and the school.*

Cutler Ridge Elementary/Assurant Satellite Learning Center has learned how to invest in grandparents as resources for the school community. Beginning with the Grandparents Day Welcome & Brunch each January, the school recruits grandparents to share their time and experience with students. After a delicious meal and welcoming ceremonies, grandparents attend class with their grandchildren and participate in a few special activities prepared by the students. At this event, grandparents can also sign-up for other activities during the year, namely Title I Literacy Day and the Read-in Chain. The Welcome Brunch celebrates the grandparents in attendance, but also inspires greater parental involvement by asking for refreshments, beverages, tableware contributions, and hosts for the guests of honor.

As part of Title I Literacy Day activities, students interview grandparents and share their “old time history” experiences with classmates during social studies time. During the Read-in Chain, Grandparents read their favorite books and tell students stories about their childhoods.

Thanks to the growing participation in the Grandparents as Resources program, a number of influential senior citizens have shared their time and histories with students. Retired judges discussed their experiences during the civil rights movement, Holocaust survivors told their stories, and a Tuskegee Airman eloquently spoke with intermediate students about his time in the service.

Grade Levels: K-5

Budget: Less than \$100

Parents Served: 200

Students: 1,100

## **BROWARD**

### **Linking the Library to Literacy**

North Side Elementary School  
120 NE 11th Street  
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33304

Program Contact: Tia Major  
Phone: 754-322-7450

**Mission:** *To connect parents and families to resources, promote volunteerism, and provide trainings that will empower and motivate them to actively support student achievement as well as family literacy.*

Linking the Library to Literacy provides families with tailored trainings in reading, writing, math, and science. These educational sessions give parents strategies and tips to support their child's academics while at home. The program also connects families to community resources that can assist with educational needs, health, nutrition, and transitions to and from other counties. Through Linking the Library to Literacy, families can build their own at-home libraries. This program has significantly increased parent involvement at the school and engendered a sense of pride and commitment in the parents who attend the literacy trainings. Thanks to this initiative, the school's students have demonstrated greater purpose for learning, better relationships with their parents, and increased academic achievement.

Grade Levels: PreK-5  
Budget: \$4,300  
Parents Served: 150  
Students: 200



## **MONROE**

### **Family Reading Party**

Key Largo School  
104801 Overseas Highway  
Key Largo, Florida 33037

Program Contact: Christine Velizeroff  
Phone: 305-453-1255

**Mission:** *To teach parents simple techniques for reading with their child.*

The Family Reading Party provides reading tips and communication skills to parents of Head Start students. A guided reading workshop teaches parents the skills used at school to help children learn to read, and sets a foundation for parents to effectively work with their children. Since many participating parents are developing their own English proficiency, the program allows them to not only improve their reading skills, but also to get to know each other better and build a support system. This program increases parents' confidence in speaking English and helps parents feel more comfortable when reading with their children—strengths which will hopefully translate over to speaking with a teacher, volunteering in the classroom, and attending school-wide events.

Grade Levels: Head Start  
Budget: \$0  
Parents Served: 19  
Students: 130

**PALM BEACH**

**Scientist & Mathematician of the Month**

Poinciana Elementary Math, Science & Technology Magnet School  
1203 North Seacrest Boulevard  
Boynton Beach, Florida 33435

Program Contact: Gwen Harris  
Phone: 561-739-5700

**Mission:** *To provide an opportunity to reward students for their improvements and efforts in the areas of math and science.*

Each month, the Scientist & Mathematician of the Month program celebrates 60 students and their parents. In order to be a Scientist or Mathematician of the month, students must demonstrate a desire to learn, show good citizenship and ethical behavior, seek accuracy, and have no more than one absence and one tardy for the month. One Scientist and one Mathematician per class are chosen each month and are photographed in their hard-earned lab coat. These pictures are displayed outside the classroom and at the front of the school. Parents and family members volunteer to serve their children during a monthly breakfast and award ceremony sponsored by a collection of business partners.

