

TACOMA WEEKLY

Graduate Tacoma receives honor for boosting childhood reading

By **Steven Dunkelberger**
June 8, 2018

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading has announced that it will recognize the Graduate Tacoma partnership with Pacesetter Honors for its work in 2017.

“Through our Collaborative Action Networks, Graduate Tacoma has developed models that provide children with the tools they need to be successful in school,” said Tafona Ervin, executive director of Graduate Tacoma. “Our partnerships and coalition building have allowed us to get books into the hands of our most at-risk children in an attempt to close educational achievement gaps. As this designation shows, we’ve made progress and need to continue to mobilize our community by working with our schools, city agencies, nonprofits, civic leaders, and parents.”

The members of Graduate Tacoma’s Early Learning and Reading Network worked together this year to provide books to schools on Tacoma’s East and South sides through its “Book to Home” program. Through its “Books to Barbershops” program, the network also provided books and bookshelves to many Tacoma barbershops as a way to engage barbers as positive role models in children’s lives.

“Recognizing Pacesetters is our way of applauding and thanking the civic leaders, organizations and agencies that have joined forces to build brighter futures for children in their communities,” said Ralph Smith, managing director of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading. “We are learning with them and from them what it takes to move the needle and close the gap. Mobilized communities — like Graduate Tacoma — are essential to ensuring school success.”

Each year, the campaign uses its Pacesetter Honors to highlight communities that report making measurable progress on key indicators of early school success. These communities serve as proof points and represent the “leading edge” of innovation, impact, and improvement within the GLR Network, currently comprised of more than 360 GLR Campaign communities, representing 43 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Canada.