



The Campaign for
**GRADE-LEVEL
READING**

73rd Annual All-America City Awards

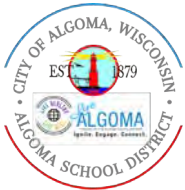
*Housing as a Platform to Promote Early School Success
and Equitable Learning Recovery*



2022 All-America City Award Supporters



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2022 All-America City Finalists

in alphabetical order by city/county/region

Alliance, OH
Atlanta, GA
Barberton, OH
Chicago, IL
Des Moines, IA
El Paso, TX
Kansas City, MO
Los Angeles, CA
Louisville, KY
Metro Omaha, NE
New Haven, CT
Palacios, TX
Phoenix, AZ
Portland, ME
Roanoke, VA
Sacramento, CA
San Antonio, TX
Springfield, MA
Suncoast Region, FL
Tarpon Springs, FL



CONGRATULATIONS!

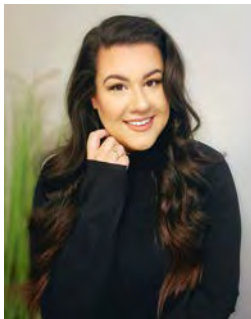
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- Any needed brackets and hardware for your poles
- Exposure for local businesses through banner sponsorship



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS PROGRAM CONTACT:

Nikki Lee Carroll

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Event Timeline

73rd All-America City Awards & Conference:

Housing as a Platform to Promote Early School Success and Equitable Learning Recovery

Virtual Event Agenda

Tuesday, July 19, 2022

All Times are Eastern Time

All Day

Throughout the day, attendees are encouraged to explore content within the [event platform](#). Attendees will find sponsor booths, civic action fair booths, cultural entertainment performances, pre-recorded sessions, speeches and more.

12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Workshop: Housing as a Platform Overview

[REGISTER](#)

In this session, philanthropic leaders will discuss the essential role of affordable housing and the importance of funders working collaboratively to address complex issues facing children, families, and communities.

2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Lunch

3:00 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.

Block 1 of finalist presentations

[WATCH HERE](#)

Jury introductions (3:00); Des Moines, IA (3:10); Palacios, TX (3:35); Metro Omaha, NE (4:00); Los Angeles, CA (4:25)

5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

All-America City Awards Opening Ceremony

[REGISTER](#)

Attendees will be welcomed to the virtual event by League President, Doug Linkhart and Campaign for Grade-Level Reading Managing Director, Ralph Smith. Keynote speaker: Adrienne Todman, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Wednesday, July 20, 2022

All Times are Eastern Time

All Day

Throughout the day, attendees are encouraged to explore content within the [event platform](#). Attendees will find sponsor booths, civic action fair booths, cultural entertainment performances, pre-recorded sessions, speeches and more.

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Roundtable Learning Exchange

[REGISTER](#)

Attendees will join breakout rooms based on the 7 areas of focus of the 2022 AAC theme: Digital equity; Relational supports; Afterschool, summer, and out-of-school learning opportunities; Transforming non-school places and spaces into learning-rich environments; Promoting school readiness, regular attendance and summer learning; Parents succeeding as essential partners; and Parents succeeding in their own journey toward sustainable self-sufficiency. Participants will discuss their related efforts, sharing best practices and difficulties.

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Lunch

2:00 p.m. – 3:35 p.m.

Block 2 of finalist presentations

[WATCH HERE](#)

Barberton, OH (2:00); Louisville, KY (2:25); Tarpon Springs, FL (2:50); Chicago, IL (3:15)



3:55 p.m. – 5:55 p.m.

Block 3 of finalist presentations.

Kansas City, MO (3:55); New Haven, CT (4:20); Phoenix, AZ (4:45); El Paso, TX (5:10); Sacramento, CA (5:35)

[WATCH HERE](#)

6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Award Announcements and Keynote Address

The National Civic League will announce the winners of this year’s Robert Wood Johnson Health Equity Award and the 2022 Hall of Fame and All-America Leader Awards. Keynote speaker: Mayor Steve Adler, City of Austin, TX

[REGISTER](#)

Thursday, July 21, 2022

All Times are Eastern Time

All Day

Throughout the day, attendees are encouraged to explore content within the [event platform](#). Attendees will find sponsor booths, civic action fair booths, cultural entertainment performances, pre-recorded sessions, speeches and more.

11:00 a.m. – 12:35 p.m.

Block 4 of finalist presentations

Roanoke, VA (11:00); Springfield, MA (11:25); Suncoast Region, FL (11:50); Alliance, OH (12:15)

[WATCH HERE](#)

12:55 p.m. – 2:55 p.m.

Block 5 of finalist presentations

San Antonio, TX (12:55); Atlanta, GA (1:20); Portland, ME (1:45); Flex Spot (2:10); Flex Spot (2:35)

[WATCH HERE](#)

3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

AAC Festival of Ideas:

Peer discussion of community projects. This session is for finalist communities only.

[REGISTER](#)

Group 1:

Los Angeles, CA
Chicago, IL
Phoenix, AZ
San Antonio, TX

Group 4:

Springfield, MA
New Haven, CT
Roanoke, VA
Portland, ME

Group 2:

Suncoast Region, FL
El Paso, TX
Louisville, KY
Atlanta, GA

Group 5:

Barberton, OH
Tarpon Springs, FL
Alliance, OH
Palacios, TX

Group 3:

Kansas City, MO
Sacramento, CA
Metro Omaha, NE
Des Moines, IA

7:30 pm – 9:00pm

Awards Ceremony

The moment we’ve all been waiting for, the announcement of the 2022 All-America City Awards! Keynote speaker: Sharon L. Davies, J.D., President and Chief Executive Officer, Kettering Foundation

[REGISTER](#)



Thank You!

National Council of Advisors

Hon. Margaret Abe-Koga, Councilmember, Mountain View, CA
Leon Andrews, President and CEO, Equal Measure
Steven Bosacker, Director, GMF Cities, German Marshall Fund (GMF) of the United States
Mary Bunting, City Manager, City of Hampton, Virginia
Kara Carlisle, Vice President of Programs, McKnight Foundation
Jim Cloar, Chair, Tampa Housing Authority
Marcia Conner, Executive Director, National Forum for Black Public Administrators
Zach Dyer, Deputy Director, Worcester Public Health Department
Charles Ellington, student, Sacramento; past winner, All-America Cities Youth Award
Chris Gates, Senior Advisor, Bridge Alliance; Elected Fellow, NAPA
Mike Huggins, former City Manager, Eau Claire, Wisconsin and member of Clear Vision Eau Claire Board of Directors
Curtis Johnson, former Executive Director, Citiscope, and former League board member
Hon. Liane Levetan, former DeKalb County CEO and Georgia State Legislator
Hon. Ron Loveridge, former Mayor of Riverside, CA
Derek Okubo, Executive Director of the Denver Agency for Human Rights & Community Partnerships (HRCP)
Charles Ozaki, former City and County Manager, City and County of Broomfield, Colorado
Joni Pattillo, Retired City Manager, City of Dublin, CA
Donavan Pinner, Graduate Student, Princeton University; residence: Hopkinsville, KY; past winner, All-America Cities Youth Award
Sarah Rubin, Outreach and Engagement Coordinator, California Department of Conservation
Hon. David M. Sander, Ph.D., City Council Member and Former Mayor, City of Rancho Cordova
Daniel Schugurensky, Professor, School of Public Affairs, Arizona State University and Director, Participatory Governance Initiative
Sean Smoot, Principal Consultant, 21st Century Policing LLC
Antonella Valmorbidia, Secretary General, ALDA - The European Association for Local Democracy
Michael Wenger, Senior Consultant on Race Relations and the Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation
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Event Supporters

Special thank you to Campaign for Grade-Level Reading; W.K. Kellogg Foundation; Southwest Airlines – The Official Airline of the All-America City Awards; CGI Digital; MissionSquare Retirement; and HealthONE. We'd also like to express our gratitude to the City of Lakewood, CO for use of their facilities for the closing ceremony.

