



SARASOTA'S READING RECOVERY® PLAYBOOK

SARASOTA'S READING RECOVERY® STORY

The back of a napkin: That's where the plan to bring Reading Recovery to Sarasota County was first mapped out. The enthusiasm generated during a lunch meeting among a county educator, a Reading Recovery expert, a local philanthropist, and Gulf Coast Community Foundation was hard to contain.

Now that all 23 of Sarasota County's elementary schools have at least one Reading Recovery teacher on staff, that enthusiasm is bubbling over again. After seeing the major impact the program has already had in Sarasota County over just a couple of years, everyone involved is eager to spread the word and show other communities how they can bring Reading Recovery to their own school districts.

You might be asking at this point, "What is Reading Recovery?" It's a thoroughly researched and proven early literacy intervention for the lowest-achieving first graders. Those students meet daily for 30-minute, one-to-one lessons with highly trained teachers. Typically lasting 12 to 20

weeks on average, the lessons provide intense, individualized reading and writing instruction focused on prevention rather than remediation. Reading Recovery was developed in New Zealand in the 1970s and has been used in the United States since 1984. While there have been previous implementations in Florida, there have been no active programs in the state since 2009.

Sarasota philanthropists Keith and Linda Monda wanted to change that. They were familiar with Reading Recovery through their involvement with The Ohio State University, which owns the trademark for Reading Recovery in the United States. OSU offers training for Reading Recovery and is also the home of the International Data Evaluation Center, which evaluates and collects data from Reading Recovery programs across the country.



IMPLEMENTING READING RECOVERY

The Mondas' passion and persistence paid off. Reading Recovery was first brought to Sarasota County in 2015, a result of a partnership forged by Sarasota County Schools, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, the Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation, the Mondas and other local philanthropists. After just two years, results have already been impressive.

For the 2016-17 school year, during which the Reading Recovery program had been implemented in all 10 of the county's Title I elementary schools, 86% of the 139 students who received a complete Reading Recovery intervention reached average levels of reading and writing. Nationally, approximately 75% of students who complete a Reading Recovery intervention meet grade-level expectations in reading and writing.

Reading Recovery is impacting not just the students who participate but also their classroom teachers, their schools, and the school district as a whole. Because of

their deep understanding of literacy theory and practice, Reading Recovery-trained professionals become experts for their schools and districts.

With this early intervention, Reading Recovery students become able to keep up with (and maybe even surpass) their grade-level peers, which impacts their entire academic careers. Instead of falling behind more and more each year, they make gains and start seeing success.

It was no easy task to bring Reading Recovery into the Sarasota County school district, but the results have made all the effort more than worthwhile. And the work done in Sarasota County is easily replicable in other school districts. Here we share lessons learned and outline the steps we took to bring Reading Recovery to Sarasota County and begin transforming the school district—and the region.



START WITH AN IDEA THAT MEETS A NEED.

READING RECOVERY IS A PROVEN INTERVENTION. SINCE IMPLEMENTATION IN THE UNITED STATES OVER 2.3 MILLION CHILDREN HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE PROGRAM.

In Sarasota County, 29% of third-grade students do not read at grade level. Reading Recovery is a proven intervention. Since implementation in the United States over 2.3 million children have participated in the program.

The structure for Sarasota County is to have Reading Recovery teacher salaries covered through Title I funding. Those teachers spend their mornings working with first graders in the program and their afternoons providing small-group reading instruction to other students. Reading Recovery also requires a Teacher Leader, who provides training and oversight, reporting, and also works with students directly.

Gulf Coast Community Foundation reached out to The Ohio State University for information and insight. We hired a consultant who was an expert Reading Recovery Trainer and recruited internally

for a Teacher Leader. That position required 15 hours of both online and in-person post-graduate classes at Ohio State, while simultaneously working as a Reading Recovery teacher in the district.

In their first year, Sarasota Reading Recovery teachers work with students four days a week, with the fifth day reserved for graduate-level training. This was provided by our consultant with a shared arrangement through the University of South Florida.



