



*Roots and Wings*SM

OUR STORY



*"You can't go back and change the beginning,
but you can start where you are and change the ending."*

C. S. Lewis

AN INTRODUCTION

There's a silent threat menacing our country that has been in place for far too long. Unlike a pandemic, it does not kill, but it does stop children from growing up to be productive adults. It is illiteracy and the staggering number of children in this country who are not learning to read.

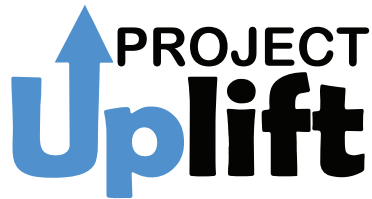
Roots and Wings, a non-profit organization headquartered in Delray Beach, FL, was launched in 2016 to combat the threat of illiteracy and to promote excellence in public education. Upon the death of his wife Anne, Ted Hoskinson founded Roots and Wings as the realization of a dream he and Anne had shared to positively impact the quality of life for disadvantaged children. The charity's name is the one that Anne had carefully chosen to represent the impact that she and Ted had envisioned.

At Roots and Wings the mission is to improve the quality of education in our extended south Florida community by supporting the students who most need help in learning to read and providing encouragement for the teachers who are working hard each day to influence and inspire children to learn.

Roots and Wings' leadership has chosen to focus on the development of strong curiosity and eagerness to learn. In realizing this vision, Roots and Wings is dedicated to rewarding and encouraging committed Master Teachers who will be our partners in helping children become strong readers and lifelong learners.



OUR PROGRAMS



Above and Beyond Awards

Project UpLift: Launched in 2017 at Pine Grove Elementary School in Delray Beach, Project UpLift is a free, intensive, small-group, after-school tutoring program, primarily targeted to struggling 2nd and 3rd grade readers attending Title One elementary schools in Delray Beach, Boynton Beach and Boca Raton, FL. Title One schools are those schools where 75% or more of students receive free or reduced priced lunch. The children we serve may not have a bed to sleep in, they may not have enough to eat at home, and they may have parents who do not speak English. Three years after its founding, Project UpLift is now serving 7 Title One schools in the 3 communities. We have also launched pilot programs for 1st grade at 6 schools and 4th grade pilots at 2 schools. In addition, Roots and Wings is exploring the opportunity to expand Project UpLift from 3 days to 5 days per week, extending the hours to 6 p.m. in the evening, and including a dynamic arts integration program and a basic life skills component that will add both depth and texture to the learning experiences. We will enhance the reading focus to include complementary activities that involve reading while exploring the visual and performing arts, and bringing science and math to life with S.T.E.A.M.-based learning. Our plan is to complement interactive learning with mentoring in basic life skills to include etiquette, budgeting, nutrition, and exercise.



Project UpLift is building an impressive reputation among school principals and has received encouragement and support from the School District of Palm Beach County for its work. In fact, Roots and Wings was formally recognized by the District as an "outstanding community partner" in 2019 and again in 2020.

As further evidence of the program's credibility, Project UpLift won the \$100,000 competitive grant in the education category from the women of Impact 100 Palm Beach County, and has been able to add two new schools to its program roster for academic year 2020-2021.



Also in 2020, Project UpLift competed for a \$50,000 award from Impact 100 Men, and received the prestigious grant. With it, we purchased the coveted Fountas and Pinnell Guided Reading Collections for 1st and 2nd grades at the 4 schools the program serves in Delray Beach. We have also added these collections and other valuable reading resources to our newest schools. The impact of this gift will positively influence the lives of literally thousands of struggling young readers over the next several years, not just through Project UpLift, but also during the regular school day. Since its founding in 2016, Roots and Wings annual budget has grown from \$28,000 to over \$625,000 in 2020.



The track record Project UpLift is building speaks for itself. When Shauntay King, principal at Pine Grove, announced the results of the 2018-19 Project UpLift program, 88% of the Project UpLift students had passed the FSA Test in 3rd grade and 56% of UpLift students met their grade level expectations (at least a level 3). When compared to students not in the UpLift program, the UpLift student outcomes showed significantly stronger growth. Only 52% of students not in the program passed the FSA test in 3rd grade, and only 31% achieved proficiency by meeting grade level expectations.

Results at Orchard View Elementary where the UpLift program completed its first year in May 2019 were also impressive. 78% of 3rd grade students in the Uplift program passed the FSA reading test as compared to 67% of students who were not in the program. 75% of 2nd grade students in the UpLift program achieved their iReady Growth Goal (one year of growth in reading proficiency) while only 43% of students not in the program achieved one year of growth.

A Project UpLift teacher from Orchard View told us, "At first, the 3rd grade students UpLift students I worked with didn't know how to use reading strategies, but by the last half of the UpLift tutorial, they were underlining, notating, identifying key ideas and important words in the comprehension questions. They were proactively going back into the text to find evidence. These strategies helped them to be successful."

