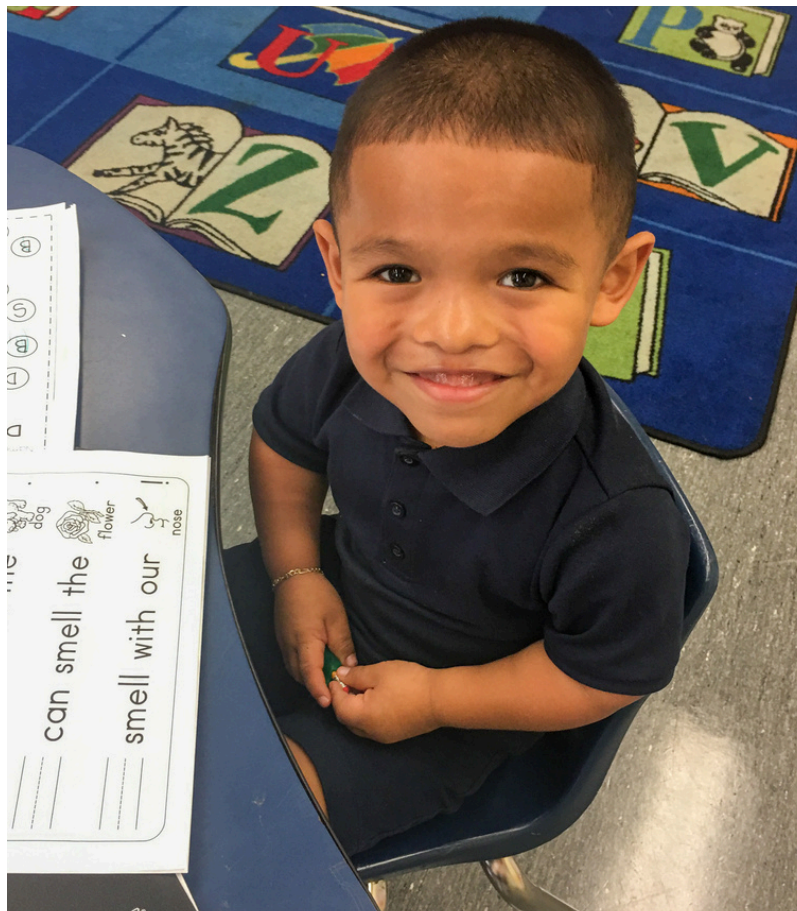
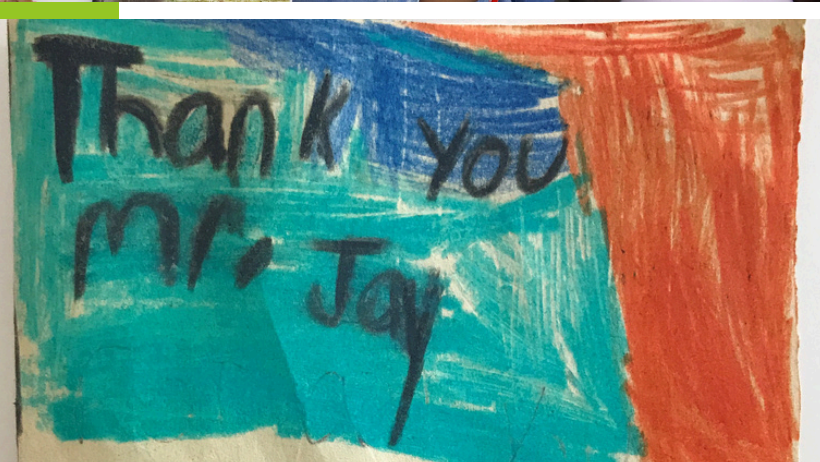


TRANSFORMING TEACHERS TO GROW GREAT READERS





Dear Miss Debbie
you are nice
you are funny
we thank for helping us.
you are the best
Thank for helping us stay out
the world. You are the best
we are going to miss you so much
from Kmartville





CONTENTS

RIVIERA BEACH LITERACY PROJECT

1 - 2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

8 - 9 THE NEXT CHAPTER

3 HISTORY

10 BUDGET

4 IMPACT

11 RESOURCES

5 CORE COMPONENTS

6 STUDENT PROGRESS

7 BARRIERS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THANK YOU

The Riviera Beach Literacy Project (RBLP) has been embraced by the community for 12 years, marking a milestone worth celebrating. We want to recognize the residents who have contributed as committee members, classroom readers, and pen pals – many of whom have served in all roles!

