



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Poster Contest Winners Announced in Support of Sarasota County-wide Literacy Initiative** *Area Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Classes Participated*

**Sarasota, FL (June 8, 2009)** – The poster contest called *Leaf in Literature* was organized by the Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County (ELC) in order to bring awareness to a new Sarasota literacy program called Literacy Empowers All Families (LEAF). The Sarasota area Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) classes submitted one drawing per class that depicted a scene from their favorite book and also incorporated the LEAF program mascot (a scholarly bookworm named Leaf). All posters were on display and the winning classes announced during Mote Marine’s Word Ocean Day on June 7, 2009. In addition, each winning VPK class received an Adopt an Animal Kit from Mote Marine.

The VPK classes from the following schools were selected as the three winners **SCTI Tech Tots Preschool, Bizzy Bee Early Care and Education Center and Venice Nokomis United Methodist Child Care**. Honorable mentions were given to Suncoast Worship Center, CROSSROADS Children's Center and St. Patrick's New Journeys. Commissioner Carolyn Mason; Mote Marine's Vice President of Education, Jim Wharton; and VPK Regional Facilitator, Lisa Toscano Allen served as judges on May 28, 2009.

LEAF is a community-wide collaborative initiative funded by a comprehensive, multi-year grant from the Community Foundation of Sarasota County. In addition to the participation of the Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County, the LEAF program involves several other partners including the School Board of Sarasota County, Children First, and the Sarasota County Library System. For more information about the LEAF program visit [www.growingmindsread.org](http://www.growingmindsread.org).

The Early Learning Coalition (ELC) of Sarasota County was established in 1999 by Florida legislation and currently serves over 3,000 children per year. The purpose of the ELC of Sarasota County is to oversee the local system of early education and childcare for preschool children in Sarasota County. In addition, the ELC ensures the quality of the childcare received and also provides families access to needed services. For more information on the ELC of Sarasota County visit [www.earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org](http://www.earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org).