

Annual Report

Raising Readers in Story County

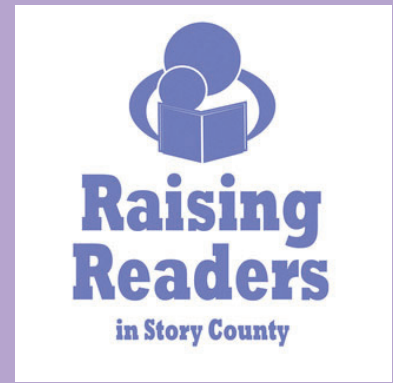
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ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

Making a Difference

2023



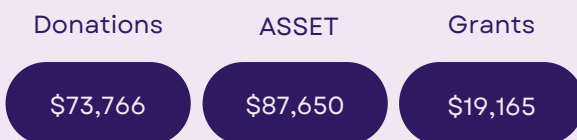
Our mission is to support the language and literacy development of young children by providing books, caregiver guidance, and early childhood programs.

This is accomplished through both direct and indirect programming as well as community events and inter-agency collaborations.

OUR PROGRAMS

Indirect	Direct		Outcomes
4000+ Reach Out and Read participants	STARS (Virtual)	Parent education early talk program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 53 participants 63% completion rate 100% parenting skills increased
253 Step Into Story Books attendees	Story Pals	Preschool language develop program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 129 participants 75% literacy skills improved/maintained
23,585 Books distributed	Reading Buddies	Early elementary literacy skill/reading mentor program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 114 participants 100% literacy skills improved/maintained

FUNDING SUMMARY



Raising Readers’ operations are funded by individual, corporate, and service organization donations in addition to grants and local ASSET awards.

RRSC Leadership

2023 Executive Committee

President Lynne Carey
 Vice President Julie Popken
 Secretary Carolyn Jons
 Treasurer Janeen Christy
 Past President Jerri Heid



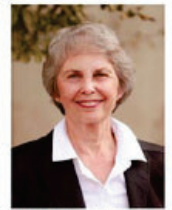
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Janeen Christy, Treasurer



Carolyn Jons, Secretary



Malai Amfahr



Connie Beecher



Diana Claus



Samantha Cross



Dan Franklin



Wesley Harris



Joni Kellen



Ellen McIntosh

FROM
OUR
PRESIDENT

As president of the board for Raising Readers in Story County, I am proud to reflect on the meaningful impact of our mission over the 2022-2023 timeframe. Our commitment to supporting the language and literacy development of young children has never been stronger, thanks to the dedication of our Executive Director, who joined us in September 2022, and has been instrumental in driving our initiatives forward. I extend my deepest gratitude to our board members, whose countless hours and unwavering dedication have propelled us toward our goals. Additionally, I commend our passionate and hardworking staff for their invaluable support in delivering exceptional programming, and I want to convey my immense appreciation to our remarkable volunteers whose contributions are indispensable to our success. Together, we have made significant strides in nurturing a community where every child has the opportunity to thrive through literacy. I am excited for the future.

~Julie Uehling Popken
RRSC 2024 Board President

FROM OUR
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

Fiscal year 2023 was a period of change for Raising Readers. New leadership brought the opportunity to reflect on current structures, practices, programs...even our mission! Through a lens focused on organizational development and community need, staff and board members collaborated to make improvements and future plans to maximize our resources and increase our capacity to reach families throughout Story County. We look forward to continuing our work of impacting the literacy of children in our community.

~Kristi Mayo

VOLUNTEER IMPACT SNAPSHOT

37

Staff & volunteer presentations

339

RRSC volunteers

7494

Volunteer hours



2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Direct Programs

STARS (Sing Talk and Read for Success) was delivered in virtual 1:1 sessions, reaching 53 participants through the year. Families reflected on the intentional talk and literacy practices with their infants and toddlers while increasing their knowledge of brain development as well as the lasting impact of early language support.

Story Pals sessions with four and five year olds were held at Northwood Preschool, Ames Comm Preschool, Colo-NESCO's Zearing Elem and at Raising Readers. 129 preschoolers read and discussed books with volunteers, learned new vocabulary, built expressive and comprehensive language skills, and enjoyed positive interactions centered on literacy.

Reading Buddies sessions held fall, spring and summer saw 114 young elementary students paired with community volunteers to enjoy books together and practice skills needed for fluent reading. Informal skills assessments were conducted to provide individualized lessons and measure program outcomes. With an assessment process better aligned with program practices, valid outcomes were evidenced and celebrated.



2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Events

Salvation Army Toy Shop

participants received 429 new books to add to their children's holiday enjoyment. Twelve volunteers facilitated the book distribution, providing guidance and positive literacy messages to the attending families.

