

READING PARTNERS

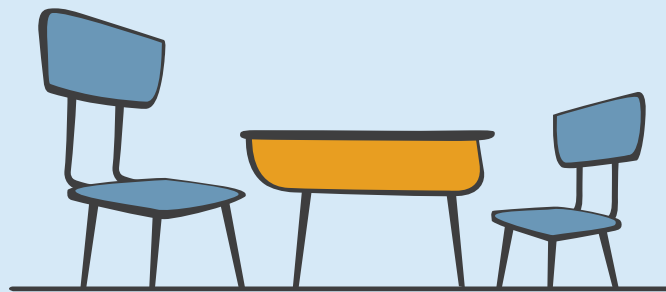
Annual Report

2012-13



one tutor. one child. infinite possibilities.

Our mission is to help children become
lifelong readers by empowering
communities to provide individualized
instruction with measurable results.



readingpartners

one tutor. one child. infinite possibilities.

A Letter from the CEO

Dear Friends,

I know for certain our volunteer tutors are changing children's lives by helping them open the doors of literacy. The reason I know this is because we monitor each and every student's progress in reading. In the 2012-13 school year, we tracked the progress of all 5,373 students across our 104 school-based reading centers, because at Reading Partners, we believe in measuring what matters.

While student assessment data are the backbone of our evaluation system, we go beyond that to see the whole story behind a student's progress. We look also at classroom observations from teachers and principals, as well as read regular reports from our thousands of volunteers. We keep track of how many free books students are taking home to build their personal libraries. We also invite parents and families into our reading centers throughout the year to share their students' progress and celebrate their learning.

Our most important objective is ensuring that every student is closing his or her own achievement gap in reading.

"Our most important objective is ensuring that every student is closing his or her own achievement gap in reading."

For kids who have fallen behind, gaining skills isn't enough: they have to make faster progress than their peers to catch up. If one of our students is struggling, our one-on-one model allows us to quickly identify the problem and adjust our strategy to get the student back on track.

In the 2012-13 school year, Reading Partners expanded to serve students in nine regions across five states and the District of Columbia. As a rapidly growing organization,



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Reading Partners in many ways reinvents itself each year. However, what has never changed is our commitment to measuring what matters, even though last year we served 10 times as many students as we did just five years ago. Looking to the future, we will continue raising the bar for what students can accomplish.

I am profoundly grateful for and humbled by the dedication of our staff, volunteers, donors, and school and district partners. Across the country, we ensure students receive high-quality individualized reading instruction exactly when they need it most. I hope that our supporters are as energized as I am by knowing that together we are expanding opportunities for children.

Michael Lombardo
CEO



"Over the year, Francisco didn't just learn to enjoy reading, he learned he could try something difficult and succeed at it."
— Karen, Tutor

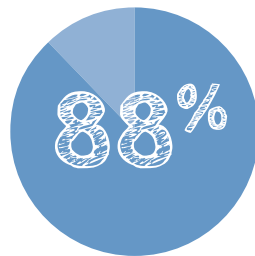
Literacy Unlocks Opportunity

2012-13 Year in Review

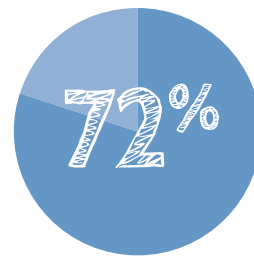
We believe literacy unlocks opportunity. With the ability to read confidently comes the ability to comprehend the world in which we live. With comprehension comes the power to interact, engage, and change. The power of this equation is electrifying. Its implications inspire us to work with focus, diligence, and passion. Every child, regardless of background, deserves the opportunity to learn this fundamental skill. Moreover, they deserve the opportunity to comprehend, engage, and improve the world around them.

Yet, we know that too few of our children are being given that opportunity. Experts estimate that two-thirds of fourth graders cannot read with proficiency.¹ For children from low-income families, the numbers are much higher. Too often, our students do not have access to the individualized, one-on-one instruction they need to develop a strong foundation in reading.

