



2024-2025 Grant Finalist Summary

Roots and Wings, Inc. – Project Uplift

Impact Focus Area: Education

The Organization:

Founded in 2016, Roots and Wings is dedicated to supporting children’s reading skills and the teachers who inspire learning. The Organization has two major programs: Project Uplift, which provides extra literacy help to Title One public elementary school students who are in the bottom 25% of their class and who agree, along with their parents, to participate with desire and determination to pass the year-end standardized reading test and advance to the next grade; and The Above and Beyond Awards, which honors teachers and staff chosen by their peers for going above and beyond for their students

The Program:

Project UpLift is a free, intensive after-school reading tutorial program designed for small groups of 10 students or less. These students begin the year reading one or two grades below grade level. The program is led by a Literacy Coordinator at each school who creates lesson plans specific to the students’ needs who, along with the certified teachers from the students’ home schools, provide essential reading enrichment and guidance focused on phonics. The program offers 54 hours of instruction, divided evenly between the fall and spring semesters, with a special emphasis on helping third graders master key literacy skills. Teachers have the flexibility to address each student’s personal reading challenges. In addition to the 54 hours of instruction, in-school field trips are provided by other non-profit organizations who partner with Roots and Wings to provide enrichment experiences. Students are rewarded for “showing up” with “Perfect” t-shirts, as well as gold, silver and bronze certificates for reading gains. Students who exceed their pre-determined iReady growth goal for the year by the December testing are rewarded with a free bicycle and helmet thanks to Boca West Children’s Foundation. This year 272 bikes were awarded. The program builds confidence and self-esteem in all Project UpLift students.

How will the program impact Palm Beach County?

Project Uplift is now currently in 15 Title One public elementary schools for the 2024-25 school year, positively impacting over 1,100 students. Students receive 54 hours of intensive reading tutorials, which would cost up to \$5,000 a child for a tutor. The cost of Project UpLift is only \$500 per student per year to cover the salaries and benefits of the teachers and the Literacy Coordinator. Project Uplift’s special model allows teachers to address components not covered during the regular school day, such as foundational phonics, and to tailor instruction to meet individual student needs. Research shows that 74% of children who cannot read at grade level by the end of 3rd grade are at risk of dropping out before high school graduation. Research also indicates that when a child living in poverty passes the reading assessment at the end of 3rd grade, they have an 89% chance of graduating high school, on par with peers from higher-income families.

Measurable Outcomes:

85% of participating Grade 1 through 3 Project Uplift students will make gains on their iReady mid-year and end of year diagnostic tests.

90% of 3rd grade Project Uplift students will be promoted to the 4th grade.

90% of 4th grade Project Uplift students will be promoted to the 5th grade.

How will Impact Palm Beaches grant be spent?

The \$100,000 will be used to continue to support the teachers and literacy coordinators in the current three schools in North Palm Beach as well as the new additional schools that are already planned for North Palm Beach County for the 2025-2026 school year.