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## **DUBUQUE IS NAMED A 2012 ALL-AMERICA CITY BASED ON PLAN TO IMPROVE THIRD GRADE READING**

*City becomes charter member of national network dedicated to increasing the number of low-income students reading on grade level*

DENVER— Dubuque was named an [All-America City](#) by the National Civic League today based on its ambitious plan to ensure that more children are reading at grade level by the end of third grade.

Chosen from a field of more than 100 entries, Dubuque's plan was submitted by a community coalition that included Every Child/Every Promise, Carnegie-Stout Public Library, the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque, the Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce and leaders and experts from area schools, colleges, universities, nonprofits, businesses, city government and philanthropies. The community was one of [14 awardees](#) selected from 32 finalists.

"This is a tremendous honor for our community to be named an All-America City twice in just five years," said Dubuque Mayor Roy D. Buol. "This award recognizes the role all citizens have in helping our children achieve reading skills, necessary skills all citizens need to be successful contributing members of this great city and nation. I encourage everyone to help us continue to meet this challenge by getting involved in Dubuque's third grade reading strategy."

In addition to being named an All-America City, Dubuque was also named a Community Solutions PaceSetter by the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading for its exemplary leadership and innovation in addressing the vexing challenges that keep many low-income students from learning to read proficiently. The Community Solutions Pacesetter Honors recognize places that are already developing community solutions to the challenges that can undermine early literacy, such as chronic absenteeism, summer learning loss and a lack of school readiness.

Beyond the award contest, Dubuque's plan makes the city a charter member in the [Campaign for Grade-Level Reading Communities Network](#), a national movement of local and state leaders, nonprofits, and foundations putting a stake in the ground on third-grade reading. That milestone marks the point when children shift from learning to read and begin reading to learn. Students who haven't mastered reading by then are more likely to get stuck in a cycle of academic failure, drop out of school, and struggle throughout their lives.

The awards are given each year by the [National Civic League](#) for outstanding civic accomplishments. Ordinarily, applicants choose their own local projects to showcase, but this year NCL is teaming with the Campaign to encourage community-based partnerships to improve reading proficiency among young students.

"This partnership with the Campaign has been an amazing experience for our All-America City Awards," said Gloria Rubio-Cortes, president of the National Civic League which has sponsored the award for more than 60 years. "We

were overwhelmed by the quality, passion and thoughtfulness of all the action plans submitted by more than 100 cities, towns and regions. There is a real and deep commitment to ensuring that our children are prepared to succeed."

The 124 cities and counties in the network, representing 350 school districts with 8 million students, are adopting a collective impact strategy, engaging the full community around the goal of supporting low-income children from birth through third grade.

The Dubuque 3rd Grade Reading Coalition plans to expand or scale programs and implement innovative new approaches, integrate national programs into the community network, work to incorporate summer learning into the year-round curriculum and adapt promising practices from outside the community and scale best practices within the district to target the five percent of students who are chronically absent. Through these efforts, the city aims to raise the percentage of third grade students reading at grade level from 86 percent to 90 percent or higher.

As a charter member of the Grade-Level Reading Community Network, Dubuque will have access to a Promising Practices Clearinghouse, an online help desk, peer-learning opportunities, meetings with national experts and policymakers and a foundation registry designed to expand and replicate successful programs.

"This honor is the result of collaboration among parents, neighbors, public and nonprofit agencies, community organizations, businesses and civic leaders," said Nancy Van Milligen, president and CEO of the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque. "By continuing to work together, Dubuque will undoubtedly succeed in increasing the numbers of students reading at grade-level by the end of third grade and close the achievement gaps for minority students and students in poverty."

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*The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is a collaborative effort by dozens of funders across the nation to: close the gap in reading achievement that separates many low-income students from their peers; raise the bar for reading proficiency so that all students are assessed by world-class standards; and ensure that all children, including and especially children from low-income families, have an equitable opportunity to meet those higher standards. For more information, visit [www.gradellevelreading.net](http://www.gradellevelreading.net) or contact Phyllis Jordan at [pjordan@thehatchergroup.com](mailto:pjordan@thehatchergroup.com) or 301-656-0348.*

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*The National Civic League is a 117-year-old nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that strengthens democracy by increasing the capacity of groups and individuals to participate in and build healthy and prosperous communities. In addition to giving the All-America City Awards, NCL publishes the Model City Charter and the National Civic Review. [www.ncl.org](http://www.ncl.org); [www.allamericacityaward.com](http://www.allamericacityaward.com).*

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