Message From the Executive Director

Dear Friends:

“My daughter often came home telling me how exciting SMART was that day. She rarely did that for other activities. Her reading and love of reading greatly improved.”

“My son was always excited after SMART. It definitely helped build his reading confidence and he always liked to come home and share his new book with the family. Thanks!!”

“I loved the program. My daughter took a very strong interest in reading. Came home every time to tell me how much she loved reading one-on-one with somebody. Thank you.”

“My kindergartener is academically advanced and bored every day at school. He likes friends and recess and PE, but SMART reading is the only thing he has gotten excited about academically and this year! The chance for him to have one-on-one time to do something at his level made such a difference!”

These are but a few of the comments parents and families shared with SMART (Start Making A Reader Today) about their child’s experience in the program over the 2018-19 school year. And, your contributions of time and treasure helped make this possible. Thanks to you, children had life-changing experiences that helped them build their confidence, literacy skills and a lasting love of reading.

In 2018-19, SMART served nearly 11,000 students in 287 sites in communities all across Oregon. This represents a 12-year high in our service, which isn’t a coincidence: SMART has been growing intentionally and carefully over the last decade, expanding to serve as many children as possible in the communities where we’re needed most. Importantly, SMART has been able to do this work thanks to the 5,000 volunteers who spend an hour each week reading with children in their local schools and communities, and 5,000 donors who provide the financial support we need to sustain our operations. My sincerest gratitude to all who make SMART’s critical work possible.

Looking to next year, there are exciting things on the horizon for SMART. The organization is reaching the final year of a three-year strategic plan, including a new outside-of-school time delivery model that’s been rolling out in pilot sites statewide. We’ll also unveil a new brand for SMART, bringing a fresh perspective and visual identity to an organization that’s been doing this work for nearly three decades.

Thank you again for your continued partnership and support. Here’s to a wonderful year ahead filled with good books and great adventures.

Chris Otis
Executive Director
ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATE

2017-2020 Strategic Plan Progress

Reach: Stay true to our core, fixed values – one-on-one reading support, access to books, evidence-basis of strategies – while exploring where we can be flexible in responding to new considerations and opportunities related to equity and the broader education landscape.

1. Investigate an Out-of-School Time Model: After a year of planning, we rolled out year one of our pilot, operating 10 out-of-school sites across the state, including after-and before-school, summer school and community programs. We’ve discovered unique challenges and opportunities with this model, and we continue to refine program delivery and evaluation to determine its viability as a full-fledged delivery model.

2. Focus on Creating a Print-rich Environment for Children: This work continues through the gift of books to students: 14 over the course of the year for students in Standard SMART programs, and a book weekly for students in OST programs (more books to offset fewer weeks in the program). SMART’s Book Committee continues to examine and refine book lists to ensure our students have access to the best and most inclusive options we can afford.

Awareness: Drive awareness of SMART through thought leadership in order to increase access and funding.

3. Establish SMART as Trusted Expert Partner in Early Reading by Forming Strategic Partnerships: SMART continued our work with the Early Literacy Success Alliance (ELSA), a coalition of like-minded literacy nonprofits and libraries working to support students with reading and learning success.

4. Influence Policy to Embed SMART into Formal Education Programming: Lobbying on behalf of ELSA during the 2019 legislative session led to the inclusion of community-based organizations as important resources as the state allocates additional funding to Oregon’s public schools through the Student Success Act.

Sustainability: Ensure that growth is aligned with our focus on equity, quality and financial sustainability.

5. Establish Long-term Revenue vs. Expense Strategies in Context of Program Goals: A subset of SMART’s Board of Directors and our executive leadership team formed a Long-Term Sustainability Task Force and met regularly throughout the year to examine how to plan for deliberate growth and maximum impact given limited resources and make a series of recommendations to the Board.

6. Define Role of Technology in Program and Process: This process will be long-term and complex. We began initial work to map our current state of desired future state with regard to technology infrastructure and systems. We began work to transition our functions to cloud-based services, and expect that technology will be a major focus and funding priority for our FY21-23 Strategic Plan.

7. Enhance Retention and Development of Each Employee: In 2018-19, we continued implementation of staff recognition and development opportunities via the creation of a Social Committee to coordinate ongoing celebrations and help cultivate a culture of appreciation, and piloted post-maternity leave flexible work arrangements.
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Assets: $6,323,225 (as of June 30, 2019)

Furniture and Equipment (net)
Beneficial Interest in Assets Held by Oregon Community Foundation
Prepaid Expenses
Contributions and Grants Receivable (net)
Investments
Cash and Cash Equivalents

Liabilities & Net Assets: $6,323,225 (as of June 30, 2019)

NET ASSETS:
- Permanently Restricted
- Temporarily Restricted
- Unrestricted: Net Furniture and Equipment
- Unrestricted: Designated by Board Endowment
- Unrestricted: Undesignated

Total Liabilities

Revenue: $862,026 (as of June 30, 2019)

Other Revenue
Special Events - Net of Cost
In-Kind Contributions
Net Assets Released from Restriction
Contributions and Grants

EXPENSES

Direct Program Expenses: 70%
Core Mission Support: 21%
Fundraising & Partnerships: 9%
EQUITY AT SMART

SMART continually strives to be more inclusive, welcoming and aware when it comes to the children we serve, our volunteers, community we’re in, and our staff. Following is a look at what this work included in 2018-19:

Operationalizing Equity
- Reinstituted monthly equity discussions on various topics for all staff to continue learning and development
- Created and implemented new staff equity training to immerse new team members in the work

Staff & Board Development
- Developed and implemented staff training on gender equity and class and poverty
- Started monthly staff Book Group focused on equity to facilitate discussion and learning
- Started Board of Directors Equity Task Force
- Created diverse applicant recruitment plan for Associate Board (emerging leaders board)

Program (Book, Volunteer Training, Partnerships)
- Internal Book Committee reviewed LGBTQ titles and selected top five for consideration to add to book collection
- Year 1 of Out-of-School-Time model pilot focused on creating Community SMART as model serving culturally-specific groups
- Annual Book Award program included many bilingual titles
- Expanded participation in the Portland Pride Parade by inviting partner organizations to march with us

External Communication
- Added gender pronouns to staff email signatures including link to informational resource to learn more
- Held a focus group inviting feedback on rebranding project with volunteers of color
Inspire a child’s next chapter.

Our Mission:
We engage community volunteers to read one-on-one with PreK through third-grade children who need literacy support. Participating children also receive new books each month to keep and read with their families.

Our Vision:
An Oregon where every child can read and is empowered to succeed.

Thank You
We extend our deepest gratitude to our thousands of volunteers, supporters and donors across the state who help us ignite a love of books and reading in Oregon children. To learn more about how SMART is making a difference in the lives of Oregon children, please visit our website at www.getSMARToregon.org.

Executive Staff:
Chris Otis, Executive Director
Jessica Bowersox, Communications Director
Alexis B. James, Program Director
Beth Katona, Director of Development Operations
Jonathan Wexler, Director of Finance & Administration

2018-19 Board of Directors:
Officers
Terri Browning, Chair
Hank Sigmon, Vice Chair
Jane Teater, Secretary
Karin Holsinger, Treasurer
Peggy Maguire, Immediate Past Chair

Directors
Johnell Bell
Greg Chaillé
Kam Emergy
Moira Farnsworth*
Monique Hayward
Ray Holliday
Anna Hutson
Adam Morris
Joe Mueller
Diana Nunez
Sarah Redgrave
Krista Tappan*

Becky Versteeg
Angela Wilhelms

*Associate Board representatives