SUPPORTERS

Anonymous	Fiona and Stan Druckenmiller	Martha and Bart McDade
Ellen and Hank Baer	Susie Fruehauf	Molly and Tim Neher
Jamie Baxter	Anita and Steve Gilbert	Marge and Phil Odeen
Marjorie and Walter Buckley	Ann Grimm	Jane and Victor Oristano
Barbara and Tom Cleveland	John Keegan	Peggy Wolff and Chuck Prince
Sue and Bill Conaty	Nancy and Carl Kreidler	Barbara Rafferty
Dee and Kevin Conway	Elaine and Ken Langone	Jill and Alan Rappaport

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Hank Baer, Chair	Debbie Daberko	Liz Hoak
Carroll Bennett, Chair	Phyllis Dirkes	Judy Horrigan
Sue Conaty, Chair	Mitzi Friedheim	Carl Kreidler
Laura Aziz	Ann Grimm	Diane Maglaris
Sharie Broadhead	Elin Harris	Ellin Miller

CLASSROOM READERS AND/OR PEN PALS

Brenda Armstrong	Cathy Finn	Pat Lentz	Ann Quick
Laura Aziz	Sandy Fredericks	Janet Lewis	Susan Rein
Ellen Baer	Mitzi Freidheim	Diane Maglaris	Scott Rogers
Mary Barnett	Anita Gilbert	Hank Manley	Susie Sebastian
Jamie Baxter	Pam Goergen	Rene Marron	Maggie Squires
Janet Beach	Pat Golding	Nancy Martin	Bonnie Stapleton
Carroll Bennett	Sheldon Gordon	Kathy Maycen	Debbie Stapleton
Jim Bennett	Ann Grimm	Anne McLeod	Dorothy Stapleton
David Bornhoeft	Liz Hoak	Tina Mikkelsen	Mildred Syron
Sharie Broadhead	Nicole Hynes	Ellin Miller	Suzanne Thompson
Joyce Calcagnini	Tom Kane	Shauna Montgomery	Liz Tory
Ruth Chiapparone	Catherine Kaneb	Dick Mullaney	Lee Tregurtha
Bill Conaty	Elin Harris	Charlotte Nau	Linda Tullis
Sue Conaty	Anne Harrison	Denise O'Hearn	Jay Twyman
David Daberko	Loretta Kenny	John O'Neill	Marion Twyman
Debbie Daberko	Steve Kirmse	Phyllis Palmer	Cathy Walsh
Phyllis Dirkes	Carl Kreidler	Jane Perkins	Jeff Walsh
Penny Edison	Nancy Kreidler	Betty Perry	Marie Weigl
Anne Ellis	Jack Lentz	Ro Poden	Marilyn Whims

WRITING A STORY OF LASTING CHANGE

THANK YOU

As part of this review process, we also wish to thank and recognize the following for their time, input, and expertise:

Michael Burke, Superintendent
School District of Palm Beach County

Danita DeHaney, PhD, CEO
Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties

Louise Grant, Former Executive Director
Mary and Robert Pew Public Education Fund

Holly Lane, PhD, Director
Literacy Institute, University of Florida

Lisa Liriano, Program Manager, Riviera Beach Literacy Project
School District of Palm Beach County

Camille Long, PhD, Regional Superintendent, North Region
School District of Palm Beach County

Keith Oswald, Chief of Equity and Wellness
School District of Palm Beach County

Stephanie and John Pew
Mary and Robert Pew Public Education Fund

Phil Poekert, PhD, Center Director
Lastinger Center for Learning, University of Florida

Kirsten Russell, Vice President of Community Impact
Community Foundation of Sarasota County

Tim Sass, Department of Economics
Georgia State University

Lisa Williams-Taylor, PhD, CEO
Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County

Kate Wolters
Mary and Robert Pew Public Education Fund

"This project demonstrates the progress that can be made in a relatively short amount of time when you get a team of professionals and committed donors who want to provide a first-class education to children in every school."

