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SPRINGDALE WINS NATIONAL AWARD FOR EFFORTS TO IMPROVE EARLY LITERACY



SPRINGDALE, ARKANSAS (June 20, 2017) – The City of Springdale received the prestigious All-America City Award for its civic engagement to help more young children achieve grade-level reading proficiency and early school success. Springdale was one of 15 communities nationwide to receive the award from the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and the National Civic League.

“We are so honored to receive the All-America City Award, which recognizes the efforts of our entire community and the

collaboration of so many organizations, educators, parents and volunteers working together to ensure that all our children can read proficiently and reach their full potential,” said Springdale Mayor Doug Sprouse.

“This award demonstrates Springdale's commitment to achieving the state-wide Arkansas Campaign for Grade Level Reading and R.I.S.E. Arkansas (Reading Initiative for Student Excellence) goals to build a culture of reading, educate parents about the importance of reading, increase access to books at home and boost professional development for educators,” said Superintendent of Springdale Public Schools, Dr. Jim Rollins.

Springdale's "OneCommunity Reads, UnaComunidad Leyendo!" program, which started in 2013, was critical in achieving the All-America City Award.

“When OneCommunity Reads, UnaComunidad Leyendo! launched, its goal was to develop a culture of reading among Springdale School District families, including where Spanish and Marshallese are spoken at home,” said Diana Gonzales Worthen, chair and co-founder of [OneCommunity](#). “This award signals the progress we have made towards the grade-level reading impact areas through enhanced parent engagement, reduced chronic absences and decreased summer learning loss. It takes all of us to move the needle — we are grateful for the many organizations and individuals who have worked so hard on behalf of the children and families of Springdale.”

To select the 15 [All-America City Award winners](#), a panel of judges examined self-assessments from the 27 communities that were nominated by National Civic League and the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading as finalists. Community self-assessments are a rigorous process designed to help communities reflect on what’s working and prepare for the next phase of learning and action.

The award recognized Springdale for exemplary progress to support student and parent success in the Springdale School District. Through community-wide partnerships, Springdale has:

- **Reduced chronic absenteeism rates by nearly 70 percent** at [Monitor](#) and [Parson Hills](#) elementary schools. In Arkansas, a student is defined as chronically absent when they miss 18 or more days of school per year. Both elementary schools moved the needle by informing parents about the importance of good attendance, monitoring attendance data monthly for patterns and trends, establishing a positive and engaging school climate, and reaching out to parents proactively and personally when a student misses school.
- **Decreased summer learning loss** among rising first through fourth graders from 81 percent in 2014–2015 to 89 percent 2015–2016 at George and Jones elementary schools in part to OneCommunity’s *Feed Your Brain* program. Through *Feed Your Brain*, students have the opportunity to read bilingual books and learn reading techniques to encourage learning over the summer months.
- **Increased parent engagement** through the *Parents Taking Leadership Action* program, which provides parents interactive lessons in their native language aimed at strengthening parent-school communication, increasing educational awareness and enhancing the leadership potential of parents from diverse populations.

To learn more about Springdale’s success, read their community profile on [the award website](#).

In Springdale, OneCommunity Reads is supported by the [City of Springdale](#), [Springdale Public Schools](#), [The Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation](#) and [the Arkansas Campaign for Grade Level Reading](#).

This fall, the community-wide attention on reading will build with the introduction of the new “Springdale Reads” campaign, part of [ForwARd Arkansas](#), which is a partnership between the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, the Walton Family Foundation and the Arkansas State Board of Education.

Reading proficiency by the end of third grade is a critical milestone toward high school graduation and career success, because it marks the transition from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.” National tests show that two-thirds of U.S. fourth graders (four-fifths of students from low-income families) are not reading proficiently. Only 31 percent of Arkansas

students are reading proficiently by the end of third grade. Students who have not mastered reading by third grade are less likely to complete high school or college.



On Wednesday, June 21, at 10:30 a.m. the Moonshot Rocket Bus will stop at Parsons Hill Elementary on its national tour to promote literacy. Parsons Hills is a *Feed Your Brain* program participant. Moonshot Moment was founded by the Indian River, Florida Campaign for Grade Level Reading, another local grade-level reading peer community. (Press are welcome to attend.)

To learn more about the All-America City Award criteria and to view profiles for each All-America City Award recipient, visit gradelevelreading.net/aacaward.

About the Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

The Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (AR-GLR) was launched in 2011 by the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation (WRF) to move the needle on education outcomes in Arkansas by focusing on third grade reading proficiency. AR-GLR is managed in partnership with Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, the Arkansas Community Foundation and the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation. AR-GLR is a collaborative effort of more than 25 organizations that believe the only way to advance grade-level reading is to work collectively and in partnership with families, educators, policymakers and business leaders around the state. To learn more, visit www.ar-qlr.net/.

About the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

Launched in 2010, the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is a collaborative effort of funders, nonprofit partners, business leaders, public officials, government agencies, states and communities across the nation to ensure that many more children from low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career and active citizenship. Since its launch, the GLR Campaign has grown to include more than 300 communities, representing 42 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, with more than 3,800 local organizations and 250 state and local funders (including 168 United Ways). To learn more, visit gradelevelreading.net and follow the movement on Twitter [@readingby3rd](https://twitter.com/readingby3rd).

About the National Civic League

For more than 120 years, the [National Civic League \(NCL\)](http://www.ncl.org) has worked to advance good governance and civic engagement to create inclusive, thriving communities. We achieve this by inspiring, supporting and recognizing equitable approaches to community decision-making. Through its signature effort, the All-America City Award and its work on racial healing, sustainability, health equity and fiscal sustainability, NCL supports cities to create a better, more equitable and inclusive future.

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