Together, we empower community volunteers to deliver highly effective, one-on-one reading instruction to students struggling to read. In the 2012-13 school year, we doubled the number of students we served over the previous year, and we did so with a strong commitment to the quality of our services. While we grew substantially, our impact was as strong as ever:



**of our students
accelerated
their rate of
learning.**



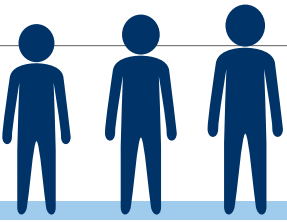




**finished the year
closer to their target
grade level, bringing
them closer to their
on-grade-level peers.**

In the following pages we'll introduce you to members of the Reading Partners community who are committed to ensuring that all children have the skills they need to succeed in school and beyond. You'll meet Jennifer Mao, a member of Reading Partners' Community Engagement team; Pamela Mitchell, principal of PS 48 in New York City; Kaycee Moua, a site coordinator supporting tutors in our community; Dean Elson, Senior Vice President of Research and Evaluation at Reading Partners; Jehan Velji, Portfolio Manager at the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation; and Deric Pinales and Jason, a tutor and student in our program.

Together, these men and women are working to ensure that children have the chance to determine their future.

¹ National Center for Education Statistics (2011). The Nation's Report Card: Reading 2011 (NCES 2012-457). Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.



		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14*
	Students Served	3,395	5,373	7,000
	Volunteers	5,162	8,595	10,000
	Hours of Service	121,000	166,000	215,000
	Partner School Sites	67	104	137
	Regions	7	9	11

*Projected

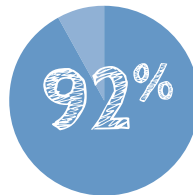


*"It's a life changing experience when you help a child learn to read."
— Principal, Friendship Academy at Cherry Hill*

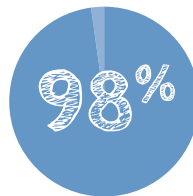
Measuring What Matters: Research & Evaluation

Reading Partners is dedicated to ensuring that each student gains the critical reading skills he or she needs to be prepared for academic, social, and civic success. To support each student on his or her unique journey to reading achievement, Reading Partners aligns its curriculum with evidence-based standards and relies on a rigorous program of research and evaluation.

We assess students' reading skills and collect teachers' feedback throughout the school year to track each student's progress and to ensure high-quality programming. In the 2012-13 school year, 88 percent of students accelerated their progress in reading, and 72 percent of students narrowed their literacy gaps with their peers who read at grade level. Teachers and principals at our partner schools consistently note student accomplishments, as well as school-wide improvements:



92% of principals reported schoolwide improved reading progress after joining Reading Partners this year.



98% of teachers and principals felt that Reading Partners was valuable to their schools.

Rates of Learning

Students who are reading at their actual grade level need to learn one month of skills for every month of instruction to remain on grade level. Before enrollment into Reading Partners, our students were already below grade level, gaining an average of only 0.6 months of reading skills for every month of learning in the classroom. By the end of just six months with Reading Partners, on average, our students typically gained 1.6 months of reading skills per month. That's more than double their prior rate of learning!

MONTHS OF READING SKILLS GAINED PER MONTH OF INSTRUCTION

Before Enrollment

0.6:1

With Reading Partners

1.6:1

Reading Partners and the Common Core

In 2012-13, Research & Evaluation staff collaborated with expert advisors and consultants to strengthen alignment to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), a set of evidence-based standards for student learning that have been adopted by Washington, DC and 45 states. Reading Partners' curriculum review process will continue for the next few years, based on implementation feedback and student data (www.corestandards.org).

Seeking Robust Evidence of Student Impacts

This year, Reading Partners launched its most rigorous evaluation study to date. Partnering with leading research firm MDRC, we conducted a randomized control trial (RCT)—the gold standard for measuring program impact. The results will help us understand the magnitude of the effect that Reading Partners has on students' reading achievement above and beyond their regular school curriculum.

MDRC administered student assessments and collected other data at 19 schools in California, New York, and Washington, DC from over 1,200 students—half were enrolled in Reading Partners and half were in a peer control group at the same schools. Results from the study will be shared in a report to be published in late 2014.



"Volunteering with Reading Partners is incredibly rewarding ... I can see the difference it's making ... each week."
— Marvin Espinoza, Tutor, Sonoma State Senior

Q&A WITH

Dean Elson, Senior VP of Research and Evaluation

Dean Elson leads the Research and Evaluation department at Reading Partners, which is responsible for refining the curriculum and program model, and increasing the organization's evidence base. The department manages independent evaluation studies, leads annual data collection activities, and provides data analyses of student and school performance.

What role does your department play in helping Reading Partners advance its mission?

My team collaborates with external literacy experts to ensure the curriculum is aligned with evidence-based standards and to add new strategies and resources to inform instruction. We collect formal feedback from program staff about our lesson plans and other instructional resources to continually improve the program. We support staff and tutor training on early literacy concepts and the specific elements of the curriculum, while also developing and refining program resources. We research and pilot test new student assessment measures and program ideas.

