What’s New in the South Valley Area
Serving Benton, Lane, and Linn counties

SELCO Sponsors Local Book Giveaway Day

SELCO Community Credit Union employees gathered at Centennial Elementary in Springfield for a special celebration of books and reading. SELCO sponsored a Book Giveaway Day this March, providing funds for every child in SMART in Lane County to choose a new book to keep. Thank you, SELCO!

Sybaris Hosts SMART Benefit

Sybaris Bistro in Albany hosted a benefit dinner for SMART this spring, featuring a delicious five-course meal with wine pairings. The event raised more than $27,000 for local SMART programs. Huge thanks to Matt and Janel Bennett and the Sybaris team for your incredible support of SMART!

2018-19 Local Impact

20 Sites 660 Volunteers 1,627 Students 20,311 Books Given

Kiwanis Club of Corvallis Sunrisers, Oregon Country Fair, and Oregon Networking Exchange

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

South Valley Area Volunteer of the Year

Longtime SMART Reader, Bud McFall, was named South Valley’s 2018-19 SMART Volunteer of the Year! Bud has volunteered with SMART in Cottage Grove for over 20 years, reading with more than 100 children. One parent told him that their child would not have graduated from high school if it had not been for his positive impact. Congratulations, Bud, and thank you for everything you do for kids in our community.

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:

Moira Farnsworth
Monique Hayward
Ray Holiday
Anna Hutson
Adam Morris
Joe Muter
Diana Nufiez
Doug Post
Sarah Redgrave
Krista Tappan
Jane Teater
Becky Tymchuk
Bucky Versteeg
Angela Wihlams

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 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

SMART Executive Staff:

Chris Otis
Executive Director
Jessica Bowersox
Communications Director
Alex James
Program Director
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Director of Development Operations
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Jane Teater
Becky Tymchuk
Bucky Versteeg
Angela Wihlams

SMART South Valley Area Office  |  640 A St.  |  Springfield, OR 97477  |  541-600-8035

Published by SMART  |  Design by Ovidio Francisco-Juan and Sara Matsuzaki  |  Editing by Jessica Bowersox, Michelle Gilmore, 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 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.

In Their Own Words: SMART Alumni

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– Nini Bui, Beaverton

“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.”

– 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

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.

First Tech federal credit union

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!

SMART BOOK CLUB
Facebook: /startmakingareadertoday   I   Twitter: getsmartoregon   I   Instagram: getsmartoregon
www.getSMARToregon.org   I   877-598-4633