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Public encouraged to attend Literacy Summit II

Imagine you could not read or write? How would you shop for groceries, apply for a job or review your child's homework? According to the National Institute for Literacy, about 27 percent of the U.S. population is functionally illiterate. To lower those numbers locally, Sarasota County officials, local human service organizations and educators are hosting Literacy Summit II: The Next Chapter, from 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 30, at the Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida Event and Conference Center, 4780 Cattlemen Road, Sarasota. Admission is free and the public is invited.

Organized by the Literacy Council of Sarasota, Literacy Volunteers of South Sarasota County, the Sarasota County Library System and the Sarasota County School Board, the summit seeks solutions to combat illiteracy through early childhood learning programs and adult literacy initiatives. Jane Barton, tutor trainer with the Literacy Council of Sarasota, will provide background on the activities and follow-up themes from the first summit held in 2006. Wendy Hopkins, vice president of the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, will moderate a panel presentation about the recently funded "Literacy Empowers All Families" project.

Throughout the day, facilitated round-table sessions will allow participants to share information about their involvement with literacy programs and to discuss health and workplace literacy, instruction for ESL (English as a Second Language) and basic literacy, how to market reading to children and young adults, and grants and funding opportunities to support these efforts.

The Literacy Summit is free, but registration is required. To register: E-mail LiteracySummit@yahoo.com, or call 941-488-8994 or 941-861-5000. The Summit invitation may be viewed on the Sarasota County Library System Web site at www.sclibs.net.

For more information, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000.

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