In addition, we define and manage our internal program evaluation and student data collection processes, while supporting national and regional staff with data analysis and reporting. Program evaluation is critical to ensuring we go beyond inspiring success stories

What are the important systems we have in place to ensure data analysis translates back into improving tutoring sessions for kids?

Reading Partners is committed to using data productively, and I think we are especially good at using data to inform students' individual reading plans and reporting annually on effectiveness. Every year, our team works with the program operations and development teams to review the data we collect and how they are used, and to ask what else we want to know. Ultimately, the goal is student reading achievement. To improve student achievement, we have to provide a high-quality, structured curriculum for the tutor, offer sufficient staff training and tutor coaching, and collect data to ensure students are learning at a significant pace while in the program.

Tutors take notes every week on student progress, the site coordinator reviews the notes, and they discuss strategies to help students

"Our internal evaluation data help inform what is working well and what needs improvement."

and recording outputs (e.g., number of students served, number of volunteers engaged, etc.). Reading Partners' annual evaluation process uses a mix of data collection methods and measures to demonstrate improvements in student learning and to assess satisfaction among tutors, teachers, and principals. Our internal evaluation data help inform what is working well and what needs improvement.

where they are struggling the most. Our mid-year assessment process provides a progress check on acceleration of student learning and an analysis of whether students are narrowing their individual achievement gaps. All site staff work with their supervisors to look carefully at all Reading Partners students. Student attendance, number of tutoring sessions, and tutor absences are considered in light of mid-year assessment results. Individual Reading Plans are updated, and more frequent "progress monitoring" may be recommended for certain students.



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Looking ahead, in what ways do you see Reading Partners' focus on research and evaluation evolving as the organization grows?

First, I envision our research and evaluation agenda being guided by an external advisory committee that will begin discussions in early 2014. Our primary focus over the past two years has been to design, fund, and carry out rigorous, external evaluations that tell us about our impact on students' reading skills and achievement, and provide some data about program fidelity. Over the next several years, I see Reading Partners engaging in longitudinal studies that seek to determine student impacts beyond program participation, while also engaging in studies that measure our impact on schools and communities. Second, I see smaller-scale research studies getting underway that focus on specific program components. Third, we'll begin an R&D agenda so that we can test new program ideas and approaches to our work. Fourth, we want to learn more about the dynamic inter-relatedness and connection that exists between the tutor and the student. We are interested in better understanding how the characteristics of the tutor, the affect and motivational language he or she uses, and other aspects of a tutor's relationship with a student can lead to improved student achievement. We also want to investigate how we can better engage families to support literacy at home.

How does your department work to create a culture of data across the organization? That is to say, what are some of the things your team does to empower everyone at all levels of the organization to think about, promote, and feel empowered by data?

I think of my department, which has been in existence only since July 2011, as continuing the "culture of data" tradition that already was in place when I arrived. I have been impressed with our staff members' commitment to collecting and using data to inform our instructional practices and program processes, and the way we share impact data with our many stakeholders. I think my team can continue to do more to elevate our data culture. One goal would be to use data more often to tell stories. Some people are more drawn to numbers and some are more drawn to stories. We need all staff to learn how to translate, for example, what "1.6 months of learning gained for every month in Reading Partners" really means for student learning, and help all our stakeholders understand this better, too.



"I am reminded how much potential a student has that, in a lot of cases, doesn't get tapped into in a large public school."
— Nuree, Site Coordinator

Harnessing National Service to Improve Public Education

Service is at the heart of what we do. Everyday, men and women from every background give their time to expand students' opportunities in their communities.

In the 2012-13 school year, Reading Partners tutors volunteered over 166,000 hours of service in reading centers across the country. That's equivalent to nearly 80 years of full time work! Using the Independent Sector's formula² for valuing volunteer time, we estimate these hours served were worth \$3.67 million.

And that's not even the full story. Reading Partners is a proud program partner of The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), a federal agency that engages more than 5 million Americans in service through its programs. Our three largest partnerships with CNCS are:

- *Social Innovation Fund*: Reading Partners received \$3.5 million over three years from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation and \$349,000 for two years from Mile High United Way through the Corporation's Social Innovation Fund.
- *AmeriCorps*: In 2012-2013 Reading Partners received \$1,077,330 from The Corporation for National and Community Service to support the work of 81 full-time AmeriCorps volunteers.
- *AmeriCorps VISTA*: Designed to specifically fight poverty and build organizational capacity, this year the VISTA program will support 20 Reading Partners team members fighting to break the cycle of poverty by increasing literacy rates.