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading thanks the following Housing as a Platform Consultative Coalition members for their support in disseminating the AAC application: Attendance Works, Council of Large Public Housing Authorities, National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, National League of Cities, National Summer Learning Association, StriveTogether, PolicyLink, and Urban Strategies Inc.

Sustaining Community Partners

Algoma, WI; Asheboro, NC; Aurora, CO; Danville, VA; Decatur, GA; Delray Beach, FL; Denver, CO; Dublin, CA; El Paso, TX; Ft. Lauderdale, FL; Fort Wayne, IN; Gladstone, MO; Hayward, CA; Illinois Municipal League; Kansas City, MO; Las Vegas, NV; Oakridge Neighborhood, IA; Pitt County, NC; Rancho Cordova, CA; Roanoke, VA; San Antonio, TX; Tallahassee, FL; Tampa Housing Authority; Tupelo, MS; and Wheat Ridge, CO.

Partners

American Society for Public Administration; Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Foundation; Government Finance Officers' Association; International City/County Management Association; Kettering Foundation; National Academy of Public Administration; National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation; National League of Cities; National Forum for Black Public Administrators; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; and United Way Worldwide.

AAC Event Support

A special thank you to the application review committee, Hall of Fame Award and All-America Leader Award review committees, jury members, and youth award interviewers.

Staff

A special thank you to the staff, consultants, and senior fellows of the National Civic League and Campaign for Grade-Level Reading.



2022 All-America City Virtual Presentation Schedule

All presentations will take place over Zoom.

Tuesday, July 19, 2022

**All Times are Eastern Time*

Block 1 Presentations:

3:00 p.m. - 3:10 p.m.	Jury introductions
3:10 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.	Des Moines, IA
3:35 p.m. - 3:55 p.m.	Palacios, TX
4:00 p.m. - 4:20 p.m.	Metro Omaha, NE
4:25 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.	Los Angeles, CA

Wednesday, July 20, 2022

Block 2 Presentations:

2:00 p.m. - 2:20 p.m.	Barberton, OH
2:25 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.	Louisville, KY
2:50 p.m. - 3:10 p.m.	Tarpon Springs, FL
3:15 p.m. - 3:35 p.m.	Chicago, IL

Block 3 Presentations:

3:55 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.	Kansas City, MO
4:20 p.m. - 4:40 p.m.	New Haven, CT
4:45 p.m. - 5:05 p.m.	Phoenix, AZ
5:10 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.	El Paso, TX
5:35 p.m. - 5:55 p.m.	Sacramento, CA

Thursday, July 21, 2022

Block 4 Presentations:

11:00 a.m. - 11:20 a.m.	Roanoke, VA
11:25 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.	Springfield, MA
11:50 a.m. - 12:10 p.m.	Suncoast Region, FL
12:15 p.m. - 12:35 p.m.	Alliance, OH

Block 5 Presentations:

12:55 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.	San Antonio, TX
1:20 p.m. - 1:40 p.m.	Atlanta, GA
1:45 p.m. - 2:05 p.m.	Portland, ME
2:10 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Flex Spot
2:35 p.m. - 2:55 p.m.	Flex Spot



2022 All-America City Awards Jury



Angela Romans
(Jury Foreperson),
Founding Executive
Director, Innovation For
Equity



Barbara O'Brien,
Senior Advisor, Campaign for
Grade-Level Reading



Hedy Chang,
Founder and Executive
Director, Attendance
Works



Jane Park,
Senior Content Strategist,
Google Kids and Family



Staci Croom-Raley,
President & CEO,
Children's Equity Coalition



Tony Peyton,
Executive Vice President &
Chief of Staff, National Cen-
ter for Families Learning



Tom Henry,
Mayor, City of Fort Wayne,
IN



Christopher R. Riano,
President, Center for Civic
Education



Bonnie Howard,
Senior Fellow, Campaign
for Grade-Level Reading



Charles Rutheiser,
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Erica McIntire
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2022 All-America City Finalist Program Summaries

Alliance, OH

When there is a need, no matter how large or how small, Alliance residents and organizations come together to address that need. Over the past 16 years, Alliance has invested in promoting early school success and equitable learning. In 2006, the Early Childhood Education Alliance, Inc. (ECEA) was formed as a nonprofit agency, partnering with the University of Mount Union, the City of Alliance and Alliance City Schools. ECEA strives to promote early school success and equitable access to quality early childhood learning. The desired outcome is for ALL children to have equitable access to quality early childhood learning and experiences, so that they enter school ready to succeed.

SPARK

One of the strategies Alliance uses to meet this goal is the SPARK (Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids) program. The evidence-based SPARK program has been proven to raise the achievement levels of young children and competencies of parents, and has long-term effects that impact grade promotion and graduation. SPARK is a home visitation public service program that teaches parents about the developmental and learning needs of their children. The program promotes a positive relationship between the child, their families, a parent partner and the schools. Each participating child (ages 3-5) and a family member are paired with a parent partner. The parent partner works directly with the child and their family. The child is

screened (cognitively, medically and socially) to identify any developmental delays. A developmental learning plan is then created based on the individual needs of the child. Parents are supported as they work with the parent partner to implement the learning plans. The parents meet with the parent partners during each home visit and are active participants in the educational visit. During each home visit, the child and parent receive a learning kit containing books, materials and activities to continue the learning beyond the monthly home visit.

During the start of the pandemic, there were times that SPARK lessons were held via cell phone. ECEA worked with the Alliance City School District and housing authorities to provide hotspots for the children and families so that they would have Wi-Fi. Additionally, the ECEA team worked with the local internet provider to arrange free internet access for families throughout the pandemic. The city also provided ECEA with funding to purchase tablets, cases and unlimited data plans to ensure that all children had equitable access to their education.

Relational Supports

ECEA learned that 1 out of every 6 children in their 4-year-old cohort experienced a death during the pandemic. ECEA reached out to various community organizations for support to get counseling and grief services in place for the families. These services are open to all and free of charge to participants.



Alliance, Ohio

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Alliance for Children & Families



Early Childhood
Education Alliance
Educate · Advocate · Collaborate



Parent Cafes are also being offered to Alliance-area families. The Parent Cafes connect parents with resources while supplying them with job skills and training opportunities so that they're able to acquire local careers with higher incomes and get out of poverty.

Atlanta, GA

The Housing Authority of the City of Atlanta (AH) serves as the largest public housing authority in Georgia, serving nearly 50,000 people. As a lead agency that provides services to a large portion of vulnerable residents, it was of critical importance to enhance services to protect families against the social, health and economic impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Hearing from countless AH participants about the daily struggle to navigate the implications of the pandemic and meet basic needs, AH and collective partners working on the frontlines mobilized resources to provide a comprehensive response that would holistically address the needs of families.

Comprehensive Service Response Plan

The comprehensive service response plan builds on AH's housing plus services approach, which advances a vision for effective and responsive service. The enhanced strategy was developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and informed by monitoring public health information and local agency updates, and having ongoing dialogue with staff, partners and, most importantly, AH participants.

The service plan consisted of:

- **Case Management Outreach and Assistance** - Case managers provided AH-

assisted participants with an assessment over the phone to determine and prioritize the needs of the household. Once needs were identified, a service plan was developed, and staff worked to facilitate access to information, services and support. Service coordination included ensuring that participants had access to food, personal care items, internet and digital devices for school-aged children, financial assistance, employment, unemployment benefits and additional supportive care services to help meet essential needs.