MIX IN PASSIONATE SUPPORTERS.

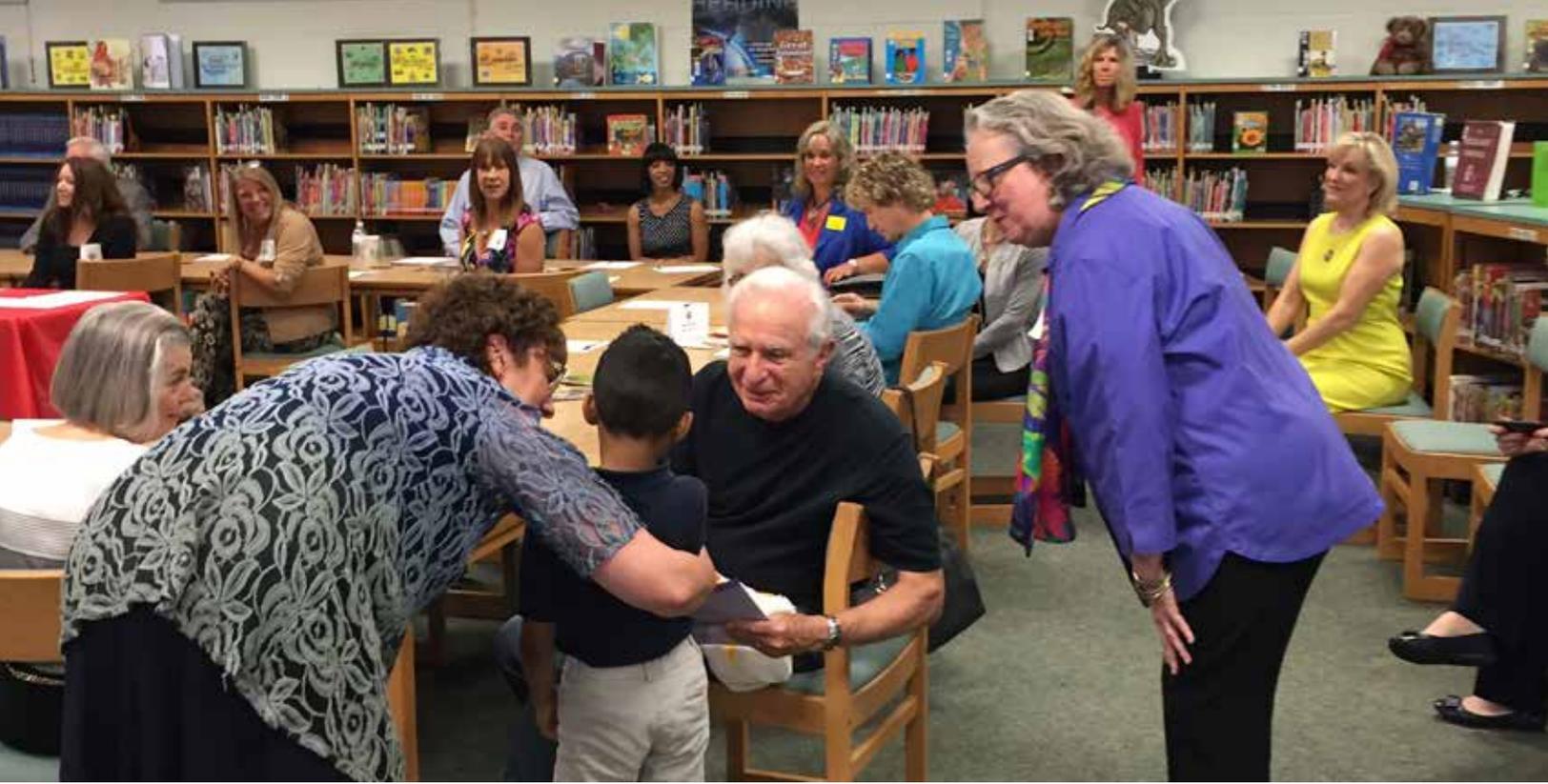
First-year implementation costs were estimated at \$225,000, which included training and an annual salary for a local Reading Recovery Teacher Leader, consultant fees, training for the schools' individual Reading Recovery teachers, and about \$40,000 for the construction of a local training facility at one elementary school. Consisting of a larger classroom and smaller tutoring room joined by a one-way mirror, it would be used for "behind the glass" sessions observed by Reading Recovery teachers during the training they receive in their first year in the program and two to three times throughout the school year.

