

Roots and Wings Expands Free Reading Program to Five New Palm Beach County Schools

Project UpLift will serve 24 Title 1 elementary schools this year, following a year in which 96% of third graders in the program made reading gains

BOCA RATON, FL, UNITED STATES, August 20, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Roots and Wings](#), Palm Beach County's largest local nonprofit focused on literacy and teacher recognition, announced today that its [Project UpLift](#)

reading program is expanding to five additional schools for the 2026–27 academic year. With the additions, the nonprofit will now operate in 24 Title 1 elementary schools throughout Palm Beach County, marking the largest footprint in the organization's history.



“

With this support, more students and their families have the tools they need to succeed in their educational journeys.”

Michael J. Burke, The School District of Palm Beach County Superintendent

The five new schools are: Banyan Creek Elementary, Barton Elementary, Diamond View Elementary, Forest Park Elementary, and Poinciana Elementary.

The expansion comes as Palm Beach County continues to face a significant early-literacy challenge. Only 57% of Palm Beach County third graders are reading on grade level, with proficiency rates even lower at many Title 1 schools. Research has also shown that students who are not proficient readers by the end of third grade are four times

more likely to leave high school without earning a diploma.

Project UpLift is a free after-school tutoring program designed for elementary students reading in the bottom 25% of their class. Participating students receive a minimum of 54 hours of focused literacy instruction over the course of the school year. Students learn in groups of 10 or fewer, are grouped according to specific learning needs, and are taught by certified teachers from their own schools using lesson plans developed by each school's Project UpLift Literacy

Coordinator.

The model is producing measurable results. During the 2024–25 school year, 93% of Project UpLift students demonstrated gains on their i-Ready reading assessments, including 96% of third graders enrolled in the program. Third-grade participants were promoted on par with classmates who did not participate — despite Project UpLift students having entered the year in the bottom quarter of their class academically.

“Third grade is the critical year,” said Ted Hoskinson, Founder and President of Roots and Wings. “Up to that point, a child is learning to read. After that, they’re reading to learn, and a student who hasn’t gotten there yet can spend the rest of their education trying to catch up. Adding five schools means several hundred more children will have access to the help they need.”

Hoskinson said the program’s strength comes from its consistency and accessibility. “Students learn in a small group taught by a teacher they already know, alongside classmates they know, all within the familiar environment of their own school. That consistency and sense of safety matters, and it’s one of the reasons principals continue asking us to bring Project UpLift to their schools.”

Another important component of Project UpLift is “showing up,” and students are rewarded for perfect attendance as well as for reading gains. “Building a child’s self-confidence is a key factor in academic success,” Hoskinson said. “Many of our students have never received academic recognition before. Celebrating their hard work and progress gives them a chance to see themselves as successful students, and just as importantly, gives their families a chance to see them in that new light too. That sense of pride can change the way a child thinks about themselves and what they and their families believe they can achieve.”



Roots and Wings - Project UpLift



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At Pine Grove Elementary School, one of the program's longest-running partner schools, the impact has compounded over several years.

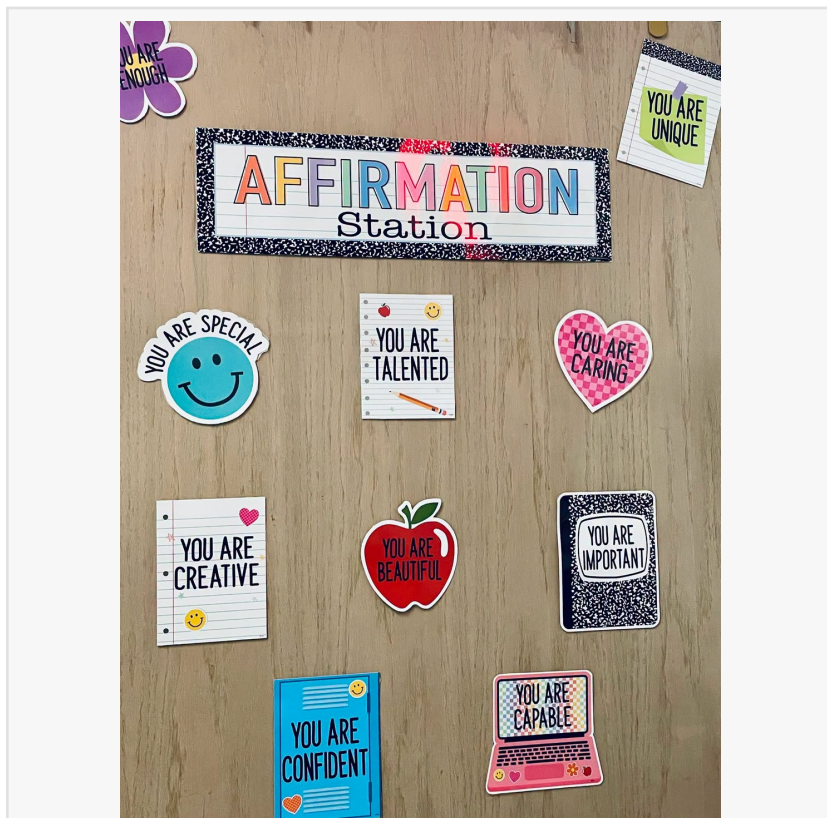
"Roots and Wings has been a steadfast ally in our mission to uplift and empower every student," said Principal Shauntay King. "Thanks to this strong and nurturing partnership, we've witnessed remarkable growth. Our third-grade reading scores have soared from just 16% in 2017 to an outstanding 73% in 2025."

The School District of Palm Beach County has also recognized the organization's role in supporting students and families. "The School District of Palm Beach County appreciates Roots and Wings for their dedication to our students," said Superintendent Michael J. Burke. "With this support, more students and their families have the tools they need to succeed in their educational journeys."

With five new schools joining Project UpLift this year, Roots and Wings will have the opportunity to reach hundreds more children and families across Palm Beach County. For each student, the goal goes beyond improving reading scores. It is about helping children become stronger readers, more confident learners, and students who believe in their own ability to succeed.

"Every child deserves the opportunity to become a successful reader," Hoskinson said. "With Project UpLift, we want children to know that they can do this, that people believe in them, and that their future is full of possibilities."

About Roots and Wings



Affirmation Station



Roots and Wings - Project UpLift

Founded in 2016, Roots and Wings has been a champion for literacy in Palm Beach County. The nonprofit focuses on improving literacy rates so every child has the tools to succeed. Its mission is to enhance the educational experience and outcomes for students by providing tutoring and mentoring that strengthen reading, writing, and comprehension skills. Roots and Wings operates two key initiatives: Project UpLift, a free, small-group, after-school tutorial program that helps students primarily in grades 1–3 who are reading one or two levels below grade level reach proficiency by the end of third grade; and The Above and Beyond Awards, a recognition program honoring outstanding teachers and staff chosen by their peers for exceptional support of students, schools, and the community. Today, the organization collaborates with 24 schools, countless teachers and volunteers, and over 1,600 students to deliver its programs and build a supportive educational environment.

Learn more at <https://rootsandwingsinc.org>.

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