



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Stone Crabs Announce Reading Club for Local Students**

*Team will work with local schools to provide students with incentives to promote literacy*

PORT CHARLOTTE, Fla. – The Charlotte Stone Crabs are launching the Stone Crabs Reading Club in an effort to promote literacy in the Southwest Florida area by tying children’s natural affection for baseball with exciting incentives and rewards for program participants who complete suggested goals.

More than 4,000 kids from eight local schools participated in the initial run of the program last year, but the Stone Crabs organization plans to expand the Reading Club to reach 30 schools and more than 15,000 students in the upcoming year.

The program is based on reaching bases on a baseball diamond with home plate as the final goal. Individual schools or teachers will decide what it takes to reach each base, and suggested guidelines may focus on number of books read, number of pages read or number of newspaper articles read. Program length depends on each individual classroom and can last anywhere from 4-to-10 weeks.

Students will earn incentives for each base reached with prizes from restaurants like Wendy’s and Buffalo Wild Wings and the grand prize of a free ticket to a 2010 Charlotte Stone Crabs home game for hitting a “home run.”

“We know how much kids love the game of baseball, and we want to use that to promote a lifelong love of reading,” said Joe Hart, general manager of the Stone Crabs. “We really want to give a boost to our local schools, teachers and students, and we think this program can be a great success.”

In addition to prizes for individual students, the Stone Crabs also plan to host several meet-and-greets with players and the team mascot Stoney at local schools during the 2010 season.

The Reading Club is free for all participating schools, and the Stone Crabs will provide each classroom with the necessary materials. The program is appropriate for all grade levels and teachers may tailor it to the reading ability of their students. For example, kindergarten teachers may want to encourage the parents to read to the children as a way to earn points; for older students, teachers may want to set the guidelines around books, pages, or newspaper articles.

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The Stone Crabs are encouraging all schools from the Southwest Florida area including Port Charlotte, North Port, Englewood, Punta Gorda, Venice and Sarasota to participate. Booklets for each individual student and posters for each classroom will be delivered to participating schools in mid-November.

For information about how your school can enroll in the Stone Crabs Reading Club, please call 941-206-HITS or send an e-mail to [info@stonecrabsbaseball.com](mailto:info@stonecrabsbaseball.com) as soon as possible.

The FSL South Division Champion Stone Crabs finished their inaugural campaign in mid-September and begin their 2010 season next April. For more information on the team and 2010 ticket packages, please call 941-206-HITS or visit [stonecrabsbaseball.com](http://stonecrabsbaseball.com).



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