

Reading Buddies Program Guide

Cause for Action:

- The City of Syracuse has one of the highest poverty rates in the country and the highest child poverty rate in NYS. Ninety one percent of students at Dr. King are below the free lunch poverty mark.
- Disparities in education outcomes between Syracuse and the rest of the county are evident, as SCSD students consistently score significantly below the state average on standardized tests. Students at Dr. King Elementary School have a 20 % pass rate on ELA and math state exams
- Dr. King Elementary School is located in a geographical area that is comprised of factors that can have a negative impact on student learning: high poverty rate; community violence; food deserts, high rates of unemployment, illiteracy and public housing.
- Graduation rates are dramatically impacted by: 1. Reading level at the end of third grade; 2. Having lived in a high-poverty neighborhood; 3. Experiencing family poverty

Where is the program?

The program is located at [Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School](#) at 416 East Raynor Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13202.

Who does the program serve?

The program serves Syracuse City School District children in 3rd and 4th grades that attend Dr. King School.

How does the program provide for this population?

Upstate students are matched with a 3rd or 4th grade student (serving as buddies) to give one on one assistance with reading to improve literacy and comprehension skills of the students.

What would I do as a student?

Once matched with a third or fourth grade student at Dr. King, Upstate students are asked to help students practice reading skills, and assist in guiding students through stories. Upstate students read to and with Dr. King students.

How often would I serve?

This program consists of a one-hour session, once a week. Upstate students are required to complete a brief training and are expected to participate on a weekly basis for a full academic year.

What are the community impacts?

Third grade reading skills and poverty influence high school graduation and the city of Syracuse has a high number of children living in poverty and dropping out of school. The Reading Buddies program works to instill interest in reading among school children, help build literacy skills in 3rd and 4th grade students at Dr. King School, and provide positive adult role models for the grade school students participating in the program. Ultimately, this program hopes to help improve educational and, therefore, health outcomes for students in Dr. King school.