Thanks All Around!

In this year of continued change and adaptation, we’ve been awed by the commitment and support of our volunteers, donors, educators, and partners who stand alongside us to bring a love of reading and learning to local kids. Thank you for being an important part of SMART Reading!

Corporate and Foundation Sponsors
Many thanks to these businesses and partners for helping us spark joy and opportunity through the magic of a shared book

A volunteer leads a Classroom SMART session for second-graders at Slater Elementary in Burns.

SMART Sip Raises Funds for Local Programs
Our annual SMART Sip fundraiser made a successful return this year! On April 14, we convened community members and SMART Reading supporters for a fun evening celebrating our 30th anniversary. It was wonderful to gather in person with so many SMART fans, and we raised over $26,000 for our local programs. Thank you to everyone who came out and raised a glass to SMART, and to our sponsors:

Jennifer Zardinejad, Area Director
Jennifer joined SMART over five years ago and oversees all of our operations, programming, and fundraising in Central Oregon. The part she loves most about her job is giving kids new books and seeing the smiles on their faces. Her personal favorite kids book is Jamberry by Bruno Degen.

Amy Luther, Program Manager
Amy came to SMART with a background in teaching, having taught 3rd and 5th grade in the Salem-Keizer and La Salle School Districts, as well as working as a substitute teacher in grades K-4. She loves getting to connect with our dedicated volunteers, hardworking site partners, and the amazing kids we serve. Her current favorite children’s book is Sheep Dog and Sheep Sheep by Eric Bailey.

30 Years of Volunteering
This year, as SMART Reading turned 30, one very special volunteer marked her 30th year of volunteering with us. Harriet Langimas of Bend began as a Volunteer Reader at Jewell Elementary in 1992, and she’s been with us as a Reader, Leadership Council member, and now an Emeritus Board Member ever since.

New Mural Celebrates the Power of Reading
In honor of our 30th anniversary, SMART Reading commissioned murals themed around the joy and power of reading in communities across the state. Here in Central Oregon, artist Addie Boswell completed a mural at the Mini Pet Mart on Greenwood Ave. in Bend. The mural includes a QR code that provides access to free literacy resources.

New SMART Central Office Site
22 Sites
1,194 Students Served
15,690 Books Given

Meet the Central Team

In addition to our staff, I am deeply grateful for the dedication of our board members and our incredible board chair, Joanna Shaw. The Board of Directors is the backbone of SMART, and I am grateful for all the time and effort that our board members put in to ensure that SMART is a successful organization.

A Message from Outgoing Executive Director, Chris Otis

On June 30 I officially retired from my post as Executive Director after 11 ½ years. It has been a true privilege to lead this organization doing such impactful work for the kids of Oregon. As I begin my retirement from my new home in Walla Walla, Wash., I do so feeling tremendous pride in all that SMART has achieved over this last decade — especially over the last two years — and gratitude for the community of people who’ve made it possible.

Our small and mighty staff team has inspired me with their resiliency, flexibility and unrelenting commitment to our mission as we’ve developed new innovations and adaptations that, while necessitated by the pandemic, have exciting potential to help us reach more kids in different ways into the future.

SMART Newsletters

Published by SMART Reading

SUMMER 2022
The Children’s Book Bank is an organization that gives new life to community-donated children’s books in order to fill homes and lives with engaging, culturally diverse books. SMART Reading and the Book Bank have worked together serving children in Multnomah County with books and reading services for many years. With natural alignment between our respective missions – and the pandemic presenting an inflection point – our Boards of Directors moved last year to explore a merger of the two organizations.

After a year of due diligence, our collective leadership voted to move forward with a merger, which was finalized on July 1, grounded in the belief that our collective whole is greater than the sum of our parts. By becoming one organization, we’re poised to better serve Oregon kids with reading support and access to books.

**2022-23 Programming Plans**

While we don’t know with certainty what the 2022-23 school year will bring, we’re hopeful for a widespread return to in-person programming and with it, many more volunteer opportunities! We continue to prioritize providing books to keep in combination with reading engagement opportunities. We’re in conversation with our educator partners about how we can best meet the needs of their students, and our current plan is to offer the following:

- **One-to-One SMART**: Our original model, One-to-One SMART pairs a trained community volunteer with a student for weekly individual, in-person reading sessions.
- **Classroom SMART**: This model pairs a trained community volunteer with a classroom for regular group read-alouds either virtually or in-person.

Developed during the pandemic, it has proven to be a popular and effective tool for building reading engagement and getting kids excited about books.

- **Book Support**: All students served by SMART receive books to keep, which include access to SMART Storytime, our digital library of read-alouds. Book Support is typically paired with Classroom SMART or One-to-One SMART. For sites where that’s not possible due to pandemic-related considerations, we’ll continue to provide books to students.

In Multnomah County, the Book Bank will continue to offer their robust suite of programs focused on getting books into the hands and homes of kids from birth through eighth-grade. Read more at www.SMARTReading.org/book-bank

We look forward to the future of expanded impact and putting more books into kids’ hands and homes throughout the state. To learn more about the merger and the work of The Children’s Book Bank, visit: www.SMARTReading.org/merger

**Celebrating 30 Years of SMART**

This year marked three decades of providing reading support and books to Oregon kids – more than 375,000 in all. In honor of this special milestone, we commissioned murals themed around the joy and power of reading in communities across the state. We also convened two literacy summits, bringing the SMART community together for informative, impactful conversations about the state of literacy in Oregon and the importance of diverse books. And thanks to 147 generous donors, we met our goal of having 100 percent of SMART schools sponsored during our 30th year! To read more about our 30th anniversary celebrations visit: www.SMARTReading.org/30th-anniversary

**Ways to Support SMART**

With nearly 100 percent of our funding contributed from private sources, we rely on the generosity of our community for the vital resources we need to serve Oregon kids. Here are some easy ways you can support SMART financially:

- Join the SMART Book Club by becoming a sustaining monthly donor. Just as our volunteers show up each week for our students, monthly donors provide critical ongoing support by showing up consistently for kids with their contributions. To sign up, visit: www.SMARTReading.org/Donate
- Set up a Facebook Fundraiser and invite your friends to make a gift to SMART. Get started at: www.facebook.com/fund/SMARTReadingOR
- If you have a Rite Aid wellness+rewards account, sign up for KidCents, select SMART Reading as your local charity, and round up your purchases to support SMART. Learn more at: www.foundation.riteaid.com/kidcents
- In lieu of physical gifts, buy gift cards benefiting our educator partners about how we can best meet the needs of their students, and our current plan is to offer the

**2021-22 Statewide Impact**

- **255 Sites**
- **750 Volunteers**
- **14,453 Students Served**
- **124,458 Books Given**
- **10,379 Volunteer Hours**

Pictured: Murals commissioned by SMART in Portland (top left), McMinnville (top right), and Bend (bottom)