



Media Contact:
Jessica Bowersox
Communications Director
971-634-1605, jbowersox@SMARTreading.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jan. 16, 2020

**Oregon-Based SMART Reading One of Six Organizations
Nationally Awarded 2019 Program of Distinction
*Designation is U.S. "Seal of Approval" for Intergenerational Programs***

Portland, Ore – SMART Reading has been named a 2019 Program of Distinction, a designation awarded annually by Generations United, a D.C.-based organization advocating for programs that connect people across generations.

SMART Reading is among six organizations across the country to receive the 2019 designation, which is valid for three years. Nationwide, 43 organizations currently hold the honor, including one other Oregon-based nonprofit, Bridge Meadows.

"We congratulate these programs for earning this distinction and their dedication to high-quality intergenerational practices," said Donna Butts, executive director of Generations United. "The Program of Distinction designation is the only U.S. 'seal of approval' for intergenerational programs. The application and review process are rigorous. Achieving this recognition is a major accomplishment and says a program employs best practices and effectively engages young and old while serving the surrounding community."

Generations United launched the Program of Distinction designation in 2010 to recognize excellence while celebrating the rich diversity among intergenerational programs. An outside panel of experts selects designees based on evidence-based standards for quality programming, such as preparing participants, staff training, partner engagement, and use of evaluation data.

"For 28 years, we have been mobilizing volunteers of all ages to read with children, fostering intergenerational relationships that build children's self-confidence, literacy skills and a love of reading – and in return, our volunteers get a meaningful opportunity to give back to their local community," said Chris Otis, SMART Reading's executive director. "We're proud of this honor and its validation of our work."

About Generations United

For over three decades, Generations United's mission has been to improve the lives of children, youth and older adults through intergenerational collaboration, public policies and programs for the enduring benefit of all. To learn more about Generations United, visit www.gu.org. **For more information on Programs of Distinction and a full list of designees, visit: <https://www.gu.org/projects/programs-of-distinction/>.**

(more)

About SMART Reading

SMART Reading is a statewide children's literacy nonprofit that serves kids in Oregon's highest need schools with two ingredients critical for literacy and learning success: one-on-one reading time and access to books. We mobilize volunteers to read with PreK through third-grade children, building confidence, literacy skills and a love of reading. Since 1992, we have paired over 139,000 volunteers to read with 222,000 children, and have given away 2.8 million books to children. Visit www.SMARTReading.org or call 877-598-4633 to learn more.

###