

# What's New in the South Valley Area

Serving Benton, Lane, and Linn counties

## Thank You!

Our incredible community of 318 volunteers spent 6,082 hours this year reading with kids and helping them choose new books to keep. We're so grateful for the volunteers, donors, educators, and partners who made it possible for us to return to in-person reading, give away thousands of books, and inspire a love of reading in local kids. Thank you for being an important part of SMART Reading!

## Corporate and Foundation Sponsors

Many thanks to these businesses and partners for helping us spark joy and opportunity through the magic of a shared book:

**Benton Community Foundation, BestMed, Coaching for Literacy, Cow Creek Umpqua Indian Foundation, Cressey Family Charitable Trust, Doris and Bill Scharpf Foundation, Doyle & Donna Shepard Foundation, Esta Rose Fund of Oregon Community Foundation, Franklin Conklin Foundation, The Gateway Grill, International Paper Foundation, Kiwanis Club of Albany, Lane County Cultural Coalition, McKay Family Foundation, PayneWest Insurance, Rotary Club of Eugene, SELCO Community Credit Union, Spirit Mountain Community Fund, Starker Forests, Tools of the Trade, Umpqua Bank, and WLS Spencer Foundation**



## Children's Book Bank Pop Ups in the South Valley

The Children's Book Bank hit the road this year and traveled to the South Valley to host two pop-up book drives and cleaning sessions in collaboration with United Way of Lane County Days of Caring and SELCO Community Credit Union. Through these pop-ups, we were able to create book bundles for 66 students at The Park Head Start in Springfield and add a free library Burrito Brigade's Waste to Taste Food Pantry.

*Pictured: SELCO employees holding up cleaned books!*

## Meet Your Local Team

**What's your favorite thing about SMART? Here's what the South Valley Area team has to say:**



### Cindy Rojas Villagomez, Bilingual Senior Program Manager

I was working for a local crisis center with foster youth working to transition to a lower level of care. My background is human services, but I wanted to pursue becoming a therapist. I knew

I needed more of an administrative position, both to learn new professional skills and accommodate going to school full-time. SMART Reading met that for me, while also allowing me the privilege of still serving our community. My favorite part of this position is finding literacy needs in the three counties we serve that are less traditional and reaching a new audience.



### Laurie McNichols, Area Director

I've worn some different hats over the years, but none where I've had a greater opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others. That, combined with working alongside others (staff, volunteers and supporters) who have a passion for helping kids love to read, invigorates me on a regular basis.

## Children's Books We Love

Cindy - *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan

Laurie - *Let Me Finish!* by Minh Lê and illustrated by Isabel Roxas



## Community Comes Together to Dedicate New Mural

This spring we held a celebration in honor of our 30th anniversary mural in downtown Springfield by local

artist Bayne Gardner. The event was well-attended by community members who gathered to hear speeches from Springfield Mayor Sean VanGordon, Library Director Emily David, and SMART Executive Director Jessica Bowersox.

## 2022-23 Local Impact



**37**  
Sites



**2,069**  
Students Served



**21,888**  
Books Given