



WHAT'S NEW IN THE Rogue Valley Area

SERVING **JACKSON & JOSEPHINE** COUNTIES

Our Heartfelt Thanks!



SMART is possible because of our incredible volunteers, donors, educators, and partners. Thank you for sharing our commitment to creating brighter futures for kids through reading!

Corporate and Foundation Sponsors

Big thanks to the funders who help us provide vital reading practice time and books to kids! For a complete listing of local corporate and foundation sponsors, please visit

www.SMARTReading.org/rogue-valley-partners.

Honoring a Cherished Founder

It is with deep sadness that we acknowledge the passing of Bill Thorndike Jr., who was instrumental in bringing SMART to the Rogue Valley. From serving on our statewide Board of Directors and Rogue Valley Leadership Council to offering up his office to inventory books, we could always count on Bill's unwavering support. His loss is felt profoundly and his legacy lives on.



Pictured: Bill Thorndike with SMART Executive Director Jessica Bowersox (left) and Area Director Leona Westdahl (center) at a celebration held in his honor last fall.

Volunteers Needed This Fall

We have openings for volunteer Readers and Site Coordinators at many of our sites this fall. The commitment starts at one hour a week, and we promise it will be a fun, rewarding experience! Learn more at www.SMARTReading.org/volunteer.

2024-25 Local Impact



**23
Sites**



**540
Students Served**



**6,023
Books Given**

The Red Jacket Puts Empathy in Action

At Ruch Outdoor Community School, the story of SMART Book Award winner *The Red Jacket* came to life in a powerful way. The Site Coordinator, a previous principal, introduced a red, zip-up jacket and asked if anyone might want to give it to a friend who could use a little extra kindness. The children lit up with excitement!



Inspired by the book, where a red jacket becomes a symbol of encouragement, the students brainstormed ways to make their version just as meaningful and agreed to find someone on the playground who could use a little boost. It was a heartwarming display of kindness and shows how books help bring compassion into the real world.

*Pictured: A SMART Reading student holds up *The Red Jacket*.*

Volunteer Spotlight: Janis Mohr-Tipton

Longtime volunteer Janis Mohr-Tipton is making headlines!

Recently featured in *The Good Life!*, a publication by the *Grants Pass Daily Courier*, Janis has been a Site Coordinator at Applegate School for thirteen years. "I've always been very passionate about reading and working with readers. The SMART program gives children the chance to sit down and read with an adult—not everyone has that chance. It's just a joy all around." Thank you, Janis, for all you do!



Pictured: Janis Mohr-Tipton reads with a student at Applegate School. Photo credit: Grants Pass Daily Courier