Not only does Project UpLift build strong readers, it also builds healthy self-esteem. One little boy who entered 3rd grade at Pine Grove reading on a second grade level initially behaved as though he didn't care about school at all. He was quiet and sullen when he attended after school UpLift sessions. Little by little this young boy began to come out of his shell and even started competing with another boy in the class. He began to care about his grades, and started to show emotion about his scores. By the end of 3rd grade he had surpassed his stretch growth levels and scored a passing grade of level 3 on his FSA test. He entered the program reading at level K and at the end of the year was able to pass to 4th grade reading at level O. His happiest occasion was the UpLift Party and the opportunity to celebrate his performance with one of our special Project UpLift Awards Certificates.

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19-driven school closures during the 2019-20 school year, students were not tested at year-end, and we do not yet have up-to-date results to report. We can happily share that over half of Project UpLift 2nd and 3rd graders in the 4 disadvantaged schools served during the 2019-20 school year demonstrated one year's worth of reading growth at the mid-year point in January of 2020.

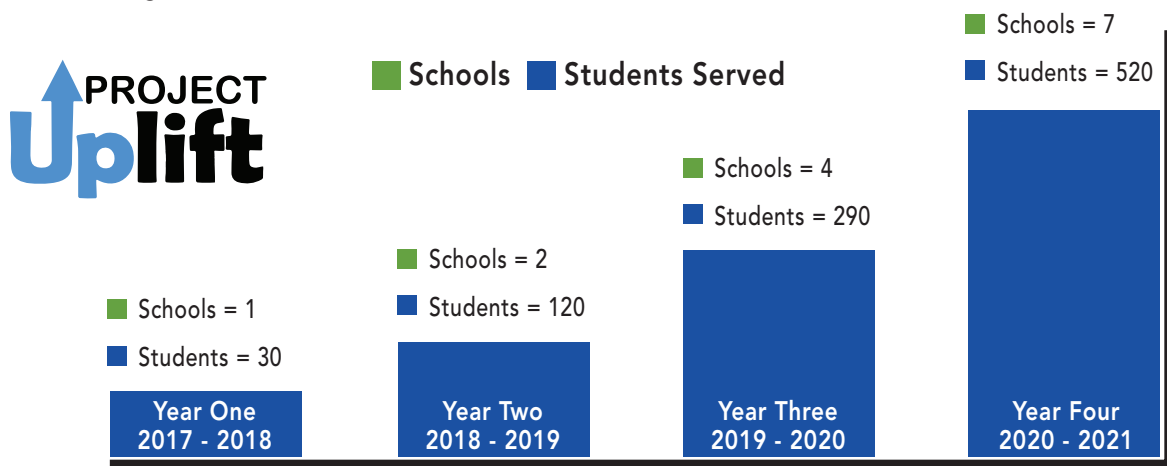


According to the Florida Department of Education, 46% of Palm Beach County students are at risk of failing the 3rd grade Florida Standards Assessment in reading. If they fail, they will need to attend summer school or pass alternative tests in order to avoid being held back. If unsuccessful, the student is required to repeat 3rd grade. Subsequently, regardless of the student's proficiency, they are passed onto the next grade each year.



A recent report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation entitled, "Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters" starkly states, "The bottom line is that if we don't get dramatically more children on track as proficient readers, the United States will lose a growing and essential proportion of its human capital to poverty, and the price will be paid not only by individual children and families, but by the entire country."

Beyond intensive, individualized support for grade level reading, Project UpLift builds self-esteem by providing struggling readers with consistent encouragement -- incentives in the form of pizza and ice cream parties, "Perfect" t-shirts and gold, silver and bronze achievement certificates for performance delivered at special ceremonies mid-year and at the close of the program year. What we are doing is working well and, with help from generous donors, foundations and community partners, we will continue to expand and grow our support of grade level reading.



Long Range Goals for Project UpLift

- Expand Project UpLift to all Title One elementary schools in Delray Beach, Boca Raton and Boynton Beach.
- Develop an expanded, comprehensive after school program ending at 6 p.m. that incorporates S.T.E.A.M concepts and a basic life skills component that includes etiquette, budgeting, nutrition, and exercise.

Above and Beyond Awards

Many would agree that teachers and school staff are among the unsung heroes of our American culture. That's why the Above and Beyond Awards were conceived in 2016 as a celebratory bi-annual recognition of the dedication and sacrifice our public school educators and staff demonstrate. Together, we share the goal of ensuring children in our communities are educated and that they are prepared to be good citizens. Since the launch of the awards in 2016, we have grown from offering the awards at one Title One school in Delray Beach to 18 Title One schools in Delray Beach, Boynton Beach and Boca Raton. To date, nearly 1,000 awards have been delivered to appreciative educators by representatives of the local business community and Roots and Wings board members.

