

## The City of Belleview

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### City of Belleview Partners with SouthState Bank to Expand "Storytime with the Mayor" in 2025

The City of Belleview is proud to announce an expanded version of the "Storytime with the Mayor" series, made possible by a new partnership with SouthState Bank. Held on the first Tuesday of each month at 5:00 PM at the Belleview Community Center, this event brings families together for a night of education, creativity, and connection. Each session includes a light dinner, a hands-on activity for children, and a story read by Mayor Christine Dobkowski, with every child receiving a free children's book courtesy of Goodwill Bookworks.

"This partnership is about more than just providing resources; it's about creating opportunities for families to bond while instilling lifelong values of literacy and learning," said Regina Behlen, Branch Manager at SouthState Bank in Belleview. "We're excited to play a role in this impactful program and to see how it will inspire young minds and bring the community closer together."

The 2025 series features a variety of books and activities designed to engage children and promote important life skills:

- January 7, 2025: *Dollars & Sense* – Learn budgeting while decorating delicious treats.
- February 4, 2025: *Respect Each Other* – Craft Valentine's cards and meet Stash the Squirrel.
- March 4, 2025: *The Shy Little Kitten* – Visit kittens from the Humane Society of Marion County.
- April 1, 2025: *Do the Right Thing* – Meet a police dog and decorate a potted plant.
- May 6, 2025: *Alexander, Who Used to Be Rich Last Sunday* – Build and create with Snapology.
- June 3, 2025: *Little Daymond Loves to Earn* – Design your own t-shirt while exploring entrepreneurship.
- July 1, 2025: *America ABC* – Celebrate Independence Day with crafts and meet Slice, the pizza guy.
- August 5, 2025: *Cinderella – Golden Books Edition* – Meet Cinderella and Prince Charming.
- September 2, 2025: *Piggy Bank Blessings* – Craft a piggy bank and start saving.
- October 7, 2025: *Get the Job Done* – Unleash your inner superhero by creating a special mask.
- November 4, 2025: *Thanksgiving Blessings* – Create a picture frame to display a treasured photo.
- December 2, 2025: *Joy of Giving for Little Ones* – Write a letter to Santa and create a holiday ornament.

"This program truly showcases the heart of our community," said Robert Vass, Events and Promotions Manager for the City of Belleview. "It's an incredible opportunity for families to come together, enjoy a meal, and engage in activities that foster creativity and learning. We're grateful to SouthState Bank and Goodwill Bookworks for making it possible to offer this experience to more families."

Mayor Christine Dobkowski, who reads to the children at each event, shared her passion for the program, stating, "As a mayor and as someone who loves books, I feel honored to be a part of something so meaningful. Storytime is about more than just reading—it's about connecting with the children and families of our city, sparking imagination, and helping build a love for learning that will last a lifetime. Watching the joy on the children's faces as they hear a story, enjoy an activity, and leave with a book they can call their own is incredibly rewarding."

The expanded program aims to strengthen the community by making literacy accessible and enjoyable for all. The events are free and open to all families in Belleview and surrounding areas.

For more information about the program, visit [www.belleviewfl.org](http://www.belleviewfl.org) or contact Robert Vass at [rvass@belleviewfl.org](mailto:rvass@belleviewfl.org).