- **Family Self-Sufficiency Services** - In partnership with several community partners, life skills and workforce development training were provided through virtual and dial-in platforms. This enabled participants to obtain new skills and employment based on their personal circumstances.
- **Health and Well-Being** - To support health and well-being, a variety of information, services and resources were provided based on evidence-based practices and public health measures. Health and safety kits were provided to youth participating in in-person programs. Telehealth services were offered for participants needing access to mental health and primary care services. The "Stronger Together" series provided participants with information on stress management, resilience and self-care.
- **Youth Programs** - During the first three months of the pandemic (March-May 2020), e-learning and dial-in social and recreational opportunities were provided to help youth engage in meaningful activities. Evidence-based activities and self-paced learning opportunities were



provided by local partners. In-person summer camp was available beginning June 2020 and provided youth with academic and life enrichment programs as well as meals. One of the most important programs offered was the “Campus Connection” program provided by the YMCA. This critical program provided youth the opportunity to complete their virtual learning at a YMCA location, providing structured learning environments for participating youth and quality child care for working parents. Services included expanded hours, meals, access to stable internet and electronic devices, and opportunities for social and physical activity.

AH and partner agencies worked to meet urgent needs and solve interconnected issues, leveraging resources to ensure that critical safety net programs were available and accessible. A shared sense of urgency, pre-existing networks, partnership experience and a commitment to protecting and serving families contributed to effectively enhancing services.

Barberton, OH

Residents of Barberton take pride in their community and believe that no one child or adult should be left behind. When data showed that less than one-quarter of Barberton children were prepared for school success, the Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority (AMHA) and the Barberton City Schools partnered to help address this key community problem.

AMHA Early Childhood Initiative

In addition to being an affordable housing authority, AMHA plays a key part in providing educational success to families.

BUILDING

A WORLD OF

OPPORTUNITIES



FOR ALL TO
Thrive



AMHA's Early Childhood Initiative (ECI) offers a continuum of early childhood services that are proven to increase parent engagement, healthy child development, and increased school readiness and success. ECI offers a two-generation approach, collaborating with parents to focus on their own personal and economic goals.

ECI offers a continuum of family-focused programming including home visitation using the Parents as Teachers (PAT) model for families with children ages prenatal through kindergarten. PAT is an evidence-based home visiting model that matches caregivers with trained professionals who make regular home visits during a child's earliest years in life, from prenatal through kindergarten. The PAT model is designed to achieve four primary goals: increase parent knowledge of early childhood development and improve



parenting practices, provide early detection of developmental delays and health issues, prevent child abuse and neglect, and increase children's school readiness and success. In conjunction with PAT, ECI also offers family outreach events and maternal depression support groups.

Next in the continuum of support is the Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids (SPARK) program, which provides a kindergarten readiness advantage for families with preschool-age children. The SPARK family meets with their assigned home visitor who helps the parent engage in a lesson that was developed around state standards and is designed to provide a school readiness advantage. At each visit, a book, an activity card and supplies are given to the family, so the parent can continue the learning between visits.

Both PAT and SPARK conduct developmental screenings and facilitate referrals and linkages to community resources. The SPARK team participates in monthly responsive services meetings that focus on a team approach of wraparound services concentrating on the child's development and preparation for kindergarten. Both PAT and SPARK prioritize assisting families with getting their children enrolled in high-quality preschool and/or child care.

The final transition point between ECI programming and kindergarten occurs in the months prior to kindergarten entry. ECI home visitors complete a Transitional Skills Summary (TSS) in early spring for each child that will be entering kindergarten in the fall. The TSS provides a snapshot of where the child is in relation to kindergarten preparedness. These child summaries can then be shared with the school/ kindergarten staff so that they can use the information to



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CONGRATULATIONS to the 2022 All-America City Finalists





Recognizing the City of Chicago, Illinois



Finalist for the 2022

ALL-AMERICA CITY AWARD

assist in preparing their classrooms or just to know more about their incoming students.

AMHA's early childhood continuum concludes with SPARK Ohio's Get Ready for School program, which provides participants with a smooth transition into kindergarten by offering an on-site, in-school introduction to the school day to make them more comfortable with the classroom by the first day of school.

Chicago, IL

The internet is not a luxury, it is a necessity for everyday life. Being connected to the internet allows families to work remotely and access essential services related to health care, food, housing, employment and education.

When Illinois schools closed in mid-March 2020, the education nonprofit Kids First Chicago (K1C) started making phone calls, reaching out to Chicago Public Schools (CPS) families to find out how they were doing and what they needed. CPS parents shared that they didn't have adequate internet or devices and they struggled to get their families connected to an array of supports and services. To better understand the magnitude of the issue, K1C and the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) dug into publicly available census data and released a joint report, Digital Equity in Education in the Coronavirus Era, in late April 2020. The report found that roughly 1 in 5, primarily Black or Latinx/a/o, children under age 18 lacked in-home internet.

Launched in June 2020, Chicago Connected is a groundbreaking, multi-year program to close this digital divide. Chicago Connected provides high-speed internet for up to 100,000 students for four years by directly paying for internet service for families that are most in need, using six priority indicators and data from Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to identify eligible households for the initiative.

The City of Chicago provides strategic leadership and financial management and serves as the lead convener for the initiative. CPS manages day-to-day operations, including eligibility selection, general marketing, data and reporting. K1C provides project management guidance and evaluates program impact. K1C also elevates the perspectives of communities and families in the design and continuous improvement of the initiative, facilitating ongoing engagement with 35 community-based organizations (CBOs) citywide. United Way of Metro Chicago serves as a fiscal agent for Chicago Connected, coordinating



payments on behalf of households to ISPs, who then provide internet service directly to enrolled families.

Participating CBOs supplement outreach with a particular focus on the hardest-to-reach households and provide newly connected families with digital literacy training and skills development curriculum. Additionally, the program partners with the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) to market the free service to K-12 families in CHA residences.

Digital equity is not achieved solely through internet adoption, so Chicago Connected also launched a digital learning platform. Enrollment in Chicago Connected includes free access to online portals with classroom curricula, training materials and thousands of assessments, all available in self-guided and in-person formats, to build and test computer skills. Additionally, a compilation of free digital learning resources is available on the Chicago Connected website.

Most recently, Chicago Connected partnered with Coursera, one of the largest online learning platforms, to deliver world-class content in multiple languages. Coursera learners are also offered a range of job support services following completion of industry-recognized certificates.

This unique partnership has already connected nearly 64,000 students and provided high-quality digital learning content to Chicago Connected families, helping CPS parents and caregivers better navigate the pandemic through their newfound connectivity.

Des Moines, IA

Oakridge Neighborhood, Iowa's oldest and largest HUD Section 8 housing project, serves Des Moines' most vulnerable children and families with housing and wraparound services. Residents represent 21 countries and speak 22 languages; 52% are children under 18; and 78% of children live in a single-parent household with an average annual income of \$18,608.

In 2019, Oakridge reviewed district data, school-level data and data specific to the academic achievement and school attendance of Oakridge students. A needs assessment conducted with students, parents, staff and community partners was used to determine additional academic support and enrichment components for



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Oakridge's out-of-school program. This combination of input helped Oakridge redesign its programs supporting the academic needs of 225 K-12 students.

- OASIS (Oakridge Achievers Successful in School, K-5)
- BE REAL (Building and Enhancing Relationships – Enriching Academics and Learning, 6-8)
- SWAGG (Students With A Graduation Goal, 9-12)

Programs

The Oakridge programs - OASIS, BE REAL and SWAGG - operate five days per week for three to five hours per day during the academic year. Daily schedules include 1.5 hours of differentiated academic support followed by 1.5 hours of high-interest educational enrichment activities. Summer programming operates for 10 weeks with

programming daily to include three hours of academic support, meals, and enrichment and social-emotional development activities. Family literacy events and parent engagement programming are held at different frequencies throughout the year. OASIS, BE REAL and SWAGG are managed by a program coordinator who is supported by an education coordinator retained to interface with building administrators, teachers and other staff to ensure all activities are aligned with school-day instruction and focused on the individual and collective needs of students.

