



S M A R T
START MAKING A READER TODAY™

SMART NEWSLETTER

SPRING/SUMMER 2019



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

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:

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- Doug Post
- Sarah Redgrave
- Krista Tappan
- Jane Teater
- Becky Tymchuk
- Becky Versteeg
- Angela Wilhelms

2018-19 Statewide Impact



288
Sites



5,042
Volunteers



11,116
Students



127,409
Books Given



138,863
Volunteer Hours



\$3.5 million
Donated Value of
Volunteer Hours

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!

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



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.

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