Elin Harris



TRANSFORMING TEACHERS TO GROW GREAT READERS

HISTORY

The Riviera Beach Literacy Project was initiated in 2012 with a grant from an **anonymous Lost Tree family** that wanted to help improve literacy in the nearby Riviera Beach community. Twenty additional Lost Tree families joined the cause.

Transforming Teachers to Grow Great Readers is based on two key research findings¹- the most important predictor of success for students is the strength and quality of the classroom teacher, and if a child is not proficient in reading by third grade, s/he will spend the rest of his/her education trying to reach proficiency. Considering these known factors for educational success, the focus of this Project is on the development of the pedagogy of the teachers to ensure quality instruction for the students in the Riviera Beach public elementary schools.

The original committee, led by **Hank Baer**, researched a variety of options for addressing literacy and decided to hire five Reading Specialists to work with teachers and administrators to increase reading and comprehension competency for the students. Resources such as classroom libraries and professional development for the teachers have all contributed to enriching the quality of instruction. To complement this important work, Lost Tree residents have volunteered as Classroom Readers and Pen Pals to augment and reinforce the efforts of the Reading Specialists.

(¹) A list of resources can be found on page 11

RIVIERA BEACH LITERACY PROJECT

IMPACT

The research is unequivocal.

Reading proficiency by third grade is one of the most significant predictors of future academic success.

Studies have shown that children who are not reading at grade level by the end of third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school than their peers who are proficient readers. This finding is not just an isolated statistic; it reflects a growing body of evidence that underscores the importance of early literacy.

Further evidence shows that teacher quality is the most important in-school factor in a child's academic success. High-quality, well-supported teachers make a significant difference in how well students learn to read. RBLP leverages this research, providing teachers with ongoing professional development, coaching, and resources to improve their literacy instruction. These efforts have resulted in measurable gains. By focusing on teacher professional development, we are ensuring that K-3 educators are equipped with the evidence-based strategies they need to teach reading effectively.

This focus on teacher expertise has led to significant outcomes: students in our program consistently show growth that exceeds the District's overall performance, even in schools with similar demographics. Evaluations conducted in 2018 and 2024 have continued to confirm these results.



RIVIERA BEACH LITERACY PROJECT

CORE PROJECT COMPONENTS

READING SPECIALISTS

- The Project funds five full-time, year-round School District employees — a Program Manager and four Reading Specialists. They support teachers through one-on-one coaching, lesson planning assistance, and direct student engagement while monitoring classroom progress. Beyond their core duties, they go the extra mile to enhance teacher and student success.
- LTF funding covers salaries, benefits, and annual bonuses for these positions. Additionally, the team designs and runs the summer reading and book programs, ensuring students have access to literacy support year-round.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- At the Project's outset, the Foundation funded all professional development programs provided by Teachers College (TC) from Columbia University to the Riviera Beach schools.
- Several years ago, the School District transitioned from Teachers College to the University of Florida's Lastinger Center for professional development and curriculum support. With UF securing state funding for these services, LTF resources were no longer required for this aspect of the Project.

CLASSROOM LIBRARIES

- Initially, the grant funded classroom libraries for every classroom in the Project. Each year, additional funding has supported summer reading books for students to take home, as well as replacements for worn or lost books.

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

- At the Project's launch, LTF's Legacy Society funded the furnishing and stocking of the Riviera Beach Literacy Resource Center, now the Riviera Beach Family Resource Center. Located at JFK Middle School, it serves as a home base for staff and a hub of resources for teachers and families.