Grade Levels: K-5  
Budget: \$346 per month  
Parents Served: 535 families  
Students: 535 families



## **BROWARD**

### **Reach-Out Western**

Western High School

1200 SW 136 Avenue

Davie, Florida 33325

Program Contact: Lisa Solovay

Phone: 754-323-2400

**Mission:** *To increase parent involvement and volunteerism in our community.*

The goal of Reach-Out Western is to provide students and families with valuable information and assistance about colleges, scholarships, financial aid, and entrance exams. One important aspect of the Reach-Out program is a 6-week Princeton Review SAT prep class, provided at a reduced rate for more than 300 students. Also, with the help of an extensive email database compiled by the PTSA, Western's BRACE advisor (a district-wide college and scholarship counseling program) sends out bi-monthly scholarship bulletins to students and parents, highlighting upcoming national and local scholarship opportunities. Thanks to this information, Western's scholarship award percentage rate continues to increase as more parents and students receive the email bulletins.

The Reach-Out College Fair provides a unique opportunity to introduce hundreds of students and parents to more than 50 colleges, universities, military academies, and vocational schools nationwide. In addition, a junior class parent/student college night informs participants about scholarship opportunities, application dates and instructions, as well as necessary requirements for preparing for college.

This year, Reach-Out Western has also incorporated a hands-on FAFSA workshop into their programming. A parent meeting prior to the all-day Saturday event prefaces the workshop. On Saturday, financial aid experts help parents and students submit the complicated financial/tax form online.

These activities provide invaluable assistance to students and parents navigating the journey to college and have given hundreds of graduating Western students the opportunity to succeed financially and academically after high school.

Grade Levels: 9-12

Budget: \$0

Parents Served: 6,000+

Students: 3,000+

## **MIAMI-DADE**

### **Edible School Garden/Collaborative Nutrition Initiative**

David Lawrence, Jr. K-8 Center  
15000 Bay Vista Boulevard  
North Miami, Florida 33181

Program Contact: Barbara Hirshorn  
Phone: 305-354-2600

**Mission:** *To combat childhood obesity by encouraging children and families to make healthy food choices.*

To reduce childhood obesity, this program recruits and trains parents to improve food choices for their children. A previous school initiative established an edible garden at the school. Staff soon realized that students are more likely to eat what they grow and decided to capitalize on the garden's success. A series of parent workshops consisting of tastings, cookoffs, and nutritional seminars stemmed from this initiative. Students are included in these workshops as well: for example, trainee chefs from a local culinary arts school present fruits and vegetables to kindergarteners. In addition to helping the school reduce the prevalence of childhood obesity, the garden and its resulting workshops also improve science concept acquisition as students test theoretical concepts in a hands-on environment.

Grade Levels: K-2, 4  
Budget: \$1,500  
Parents Served: 40  
Students: 250



## **PALM BEACH**

### **Welcome to Okeehelée Village Values**

Okeehelée Middle School  
2200 Pinehurst Drive  
Greenacres, Florida 33413

Program Contact: Brina Rubin  
Phone: 561-434-3260

**Mission:** *To orient parents new to the school and maximize involvement.*

Okeehelée Middle operates on three village values: 1) Respect for all, 2) Individual accountability for actions, and 3) Commitment to the larger community. This orientation program introduces these principles and gives new parents an insider view of the school and its organization through a variety of presentations, events, and written communication. A Starter Kit provides new students with rules and regulations, organizational tips, homework and study skills suggestions, a directory, and information about activities and clubs. These resources, among others, encourage parents to get involved in the new school setting and help students make a smooth transition to middle school

Grade Levels: 6-8  
Budget: \$155  
Parents Served: 1,343 families  
Students: 1,343 families



For information on participating in the Parent Involvement Awards,  
please contact your school district's  
volunteer/community involvement department or the

Florida Department of Education  
Bureau of Family and Community Outreach  
325 West Gaines Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400  
Telephone: 850-245-0847



blank  
inside back cover



**Florida Department of Education**  
**[www.fldoe.org](http://www.fldoe.org)**

**This document was prepared by the  
Bureau of Family and Community Outreach  
325 West Gaines Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400  
850-245-0847**

**September, 2011**