Q&A WITH

Kouchee "Kaycee" Moua, Regional Site Coordinator

Kaycee Moua's passion for literacy and education led her to tutor English language learners in math and language arts, substitute teach, and travel to South Korea to teach English. Kaycee was a site coordinator at Bret Harte Elementary School for two years and is now in her third year with Reading Partners as the regional site coordinator for Sacramento.

What does service mean to you?

Service means bringing together people with a shared vision to take part in a movement to build up, support, inspire, and celebrate our communities.

Why did you choose to serve for the year with Reading Partners?

Reading Partners struck a chord with me. I've always held a deep passion for literacy, and I truly love the one-on-one aspect of Reading

Partners' program. The curriculum is individualized for students, and the progress each student makes is something amazing to celebrate.

What role do you believe community members can play in improving public education?

Community members have the ability to impact their neighborhoods because they intimately understand the challenges. They have the capacity to help solve local issues by being



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active participants in the life of their neighborhood. It takes a passionate person to start a movement and an actively engaged community to bring about real change.

What has been the best surprise you've encountered in your work with Reading Partners?

My best surprise is a student named Xitaly. Two years ago, she entered school as a second grader three-fourths of the way through the school year and immediately was enrolled in Reading Partners. She had not been attending school that year, and our assessments indicated that while Xitaly should have been almost ready for third grade level skills, she was reading like a kindergartener. I worked extra hard with her for the remaining three months of school, during which time she gained nearly half a year's worth of new skills. Her father was very active in her education and, in his limited English, would ask what he could do to support her. Xitaly was enrolled in Reading Partners again last year. By the end of school, she was reading at a 2.80 grade level! I was blown away by how much progress she had made—over two years worth of reading skills in just one year! It was an amazing experience to help her achieve so much.

What was your biggest learning curve coming into the Site Coordinator position?

My biggest learning curve was talking to new tutors. I am a true introvert and very reserved, and I had to learn to burst that bubble in order to ensure both our returning and new volunteers had all the information they needed to be effective tutors. My program manager was terrific about encouraging me to step out of my comfort zone. I saw how easily she interacted with tutors, and I knew that in order to have a really successful reading center, I had to make myself vulnerable and uncomfortable. Today, I love talking with tutors. The relationships I've built with them, along with their support and encouragement, have truly reshaped how I communicate with others.

What will you remember most about your year of service with Reading Partners?

First and foremost, I will remember my students. They made amazing progress, and every time they had an "Ah-ha!" moment I reveled in their victory too. I also will remember all the stories parents told at the Winter Reading Recital and the End of Year Celebration about the positive impact Reading Partners made on their children's educational success.



"One-on-one interaction is key for students who are in high risk situations—sometimes the one-on-one only happens here."
— Mia Manzo, Assistant Principal at Bret Harte Elementary

Partnering for Student Success

We place a trained AmeriCorps site coordinator at each reading center to coach and train volunteers, serve as a liaison to teachers and school staff, as well as run the daily operations at the reading center. A Reading Partners program manager, who is a veteran educator, supervises a portfolio of reading centers, supporting the site coordinator and ensuring the site yields consistent results through fidelity to the program model. The results are dramatic: the average student more than doubles his or her rate of learning reading skills while in the program.

In the 2012-13 school year, Reading Partners worked with 104 Title I schools to support students reading six months to two-and-a-half years below grade level. Working with school leaders, Reading Partners transforms a designated classroom into a reading center, complete with books, literacy-themed games, and five levels of research-based curriculum.

A crucial ingredient for success is the great relationship we forge with the leadership and staff at each school. Site coordinators and program managers work closely with teachers throughout the year to ensure that we are serving the students with the greatest needs and serving them well.

Q&A WITH

Pat Mitchell, Principal

Pat Mitchell is the principal of PS 48, an elementary school in the South Jamaica neighborhood in New York City. Pat has been an educator for the past 23 years, half of those years in a classroom in Brooklyn. Pat became principal of PS 48, a school serving predominantly students of color from low-income families, seven years ago.

How did you first learn about Reading Partners?

We have a community advocate who has his finger on the pulse of everything good. He said he'd heard about a program called Reading Partners at a school in Queens, so we made an appointment to go see it in action. From the minute we walked into the room we got the sense that this program was something incredible. The children were at ease, the environment was warm and inviting, and the volunteers were very comfortable. I said, "I have to have this at my school."

Why are strong literacy skills so important?

