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What is ReadingPals?

ReadingPals is an early childhood literacy initiative that brings 200 plus volunteers into 50 Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) classrooms in our community to read to a small group of children for 30 to 60 minutes per week. The program is funded by Carol and Barney Barnett, chair and co-chair of Publix Supermarket Charities, who generously contributed private funding to address kindergarten readiness in the state of Florida between 17 United Ways.

The goal of ReadingPals is to build meaningful relationships with young children in Florida, while helping them improve their social-emotional development and early literacy skills.

The ReadingPals program understands that in order to make a greater impact with our children, teachers and families need to be an integral part of the program. This is why ReadingPals provides teachers, volunteers and families with tools that will enable them to be advocates for early childhood education and learn how to support children’s emergent literacy skills. Each of the 200 children in our program receive a minimum of four take-home books throughout the year and a transition to kindergarten packet that includes books, activities and community resources that we hope will prevent summer loss.
ReadingPals volunteer description

**Job Title: ReadingPals Volunteer**

**Purpose:** To build meaningful relationships with pre-kindergarten students, while helping them improve their social-emotional development and early literacy skills.

**Location:** Reading occurs at one of the 15 centers/schools participating in the ReadingPals program.

**Key Responsibilities:**
- Complete the required two hour orientation
- Complete and pass a level 1 background check
- Sign-in at the school office
- Read to the same two, pre-selected students each week
- Follow the curriculum guide while reading
- Successfully fill out the required weekly online timesheet

**Have fun!**

**Time Commitment:** One day per week (M, T, W, TH) for one hour for a minimum commitment of 25 weeks. Reading will happen at the same time and day each week. Every student needs to receive one hour of intervention a week. **October 1st, 2018- May 14th, 2019**

**Qualifications:** Basic computer skills, patience, dependability, positive attitude, excitement, eagerness and desire to work with our wonderful students

**Support:** Danielle Wolfe, the ReadingPals Coordinator will be available for questions and assistance. Your specific teacher and school leadership staff.

**Dress Code:** Casual
ReadingPals expectations

Arrival:
- Check-in at the schools front desk
  - Some schools will require you to check-in with a security officer before getting to the office
- Upon arrival to the classroom, check-in with the teacher. This is a great time to get updates about students.

Attendance:
- Communicate with your Reading Buddy, if you have one.
- Communicate with the teacher and students if you know you will miss a day of reading
- Communicate with the ReadingPals coordinator about absence and arrangements
- Do NOT send anyone to substitute for you that has not been cleared by the ReadingPals staff
- Remember the ReadingPals goal is to have each student be read to for one hour a week. If you are going to miss more than a reasonable amount of reading days please discuss options with the ReadingPals coordinator

Safety:
- All volunteers will complete and pass a background check before entering the classroom. Do not go to the school until the ReadingPals coordinator has informed you that your background check has cleared
- Volunteers should not be left alone with students. If volunteers are reading outside of the classroom ensure that you are reading in a space with other school staff members
- Ask the teacher before bringing food or snacks for the students

Departure:
- Tell you students good-bye. If you are not going to be there next week let them know
- Sign-out with the school
- Fill out your timesheet
Overview for 30 minute volunteers

Volunteers reading for 30 minutes will be matched with two students. Volunteers will read with those two students for 30 minutes before returning them to class. There will be another volunteer reading to two different students during the same time.

Volunteers are divided into volunteer A and volunteer B. This is done so that the students do not read the same book twice in the same week. When looking at the curriculum keep in mind what volunteer you are. Volunteers are assigned a volunteer label when they are matched with their students. If volunteers ever need reminded of their label contact the ReadingPals coordinator.

Always remember that students are being read to two volunteers twice a week.

Our goal is to make sure each student in the ReadingPals program get one hour of reading each week.
Overview for 60 minute volunteers

Volunteers reading for 60 minutes will be matched with four students. Volunteers will read with two students at a time for 30 minutes. Once the first 30 minutes passes volunteers will then collect the other two students for the remaining 30 minutes of reading. It is recommended to keep the same pair of students and read at the same every week.

Day 1 (i.e. Tuesday)

Day 2 (i.e. Thursday)

Volunteers are divided into volunteer A and volunteer B. This is done so that the students do not read the same book twice in the same week. When looking at the curriculum keep in mind what volunteer you are. Volunteers are assigned a volunteer label when they are matched with their students. If volunteers ever need reminded of their label contact the ReadingPals coordinator.

Always remember that students are being read to two volunteers twice a week.