The Roots and Wings Education Committee has carefully developed a list of 9 key attributes for teachers and school staff to consider when they nominate their peers for Above and Beyond Awards. The nomination process takes place twice a year. Teachers and staff are asked to nominate their peers based on these attributes. Once in the fall semester and once in the spring, six teachers and one staff member at each of the 18 schools we serve are chosen for Above and Beyond Award recognition.

Each teacher award consists of a canvas "Dedicated Educator" tote bag containing \$100 in cash, a handsome framed Above and Beyond Award certificate and nearly \$1,000 worth of gift cards from area restaurants and service providers. When winning teachers are surprised in their classrooms with the Above and Beyond Awards there are tears of joy, great excitement from students, and an unforgettable moment for the community members who participate.



"Your display of generosity enables us to feel encouraged, appreciated, and heartened during our daily interaction with our school community. I extend my deepest appreciation for investing in the faculty/staff and America's future by contributing to the education of our country's most valuable natural resource, our children."

– Jeanne Russell-Khan, Boca Raton Elementary

Since 2016, The Above and Beyond Awards have grown from serving 7 schools to a total of 18. We have also expanded the number of teachers recognized from 189 to 252 teachers each year.

- **Long Range Goal for Above and Beyond Awards Program:**
Supporting the teachers who are Above and Beyond Award Winners, develop a program that encourages "master teachers" and helps them meet their professional development goals.



HELP US PROMOTE GRADE LEVEL READING AND EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

There are many ways that you can help Roots and Wings grow in its mission of promoting excellence in education. First, we invite you to visit the schools we serve with us and see our programs in action. Come after school and see just how excited our students are to participate in Project UpLift and how much they enjoy supporting one another's successes. Come during the school day and help us deliver the Above and Beyond Awards to dedicated educators and school staff. We guarantee you will not soon forget the surge of positive feeling that is a natural outcome of these experiences with teachers and the children they serve.



You may also want to consider joining our growing list of individual donors, corporate sponsors and private foundations that have generously joined us in growing our programs. Consider this. Together, we are infusing the children we serve with the skills and confidence they need to reach for the stars, to thrive in academics and in life. We are also recognizing dedicated teachers for the work they do each day to put our children on that strong path to becoming productive adults.



Here are some ways that you can help us.

- **Sponsor Project UpLift's free intensive, small-group tutoring program in reading for one year at a participating school. - \$30,000.**
- **Sponsor a grade for one academic year at a Project UpLift school -\$15,000.**
Example: Add a 1st grade or 4th grade Project UpLift program to one of our 7 schools.
- **Purchase the Fountas and Pinnell Guided Reading Collection for 1st or 2nd grade at one of our participating schools - \$6,500.**
(Teacher compensation and program implementation are paid for by Roots and Wings.)
- **Sponsor the Above and Beyond Awards at one of our 18 schools for an academic year - \$1,500.**
(Join Florida Power and Light; Furbaby Group at True Floridian Realty; Gracey Backer Insurance; Hacker Dermatology; Stuart and Shelby Development; Young Dentistry; Zappitell Law Firm, and The Pearl Antonacci Group at Compass Real Estate in proudly sponsoring our Above and Beyond Awards for dedicated public school teachers and school staff.)
- **Sponsor a student's participation in Project UpLift for one academic year with your Roots and Wings Scholarship - \$500 for each student you choose to support.**



"I am so fortunate to be able to work with such wonderful students and staff each day. After 35 years of teaching, this award confirmed how much I still love teaching and helping others. At the end of the day, I opened the gift bag and felt SO special with all the wonderful gift cards, treats, lotion and even money. Thank you again from the bottom of my heart."

– Laura Orlove, Reading Coach K-2, Crosspointe Elementary, Boynton Beach



"To be recognized by such a special organization and its sponsors in my tenth year of teaching in Palm Beach County overwhelmed me with pure joy. The challenges we face and accept daily are incredible, and this was the first recognition I have ever received. This will be one of the biggest impacts of my career!"

– Erika Dunlea, 1st Grade Teacher, Hammock Pointe Elementary School, Boca Raton



"When I was presented with the award in my classroom, among my students, school administrators and fellow teachers, it was one of the greatest experiences in my career as an educator. Looking at all the businesses that supported this endeavor surely makes teachers feel that we are not alone in the making of the future of our county."

– Yazmin Frydman, 3rd Grade, English Language Learner (ELL) Teacher,
Orchard View Elementary, Delray Beach





Roots and Wings is endorsed by the Superintendent of Schools of Palm Beach County and by the City of Delray Beach.

Roots and Wings, Inc., a Florida not-for-profit corporation, is registered with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services under registration #CH54161. It is a Section 501(c)(3) charitable organization under the Internal Revenue Code. A copy of the official registration and financial information of Roots and Wings, Inc. may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by visiting their website (www.FDACS.gov) or by calling their toll free number (1-800-435-7352) within the state. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval or recommendation by the state.