



## ELC's Signature Storybook Event Hits Another Home Run in 2021

*Nearly 700 Children Roll Through "Storybook Street: South County"*

'If you build it, they will come' rings true for the Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County as the agency's *Storybook Street* event once again meets with overwhelming success, this time at CoolToday Park: Spring Training Home of the Atlanta Braves.

On September 18, 2021, the Coalition teamed up with the Braves organization in North Port to present its literacy-meets-the-arts event, a drive-thru extravaganza where children received new books and watched those same books come to life.

The free, fun, family-friendly event reached nearly 700 children in three hours, distributing 5,500 books to those in attendance (18 books per family). Designed for children under the age of 7, *Storybook Street* delivered remarkable results, effectively building the home libraries of our area's littlest learners.

The south county event happened on the heels of a super successful run in Sarasota in April 2021 at Ed Smith Stadium: Spring Training Home of the Baltimore Orioles. Together, the two events distributed 11,500 books and reached nearly 1,300 young children.

Both book-themed wonderlands were 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 displayed preschool-level spectacle, delivering meaningful, memorable moments to help foster an early love of reading.

From unicyclists and fiddlers to ballerinas and a baseball mascot, the September *Storybook Street* showcased the many talents of artists from Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, Sarasota Orchestra, Sarasota Ballet, Venice Theatre, Ringling College of Art + Design, Ringling Museum ROAR program, Circus Arts Conservatory, Florida Studio Theatre, Venice Symphony, and Irish Dance Academy of Sarasota. Our list of collaborators continues with Sarasota County Libraries, Siesta Key Kiwanis Club, and Pi Beta Phi Sarasota-Manatee Alumnae Club.

A special thank you to The Community Foundation of Sarasota County for assisting with some of the book purchases as well as the PNC Bank Foundation's 3Ts Campaign: *Tune In, Talk More, Take Turns*.

Stay tuned for news of *Storybook Street 2022*, as the unique event will now be hosted annually.

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 [amccclendon@earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org](mailto:amccclendon@earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org)