Academics

Utilizing Des Moines Public Schools (DMPS) academic performance data and the district's priority performance areas, the Oakridge programs use evidenced-based academic support, educational enrichment, parent engagement and family literacy activities, and focus on improving academic outcomes and performance in the core areas of reading and math. All Oakridge programming is aligned with classroom instruction. Oakridge retains the services of licensed teachers to advance the academic components of the afterschool curriculum, including multiple teachers with an English Language Learner (ELL) endorsement and with licensed teachers retained to provide the academic components of the program. The Scholastic testing methods for reading comprehension are used for students in K-5, and academic supports (tutoring, homework help, and small group instruction) are used to advance the academic needs of student participants.

Enrichment

Valued community partners help support academic programming, provide enrichment opportunities and enhance family engagement components. Enrichment



activities encourage the development of skills and interests not fully nurtured during the school day. These activities are incorporated into Oakridge programs and are facilitated by Oakridge Youth Success Navigators and/or community partners. The selection of activities is based on student interest surveys and stakeholder input. Oakridge partners with a variety of arts and culture, health and wellness, and STEM/STEAM partners to provide opportunities for increased access and exposure to fun, stimulating and educational enrichment activities for participants.

El Paso, TX

2020 has redefined what success is for many communities. With so much uncertainty in everyone's daily lives, one thing was certain – the El Paso community needed to come together to ensure children and families had the support they needed. Through integrated planning efforts with the local housing authority and the El Paso Public Libraries, El Paso was able to promote early school success initiatives to address the educational challenges brought on by the pandemic.

Transformational Learning Community (TLC) Housing Opportunity Management Enterprises (HOME), formerly known as the Housing Authority of the City of El Paso, not only provides safe and affordable housing to low-income residents but also offers supportive services, including youth learning opportunities, through community partnerships.

From March 2020 through September 2021, all face-to-face programming was discontinued due to the pandemic. Since



resuming services, youth residents have shared feelings of seclusion and sadness when services and resources were not being provided. They voiced their eagerness and desperation to participate in social activities with fellow residents and within the wider El Paso community. It was clear that something needed to be done in response to the negative impacts of isolation experienced by youth; in collaboration with the Philosophic Systems Institute (PSI), the Transformational Learning Community (TLC) project was created.

The purpose of TLC is to create sustained opportunities for teen residents to co-design projects across cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. TLC is an active learning exploration of young people's interests, potential and process of idea





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Thank you for all your
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generation and research. PSI serves as a bridge in providing core facilitators for programming, inviting artists, engineers, musicians, creative writers, cooks, etc., based on the youth's chosen area of interest. Each of the continued weekly engagements supported young people's connections to one another, as well as the development of practical focus areas. Program facilitators ensured a regular onsite presence within the HOME properties and made themselves available for informal interactions outside of the programmed activities. At the end of the program period, youth were given the opportunity to showcase their completed projects. HOME is now permanently embedding this initiative into its future properties, speaking to the positive impact TLC has had on youth residents.

The El Paso Public Library (EPPL)

Due to the pandemic, library services were limited to curbside pick-ups and deliveries, and El Paso schools were closed. Around this time, EPPL was awarded a timely grant of \$20,000 and 100 refurbished laptop computers for its Literacy Center. The Literacy Center offers entrepreneurs access to services and technology to help them start or grow their businesses.

Through strategic partnerships, including HOME, 100 low-income families who were adversely impacted by the pandemic were identified. These community members each received one of the 100 computers provided by the grant and were offered classes to assist adults with helping their children in attending school online and to support them with finding jobs online or meeting with social service agencies, family members and doctors virtually. EPPL also teamed up with EveryoneOn to facilitate basic digital literacy computer classes.

Kansas City, MO

Kansas City is a city rich in diversity, creativity and entrepreneurship and is filled with nonprofit agencies and philanthropic supporters seeking to make the city strong for all residents. However, it is also a complicated city with a history rife with racism and division that created tremendous challenges, including the equitable education of children.

Educationally, the percentage of students who read at grade level by third grade ranges from 0% - 60%, with the average falling at approximately 15%. These numbers exemplify the inequity across the city and the powerful need to focus on



increasing literacy for all students. Turn the Page KC (TTPKC) is a nonprofit organization that was founded to improve children’s lives and opportunities by increasing literacy by the third grade.

Pandemic Response

When COVID-19 forced schools to close in March 2020 and open virtually for the 2020-2021 school year, it created a child care crisis across Greater KC. In the districts/schools where most students live in economically vulnerable households, lack of child care and digital equity quickly emerged as critical risk factors. The Out of School Time Collaborative (OST Collaborative), coordinated by TTPKC, quickly mobilized to raise funds and enroll students at 16 “safe learning sites.”

The group learned quickly that the needs of

the children were much more than anyone anticipated. The children served lacked food security, witnessed domestic violence, suffered from anxiety induced by fears of the virus, had no electricity at home, and so much more. Through grants and generous donations from a wide array of community partners, the OST Collaborative raised over \$3 million and served over 800 students with full-day, safe, hybrid learning spaces and critical wraparound services.

Looking Ahead, READ 360°

In fall 2021, TTPKC initiated READ 360°, a new collective impact program focused on centering the voices of parents and families, neighborhood by neighborhood, to shape the vision of support, resources and services that will increase literacy. Bringing together the parents and family



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members of a community, READ 360° program partners focus on listening and supporting Neighborhood Literacy Councils and leveraging the unique and specific assets of partners who support the growth envisioned.

A neighborhood association or leadership group will be approached by the READ 360° outreach team for discussion and planning. If the neighborhood is interested in engaging in READ 360°, a Literacy Community partnership will be formed. Each partnership will consist of a three-year commitment, while developing the programs, structures and leadership to be self-sustaining beyond those years.

As TTPKC has developed the initial structures and strategies of the READ 360° program, it

has done extensive outreach to social service, education and community partners. These conversations have helped reshape TTPKC's thinking around such topics as: how to center the work on families; how to create trust with Literacy Councils; how to focus literacy in the vision/planning of parent Literacy Councils; how to build leadership and sustainability into the program; and more. A partner networking conversation every six months allows for continued feedback and guidance from community stakeholders.

Los Angeles, CA

In 2014, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) entered into a data-sharing agreement with the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), and by 2015, received startling results showing that HACLA children were not passing the third-grade reading exam. Children were placed in Special Education with little or no chance of mainstreaming out, and by 9th grade, they weren't showing up. In response, HACLA quickly increased access to books and literacy support, and embarked on a major overhaul of afterschool program contracts. The focus in the summer months was on preventing summer slide by offering academic support and, most recently, Academic Learning Pods for virtual learning at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in parallel to low-cost, high-speed internet installation.

Digital Equity

Families served by HACLA didn't have affordable internet access, and due to broadband zones, their options were limited. HACLA recognized the need for internet for youth and families to advance academically



and economically but hit a significant hurdle with Internet Service Providers (ISPs) on the costs for installation. Then the pandemic hit, pushing families to learn and work virtually. Starry Internet raised the infrastructure funds to install high-speed, low-cost internet at public housing sites. HACLA committed to doing all the community outreach and engagement by hiring Digital Ambassadors. To date, there is a 34% adoption rate at all housing sites. HACLA, in partnership with the Mayor's Office, is raising additional capital to invest in the transformation of 13 computer labs so that the spaces can have upgraded equipment and new furniture along with digital literacy, academic and workforce development programming.

Community Coaches and Digital Ambassadors

Community Coaches and Digital Ambassadors participate in collaborative meetings to learn about resources that are available to HACLA residents. Digital ambassadors assist with educating families on Starry Internet, co-host COVID-19 educational workshops, assist people with accessing telehealth resources, and train residents on how to navigate software and internet resources. HACLA also worked with partners to establish no-cost learning pods to help younger children navigate their lesson plans while their parents worked or when adults were uncomfortable navigating digital lessons on behalf of their children.

