



MEDIA ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

15506 County Line Road
Spring Hill, FL 34610
Phone: (727) 233-8291
Fax: 727.857.0151

March 27, 2014

Contact: Sherri Sabadishin
Communications Specialist
s.singleton@phelc.org
O: (727) 233-8291

EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF PASCO AND HERNANDO COUNTIES, INC. HOSTS FREE “STORYBOOK FOREST” EVENT AT CREWS LAKE WILDERNESS PARK

The event, which drew more than 2,500 children and families in 2013 is held in honor of Children’s Week 2014. A statewide celebration of Early Childhood Education that brings awareness to legislators and community leaders.

The Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties, Inc. will host its **5th annual “Storybook Forest”** event on **Saturday, April 5, 2014 from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM, at Crews Lake Wilderness Park, 18739 Crews Lake Drive, Spring Hill, 34610, to support Children’s Week and Early Childhood Literacy.**

Last year more than 2,500 attendees enjoyed stories to include, “Cat in the Hat,” “Where the Wild Things Are,” and “The Very Hungry Caterpillar.” **The day will begin at 10:00 AM with a Ribbon Cutting by Board Chair, Dr. Steven Kanakis, to announce the opening of Storybook Forest.**

Early Childhood Educators in Pasco and Hernando Counties will create interactive displays based on children’s books. Children will learn about the story through hands-on activities and will create a related make-and-take project at each display.

Storytellers will ignite guests’ imagination as they bring children’s stories to life. Meet and greet with children’s favorite characters such as **Clifford the Big Red Dog, Super Why and friends, Curious George, The Man in the Yellow Hat,** and many more!

Thanks to our sponsors including Tampa Bay Times and WEDU, The Storybook Forest offers a FREE afternoon of family fun, including:

- **FREE** Children’s Entertainment
- **FREE** Activities
- **FREE** VPK Registration
- **FREE** Crafts
- **FREE** Music
- **FREE** Food

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) is a FREE program for all children four years old and on or before September 1 of the program year. There are no income requirements to be eligible for VPK. Storybook Forest guests planning to register children for VPK must bring proof of age (such as a birth certificate)

for each child as well as proof of residence. For more information about accepted documents or to view the VPK application, visit www.phelc.org/VPK.

The Storybook Forest is one of hundreds of events held throughout Florida to celebrate Children's Week (April 6 – April 11) by bringing together child advocates to deliver the message that every child in Florida must be healthy, ready to learn, and able to achieve their full potential.

To learn more about Children's Week, visit <http://www.childrensweek.org/>.

For more information about the StorybookForest, contact Bev Doucet at 727-233-8291 or b.doucet@phelc.org.

For more information about the Coalition and its services, visit www.phelc.org.

About the Coalition

The Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties, Inc. is one of 30 Early Learning Coalitions in Florida. It works to ensure that programs and services are available to assist families with young children during their formative years. Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program is for all children who are four-years old on or before September 1st. School Readiness provides subsidized child care for low-to-moderate income working families. Starting as separate organizations in 2000, Pasco and Hernando counties joined forces to form the Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties in 2005. The non-profit serves over 9,000 children between infancy and eight years old, working with more than 300 providers in the counties.

###