Our goal is to make sure each student in the ReadingPals program get one hour of reading each week.
Communication is key

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining regular communications with the ReadingPals Coordinator. This includes but is not limited to: filling out timesheets, responding to urgent requests and opening emails. In order to provide a positive volunteer experience, the ReadingPals Coordinator will periodically provide information to volunteers on behavior management, reading tips and upcoming opportunities. Below are the main methods that the ReadingPals coordinator and staff will communicate with volunteers.

Email:

- It is vital to the program that you open and read emails sent to you about ReadingPals.
- ReadingPals staff will send out weekly email with update about the books, activities, tips and upcoming events. It is vital to the program that you open and read emails sent to you about ReadingPals.
- A notification email from Formsite will be sent as a confirmation of you submitting your timesheet.

Text messages:

- ReadingPals utilizes the text messaging system Remind. This is an optional communication form but is always helpful for last minute changes and updates
  - You can always text Danielle directly (within business hours) at 305-646-7021

Phone Call:

- You can always call Danielle directly at 305-646-7021
Remind Text Messaging System

To receive messages via text, text @readingmia to (347) 514-6626

You can opt-out of messages at anytime by replying ‘unsubscribe @readingmia’.

Or to receive messages via email, send an email to readingmia@mail.remind.com to unsubscribe, reply with ‘unsubscribe’ in the subject line

What is “remind” and why is it safe?
Remind is a one-way text messaging system. With Remind, all personal information remains completely confidential. Teachers will never see your phone number, nor will you ever see theirs.

Visit: www.remind.com to learn more.
Sample sign-in sheet

United Way ReadingPals Program

ReadingPals Weekly Sign In Sheet

INSTRUCTIONS: Please fill out this form after each time you read for ReadingPals.

Volunteer First Name *
Danielle

Volunteer last name *
Wolfe

School or ReadingPals location *
Natural Bridge Elementary School

Date of reading *
10/01/2019

Did you go to ReadingPals this week? *
- Yes
- No

Comments and feedback

Please contact me, I would like to stay for an additional 30 minutes to read with a second pair of students

Submit
Sample sign-in sheet

30 Minute Volunteers

ReadingPals Weekly Sign In Sheet

INSTRUCTIONS: Please fill out this form after each time you read for ReadingPals.

Volunteer First Name *
Danielle

Volunteer last name *
Wolfe

School or ReadingPals location *
Natural Bridge Elementary School

Date of reading *
10/01/2019

Did you go to ReadingPals this week? *
- Yes
- No

How long do you read? *
- 30 Minutes
- 60 Minutes

Did you read to Student A? *
- Yes
- No

Did you read to Student B? *
- Yes
- No

Why didn’t you read to Student B? *
- I did not go to the school to read this week
- My assigned student was absent
- My assigned student has moved
- The teacher asked me to read with this student even though my assigned student was present

Are you interested in reading for 60 Minutes? *
- Yes
- No

Submit

60 Minute Volunteers

ReadingPals Weekly Sign In Sheet

INSTRUCTIONS: Please fill out this form after each time you read for ReadingPals.

Volunteer First Name *
Danielle

Volunteer last name *
Wolfe

School or ReadingPals location *
Natural Bridge Elementary School

Date of reading *
10/01/2019

Did you go to ReadingPals this week? *
- Yes
- No

How long do you read? *
- 30 Minutes
- 60 Minutes

Did you read to Student A? *
- Yes
- No

Did you read to Student B? *
- Yes
- No

Did you read to Student C? *
- Yes
- No

Why didn’t you read to Student B? *
- I did not go to the school to read this week
- My assigned student was absent
- My assigned student has moved
- The teacher asked me to read with this student even though my assigned student was present

