

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Elementary Students Raise Over \$8,500 to Support ELC Fire Fund**

Vero Beach, FL – Five area elementary schools raised a combined \$8,575.41 through individual read-a-thons held this spring to support the Environmental Learning Center (ELC) Fire Fund. Participating schools included Liberty Magnet, Treasure Coast Elementary, Citrus Elementary, Dodgertown Elementary, and the 4th grade students at Beachland Elementary.

The concept of the read-a-thon began when teacher Jennifer Wright at Liberty Magnet contacted Holly Dill, executive director of the ELC, to let her know that her class wanted to conduct a read-a-thon fundraising event to do their part to help rebuild the ELC's facility. Ms. Wright's idea planted the seed and the concept blossomed from there.

“We were thrilled to hear that elementary students wanted to do their part to rebuild the center,” explained Holly Dill, ELC executive director. “These children are so important to the mission of the ELC as the future stewards of our natural resources and their contributions to the fire fund illustrates how important the center is to them.”

Lightning struck the center on June 30, 2008 destroying the wet lab, classroom and bathrooms at the ELC, located on an island in the Indian River Lagoon adjacent to the western end of the Wabasso Bridge in north Indian River County. Undaunted by the challenge before them, volunteers and staff have conducted a full schedule of classes and programs continued throughout the 2008-09 year. To date, the ELC Fire Fund, added to insurance payments, has topped \$1,200,000. Projections for new construction, along with replacement exhibits and furniture, bring the financial needs to \$1,700,000.

The ELC's mission is to provide comprehensive environmental education that will instill an understanding

of our natural world and will motivate participants to be active stewards of our natural resources.

Caption:

Deb Berg, Treasure Coast Elementary School's Assistant Principal presents Read-A-Thon proceeds to Eileen Connelly, Chairperson of ELC's Board of Trustees. All of the proceeds from the Read-A-Thons held at many public schools are helping ELC's Fire Fund Campaign to rebuild its educational facilities lost in a fire on June 30, 2008.