CLASSROOM READERS

- Since the Project's inception, Village volunteers have dedicated an hour per week each spring to reading with students, with participation sometimes exceeding 40 volunteers.
- In response to heightened school security and COVID safety measures, a Pen Pal program was introduced, providing residents new ways to connect while helping students strengthen their writing skills.

A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR LIFELONG ACHIEVEMENT

STUDENT PROGRESS

The core intent of the Riviera Beach Literacy Project is to enhance teacher effectiveness, ultimately providing students with better opportunities to succeed. While tracking data has been challenging due to the factors mentioned earlier, the data we do have consistently shows that **students thrive while in the program.**

Moreover, students who complete the Project at or above grade level continue to maintain near-grade-level achievement, at a minimum, as they progress through subsequent grades. This long-term success demonstrates the lasting impact of the Project, helping to build a solid foundation for future academic growth.

IMPACT OF THE PROJECT ON LONG-TERM STUDENT SUCCESS

We reviewed the first cohort of kindergartners from the RBLP, who are now juniors in high school. Out of the 76 original students, 43 remain in Palm Beach County, with 3 students lacking test scores for unknown reasons.

Of the available data for this cohort, 42.5% were at level 3 (on grade level) or higher for the 10th Grade ELA FAST test.

For comparison, below is the level 3+ attainment at schools with similar demographics:

- Boynton Beach High - 34%
- John I. Leonard - 39%
- Lake Worth High - 27%
- Pahokee Middle-Senior High - 37%
- Palm Beach Lakes - 33%
- Riviera Beach Prep - 13%

The Project has enabled students to exceed expected progress, though it is hard to prove what their outcomes would have been without it. However, research supports the belief that these gains will have a lasting impact, setting the stage for long-term academic success and brighter futures. This is the lasting power of the Riviera Beach Literacy Project.

In discussions with leadership at the School District of Palm Beach County, it's clear that the Riviera Beach Literacy Project stands as a model they would like to see expanded across the County. The work of the Literacy Specialists has even been adopted as a professional development model for educators in the area. However, the District faces significant challenges.

With over 180,000 students, Palm Beach County is the 10th largest school district in the U.S. and the largest employer in the County, providing jobs for 23,000 individuals, including 13,000 teachers. The District is also the largest provider of food services, serving 33 million meals annually, and managing the area's largest transportation network. While other literacy specialists exist within the County, they are often stretched thin, dividing their time among multiple schools. Without continued support from LTF, there is a real risk that the current positions in the Riviera Beach Literacy Project would be eliminated or consolidated due to budget limitations.

To date, the Project has reached 168 teachers and over 1,500 students annually, with 547 students benefiting from reading with a Lost Tree volunteer or pen pal.

BARRIERS TO STUDENT SUCCESS

The students in Riviera Beach face complex social, cultural, and economic challenges that impact their educational journey.

Additionally, numerous external factors beyond the Foundation's control play a role in shaping their progress.

TEACHER MOBILITY:

Nineteen teachers have been promoted to other positions, highlighting the success of the Project in developing talent, but creating gaps in the program's teaching staff. Teacher turnover has been significant, with only four teachers remaining since the Project began. The lack of affordable housing in Riviera Beach continues to impact teacher retention, especially in lower-income areas. Ongoing professional development and support from our Specialists have been crucial in maintaining consistency for students.

IMPACT OF COVID-19:

The pandemic severely affected kindergarten readiness, as many children missed essential early childhood education due to limited access to childcare and pre-kindergarten programs. Additionally, truancy has increased, but the School District is actively working on strategies to address post-COVID absenteeism.

COMMUNITY MOBILITY:

Riviera Beach is a transient community, with over 40% of students leaving the District since the Project began. However, we can have confidence that those students were better prepared to progress in school than they otherwise might have been.

TEACHER VACANCIES AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP:

Teacher shortages, especially post-COVID, have been addressed through an international teacher partnership. While cultural differences pose challenges, our Specialists provide essential support to help these teachers adapt to Riviera Beach's unique needs.

ASSESSMENT CHALLENGES:

Changes in state and local assessments and curricula have made data calibration difficult. However, the consistent use of iReady assessments has ensured that we can continue to monitor and compare student progress.