Submit
## Reading Schedule 2018-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Week 6</th>
<th>Week 7</th>
<th>Week 8</th>
<th>Week 9</th>
<th>Week 10</th>
<th>Week 11</th>
<th>Week 12</th>
<th>Week 13</th>
<th>Week 14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volunteer A</strong></td>
<td>ReadingPals scavenger hunt!</td>
<td><em>Book! Book! Book!</em> By: Deborah Bruss</td>
<td><em>The Recess Queen</em> By: Alexis O’Neill</td>
<td>Read for the Record <em>Maybe Something Beautiful</em> by Isabel Campoy and Theresa Howell</td>
<td><em>Giggle, Giggle, Quack</em> By: Doreen Cronin</td>
<td><em>The Feelings Book</em> By: Todd Parr</td>
<td><em>Not Norman</em> By: Kelly Bennett</td>
<td><em>Fish Eyes: A Book You Can Count On</em> By: Lois Ehlert</td>
<td><em>Chicka Chicka Boom Boom</em> By: Bill Martin Jr. &amp; John Arcambault</td>
<td><em>Clifford Goes to Dog School</em> By: Norman Bridwell</td>
<td>Choose your favorite book!</td>
<td><em>Rumble in the Jungle</em> By: Giles Andreae</td>
<td><em>We Are In A Book</em> By: Mo Willems</td>
<td><em>Pete the Cat: Pete at the Beach</em> By: James Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volunteer B</strong></td>
<td>ReadingPals scavenger hunt!</td>
<td><em>It’s Okay to Be Different</em> By: Todd Parr</td>
<td><em>A Color of His Own</em> By: Leo Lionni</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Dog Breath: The Horrible Trouble with Holly Tosis</em> By: Dav Pilkey</td>
<td><em>The Letters Are Lost!</em> By: Lisa Campbell Ernst</td>
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# Reading Schedule 2018-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Volunteer A</th>
<th>Volunteer B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 15</strong></td>
<td><em>Clifford Goes to Kindergarten</em>&lt;br&gt;By: Norman Bridwell</td>
<td><em>A Pocket for Corduroy</em>&lt;br&gt;By: Don Freeman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 27 – February 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 16</strong></td>
<td><em>A Pocket for Corduroy</em>&lt;br&gt;By: Don Freeman</td>
<td><em>Clifford Goes to Kindergarten</em>&lt;br&gt;By: Norman Bridwell</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 4 – February 8</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 17</strong></td>
<td><em>Mrs. Wishy Washy’s Farm</em>&lt;br&gt;By: Joy Cowley</td>
<td><em>Pete the Cat: Pete at the Beach</em>&lt;br&gt;By: James Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 11 – February 15</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 18</strong></td>
<td><em>The Very Lonely Firefly</em>&lt;br&gt;By: Eric Carle</td>
<td><em>We Are In A Book</em>&lt;br&gt;By: Mo Willems</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 18 – February 22</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 19</strong></td>
<td><em>Read Across America</em> - Dr. Seuss’ Birthday</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 25 – March 1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 20</strong></td>
<td>Choose your favorite book!</td>
<td><em>Rumble in the Jungle</em>&lt;br&gt;By: Giles Andreae</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 4 – March 8</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 21</strong></td>
<td><em>The Bear Ate Your Sandwich</em>&lt;br&gt;By: Julia Sarcone-Roach</td>
<td><em>Clifford Goes to Dog School</em>&lt;br&gt;By: Norman Bridwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 11 – March 15</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 22</strong></td>
<td><em>Alphabet Under Construction</em>&lt;br&gt;By: Denise Fleming</td>
<td><em>Chicka Chicka Boom Boom</em>&lt;br&gt;By: Bill Martin Jr. &amp; John Arcambault</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 18 – March 22</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 23</strong></td>
<td><em>Whoever You Are</em>&lt;br&gt;By: Mem Fox</td>
<td><em>Fish Eyes: A Book You Can Count On</em>&lt;br&gt;By: Lois Ehlert</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 1 – April 5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 24</strong></td>
<td><em>Pete the Cat: A Pet for Pete</em>&lt;br&gt;By: James Dean</td>
<td><em>Not Norman</em>&lt;br&gt;By: Kelly Bennett</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 8- April 12</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 25</strong></td>
<td>Choose your favorite book!</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 15- April 19</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 26</strong></td>
<td><em>Dog Breath: The Horrible Trouble with Hally Tosis</em>&lt;br&gt;By: Dav Pilkey</td>
<td><em>Giggle, Giggle, Quack</em>&lt;br&gt;By: Doreen Cronin</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 22 – April 26</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 27</strong></td>
<td><em>A Color of His Own</em>&lt;br&gt;By: Leo Lionni</td>
<td><em>The Recess Queen</em>&lt;br&gt;By: Alexis O’Neill</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 29 – May 3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 28</strong></td>
<td><em>It’s Okay to Be Different</em>&lt;br&gt;By: Todd Parr</td>
<td><em>Book! Book! Book!</em>&lt;br&gt;By: Deborah Bruss</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 6 – May 10</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 29</strong></td>
<td><em>Countdown to Kindergarten</em>&lt;br&gt;By: Alison McGhee</td>
<td><em>Countdown to Kindergarten</em>&lt;br&gt;By: Alison McGhee</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 13 – May 17</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 30</strong></td>
<td><em>Last Day of ReadingPals: Say goodbye to your Pals’</em>&lt;br&gt;Ask your teacher if you can read to the entire class</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 20 – May 24</td>
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</table>
ReadingPals will follow the MDCPS calendar.
## Other Important Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/28/2018</td>
<td>ReadingPals kick off event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/1/2018</td>
<td>1st day of ReadingPals</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/18/2018</td>
<td>ReadingPals Council Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/25/2018</td>
<td>Read for the Record</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/8/2018</td>
<td>2nd Annual Cookies, Coffee and Conversation</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/15/2018</td>
<td>ReadingPals Council Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/19/2018-11/25/2018</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break                  Schools Closed: No ReadingPals</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/20/2018</td>
<td>ReadingPals Council Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/24/2018-1/4/2019</td>
<td>Holiday Break                              Schools Closed: No ReadingPals</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/21/2019</td>
<td>ReadingPals Council Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Midpoint Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/21/2019</td>
<td>ReadingPals Council Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/1/2019</td>
<td>Read Across America</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/21/2019</td>
<td>ReadingPals Council Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/25/2019</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/7/2019-4/13/2019</td>
<td>National Volunteer Week</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/18/2019</td>
<td>ReadingPals Council Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/16/2019</td>
<td>ReadingPals Council Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/24/2019</td>
<td>Last Day of ReadingPals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>End of Year Celebration</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Frequently asked questions