253 individuals attended our annual **Step Into Story Books** event. Children received new books and enjoyed interactive play experiences that brought books to life. Reflecting on the event, most participants shared that they felt more inspired to engage in literacy activities with their children at home.

Reach Out and Read health care partners distributed approximately 8200 books to over 4000 children attending well-child visits in 2023. These books, provided by community sponsorships, are delivered by trusted medical professionals along with an age-specific message of literacy support and development.



Read to Succeed book distributions coordinated with community school district's emergency food backpack programs provided 520 new books to under-resourced students in five extended-county elementary schools.

Little Free Libraries distributed over 7000 books this year to communities throughout the county. Our little free library locations are supported by community members with stewardship support provided by volunteers from the Ames Town & County Kiwanis Club.

Gift Book Programs

Our Generous Supporters

FY 2022-2023

Annual Fund Donors

\$10,000+

Ames Morning Rotary Club
City of Ames (ASSET)
United Way of Story County
(ASSET)
Story County (ASSET)

\$2500-\$9999

Story County Community
Foundation
Rotary Club of Ames
Jennifer & Brian Dieter
Northwest Bank
Underwood Family Foundation
Four Sisters Foundation, a Burke
Family Fund
Beth & Craig Marrs

\$1000-\$2499

McFarland Clinic Physicians
Shirley Wood
Ames Lions Club
Theisen's Farm, Home & Auto
Iowa State University (ASSET)
Dr. Donald Bear
Ames Golden K Kiwanis
John Miller
Kiwanis Club of Ames (Noon)

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Linda & Al Carver
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Joyce & Jim Kliebenstein

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Mary Greeley Medical Center
Dr. Mike & Jill Guffy
Paula DeAngelo
Kristy Calland

Our Generous Supporters

FY 2022-2023

\$250-\$499

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Wendy Wintersteen
Edra Wheelock
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Jaime & Chad West
Kelly & Travis Burton
Phillip Engen
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Janeen & Jon Christy

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Sandi & Steve Ward
Molly Klocke
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Toni & Bill Whitman
Cathy & Don Adams
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Our Generous Supporters

FY 2022-2023

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Patricia Martin
Allison & Thomas Greenwald
Dr. Connie Beecher

\$1-\$99

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Sally Chase
Susan Pelka
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Dr. John Greve
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FY 2022-2023

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Joan & Kim Wass
Caitlyn Chellew

Our Generous Supporters

FY 2022-2023

\$1-99 continued

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Darcy & James Lovin
Community Foundation of
Greater Des Moines
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Phyllis Seim
Marlys Potter
Rebecca Nastuzzo
McFarland Clinic
Shirley Haverly-Felten
Cathy & Dan Adams
Michael Mengeling
Patty Ruben
Jeanne & Kevin Conway
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Christy & Matt Franco
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Myrna & Roy Cakerice
Joyce Matters
Melissa & Pat Rowan

Our Generous Supporters

FY 2022-2023

Endowment Fund Donors

\$10,000+

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Drs. Jill & Jacob Alexander
Kim & Mike Hermanson

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W. Larry Mitchell
Julie & Jim Popken
Kelly & Travis Burton
Sharon & Jan Haugen
Rochelle & Roger Ginder

\$100-\$249

Marilyn & Steve Moehlmann
Ruth Harris
Connie & Warren Dunham
Shala & Joe Ludley
Janeen & Jon Christy
Kueier Chung
Susan Barry

\$1-\$99

Ann Hein
Melissa Skinner
Diana Claus
Cindy Barrowcliff
Joy & Allen Lang
Jodi & Jake Gibson
Don Paper
Kevin Schilling

Gifts in Memory of:

Barb Mengeling
Spencer Veysey
Mary Jo Farrar
Becky Rice
Beverly VanMeter
Dr. Paul Koellner
Ella Vilsack
Joanne Schall
Sara Mitchell
Robert Kuehl

Gifts in Honor of:

Benjamin Weiner
Bruce & Emma Bassler
Ellen McIntosh
Linda Carver
Kristi Mayo

GRANT FUNDERS

Ames Golden K Kiwanis: gift books programs, community events

Story County Community Foundation: Story Pals

Ames Morning Rotary: community literacy event

Ames Noon Rotary: STARS Storytime, RRSC operations

Theisen's Home, Farm & Auto: 365 Amazing Days

Memorial Lutheran Church (Nevada): Reading Buddies, Story County outreach

Reach Out & Read PROGRAM SPONSORS

6 Months: **Ames Morning Rotary**

9 Months: **Wilson Toyota**

15 Months: **Ames Lions Club, Sue & Don Seaton**

18 Months: **Jennifer and Brian Dieter**

2 Years: **Rotary Club of Ames**

3 Years: **Northwest Bank**

5 Years: **Kiwanis Club of Ames, McFarland Clinic Physicians**

**We thank you
for your continued
support of
our programs!**