Additionally, all HACLA Gym Providers quickly pivoted to provide basic resources to families, such as cleaning supplies, food, clothing, academic enrichment, activity kits and virtual learning. They even created learning pods (in-person) for youth to access virtual learning because they lacked internet at home and/or their parents were essential workers. Coaches were now tutors,

and mentors transitioned into outreach staff alongside Digital Ambassadors and Community Coaches doing knock and drops to pass out food or check on a family during this difficult time.

As part of the knock and drops, a partnership with the LA Library and Book Rich Environment allowed HACLA to distribute over 7,000 culturally relevant books last year. Through a decade-long partnership with the University of California Los Angeles Tutoring Program, youth also received virtual tutoring after their learning pod instruction. Lastly, the LA Library provides free digital tutorial support and access to grade-level literacy resources that youth and parents can use to supplement their school support.



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Best wishes and good luck to
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Louisville, KY

Beecher Terrace is a public housing site owned by the Louisville Metro Housing Authority (LMHA), located in the Russell neighborhood in long-underserved West Louisville, Kentucky. Despite decades of federal programs and local interventions, the families of Beecher Terrace have suffered from unacceptable economic, education and health inequities.

In 2015, LMHA was awarded a Choice Neighborhoods planning grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Beecher Terrace public housing development and the Russell neighborhood. Supported by the grant, the People Plan was implemented to provide high-quality resources needed to systematically eradicate disparities and

create in their place, a belief in a better future.

Urban Strategies Inc. (USI) was chosen to serve as the lead for the People Plan Implementation Team, with support from LMHA case managers, relocation staff and outside organizations that act as direct service providers. The vision of the People Plan is to create equitable opportunities where all Russell neighborhood/Beecher Terrace children and families are stable and thriving; where all voices are acknowledged and promoted; and all systems are positively aligned and equally contributing. USI and LMHA are working toward this vision through the following initiatives.

Digital Equity

In 2020, LMHA created the position of Digital Inclusion Coordinator to manage and grow its computer refurbishment program, connect residents to low- or no-cost internet and coordinate digital training for residents. In collaboration with USI, LMHA provided refurbished MacBook Pros to graduating seniors from Beecher Terrace.

Relational Supports

Both USI and LMHA provide comprehensive, wraparound case management for families. While USI primarily assists those residing in Beecher Terrace by providing referrals for any need they may have, including emergency services, educational programming, employment opportunities, LMHA offers support for anyone who resides in public housing. Additionally, residents can access financial literacy courses about budgeting, credit recovery and related topics.

Transforming Non-School Places

Through the Book Rich Environment/Russell Reads program, LMHA and USI distributed



over 10,000 books to underprivileged youth in the Russell neighborhood and beyond. This has improved the number of families who are reading to children in the home, going from 86% to 97% over the course of the past five years.

Parents Succeeding in Their Own Journey Toward Sustainable Self-Sufficiency

During 2021, LMHA served 201 parents in its Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program. FSS participants receive intensive case management services (from one or both agencies), financial literacy education, and assistance in returning to school and finding and maintaining employment. As FSS participants increase their earned income, money is added to an escrow savings account.

Additionally, LMHA has awarded college scholarships to its residents. In 2021, eight parents of school-aged children and seven recent high school graduates each received a \$1,500 scholarship.

Lastly, USI hosts monthly resident meetings that provide residents with a platform to voice concerns surrounding their community and that connect residents to supportive services.

Louisville taps into community partnerships to advance additional areas of focus around early school success and equitable learning recovery, including developmental screenings for young children, enrollment in kindergarten readiness and early learning programs, and out-of-school learning activities.

By providing greater access to service providers (beginning at birth and continuing through high school) that meet

residents where they are, Louisville aims to close the educational equity gap between Beecher Terrace/Russell neighborhood youth and their peers. When a disadvantaged child is provided with consistent educational support, the trajectory of their life changes. Ultimately, their entire community is impacted.

Metro Omaha, NE

When a 2021 assessment of housing availability in Omaha found that many families continued to need safe, stable housing - a problem exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic - the Metropolitan

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Omaha Education Consortium (MOEC) broadened its work to prioritize housing stability through various initiatives done in partnership with a diverse team of community partners. Philanthropic organizations, research centers and housing organizations have spearheaded programs like Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless, Front Porch Investments, Progressive Families, Omaha Urban Thinkscapes and more, responding to housing crises with a strategic and create framework that seeks to:

- Prevent and address housing instability
- Accelerate affordable housing production
- Preserve existing affordable housing
- Foster innovations to lower housing costs
- Address the negative impacts of gentrification

Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless (MACCH)

MACCH is a collective impact homeless services organization that, throughout the pandemic, has played a pivotal role in combating homelessness and housing insecurity throughout Metro Omaha. Through its Household Problem Solving (HPS) initiative, MACCH distributed more than \$6.3 million through 5,007 fund requests to 4,419 unique households, with an average of \$1,409 per request. The vast majority of these households were on the brink of homelessness, with many facing housing crises caused by the effects of the COVID-19. This program delivered essential support that enabled countless children to remain in their home schools and avoid the turmoil and stress of relocation or loss of housing.

Front Porch Investments

Along with HPS, Front Porch Investments (FPI) assisted in preventing homelessness for 278 individuals in Metro Omaha. Developed in response to the demand for strategic investment and coordinated leadership in the areas of affordable housing and homelessness prevention, FPI seeks to “create opportunities to implement successful housing solutions by maximizing public and private resources, convening community partners, new stakeholders, and historically excluded voices.” With housing assessment grants to be awarded in May 2022, this philanthropy presents exciting and innovative strategic partnerships across the metro area.

Progressive Families

The Progressive Families program complements the work of these initiatives in its holistic approach to housing crises



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Las Vegas



2018



and their wide-reaching effects. Families receive housing education; utility, rent and mortgage assistance; tax assistance; private financial literacy education; and Individual Development matched Savings Accounts (IDAs) that support families' efforts to save for education, homeownership and micro-business enterprise. Made possible through the support of United Way and the Siemer's Institute, this initiative has supported over 120 families. Beyond this program, United Way investments continue to benefit families and children in the metro area, with 89% of school-aged children served through UWM investments remaining in their schools of origin by choice.

New Haven, CT

Like so many other places, New Haven is a city of haves and have-nots. The residents at Elm City Communities/Housing Authority of New Haven are so many of the have-nots — people who have been left behind by decades of white flight, disinvestment, and a fractured and transitional economy. These inequities were the genesis of the Elm City Communities (ECC) Believes Initiative.

Elm City Communities Believes Initiative
ECC Believes was launched with the simple mission of providing educational supports to students and families living in ECC properties.

To start, housing authority staff initiated a citywide outreach campaign to find community partners to provide onsite programming for youth residents and explore creative ways to share resources and grant opportunities. ECC first entered Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with several New Haven public schools. The MOUs were critical tools for ECC to access data



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about student performance, attendance and truancy, and helped inform data-driven programming.

Beyond the school system, ECC staff sought meaningful collaboration with local partners that went further than simply promoting programs to residents. ECC encouraged local partners to hold classes on-site and organized additional regular programming with external organizations.

Through the development of community collaborations, ECC Believes offers an array of programs and services addressing:

- Early Childhood Education
- Attendance and School Engagement
- Academic Support
- Career and College Readiness
- Parent Engagement



While partnerships may differ, they share the common goal of bringing expanded services to residents and supporting learning and academic opportunities for students and their families.

COVID-19 Response

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ECC Believes Initiative adopted a more holistic wraparound approach to fill the gaps left by schools and other partner organizations that either shut down or significantly decreased operations.

Connectivity Services - ECC coordinated resources to redistribute tablets initially earmarked for other activities, such as census work, to families with children now engaging in digital learning.

Teacher in Residence (TIR) - To support ECC students' educational endeavors, a program was created to house a New Haven Public Schools (NHPS) teacher within developments in exchange for on-site homework help and tutorial services.

Resident Summer Youth Volunteer Program (RSYVP) - ECC built a summer jobs and soft skills program that provided financial compensation and mentorship for almost 40 participants.