UPCOMING SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING:

Starting in the 2027-2028 school year, the District will consolidate schools, where RBLP operating in two elementary schools. This transition will be challenging for teachers and students, but our Specialists will provide the support needed to help navigate these changes smoothly.

RIVIERA BEACH LITERACY PROJECT

THE NEXT CHAPTER



OUR GOAL

The Riviera Beach Literacy Project has made a profound impact, but our work is not yet complete. Currently funded through December 2026, the Project's future depends on securing an additional \$1.65 million to continue its mission through the 2028 school year. This extension will bring the project to its 15-year milestone, a monumental achievement that will serve an entire generation of students.

RIVIERA BEACH LITERACY PROJECT

TURNING THE PAGE

For the past 12 years, the Riviera Beach Literacy Project has been instrumental in transforming early childhood education in Riviera Beach, equipping students with essential literacy skills for lifelong success.

By extending the program for three more years, we will help guide the current cohort of kindergarteners through to third grade, support the transition as schools restructure, and ensure a smooth and thoughtful phase-out.

THIS NEXT CHAPTER WILL ALLOW US TO:

1. Provide Critical Support to Our Youngest Learners

The current group of kindergarteners experienced significant setbacks in early learning due to pandemic-related disruptions. Many missed out on pre-kindergarten resources, placing them at a disadvantage. Extending RBLP for three more years ensures these students receive essential literacy support through third grade, laying the foundation for academic success.

2. Guide Schools Through Major Transitions

The educational landscape is evolving rapidly, especially in Riviera Beach. As the District restructures schools to accommodate a new dedicated high school, elementary schools will merge and shift into new configurations. This transition presents both challenges and opportunities for students, teachers, and the community. At this pivotal time, RBLP's continued support will ensure students and educators are not left behind as they adapt to these changes.

3. Ensure a Thoughtful and Sustainable Transition

Abruptly ending RBLP would disrupt the continuity and growth we've fostered. By extending the program for three more years, we provide the School District with the time needed to plan for the future. Additionally, our Literacy Specialists will have opportunities to transition into leadership roles, using the skills and professional development they have gained through RBLP to continue driving progress within the district.

Together, these three years will ensure that RBLP's impact continues to ripple through the schools and the community, setting the stage for even greater progress long after the program concludes.



Riviera Beach Literacy Project
Projected Expenses
FY25 to FY28

	Grade Level	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
		Year 12	Year 13	Year 14	Year 15
		<i>*Current year</i>		<i>*Proposed Start of New School Structure</i>	
	K	22	22	22	22
	1	22	22	22	22
	2	22	22	22	22
	3	22	22	22	22
Total Classrooms (Teachers)		88	88	88	88
Total Students		1,584	1,584	1,584	1,584

Expenditures					
		2024-2025 Projected	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
RBLP Staff (4 Specialists, 1 Manager)		\$ 520,000.00	\$ 540,000.00	\$ 560,000.00	\$ 580,000.00
Classroom Libraries		\$ 10,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
Food for Meetings		\$ 6,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
Supplies		\$ 7,000.00	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 7,000.00
Summer Reading Program		\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00
Fiscal Agent Fee		\$ 5,455.00	\$ 5,565.00	\$ 5,765.00	\$ 5,965.00
Teacher Incentives		\$ 7,000.00	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 7,000.00
RBLP Staff Incentives		\$ 20,000.00	\$ 21,000.00	\$ 22,000.00	\$ 23,000.00
Foundation Administration		\$ 12,500.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 11,500.00	\$ 11,000.00
Total By Year		\$ 590,455.00	\$ 602,065.00	\$ 622,765.00	\$ 643,465.00

Remaining Funding Available	\$	590,455.00	\$	213,677.46	\$	-	\$	-
Funding Gap	\$	-	\$	388,387.54	\$	622,765.00	\$	643,465.00

TOTAL FUNDING NEEDED FOR PROJECT COMPLETION	\$	1,654,617.54
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RIVIERA BEACH LITERACY PROJECT

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