Initial funding was raised through the partners and donors, with Gulf Coast coordinating and shepherding the efforts through the school district. Since that

time, a number of other local donors have come on board to support expanding Reading Recovery in Sarasota County's schools. The school district also allocated some of its own funds to build a second "behind the glass" training facility.

Results were promising that first year. Of the 47 students who received a complete Reading Recovery intervention of 20 weeks or less, 85% reached average levels of reading and writing. Positive feedback started coming in from the students' classroom teachers, and the schools began embracing the program.

AT ONE SCHOOL, THE PRINCIPAL MET WITH READING RECOVERY STUDENTS EVERY FRIDAY MORNING FOR BOOK BUDDIES. THIS ONGOING SUPPORT HAD A POSITIVE EFFECT ON ENSURING THAT THE STUDENTS MAINTAINED THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE PROGRAM. SHE PROVIDED PERSONALIZED BAGS WITH INDIVIDUALIZED, READABLE BOOKS FOR EACH CHILD.



SCALE UP AT A RATE THAT MATCHES DEMAND AND SUPPORT.

By December 2015, Gulf Coast was seeing the potential to bring Reading Recovery into all 10 of Sarasota County's Title I elementary schools. It was willing to raise the money needed if the principals wanted the program, which they resoundingly did.

During the summer of 2016, an additional step was taken to strengthen and support Reading Recovery. The partners found a Reading Recovery teacher willing to be stipended over the summer to work with children four mornings a week at a summer camp in an economically disadvantaged area of Sarasota. Through what came to be called the Kids READ program, she worked with 11 students, helping reduce "summer slide."

The 2016-17 school year began with 20 Reading Recovery teachers at all 10 Sarasota County Title I elementary schools. In the spring, the district received its first assessment by the International Data Evaluation Center at OSU and got positive reviews. Following this successful review, the district offered to provide salary funding for a Reading Recovery teacher in each non-Title I school, a goal that would take two years. With generous funding through the Barancik Foundation these additional teachers were all funded in the first year.

During the summer of 2017, the Kids READ program expanded to six sites throughout Sarasota County, with one to three stipended Reading Recovery teachers at each site. Those teachers worked with struggling readers entering first or second grade who either would be entering the Reading Recovery program in the fall or needed additional help in preparation for second grade. Nearly all of the children who participated made substantial progress, and the students' classroom teachers received information about each student to help with instructional planning.

Today there is now at least one Reading Recovery teacher in every Sarasota County elementary school, and one of the Title I schools has expanded to three Reading Recovery teachers to meet student need. Training materials have also been designed for classroom volunteers, to help them when working with students.



LOOKING FORWARD

Ongoing philanthropic expense for Reading Recovery in Sarasota County during future school years is expected to be \$100,000 to \$150,000, including Teacher Leader funding and training expenses for new Reading Recovery teachers. Annual expenses for Kids READ are estimated at \$50,000. Gulf Coast Community Foundation's next goal is to raise at least five years of funding for the program, reaching out to both new donors and those who have already contributed to Reading Recovery efforts.

Cost Savings

Questions often arise regarding the expense associated with the program. Not counting teacher salaries (covered by Title I or district funds), the expenses are controllable at \$5,000 for training and supplies in each teacher's first year, and then ongoing maintenance and Teacher Leader salary.

Through reducing kindergarten and first-grade retention, Reading Recovery creates important cost benefits for school districts. Each retention costs a school system the per-pupil cost

for another year in school (\$9,500 in Sarasota County), a figure that is higher than the cost of providing Reading Recovery service. In addition, the long-term impact of students not keeping up with their classes—and the related social and psychological impact—make a successful early intervention priceless.