Student Training Employment Program (STEP) - STEP provides needed opportunity and experience for professional, personal and financial growth by hiring young residents within ECC offices and providing them with wraparound services and mentorship.

Child Development Associate (CDA) Program - The program provides on-site services to residents to help them apply for

the CDA credentials required in Connecticut to work as a head teacher in a child care center.

Food Distribution - ECC coordinated with food banks to have food delivered directly to developments. Residents were then given stipends to separate the food and deliver it to families and disabled and elderly residents. NHPS introduced its meal-kit delivery service in November 2020 to help families that were unable to travel to the designated pick-up sites. ECC partnered with NHPS to identify families in need of the service and streamline the delivery process.

Healthy Start Workshops - ECC partnered with New Haven Healthy Start to host a series of virtual trainings for parents focusing on Managing Through the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Palacios, TX

Palacios is a community on the Texas Gulf Coast known for its rich history along with its incredibly diverse population and agricultural resources. However, issues in rising crime rates, drug trafficking and more have arisen in Palacios over the past decades, in no small part due to lingering poverty, unemployment and insufficient public transportation resources in the city. Following the work of the Rural Literacy Coalition, over the past 10 years, the Palacios Hub has brought together various community organizations and resources to address these issues through community outreach and collaboration. These efforts have been guided by the goal of reducing "the issues caused by poverty and provid[ing] equity of services and



programs available to Palacios families of all racial backgrounds and socio-economic backgrounds.”

Community Partners

Connecting with an extensive collection of community partners, the Palacios Hub has continued to discover the needs of impoverished and underserved community members. These needs often center on education, housing and concerns related to health and wellness. Through collaboration with organizations and initiatives like Community in Schools, Early Childhood Interventions (ECI) and First Book Matagorda County, the Palacios Hub has delivered countless resources to children who otherwise would not have access to the food, school supplies, clothing, emotional

support, individualized attention and more that they need to be successful in school. Complementing these collaborations is the relationship between the Palacios Hub and the Palacios Independent School District, which has provided technological resources necessary to track children’s development and progress through their educational experiences.

Beyond education, the Palacios Hub has developed strategic relationships with community partners to address housing and health needs felt by many in Palacios. One such relationship exists with the Palacios Wellness Council, which specifically focuses on treating the mental and physical health of all community members. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Palacios Hub assisted the Palacios Wellness Council in making masks for local medical centers, delivering postcards to shut-ins and senior citizens, distributing pandemic information communications, and coordinating donations of disinfectants and other necessary supplies. In response, the Palacios Wellness Council’s Gratitude Project distributed over 800 books to children in the community and facilitated intergenerational connection throughout the city.

Parents as Teachers

Another innovative approach to challenges presented by poverty and unemployment in Palacios has been Parents as Teachers (PAT). PAT “promotes the optimal early development, learning and health of children by supporting and engaging their parents and caregivers” through integrating educational experiences within familial contexts for children, parents and caregivers. Led by a full-time supervisor/educator and a part-time educator, this

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- Palacios Housing Authority
- Palacios Community Hub
- City of Palacios
- Palacios ISD
- Sanford Community Center
- City by the Sea Museum
- The Trull Foundation
- Campaign for Grade Level Reading
- Palacios Community Connection
- Parents as Teachers
- Team First Book
- Communities in Schools
- Texas AgriLife
- Palacios Public Library



initiative has shown promise and hopes to expand its work to incorporate even more families in the years to come.

Phoenix, AZ

When the pandemic exposed a “COVID-19 learning slide” in the reading skills of thousands of children in Phoenix, Read On Phoenix (ROP) and the City of Phoenix doubled down on efforts to increase school readiness, literacy initiatives and early childhood activities. Having been recognized by the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading as a “Pacesetter” community in 2016 and 2017, as well as a “Bright Spot” community in 2020, these efforts have built on nearly a decade of collaboration designed to combat learning loss through addressing digital learning inequities and ensuring affordable housing with a pathway to self-sufficiency for those with low or limited incomes.

Digital Equity

Technology extends and expands educational programming beyond the classroom, which proved essential during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, technology comes with a cost that can often be prohibitive for many families. Recognizing the need for technological assistance, the City of Phoenix initiated several partnerships and collaborations designed to address this need. The city partnered with T-Mobile to distribute over 800 tablets to families in public housing, which have been crucial in educational enrichment and digital literacy training for more than 1,800 people. To complement these efforts, the city partnered with School Connect and Scottsdale Bible Church to use more than \$3.5 million to



purchase more than 12,000 internet-powered laptops for residents of public housing.

Distribution of technology like laptops facilitated online learning for countless students, but these technologies required expansion of existing Wi-Fi networks and broadband internet access throughout Phoenix. The city addressed this need in several ways. The Phoenix Digital Education Connection Canopy (PDECC) brought together school districts and community colleges to increase broadband internet access in areas where the need was the greatest. It now supports a four-square-mile area in which nearly 1,000 students participate in online learning with technical support available seven days a week. Given



its success, PDECC anticipates expansion throughout Phoenix to deliver high-speed internet to over 350,000 families. The city also has invested in maximizing Wi-Fi access, along with Wi-Fi hotspot lending programs that serve hundreds of families in public housing.

Learning Rich Environments

Through the Housing Coalition of Service Providers (HCSP), the city collaborates with more than 70 community partners in education, workforce, health, recreation and other supportive services to assist in developing literacy and learning-rich environments in the city's housing facilities. These initiatives recognize the need for additional support for children and families to become self-sufficient, and provide everything from books to career development resources to family-oriented literacy development programs. Along with educational needs, learning-rich environments seek to provide social and emotional support for children and families through mental health resources. Due to these collaborations, families and children are empowered to keep up with classmates, obtain resources necessary for success and pursue learning within stable housing environments.

Portland, ME

In Portland, like many other communities, the pandemic highlighted many long-standing disparities in educational opportunities and outcomes for low-income families and children. Portland ConnectED exists to combat this challenge. This cross-sector, cradle-to-career partnership includes over 70 organizations from the early



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childhood, K-12, postsecondary, government, business, nonprofit, health and philanthropic sectors that are working in close partnership with Portland Public Schools (PPS) and the Portland Housing Authority (PHA). Through these relationships, Portland ConnectED seeks to bring opportunity to families in public housing and address the barriers that may get in the way of children succeeding in school. These efforts fall into three principal areas: revitalized use of study centers; afterschool, summer and out-of-school learning opportunities; and partnerships with parents and caretakers.

Study Centers

Since 1992, PHA has operated four afterschool drop-in study centers designed to facilitate academic and social success for students who live in public housing. These



centers have been valuable for decades in providing structured study spaces and connecting children with resources in local organizations, such as the Boys & Girls Clubs, and they became essential in assisting children throughout the COVID-19 pandemic with remote learning support amidst hybrid learning. Building on this experience, Portland ConnectED anticipates continued expansion of study centers to better integrate in-school learning with afterschool programming, provide resources to families with specific educational needs, and support families and children to ensure school readiness.

Afterschool, Summer and Out-of-School Learning Opportunities

Beyond study centers, Portland ConnectED and PHA have partnered with various community organizations on a diverse collection of educational initiatives designed to complement in-school education. Through a relationship with the Portland Public Library, multiple summer reading programs connect children in public housing with reading resources and summer learning opportunities. During the pandemic, a \$500,000 investment facilitated the creation of the Out of School Time Network, enabling over 500 children to participate in learning in arts, outdoor education, civic engagement and sports outside of the classroom.

Congratulations to our fellow finalists!



Partnerships With Parents and Caretakers

Recognizing the importance of two-generation strategies to assist in improving learning opportunities and outcomes for children in public housing, Portland ConnectED and PHA have strengthened partnerships with parents and caretakers. Through participation in the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) and Resident Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency (ROSS) programs through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, PHA has connected families with employment networks and resources designed to address basic needs ranging from school supplies to medical care. Portland Empowered has empowered traditionally underserved families and caretakers to advocate for their needs within local policymaking and decisions regarding housing and education, and Starting Strong (an initiative of Portland ConnectED) convenes a Parent Council to guide early childhood education efforts.

