

Community Outreach

RSR participated in National Summer Learning Week through **READAPALOOZA 2019**, a week filled with activities promoting the importance of reading. Activities included Fun with the **Fightin Phils**, special activities in partnership with the **Berks County Library System and Reading Public Library**, volunteers from our corporate partners reading to area preschool classrooms, reading and rock painting with **Olivet Boys & Girls Club - Pendorra Park** and sharing literacy through the arts with **Barrio Alegria and Yocum Institute for Art Education**.



In Their Words...

Parents, tutors and educators share comments about RSR programs and the impact.

.....
"The results of the Star Readers program proved itself on our son's report card. Great program with great results." - Parent

"Thank you Raising a Reader program for helping my daughter with new words. It helps me to read to my child and for her to listen and ask questions, and it also helps my daughter to see new words." - Parent

"This was my first year as a volunteer tutor for the program. I thoroughly enjoyed working with a second grade student for this past year. I hope I have made a difference in their lives. They certainly have made a difference in mine!"

- *Ready.Set.READ! Star Readers Tutor*

"We have been very fortunate to have our students involved in the Star Readers for a number of years. The volunteers are providing a positive role model ... assisting them to become better readers while also growing the love of literature."

- *Shirley Feyers, Principal,
 Mt. Penn Elementary Center and Mt. Penn Primary Center*

We share special recognition with the **Ready.Set.READ! LONGEVITY TUTORS** who have volunteered and worked with students since the initiative's inception and are returning for their 8th year:

Barbara Futrick, *Community Volunteer*
 Martha Goldstein, *UGI Energy Services*
 Carol Gunzelman, *Community Volunteer*
 Barbara Hall, *Community Volunteer*
 Mary Beth Mancias, *FirstEnergy Corporation*

Thomas McMahon, *Community Volunteer*
 Rosemary Schaeffer, *Penske Truck Leasing Co.*
 Sandra Schlegel, *Community Volunteer*
 Dr. Lori Smith, *Community Volunteer*

2018

Board of Directors

Brad Hall, Chair
*Early Learning
 Investment Commission*

Ellen Albright
Greater Reading Chamber Alliance

Sharon Danks
Tweed-Weber-Danks, Inc.

Melissa Eggert
Reading School District

Bronwen Gamble
Reading Public Library

Wayne Gehris
Reading School District

Lisa Glenn
Albright College

Barbara Hall

Nancy Jackson
Reading Area Community College

Lorena Lazarchick
The Highlands at Wyomissing

Stella Leonti
Reading School District

Bill McKay
Governor Mifflin School District

Dr. Elaine Meils
Penn State Berks

Rev. Dr. Steve Ohnsman
Calvary UCC Church

Barbara Pattison
BB&T

Teresa Schutt
Berks County Intermediate Unit

Jerry Simcik
SFS intec, Inc.

Robert Spengler
Grafika Commercial Printing, Inc.

Michael Toledo
Centro Hispano

Christi Weitzel
Berks County Intermediate Unit

Jay Worrall
Alvernia University

Lauren Zuidema

Community Impact/ Ready.Set.READ! Staff

Tammy White
President, United Way of Berks County

Diane Fiorentino	Cindy Line
Kristin Gehris	Dr. Yamil Sanchez Rivera
Alicia Hartman	Jennifer Tinsman
Mary Jimenez	Darby Wiekrykas

EITC Supporters

BB&T
 East Penn Manufacturing Co., Inc.
 Fulton Bank Greater Berks
 The UGI Companies
 Tompkins VIST Bank
 UPMC Health Plan
 Weis

These organizations generously provided United Way with Educational Improvement Tax Credit Contributions. In 2018, these organizations contributed a total of \$93,000.

Education Partners

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Antietam School District
 Brandywine Heights Area School District
 Conrad Weiser Area School District
 Daniel Boone Area School District
 Exeter Township School District
 Governor Mifflin School District
 Hamburg Area School District
 Kutztown Area School District
 Muhlenberg School District
 Oley Valley School District
 Reading School District
 Schuylkill Valley School District
 Tulpehocken Area School District

EARLY CHILDHOOD PARTNERS

Berks County Head Start
 Norma DeHoyas 2 Daycare
 Second Street Learning Center
 at Opportunity House
 YMCA of Reading and
 Berks County Childcare

HIGHER EDUCATION

Albright College
 Alvernia University
 Kutztown University
 Penn State Berks
 Reading Area Community College

For additional information about Ready.Set.READ!, contact Cindy at cindyl@uwberks.org. To learn more about RSR volunteer opportunities contact Darby at darbyw@uwberks.org

In-kind printing provided by Lasting Image

2018/19

Ready.Set.READ! ANNUAL REPORT



Ready.Set.READ! PROGRAMS:

Star Readers • **Growing Readers** • **Raising A Reader** • **Reach Out And Read**
Opening Doors/Abriendo Puertas • **Neighborhood Bridges**





Ready.Set.READ! (RSR), managed by United Way, is a collaboration of volunteers, educational organizations, corporations and community partners working together to help improve third grade reading proficiency.

In the past 7 years, tens of thousands of children across Berks County have benefited from RSR programs. RSR is helping preschool teachers become stronger educators. RSR is recruiting and training tutors to spend time with struggling readers to help them improve their vocabulary skills and increase their interest in reading. RSR is providing books to students and families to grow their home libraries. RSR is a tremendous community commitment focused on a common goal...providing our children an opportunity to succeed through reading. We are grateful to everyone who supports the efforts of Ready.Set.READ! and United Way. Thank you!

