

UMass Dartmouth celebrates 20th anniversary of America Reads/Counts program

The Leduc Center for Civic Engagement initiative has delivered 300,000 hours of reading and math tutoring to New Bedford and Fall River students

On Thursday, December 6, 2018, the UMass Dartmouth Leduc Center for Civic Engagement celebrated 20 years of America Reads/Counts tutoring program that has sent student tutors into the SouthCoast community. To commemorate the anniversary, university officials, legislators, and community partners gathered at the YMCA's in New Bedford and Fall River to witness the impact of tutoring.

The America Reads program, which was started by President Clinton in 1996 to increase literacy across the nation, connects university student tutors to SouthCoast K-12 students at 14 different locations in the two cities. At community centers, and local elementary, middle, and preschools, UMass Dartmouth students provide classroom support and individual attention to the younger students.

"This program is about the human element of connection, allowing for new and incredible possibilities," Matthew Roy, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Civic Engagement, said. "Our student's tutoring and mentoring youth in the SouthCoast open their eyes and hearts through learning. They provide an example of how furthering your education is possible and how education enriches lives."

The program strives to increase the reading levels and mathematics understanding of local children from pre-K to fifth grade, increase university students' involvement in the community, and strengthen the partnership between the

university and the local community.

America Reads/Counts program sites include:

- Boys & Girls Club, Fall River
- Boys & Girls Club, New Bedford
- Brooks Elementary school, New Bedford
- Buttonwood Park Zoo, New Bedford
- Carney Academy, New Bedford
- Dennison Memorial Community Center, New Bedford
- Gomes Elementary, New Bedford
- Head Start, Fall River
- Henry Lord Community School, Fall River
- Housing Authority, Presidential Heights, New Bedford
- School on Wheels, Harbour House, New Bedford
- St. Andrew's afterschool, New Bedford
- YMCA, Fall River
- YMCA, New Bedford

Since the initiative began, UMass Dartmouth has provided more than 300,000 hours of tutoring and helped more than 15,000 SouthCoast students. Each year, 175 to 200 tutors perform approximately 20,000 hours of reading and/or math instruction and homework help.