Roanoke, VA

In Roanoke, urban renewal has fueled economic growth and resulted in higher concentrations of poverty within two quadrants of the city. Roanoke's leaders are using a "whole-of-government" approach to confront this challenge. Their strategy seeks to combine the efforts of city government departments, community members, and both new and existing partnerships to improve the educational, occupational and health trajectories of those who live in public housing throughout Roanoke. This approach connects governmental agencies with community partners at public housing-dense locations to provide resource hubs to meet the needs of residents. Examples of partners connected through these hubs include

grocery stores, Goodwill, public libraries, senior living centers and public parks.

Community Hubs

Across Roanoke, community hubs have played a central role in distribution of various resources to community members in need. Educational initiatives such as Star City Reads have used hubs in Northwest Roanoke - a community historically underserved and isolated - to give books to children and connect families with educational opportunities, day care and library programs. These library programs have been critical not only in ensuring access to books for children and families in public housing, but also in offering STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) programs, free meals and a safe place to spend time with other children. Utilizing these hubs, additional partners like the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra and the Mill Mountain Zoo have introduced programs in music and animal learning to children who live in public housing.

Beyond education, these hubs continue to shape the landscapes of resources available to those in public housing. One example lies in mental health services, a need that the COVID-19 pandemic uncovered among children and families throughout Roanoke, especially within marginalized communities. Through collaboration with neighborhood organizations, faith-based groups and other initiatives such as Kids Soar, the City of Roanoke has used community hubs within its whole-of-government approach to deliver mental health resources to those in need.

Feeding Southwest Virginia

In partnership with the Star City Reads program, Feeding Southwest Virginia has





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enabled more than 197,000 meals to be served at public libraries in underserved communities in Roanoke since 2014. These meals have been complemented by nutrition classes, meal production training for adults, and youth meals served and coordinated through the Feeding Southwest Virginia Community Solutions Center. Building on these efforts, Feeding Southwest Virginia collaborated with Roanoke’s Public Library System to implement a children’s farmers’ market, where kids can pick out produce and learn about nutrition, and it is developing further connections between impoverished communities in public housing and grocery stores to encourage nutritious and healthy food options.

Sacramento, CA

In Sacramento, the COVID-19 pandemic brought about significant reductions in literacy rates of third-grade readers, with disproportionate effects on children of color and children from low-income communities. These losses have particularly affected children who receive Free and Reduced-Priced Meals (FRPM) and who live in public housing, much of which is concentrated in the Sacramento Promise Zone (PZ). First awarded in 2015, the PZ is a designation from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that identifies regions of particular vulnerability to receive additional federal, state and local support designed to “improve educational outcomes, foster a sustainable economic base, accelerate job creation, promote healthy behaviors, and support sustainably built communities.” Through the efforts of the Sacramento Literacy Foundation (“the Foundation”) and the Sacramento Promise Zone, various initiatives are underway to combat reading losses and poverty-driven adversity.

Promise Zone Literacy Initiative

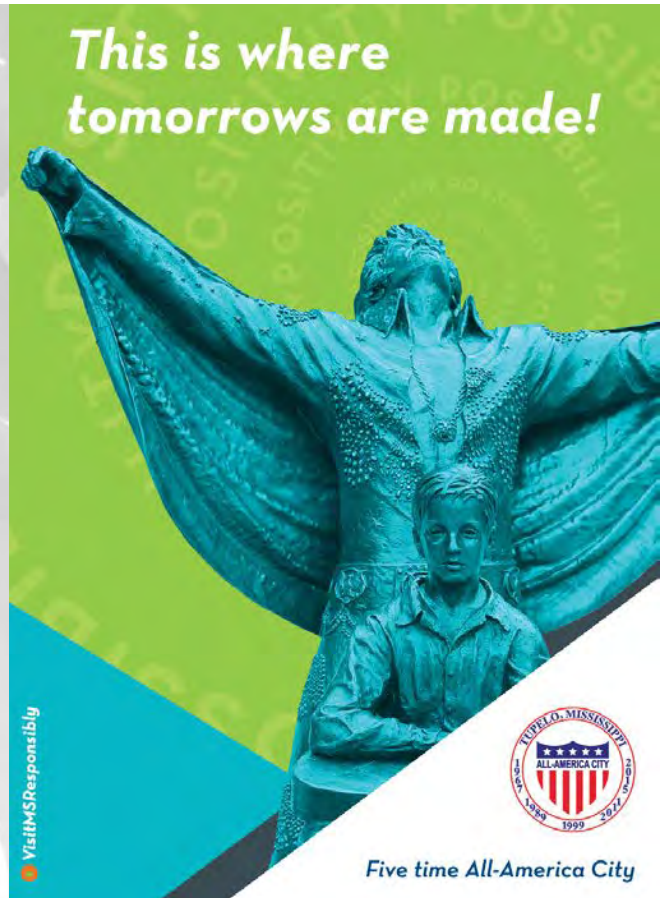
One significant component within the renewed, collective response to COVID-19’s impact on literacy in Sacramento has been the Promise Zone Literacy Initiative. A collaboration between the Foundation and the Promise Zone, this initiative’s goal is for all children who live in the PZ to read at grade level. This is a particular challenge given economic crises within the PZ, as more than 4,300 families who live within the PZ have limited occupational opportunities.

The PZ Literacy Initiative takes a multifaceted approach in improving literacy rates within Sacramento. Central to this



approach is giving books to children living in public and affordable housing, which offers children the chance to complement reading comprehension and communication skills developed in school with opportunities to practice and continue learning at home. The PZ Literacy Initiative also supports various out-of-school, afterschool and summer reading programs to combat any “reading slide” that might take place when students are disconnected from opportunities to learn. Utilizing connections with the Sacramento Public Library and other community partners, these programs include creative writing workshops, literacy tutoring and wellness education. Since the pandemic, these programs have increasingly relied on virtual connections to reach students beyond in-person classroom settings. These programs have been incredibly successful, with more than 14,000 served in new and innovative educational connections through primarily virtual and hybrid means. Going forward, the PZ Literacy Initiative anticipates using these connections to further develop in-person learning opportunities for children in the PZ.

The PZ Literacy Initiative also works to highlight the importance of PZ-oriented literacy efforts throughout the city, sponsoring an annual Walk4Literacy and designating September as “Literacy Month” in Sacramento. Together, these efforts keep literacy at the forefront of policymaking decisions in housing, education and other spheres of governance.



San Antonio, TX

With one in four children living in poverty, the City of San Antonio has sought to foster a citywide movement to improve digital equity, relational supports, school readiness and parental self-sufficiency. To achieve these goals, the city has launched several initiatives that have built upon the success of PreK4SA to address the conditions behind the challenges faced by impoverished children and families.

Ready to Work

One such initiative is Ready to Work, a taxpayer-funded program offering low-income adults the opportunity to pursue high-paying careers in high-demand



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occupations. This initiative pays tuition costs for industry-recognized certifications, associate and bachelor's degrees, and promotes retention of graduates through collaborative relationships with employers and trainees throughout the city. By 2025, this program will have trained and placed 28,000 low-income San Antonians in demand occupations, lifting countless families out of poverty. This program shapes generational trajectories of families, as it connects them to quality early childhood education and child care programs.

Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP)

Approved in 2021, SHIP is a 10-year plan that marks a first step toward achieving quality, accessible, affordable housing choices for all San Antonio households. SHIP maintains a priority in delivering housing choices to families who face particular challenges related to disability, overcrowding and age, achieving this through:

- Preserving existing affordable housing
- Creating new affordable options
- Leveraging other funding sources like Housing Choice Vouchers and SA Ready to Work to boost family incomes and increase the boundaries of affordability

Through SHIP, the City of San Antonio expects to preserve or build 28,000 affordable homes over the next 10 years.

