Dear Friends:

Thank you for making 2018-19 another great year filled with bringing 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.

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. Thanks to our incredible team and partners, SMART now has a new logo, language, and messaging that reflects 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

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**SMART Northeast Area Volunteer of the Year**

Longtime Leadership Council member and Reader, Jenni Donahue, was named the Northeast Area’s 2018-19 SMART Volunteer of the Year! Jenni has been a dedicated member of the SMART community in Hood River for over 15 years and works tirelessly to recruit volunteers and support our fundraising efforts. Congratulations, Jenni, and thank you for everything you do for SMART!

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**SMART Sip in the Gorge Raises Funds for Local Programs**

Our second annual SMART Sip fundraiser was a success! Held at the Hood River Hotel, guests celebrated another wonderful year of SMART, enjoyed delicious food and beverages, and purchased a record number of book packs. Thanks to our generous guests and sponsors, we raised nearly $6,000, enough to provide a year’s worth of books to 140 local kids. Thank you to our sponsors and vendors:

Sip in the Gorge sponsors:

- insitu (Hood River Memorial Hospital)
- Weinstein PR
- Windermere Real Estate
- Providence Hood River
- Blue Mountain Health
- Full Sail Brewing Company
- HR Hotel
- Haddie's
- baker UST
- Full Sail Brewing Company

Sip in the Gorge vendors & in-kind sponsors:

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**SMART Returns to Parkdale Elementary**

We’re thrilled to once again have SMART at Parkdale Elementary in Hood River County. Site Coordinator Alison Betzing stepped up to lead the program, which is currently serving 30 kids each week!

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**SMART Expands at Umatilla Morrow County Head Start**

Thanks to the leadership of Site Coordinators Hannah Williams and Miranda Ainsworth, SMART is thriving in Hermiston! We’re serving twice the number of kids each week, helping foster a love of reading in PreK students as they begin their journey in school.

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**2018-19 Local Impact**

- 12 Sites
- 135 Volunteers
- 341 Students
- 4,089 Books Given

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**2018-19 Statewide Impact**

- 287 Sites
- 5,021 Volunteers
- 10,993 Students
- 105,219 Books Given
- 155,922 Volunteer Hours
- $3.5 million Donated Value of Volunteer Hours

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**SMART Northeast Area Office**

181 SW Market St. | Portland, OR 97201 | 971-634-1614

Published by SMART | Design by Oxidio Francisco-Juan and Sara Matsuoka | Editing by Jessica Bowersox, Michelle Olmores and Phoebe Petersen
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.

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.

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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!

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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](http://www.bit.ly/SMARTBookClub).