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Florida Department of Education

Media Room

Press Release

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DOE Press Office
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Department of Education Partners with State Agencies to Celebrate Literacy, Florida!

~ Literacy volunteers promote connection between reading and health ~

TALLAHASSEE – In recognition of Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida, the Department of Education's Just Read, Florida! office has partnered with the Florida Department of Health (DOH) and Food and Nutrition managers statewide to promote the connection between literacy and health education and prevention.

"Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida! is a wonderful opportunity to renew our love of reading and explain to our children the many benefits it offers, not only academically, but physically and mentally," said Education Commissioner Dr. Eric J. Smith. "Reading promotes a healthy mind and body and it provides the foundation for every individual's future success."

Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida! is a weeklong celebration from Jan. 25-29, created to raise awareness of the programs and projects offered by the Department of Education's Just Read, Florida! office and its partner agencies and organizations. This week, school food and nutrition managers as well as DOH employees throughout the state have volunteered to read *Our Generous Garden* by Anne Nagro as a way to teach students about the importance of healthy eating and share in a fun and engaging literacy exercise. The book, presented in both Spanish and English, is the 10th in a series of "Health in the Classroom" volunteer reading activities and encourages students to create a garden at their school filled with their favorite vegetables. Reading volunteers from various state agencies and literacy week partner organizations will visit more than 1,500 classrooms during Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida!

"We not only support reading as a component of childhood education, we know it's also vitally important for good health," said State Surgeon General Ana Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H. "The Department of Health promotes health literacy across the lifespan to help Floridians access health care appropriately, understand and follow basic health care instructions, interact with their children in ways that will lead to optimal growth and development, and make informed health and life choices."

The Department of Education actively works with community groups and volunteer organizations throughout the state to make reading a priority in students' lives. For more information about the Department of Education's Just Read, Florida! Office, please visit <http://www.justreadflorida.com/>.