

NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ernestine Benedict
202-491-3950
ebenedict@gradelevelreading.net

CAMPAIGN FOR GRADE-LEVEL READING HONORS SUPER BOWL RE(A)D ZONE LITERACY CHAMPIONS

Oakland, Calif. — February 2, 2015 — The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading honored the [San Francisco Bay Area Super Bowl 50 Host Committee](#), [the 50 Fund](#), [Tuck's R.U.S.H. for Literacy](#), and the Bay Area Campaigns for Grade-Level Reading for their visionary leadership to seize the Super Bowl spotlight to raise awareness and support for early literacy.

The awards were presented on Sunday, January 31 at the Fox Theater in Oakland, Calif. during [The Re\(a\)d Zone](#) Thank You party for 1,000 staff, volunteers and funders of more than 25 Bay Area nonprofits. The Re(a)d Zone is a signature initiative of the 50 Fund, the legacy fund of the Super Bowl 50 Host Committee, focused on investing in, strengthening and building the capacity of high-quality literacy programs that increase third-grade reading proficiency throughout the Bay Area.

“We are incredibly proud of these organizations and the individuals behind each of them for joining forces and working tirelessly to uplift the entire Bay Area community and inspire the nation to rally around early literacy,” said Ralph Smith, managing director of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading. “These awards honor their spirit of generosity and bold vision to build upon innovative and effective early literacy work already happening in the Bay Area, and use Super Bowl 50 as a catalyst to put this region on a path to having the highest percentage of low-income kids that are proficient readers by 2020.”

Reading proficiency by the end of third grade is a critical milestone on a child’s path to high school graduation and later success because it marks the transition from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.” Students who have not mastered reading by that time are more likely to drop out of high school and struggle throughout their lives. National tests show that two-thirds of U.S. fourth graders, and four-fifths of those from low-income families, are not reading proficiently.

Since the launch of the Re(a)d Zone initiative this past summer, the 50 Fund has awarded more than \$800,000 in grants providing:

- Enhanced summer literacy programs and online early learning to over 45,000 children;
- More than 100,000 books to build home libraries;
- 50,000 free, summer lunches and 15,000 free snacks to children in Lunch at the Library programs in 12 Bay Area counties and;
- More than 2,000 children living in public housing with literacy-rich resources and support.

The Re(a)d Zone also received a \$250,000 investment from Tuck's R.U.S.H. for Literacy—the philanthropic initiative of two-time Super Bowl champion and Raiders all-pro defensive end, Justin Tuck and his wife, Lauran—to provide books for Bay Area children and families during Summer 2015 through First Book, Imagination Library, Jumpstart's Read for the Record® campaign and myON, the world's largest interactive digital library.

“The books and grants distributed by Tuck's R.U.S.H. for Literacy have made a significant difference in the lives of thousands of children,” said Ralph Smith, managing director of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading. “We are deeply appreciative of Justin and Lauran for going above and beyond to share the joy of reading with families and provide children the resources and support they need for success in school and life.”

About the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

Launched in May 2010, the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is a collaborative effort of funders, nonprofit partners, business leaders, government agencies, states and communities across the nation to ensure that many more children from low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career and active citizenship. Since its launch, the campaign has grown to include 232 communities, representing 47 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands with 2,100 local organizations (including 130 United Ways and 250 state and local funders). To learn more, visit gradelevelreadig.net and follow us [@readingby3rd](https://twitter.com/readingby3rd).

###