

What's New in the Rogue Valley Area

Serving Jackson and Josephine counties



SMART NEWSLETTER

SPRING/SUMMER 2019

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!

Corporate and Foundation Sponsors

Many thanks to these businesses and partners for helping us provide one-on-one reading support and books to kids in our community:



Rogue Valley Volunteer Honored with Statewide Award



As you read in our statewide newsletter, SMART's Statewide Outstanding Volunteer of the Year is Karen Brkich of Central Point! Karen's 23 years as a Reader and Site Coordinator, along with her demonstrated

commitment to supporting kids in our community, helped her stand out among regional nominees from across the state. She is an incredible champion for SMART, recruiting volunteers, building awareness of our work in the community, and pitching in whenever needed to support our local programs. Congrats to you, Karen! We're so grateful for everything you do for SMART!

2018-19 Local Impact



39 Sites



711 Volunteers



1,344 Students



17,835 Books Given



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. 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

2018-19 Statewide Impact



287 Sites



5,021 Volunteers



10,993 Students



145,546 Books Given



155,922 Volunteer Hours



\$3.5 million
Donated Value of
Volunteer Hours

Executive Staff:

- Chris Otis
Executive Director
- Jessica Bowersox
Communications Director
- Alexis James
Program Director
- Beth Katona
Director of
Development Operations
- Jonathan Wexler
Director of
Finance and Administration

Board of Directors:

- Terri Browning
Chair
- Hank Sigmon
Vice Chair
- Jane Teater
Secretary
- Karin Holsinger
Treasurer
- Peggy Maguire
Immediate Past Chair
- Johnell Bell
- Greg Chaillé
- Kam Emery
- Moira Farnsworth
- Monique Hayward
- Ray Holliday
- Anna Hutson
- Adam Morris
- Joe Mueller
- Diana Nuñez
- Doug Post
- Sarah Redgrave
- Krista Tappan
- Jane Teater
- Becky Tymchuk
- Becky Versteeg
- Angela Wilhelms

Celebrating SMART's Statewide Volunteer of the Year



Volunteer of the Year Karen Brkich accepts her award from Executive Director Chris Otis at the SMART Alphabet Ball on Feb. 8.

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.



SMART's Monthly Giving Society: The 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.

Just for Fun



SMART Staff Book Squad

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 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



In Their Own Words: SMART Alumni



"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



"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



"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