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YMCA READS! Receives \$2 Million Increase in State Funding

Tampa, FL (June 23, 2014) – The Florida Alliance of YMCAs will receive nearly \$2 million more from the Florida Legislature in the 2014-2015 fiscal year for the YMCA READS! program. The increase in dollars from \$764,000 to \$2,764,000 means the program, currently offered in 15 locations across the state, will grow to approximately 40.

“I think this speaks to two things: the quality of the program itself and the desire of the Florida Legislature to fund highly accountable, efficient and effective programs that serve the people of Florida,” said Todd Rosenbaum, Executive Director of the Florida Alliance of YMCAs.

In Hillsborough County, YMCA READS! is currently offered weekdays at Sulphur Springs Elementary School during the school year. For the past two years, the program has reported a high success rate, averaging over 90-percent of students making reading improvements. During the 2013-2014 school year, [the Tampa Metropolitan Area YMCA](#) served 82 students with 20 volunteer mentors and two staff members. The Tampa Y hopes to expand the program into a second school location for the upcoming new school year.

YMCA READS! seeks to close the gap in students’ reading performance and the State of Florida’s reading performance expectations. The program meets the educational and developmental needs of students by providing structured and supervised services. The primary focus is on improving students’ reading skills. Additional services are provided to develop the whole child, including meeting each child’s need for relationship-building and greater self-esteem. Volunteer mentors deliver the program services under the supervision of an associate program director.

Since its inception in 2005, YMCA READS! has impacted 10,380 students in 18 counties through partnership with 46 public schools. Funded through the Department of Education and augmented by a contribution from local YMCAs, use of classroom space in local schools and the efforts of over 4,000 mentors, the program represents a successful partnership of public and private dollars, community support and non-profit leadership. Statewide outcomes for YMCA READS! demonstrate consistent positive results. The Ounce of Prevention Fund, a private non-profit organization, uses quantitative and qualitative data on program performance and participant outcomes in reviewing the program. Reports indicate a consistent history of student success across each year, with more than 96-percent of participants demonstrating an improvement in SIPPs (Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words) evaluations each of the last three years.

[Click here](#) for more information on YMCA READS! at Sulphur Springs Elementary. For more information on the program’s statewide impact, contact Todd Rosenbaum at the Florida Alliance of YMCAs at todd.rosenbaum@floridaymcas.org or 850-525-0342.

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About the Tampa Y

The Tampa Metropolitan Area YMCA is a cause-driven [4-star charity](#) and one of the area's leading nonprofits, strengthening Hillsborough and East Pasco communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Across the Association, 19 facilities engage more than 167,000 men, women and children — regardless of age, income or background — to nurture the potential of children and teens, improve our community's health and well-being, and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors. The Tampa Y has long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver, lasting personal and social change. www.tampaymca.org