



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 20, 2011

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***Edwards Summer Reading Camp tied to
National Summer Learning Day, June 21, 2011***

OKLAHOMA CITY – Seventy-five children (kindergarten to third grade) will celebrate National Summer Learning Day, Tuesday, June 21, 2011, at the Edwards “Reading Explorers” summer camp held at Edwards Elementary School, 1123 Northeast Grand Boulevard, Oklahoma City.

The National Summer Learning Association recently held a Congressional briefing and panel discussion focused on the challenge of summer learning loss. The effort to keep kids learning during the summer months is based on research that shows without effective summer learning opportunities:

- Low-income children fall behind two to three months worth of reading each summer, while their middle- and upper-income peers make slight gains.
- By the end of fifth grade, lower-income children can be nearly three years behind their higher-income peers in reading.

As a member of the National Summer Learning Coalition, It's My Community launched “Reading Explorers” to strengthen the work the organization is already doing in the school to support this national movement.

Edwards Elementary was selected as the pilot for the summer reading program because:

- 1) According to 2009-2010 data, many Edwards Elementary students are not reading at grade level. Midyear reading benchmarks at Edwards Elementary revealed 78% of third graders were far below reading level.
- 2) The school is part of a community comprised mostly of African American families that have experienced chronic and multi-generational poverty.
- 3) Research shows that reading at grade level by the third grade is a predictor of high school graduation rates.

Through its “Reading Explorers” program, It’s My Community is implementing the principles set forth by the National Summer Learning Association. The free, six-week Edwards “Reading Explorers” camp includes intensive reading rotations as well as additional engaging activities to expand the summer learning experiences for this group of children. It is the goal of the camp to help participating students avoid summer learning loss (losing the skills they gained during the previous school year) as well as increasing the knowledge they will have at the start of the next academic year.

“Reading Explorers is just one part of our commitment to help students meet the requirements of recent legislation regarding required reading aptitudes in our schools,” said Sandino Thompson, Executive Director of It’s My Community. “This summer reading camp not only helps the children maintain and advance their growth, it also helps keep children safe and happy, supports working families during the summer months, and helps prepare young people to go back to school ready to learn.”

The Edwards Elementary “Reading Explorers” summer camp is administered by It’s My Community, in partnership with Public Strategies, SandRidge Energy, and the Inasmuch Foundation. Additionally, Oklahoma City Public Schools and the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma are supporting the camp.

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For a full media kit and information about the “Reading Explorers” camp, please visit <http://thereadingexplorers.com/news.php>. To learn more about the National Summer Learning Association, please visit <http://www.summerlearning.org>.

Tuesday, June 21, 2011, National Summer Learning Day Activities are as follows:

- **Reading Rotation: 9:05 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.**

The Explorers will experience their reading rotation to accelerate and reinforce learning skills and ensure grade level proficiency.

- **Sand Ridge Reading Coaches: 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

Sand Ridge Energy employees join the children after lunch as reading coaches, allowing the Explorers the opportunity to read books with a caring adult.

- **Urban Farming: 2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

The “Women in Agriculture” organization will be joined by the “Hip Hop Farmers” to teach “Reading Explorers” the importance of soil conservation and growing healthy foods.

Edwards “Reading Explorers” camp will continue the Summer Learning Day Celebration through Wednesday and Thursday:

- **Wednesday, June 22, 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.**

Lt. Governor Todd Lamb, Guest Reader

Lt. Governor Lamb will begin reading at 8:30

- **Thursday, June 23, 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.**

Olympian Kelly Garrison, Guest Reader

Ms. Garrison will begin reading at 8:30