



## Excitement for ELC's Whimsical, Fantastical Storybook Event Reaches Fever Pitch at Ed Smith Stadium

*More Than 600 Children Roll Through "Storybook Street"*

The success of the first annual *Storybook Street* presented by The Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County exceeded all expectations. On April 24, 2021, the Coalition teamed up with the Baltimore Orioles and to present the literacy-meets-the-arts event, a drive-thru extravaganza where children received new books and had the opportunity to watch those same books come to life.

The free, fun, family-friendly event reached more than 600 children in 3 and a half hours, distributing nearly 6,000 books to those in attendance (17 books per family). Designed for children under the age of 7, *Storybook Street* delivered impressive and impactful results, truly building the home libraries of our area's littlest learners.

*Storybook Street* was a book-themed wonderland made possible by a multitude of community collaborations. While the ELC provided the books, Sarasota's premier arts organizations provided the talent. Featuring dance, drama, art, music, movement and more, the event showcased preschool-level pomp and circumstance, delivering meaningful, memorable moments to help foster an early love of reading.

The Coalition takes pride in showcasing the many talents of artists from Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, Sarasota Orchestra, Sarasota Ballet, Venice Theatre, Ringling College, Ringling Museum ROAR program, The Players Centre, Venice Symphony, Music Compound and Irish Dance Academy of Sarasota. Our list of collaborators continues with Sarasota County Libraries, Siesta Key Kiwanis Club, Gulf Coast Latin Chamber of Commerce, Pi Beta Phi Sarasota-Manatee Alumnae Club, Sarasota County Sheriff's Office, and Sarasota County Fire Department.

To add to the children's excitement, Sarasota High School Theatre Group joined us as roving storybook characters, meeting and greeting their little fans as they waited in the car queue.

A special thank you to local nonprofit, Embracing Our Differences, an avid early literacy supporter and *Storybook Street* book sponsor. We are also grateful for the strong support of the Community Foundation of Sarasota County for book purchases as well as the PNC Bank Foundation's 3Ts Campaign: *Tune In, Talk More, Take Turns*.

As sensational as *Storybook Street* was, it's no wonder the ELC is already making plans for hosting this unique event on an annual basis.

For more information about the mission, work and literacy outreach of the Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County, contact Ana McClendon, Community Outreach Coordinator at 941-954-4830 ext. 225 or [amcclendon@earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org](mailto:amcclendon@earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org)





