Q: Why is ReadingPals important?
A: 45% of children in Florida are not ready for kindergarten and 43% of Florida students cannot read at a proficient level by the end of third grade. ReadingPals gives individualized attention which can lead to student success!

Q: Is ReadingPals just in Miami?
A: No, ReadingPals is offered in 27 Florida counties via 17 United Ways! Each program runs a bit differently but we all have the same goal in mind, helping students succeed.

Q: How is ReadingPals funded?
A: ReadingPals is privately funded by Carol and Barney Barnett, the chair and co-chair of Publix Supermarket. In 2011, The Barnett family selected The Children’s Movement of Florida to build a statewide, volunteer-based early literacy initiative in partnership with United Way. The Children’s Movement designed and oversees ReadingPals from a statewide level, distributing grant funds to 17 United Way programs across Florida. Every year United Way of Miami-Dade applies for a grant to help with the costs associated with ReadingPals.

Q: How are reading days/times selected?
A: The principal, assistant principal, curriculum specialist, and/or reading coach at your school selected the reading days/times earlier this summer.

Q: What happens if a student is absent?
A: If one student is absent, the volunteer should work with the other assigned student. If both students are absent, please coordinate with the teacher to conduct a whole-class reading.

Q: If my students are both absent or I am unable to go to my ReadingPals session do I still fill out a timesheet?
A: Yes! Timesheets are one of the most important requirements of the program and should be filled out regardless if your students or yourself were absent.

Q: Why are timesheets so important?
A: Since ReadingPals is a grant funded program we use timesheets, along with VPK assessments to show the success of the program. Our goal is to have volunteers read for at least 19 hours.

Q: Will students receive books to take home?
A: Each participating student will receive a minimum of 4 take-home books over the course of the year. Students will also receive other materials and resource to support the transition into kindergarten. Distribution of these materials will happen 4 times a year.
**Frequently asked questions**

**Q: My reading time interferes with naptime/recesses/ other important classroom activity, what should I do?**

A: Discuss this issue with your teacher, if you need support or do not feel comfortable talking to your teacher about this matter please let me know!

**Q: I know I am going to miss a ReadingPals session, what should I do?**

A: If you know you are going to miss a day of reading please let your teacher know and coordinate a makeup session. If you cannot make up the missed day please contact the ReadingPals coordinator for more support.

**Q: My students won’t focus on the book and never seem to sit still?**

A: It is always important to remember that we are working with 4-5 year old children, they won’t always be able to focus and sit nicely. It’s okay to ad-lib and make it your own if you need to. If you get stuck and need help there are suggested activities in the back of your curriculum booklet.

**Q: My students are not reading. Am I doing something wrong?**

A: No, ReadingPals is not designed for you to teach your students to read. ReadingPals is all about building a relationship with your students while showing them how fun reading can be!

**Q: Who should I contact if I have a question or concern?**

A: For matters concerning the volunteer program, or logistics, contact Danielle Wolfe at (305) 646-7118 or wolfed@unitedwaymiami.org
Share your pictures with us!

Every child in the ReadingPals program has a media release form. Take pictures with your children and send them to us at readingpals@unitedwaymiami.org or by text at (754) 900-1073.

If you are using social media, use the hashtag #ReadingPalsMiami @unitedwaymiami.
Thank You on behalf of the entire ReadingPals staff!

**Luisa Cotto**  
Director, Engagement  
External Affairs  
United Way of Miami-Dade  
305.646.7118 Office  
cottol@unitedwaymiami.org

**Danielle Wolfe**  
Engagement Coordinator; ReadingPals  
External Affairs  
United Way of Miami-Dade  
305.646.7021 Office  
wolfed@unitedwaymiami.org

**Helpful Links:**

http://www.unitedwaymiami.org/readingpals  
https://www.facebook.com/UnitedWayMiami  
https://twitter.com/unitedwaymiami  
http://tinyurl.com/readingpalscurriculum