During this past year, nearly 37,000 kids (ages 0-8) benefitted from Ready.Set.READ! activities.



STAR READERS

The **STAR READERS** program trained 450 volunteer tutors to work with 516 first, second and third grade students in 31 elementary schools to provide one-on-one tutoring support each week.

Every student in the **Star Readers Program** was assessed at the beginning of the school year and again at the end of the school year using an assessment tool* to measure language and literacy skills. The assessment demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in language and literacy scores from Fall to Spring. The improvement in scores is possible because of the support of tutors, teachers and parents.

*Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test 4th Edition



95% of parents of tutored Star Reader students who completed a survey strongly agreed or agreed their child shared positive stories about tutoring, and 92% strongly agreed or agreed their child's attitude toward reading improved.

82% of Star Reader tutors completing a survey noted "My student's attitude about reading improved." and 96% completing the survey shared "I would recommend RSR as a volunteer opportunity to a friend."

86% of tutored students completing a survey said "Tutoring helps me read better."

Growing Readers

The objective of Growing Readers is to help prepare Pre-K children to begin school. The **Early Childcare Provider Training and Incentive Program** is designed to increase the skills and retention of Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) so they provide quality early education. The program recruits, works with and provides wrap-around services to the ECEs to obtain their Child Development Associate, a nationally recognized credential. The program is measured by evaluating the ECEs effectiveness in the classroom. The program is delivered in partnership with Reading Area Community College and with the sponsorship of Brad and Barbara Hall, longtime United Way and RSR supporters. United Way was awarded a \$100,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, which was announced by State Senator Judy Schwank and allowed for program expansion.



Program highlights include:

- Two Cohorts, consisting of a total of 20 ECEs, have completed classroom instruction. 19 have obtained their Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. All 20 ECEs remain teaching at their childcare center; providing consistency and stability for students.
- 4 of the ECEs are pursuing an Associate's Degree and one was promoted to an Assistant Teacher in a Pre-K Counts Classroom.
- ECEs, receiving their CDA, are evaluated using an assessment tool** to measure the quality of the classroom environment and the teacher's practices. The assessment identifies areas of development for the teachers to receive coaching and classroom modeling.
- The students of the ECEs in the Growing Readers program were assessed, when the ECE began classroom instruction and after they received their CDA, using an assessment tool* to measure and language and literacy skills. The assessment demonstrated there was a statistically significant increase in the scores from the time the ECEs began the program through the time they successfully ended the program.
- In partnership with RACC, the program is expanding to provide classroom instruction and CDA credential obtainment for two cohorts annually.



**Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO)

RAISING A READER centers on a home book-sharing routine at 5 elementary schools, and 8 Head Start centers (55 total classrooms) to encourage family reading. A survey from parents shared: 87% of families now have a reading routine (previously 57%); and 81% of families share books at least 3x/week (up from 52%).

Early literacy is incorporated into pediatric practices through **REACH OUT AND READ** and equips parents with tools to help children become prepared to learn when starting school.

In partnership with Centro Hispano, **OPENING DOORS/ABRIENDO PUERTAS** delivers parenting education programming, which is delivered by a trained facilitator to interested parents. The program is designed by Latino parents, for Latino parents.

We partner with Yocum Institute for Arts Education to present **NEIGHBORHOOD BRIDGES** programming in four 3rd grade classrooms in Reading School District.

Summer Learning



Summer reading is critical for students to retain knowledge and skills learned in the previous school year. Students who don't read are at risk of falling behind their classmates. Low-income children typically lose two to three months of learning every summer. The cumulative effect is by 5th grade, summer learning loss can leave low-income students two-and-a-half to three years behind their middle to higher income peers (*National Summer Learning Association/Campaign for Grade Level Reading*).

RSR/United Way staff took the lead in convening the **Summer Learning Coalition** to expand summer learning opportunities throughout Berks County. More than 180 county-wide summer learning programs were housed in 211; providing quick and easy referrals for parents/caregivers. Families were encouraged to connect with summer learning programs through organized promotional efforts.

\$54,000 in Summer Learning Grants were awarded to 12 local organizations to provide summer programming featuring literacy activities for Berks County Title 1 students (up to and including 3rd graders). **Recipients include:**

- 10th & Penn Elementary - Summer Learning Through Arts & Innovation
- Amanda E. Stout Elementary - STEAM Summer Camp
- Berks County Intermediate Unit - Summer Reading/STEM
- Brandywine Heights Elementary - Summer Book Club
- Daniel Boone Area Primary Center - Teachers in the Park
- Governor Mifflin School District - Kindergarten Countdown
- Lauer's Park Elementary - Family STEM Summer Camp
- Muhlenberg Elementary - Have Fun and Read
- Olivet Boys and Girls Club - Pollinator Garden
- Reading Public Library - Summer STEAM
- YMCA of Reading & Berks County - Awakening the Imagination Literacy Project
- Yocum Institute of Arts Education - Summer Arts Connection Camps



Xileyram "Sofia" Soto, 5, was excited to receive her bike courtesy of Customers Bank.

The summer literacy program, **"Books for Bikes"**, was held for its fourth year in partnership with Berks Community Health Center, Customers Bank, the Reading School District and the Reading Housing Authority (RHA) for kids residing in the Oakbrook neighborhood. The program was designed to meet the needs of low-income children by engaging them in literacy-related activities on a daily basis around the neighborhood's summer food service program. Close to 65 children participated in the summer program, with more than 30 participating in at least 75% of the program days and earning a bike and helmet, generously provided by **Customers Bank**.

