Thanks All Around!

SMART wouldn’t be possible without our incredible community of Site Coordinators, Readers, donors, educators, and advocates who partner with us to bring a love of reading and learning to local kids. Thank you for being a part of the SMART family!

SMART School Sponsors

SMART School Sponsors are businesses, foundations, and individuals who provide the funding and volunteer support necessary for sites in their communities to thrive. Special thanks to this year’s local sponsors, including:

- Ed and Romell Ackley Foundation and WLS Spencer

Thanks to your support, SMART served over 11,000 students with one-on-one reading and gave away over 127,000 books to Oregon kids this year. We think that is worth celebrating!

As I’ve come to learn in my eight years at SMART – and one of my favorite things about this organization and our incredible team – each year is filled with interesting and exciting new developments. This year, we launched 15 pilot programs through our new Out-of-School Time (OST) model, prioritized in our 2017-20 strategic plan. The OST model reaches more children who can benefit from our services by partnering with community organizations, after school programs and summer programs. SMART OST programs served nearly 300 children and gave away over 1,500 books in 2018-19. Next year, we aim to reach 400 students and will continue refining the model and evaluation mechanisms before rolling it out statewide.

You also may have heard that SMART is getting a new look through a rebranding effort. This organization and our incredible team – each year is filled with interesting and exciting new developments. This year, we launched 15 pilot programs through our new Out-of-School Time (OST) model, prioritized in our 2017-20 strategic plan. The OST model reaches more children who can benefit from our services by partnering with community organizations, after school programs and summer programs. SMART OST programs served nearly 300 children and gave away over 1,500 books in 2018-19. Next year, we aim to reach 400 students and will continue refining the model and evaluation mechanisms before rolling it out statewide.

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Trail Blazer CJ McCollum Visits SMART

Kids at KairosPDX in North Portland got a special visit from the Blazers’ star this spring. McCollum read with kindergarten classrooms and then led a full-school reading assembly. This fun day was made possible by SMART Board Member Peggy Maguire who purchased this auction package at the SMART Alphabet Ball.

Dear Friends:

Thank you for making 2018-19 another great year filled with the joy and power of reading to kids throughout Oregon. At our core, SMART believes that reading matters. We know reading is an essential building block in a child’s life, forming the strong foundation for future learning and life experiences. And we know our vast community of volunteers, donors, educators, families and students agrees with us.

Congratulations, Julie, and thank you for everything you do for SMART!

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You also may have heard that SMART is getting a new look through a rebranding effort. Later this year, you’ll see a new logo, language, and messaging as an updated reflection of who SMART is today and where we’re headed. Much more to come on this front in the fall – keep an eye out for SMART’s new look.

Thank you again for your continued partnership and support. Here’s to a great summer filled with warm, sunny days and an endless supply of good books!

Chris Otis
SMART Executive Director

Metro Area Volunteer of the Year

We are thrilled to honor longtime Site Coordinator, Julie Ehlers, as the Metro Area’s 2018-19 SMART Volunteer of the Year! Julie, who coordinates the program at Vestal Elementary in Portland, serves more than 60 kids each week and is continually coming up with innovative ideas to ensure kids and volunteers alike have a fun, meaningful experience.

Congratulations, Julie, and thank you for everything you do for SMART!

Volunteers Needed for SMART Summer Programs

If you are already missing SMART, consider joining us at one of our summer programs:

- Blazer’s Boys & Girls Club
- Earl Boyles Elementary
- Portland Tennis & Education
- Stephen’s Creek Crossing

Give us a call for more information!

Volunteers

95 Sites
1,791 Volunteers
3,375 Students
44,855 Books Given

Donated Value of Volunteer Hours
$3.5 million

Books Given
145,546

Volunteer Hours
155,922
SMART had a huge impact on my life. Even though my parents read with me regularly, SMART provided the extra practice and one-on-one time at school that helped me grow as a reader and catch up with my classmates. With the extra boost, I exceeded on the SATs and ACTs. I'm a very fast reader now and good at skimming, which has been really helpful to me in college.

– Mariza Rayfield, Tigard/Tualatin

SMART staff launched a book club this year to foster reading and learning together as a team. Our first book was Americanah by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, which members of our statewide team gathered to discuss over their lunch hour. Next up: Brown Girl Dreaming by Jacqueline Woodson.

Celebrating SMART’s Statewide Volunteer of the Year

Congratulations to Karen Brkich, a SMART Site Coordinator in Central Point, who has been named SMART’s statewide Volunteer of the Year. Karen has been volunteering with SMART since the first program opened in the Rogue Valley in 1995, and was selected from among 10 regional winners because of her longstanding dedication to fostering a love of reading in local children.

“Through all of life’s changes, Karen has made volunteering with SMART her number one priority,” says Julie Brimble, SMART Rogue Valley Area Manager. “She has recruited and trained volunteers, taken on challenging sites and helped them thrive, and is beloved by volunteers, school staff, and students alike. As one of her fellow volunteers said, ‘she is, quite simply, the best!’” Big thanks and kudos to you, Karen!

2019 Alphabet Ball Raises Funds for SMART Statewide

SMART’s annual statewide fundraiser, the Alphabet Ball, was held on Friday, Feb. 8 (amid rumors of snow that thankfully didn’t materialize). By all accounts, the event was a great success! Over 300 guests joined us at The Nines Hotel in downtown Portland, and collectively helped raise $502,000 to support SMART operations throughout the state. Thank you to our many supporters and sponsors, including our presenting sponsor, First Tech Federal Credit Union.

In Their Own Words: SMART Alumni

“If I hadn’t been in SMART, I wouldn’t have enjoyed reading. It was such a positive, welcoming environment and I felt free to learn and have fun with books without judgement. Through SMART, I got more adventurous with books and started exploring new genres. I love that reading is all about sparking the imagination.”

– Nini Bui, Beaverton

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– Mariza Rayfield, Tigard/Tualatin

“As a shy child falling behind my classmates in both learning and confidence, the SMART program not only provided me focused time for reading with a devoted adult but also an early confidence boost that I was not receiving elsewhere at that point in my life. Even two decades later, I know that my time spent as a participant in the SMART program was one of the factors which increased my confidence and reading ability, leading me to the successful place I have in life today.”

– Andrew Eddy, Klamath Falls

SMART’s Summer Reading List

With longer days filled with sunshine almost upon us, here’s a look at what SMART staff will be reading this summer:

Circe by Madeline Miller
- Stacy Goodwin, Metro Senior Program Manager

Small Beauty by Jia Qing-Wilson Yang
- Shannon Ross, South Valley Program Administrator

Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens
- Stephanie Gates, Northwest and North Coast Development Officer

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SMART Book Club

When you join the SMART Book Club by making monthly gifts to SMART, you join an exclusive group of dedicated people who are committed to ensuring students continue to receive one-on-one reading support with an engaged volunteer and books to keep. Members of SMART’s Book Club receive monthly emails recommending a children’s book from our program, as well as periodic updates and invitations to SMART events. To learn more, visit www.bit.ly/SMARTBookClub.