Continued support from the county's elementary schools also helps broaden the impacts of Reading Recovery. Schools are already seeing the capacity-building power of the program, as formally trained Reading Recovery teachers share tips and techniques with classroom teachers at their schools.

THE READING RECOVERY SAVINGS REALIZED THROUGH REDUCED RETENTIONS CAN BE ESTIMATED BY SUBTRACTING THE PER-PUPIL READING RECOVERY COST FROM THE PER-PUPIL COST FOR THE DISTRICT AND THEN MULTIPLYING BY THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN WHOSE LESSONS WERE SUCCESSFULLY DISCONTINUED.

AT ONE SCHOOL, OLDER STUDENTS WERE PAIRED WITH FIRST-GRADE PARTNERS TO HELP THEM PRACTICE THEIR READING. OTHER SCHOOLS HAVE FOLLOWED SUIT, SETTING UP BOOK CLUBS AND OTHER EFFORTS DESIGNED TO BUILD ON THE SUCCESS OF READING RECOVERY.



THANK YOU

The long-term goal? To see Reading Recovery make a significant impact on third-grade standardized testing scores, elementary school graduation rates, and beyond.

Partnership has been a key component of our local success and is a necessary element for replication by other school districts. To get the program to where it is in Sarasota County today, it has taken passion and commitment from everyone involved, from the school district and its teachers to the local philanthropic organizations and individual donors who helped move things at a faster pace. Working together, the various partners addressed budgeting issues and embraced new ideas to meet a need and help transform the lives of students, the local education system, and the region in general.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND PHILANTHROPISTS

Gulf Coast would like to acknowledge the partnership of over 60 individuals who invested in our Reading Recovery Initiative:

Keith and Linda Monda
Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation
Frank Brunckhorst
Bob and Lin Williams

Sarasota County School District Leadership:
Sarasota County School Board
Todd Bowden, Superintendent
Lori White, Former Superintendent
Laura Kingsley, Assistant Superintendent
Lisa Fisher, Teacher Leader
Dr. Lea McGee, Literacy Consultant
Chris Renouf, Elementary Education, Executive Director

STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION

If you're interested in bringing Reading Recovery to your district, here are some of the key steps to take:

1. Obtain interest and support from your district administration.

Because it's an intense, individualized, multi-week program that requires significant teacher training, Reading Recovery needs buy-in from school administrators and faculty for it to be successful.

2. Tap resources to gain a greater understanding of Reading Recovery and its requirements for schools and teachers.

The Ohio State University Reading Recovery Project (rrosu.org) and the Reading Recovery Council of North America (readingrecovery.org) offer general information on Reading Recovery, examples of lessons, and training requirements and resources. RRCNA's *A Site Coordinator's Guide to the Effective Implementation of Reading Recovery* offers a step-by-step plan for school administrators and staff, providing guidelines for budgeting, recruiting and training teachers, and setting up Reading Recovery facilities in schools. For data, visit the website for the International Data Evaluation Center (www.idecweb.us).

3. Build a strategy and budget for implementation.

Reading Recovery ideally is implemented with at least two teachers in a school. Rollout can begin on a smaller level, as Sarasota County did by starting with three schools. But for maximum impact, a strategy should aim for eventual multi-school or district-wide implementation.

Funding needed includes a Teacher Leader's salary (and tuition at a Reading Recovery University Training Center); Teacher Leader training (if they aren't already certified); training expenses for each Reading Recovery teacher; buildout of a "behind the glass" Reading Recovery training facility in at least one school; and books and supplies. Title I funding can pay for individual teacher salaries.

4. Look for external funding to augment your school district budget.

Reach out to local funders, such as area philanthropists and community or private foundations. In Sarasota County, external funding helped get Reading Recovery into schools in the first place and then sped up its rollout into all district schools.

5. Build on success.

Gather data to track Reading Recovery's impact, especially if you start off at a few schools and then plan to expand. This helps show both school administrators and community funders the effect the program has and why financially supporting it is worthwhile.