Community Digital Equity Plan and Roadmap

With over 100,000 households lacking sufficient broadband access, technological disparities evident in virtual learning during the 2020-2021 academic year raised awareness of digital equity as a major crisis to resolve in facilitating school readiness and

early childhood learning. To complement stopgap solutions that introduced temporary internet access throughout digitally disconnected neighborhoods and communities, the City of San Antonio introduced a Community Digital Equity Plan and Roadmap in 2021 to specifically target 50 high-priority populations who experience the digital gap the most. This plan integrates expansion of broadband internet access and other technological resources with efforts to improve housing options and reduce systemic inequalities in education, health and employment opportunities.

Springfield, MA

Located in western Massachusetts, Springfield is one of the largest and most diverse communities throughout New England. Springfield continues to contend with challenges associated with deep poverty faced by thousands of people living in the city. City residents, who are likely to be underemployed or in low-paying jobs, confront not only poverty but racism, homelessness, segregation and high rates of preventable health concerns.

In the face of these adversities, heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic, Reading Success by 4th Grade has continued to organize and lead citywide efforts that focus on young children's success. In collaboration with the Springfield Housing Authority (SHA) and its program Talk/Read/Succeed (T/R/S), Reading Success by 4th Grade has sought to combat the most pressing issues faced by impoverished families in Springfield by extending access to the technology necessary for virtual learning and by integrating familial networks into children's learning efforts.



Technology Access

Remote learning during COVID-19 school closures increased awareness of existing disparities in access to technology such as computers and internet access, with impoverished children less likely to have the resources necessary to connect to online school. To combat these issues, SHA helped distribute computers, expand Wi-Fi access through hotspots and assist with online bill payments. When issues arose with technical glitches and challenges for students to remain motivated during virtual learning, T/R/S staff stepped in to provide encouragement and friendly support for both children and families. T/R/S helped students identify and create special spaces in their homes where they could participate in school, and if not possible, T/R/S helped connect children and families to alternative learning spaces in local partner sites, including the Greater Springfield YMCA and other community partners.

Familial Connections

Through collaboration with T/R/S and SHA, Reading Success by 4th Grade seeks to connect impoverished families to supports necessary to assist in their children's education. Outreach workers at T/R/S visited every young family living in affordable housing multiple times during the pandemic, learning the unique needs each family faces and delivering resources, assisting with online learning, and helping families complete preschool registrations. These efforts have been critical in improving preschool readiness and early school success.

Along with these efforts, SHA partner organization Head Start played a critical

role meeting basic needs that impoverished families struggle to access. Some of the basic services offered are day care, preschool and child care for school-age children, along with the provision of educational, nutritional, health and other social services. Head Start also supports parents and caregivers through nutrition, mental health, parenting, relationship and financial education programs. These initiatives combat various problems that contribute to poverty and the educational delays that impoverished children face, seeking to ensure familial wellness and to empower families and caregivers with the resources they need to support their children with school readiness and early school success.

Suncoast Region, FL

The Suncoast Region of Florida - encompassing Charlotte, DeSoto, Manatee and Sarasota counties - is a region marked by incredible diversity of multiracial and multilingual rural, suburban and urban communities ranging in economic status. Within this region, many asset-limited families continue to struggle to ensure that their children will retain reading skills and read at grade level throughout elementary school. Challenges faced by these families only grew during the COVID-19 pandemic, which offered new inroads and opportunities for the Suncoast Region Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (SCGLR) to continue its work in ensuring children retain grade-level reading skills. The following five principles undergird this work:

- School Readiness
- Attendance



- Summer Learning
- Parent and Family Engagement
- Health Determinants

A 2Gen Approach

Collaboration between SCGRL and the Community Foundation of Sarasota County (CFSC) has led to the implementation of a 2Gen approach toward promoting grade-level reading among children from asset-limited families. This approach specifically engages with historically marginalized communities to incorporate the perspectives, values and leadership of parents and caregivers in educational programming and resources. CFSC's 2Gen approach invests in education and certification for parents, caregivers and children, aligning mental health support with academic success. Through this approach, CFSC and SCGRL have provided resources for over 17,000 asset-limited children throughout the Suncoast region. Beyond children, this approach supported 194 parents to enroll in college programs, 85% of whom received wage increases by virtue of additional education. Parents and caregivers are empowered not only to support their children in early childhood education, but also to further their own educational pursuits through additional resources that can alter generational trajectories for countless families and communities.

Along with CFSC, SCGRL partnered with the Sarasota Housing Authority to develop and implement several initiatives designed to combat educational inequities and poverty cycles. These initiatives include affordable housing programs such as Lofts on Lemon, a collection of 128 units in a mixed-income project that stabilizes housing costs for

limited-asset families. Beyond housing, these partnerships support various summer, afterschool and out-of-school learning opportunities. Through Summer Learning Academies and the Sarasota Summer Reading Challenge, more than 9,000 students benefited from summer learning programming. With Stronger Me, Stronger We, SCGLR invests in communities through virtual small groups that seek to increase literacy by connecting children and families to educational resources. These connections develop senses of solidarity and community among families and children as they progress in their literacy journeys.

These collaborations are supported by data-sharing programs that connect school districts, community partners and housing networks. Data sharing, which takes place both at individual and aggregate levels, prevents children from "falling through the cracks" by tracking attendance, disciplinary records, and encouraging success and milestones within each child's educational experiences. Through these networks, SCGRL and its community partners hope to develop further initiatives to address evident community needs and support families and children utilizing a 2Gen approach.

Tarpon Springs, FL

Within Pinellas County, the Tarpon Springs Housing Authority (TSHA) plays a pivotal role in managing and providing affordable housing, along with facilitating resident services that promote family stability and upward mobility for greater quality of life. In Tarpon Springs, as in many other communities, poverty consistently serves



as a barrier to accessing the resources, connections and supports necessary for children to grow, thrive and become successful young adults. These barriers became especially apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic, when families who were already the most vulnerable faced seemingly insurmountable risks in health, education, housing and more.

To break down these barriers and meet these challenges, TSHA collaborated with several governmental agencies and community partners in service of families, caregivers and children whose struggles in accessing affordable housing and other resources affect their education. Building on existing relationships, these partnerships have

transformed TSHA's response to community crises and have delivered countless positive community outcomes.

Cops n' Kids

Founded in 1996, the Cops n' Kids program has evolved from a mentorship program between the Tarpon Springs Police Department and the Local Community Housing Corporation (LCHC) into a multifaceted community resource that emphasizes support for at-risk children and their families. Cops n' Kids is a licensed child care center through the Pinellas County Licensing Board and the Department of Children and Families with a capacity to serve 75 families. First and foremost, Cops



n' Kids focuses on childhood education initiatives. This ranges from daily afterschool programming, homework assistance, and formal 1:1 and small group tutoring for children most in need. STEAM educational opportunities that accompany community service, field trips and alternative learning opportunities complement daily programming. On a monthly basis, programming includes organic gardening, career exploration, performing arts, leadership, team building and education about cultural diversity. When youth participants require additional assistance, Cops n' Kids offers extensive help through academic tutoring programs that involve families and caregivers to support their children.

Beyond solely educational-related services, Cops n' Kids also takes an active role in combating food insecurity. Thanks to support from Feeding Tampa Bay, food distribution expanded from only ensuring children in the program received food during the week to bringing food, toiletries and other household goods to dozens of families. These supports were especially important during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, in which families continued to receive resources while all Cops n' Kids programming shifted to a virtual environment. Cops n' Kids assists families and caregivers through not only delivering resources and academic support, but also providing positive role modeling for children and establishing stronger relationships between police officers and community members. These relationships play a critical role in ensuring community wellness and solidarity amidst the continuing challenges of the COVID pandemic and as TSHA moves forward in assisting at-risk communities.



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