THE BIG NEW PLAN

By Bronwyn Beightol, Manatee Area President, United Way Suncoast

Since January 2019, we have been listening to our community, reaching out to hear community voice and shared aspirations.

Recently, we held a meeting of church leaders, educators, government officials, and civic-minded concerned citizens at a church in Downtown Bradenton.

Here is a look at what we discussed, and the unveiling of a plan we know can make a BIG difference in creating a more hopeful future for our children and families... together.

In 2015, as we were developing the partnerships and 'structure' for the Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, a question arose. How do we ensure that people recognize THE SCGLR, not side efforts that may not have intended results or may not follow the strategies? Remember, partnering in this...

YEE-HAW!

Learn more about Kindergarten Readiness [time: 2:30]

It’s time for the Kindergarten Round-up, and thanks to the help of incredible volunteers, SCGLR is officially ready to distribute Kindergarten Readiness Bags to kiddos in our four-county region.

6,100 Kindergarten Readiness Bags will be distributed at Kindergarten Round-up events in Charlotte, DeSoto, and Sarasota counties, and at Title 1 schools in Manatee County. Please check SCGLR’s events calendar for dates, times, and locations or SCGLR’s Facebook event listings.

NOTE: Students who do not attend Kindergarten Readiness events will receive their bags at registration.

Each Kindergarten Readiness Bag includes:

- Alphabet flashcards
- First-word flashcards
- Number flashcards
strategies? Remember, partnering in this way was very new.

I will always remember the answer Debra Jacobs gave... "We don’t. I think success arrives when people begin to own this moral imperative and maybe even come to believe that they invented it!"

That philosophy has guided our leadership of this effort and is foundational to The Big Plan.

When Ralph Smith, Managing Director of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading talks about long-term success, he emphasizes the need for support or engagement in the right "dosage" and "frequency" of efforts to ensure that a foundation for lifetime success has been established in our community, for our children.

We believe that the only way to get to those, is by engaging our entire community in ways big and small - not always prescriptive and certainly not able to be highlighted here today due to the number of people who continue to ask themselves, "What can I do today to make a difference?" and respond with action.

As we continue to elevate and amplify the impact of SCGLR efforts in Manatee County, one necessity continues to surface... we need more community voice.

We need to better understand what individuals are facing in order to build connective tissue between outside and inside school time. For lasting success, it is important that we have all of the voices, and that only happens when we turn outward.

With Rich Harwood's launch of his new book Stepping Forward, about authentic community engagement, I'd like to share one of my key thoughts from his latest Harwood Summit: When you create something with, not for, people, it accelerates connection. To do this, we must make space to think with one another and structure different conversations - conversations that cultivate habit change.

THAT is The Big Plan.

Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, a Walk to Respect

Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass: A Walk To Respect
I leave you with the inspirational words of lyricist and rapper, Eminem, from his song Lose Yourself:

*If you had one shot, one opportunity to seize everything you ever wanted in one moment, would you capture it or just let it slip? You only get one shot, do not miss your chance... opportunity comes once in a lifetime.*

You can do anything you set your mind to.

This is our shot, our moment to make a difference! A thriving democracy requires that all of us have equitable access to opportunities to create the life we imagine...

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As part of Honoring and Onward*, in partnership with WestCoast Black Theatre Troupe, The Patterson Foundation is proud to announce a staged reading of a new one-act play, *Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, a Walk to Respect*, by Beth Duda with original spoken word poetry by Cedric Hameed.

Frederick Douglass, a true radical with a fiery spirit, believed in racial equality for everyone. Douglass dedicated his life, writings, and career to abolishing slavery everywhere.

Abraham Lincoln, cautious and considered, while opposed to slavery, was first and foremost a patriot intent on preserving the Union at all costs. These two self-made men, at a time when our divided nation faced annihilation, faced their differences with courage and compassion, forging a friendship that helped to end the Civil War and reunite our nation.

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Join Embracing Our Differences (EOD) and SCGLR as a volunteer reader on TUESDAY, MARCH 10 for Embracing Our Differences Reading Day!

This year, EOD will explore lessons of diversity, inclusion, respect and integrity in Sarasota and Manatee County classrooms through the writings of Todd Parr and Patricia Polacco.

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We welcome your thoughts. Contact us at info@GradeLevelReadingSuncoast.net.