More and more we know that literacy is not just important when we read books, but in ev-

erything we do and how we make sense of the world. Reading is fundamental to everything from being able to function as a citizen and paying bills to getting around town and how we tackle math. There is truly an all-important connection between reading and all disciplines.

How has your partnership with Reading Partners made a difference at your school?

Reading Partners is an amazing entity here because there is a triangular approach to what they do. First, they reach out to students and create these amazing relationships between students and volunteers—members of our community who come in to give back. I am in awe of the volunteers who give their time to help a student in need. Second, Reading



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Partners reaches out to parents to create a strong partnership, so that parents are reminded of just how integral they are to what goes on in their child's life at school. Finally, Reading Partners serves as another lifeline to teachers who can seek out [Site Coordinator] Kiana and [Program Manager] Tiffany to say, "Hey, listen, I just got a new student today who I know needs extra help. Can we talk?"

Consequently, teachers have respect for this program because it speaks to their needs. Teachers understand that when they have 32 kids in a class, it's difficult for them to do what they want to do for every single student. So the new competence that Reading Partners helps our scholars to achieve, the reassurance they provide to parents, and the support they give to teachers is amazing.

What do you think is the biggest benefit for a student in having that one-on-one time with a tutor?

If you were a lay person and you just walked into a reading center and saw what was going on you might say, "Some kids are reading with adults. Big deal." However, having a long standing background in education, I know what works and why. Reading Partners brings to life the adage of Dr. James

Comer that "No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship." I have held that belief for many years. That's what happens in Reading Partners; they create significant relationships and learning occurs.

What benefits do you see in having community volunteers work inside your schools through Reading Partners?

I feel very strongly that raising a child does take a village. That may sound corny, but I think people need to make the connection between how our children fare in school and the strength of our community. What happens now affects what is going to happen 20 years from now. If we are going to close the achievement gap and break this cycle of poverty, we have to start now.

When people come into this building to volunteer, they get that connection. Our mantra here at PS 48 is "Our scholars, our community, our future." It's that simple. I believe that people should not only have the opportunity to help these scholars, one kid at a time, but that they should seize it. Reading Partners makes that opportunity happen for our community.



"If you want to give back—not only to your community, but to the world—I would so recommend Reading Partners."
— Brenda Guy, Principal at San Miguel Elementary

Reaching Out: Our Community of Heroes

We're not concerned about hiding Reading Partners' secret sauce, that crucial mix of ingredients that makes our program so successful. In fact, we do what we can to share it with everyone we meet. That's because it gets more powerful the more people hear about it. Our secret sauce is empowering community members to overcome community challenges.

We work tirelessly to reach out to passionate men and women who want to make a difference in their community and then to give them the tools and support they need to be effective agents of change. In the 2012-13 school year, we recruited and trained 8,595 volunteers from the community to work one-on-one with a student in a local school. 97% of tutors reported that they were satisfied with their experience with Reading Partners.

The Reading Partners Community Engagement team is out in our communities, meeting with parents, teachers, business leaders, and community groups, and sharing our secret sauce. Together, we're changing the lives of boys and girls across the country.

Q&A WITH

Jennifer Mao, Community Engagement Manager

Before joining Reading Partners, Jennifer Mao worked within a variety of educational contexts, ranging from classroom teaching to college admissions advising. She is thrilled to join Reading Partners as the Community Engagement Manager and looks forward to building long-lasting partnerships in the Bay Area.

What does your typical day look like?

One of the best things about my role is that there really is no typical day! I spend a good portion of time building and maintaining relationships with volunteer partners. These partners include high schools, colleges, non-profits, local businesses, faith-based organizations, start-ups, and corporations.

Every day brings a fresh challenge. As an example, during this past week, I have had meetings with four volunteer partners, accompanied my team on their first five presentations of the year, travelled across the Bay Bridge eight times, and written 132 emails.

I also have the incredible privilege of leading a fantastic team of four AmeriCorps fellows, who have committed a year of service with us to coordinate and strengthen our external relations.

I love that "Community Engagement" is in my title, because it is such a broadly applicable term that I think captures the breadth and depth of Reading Partners' commitment to become deeply embedded within the fabric of our local communities and schools. Our Community Engagement team is an absolutely essential piece; without volunteers, we wouldn't be able to serve students!

What is the most rewarding part of your job?

I find it most rewarding that I'm part of a community-powered organization. Without the commitment of thousands of everyday citizens, Reading Partners wouldn't exist. Being part of an organization that can provide a conduit for people to enact meaningful change in their local communities is a constant source of inspiration for me.



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What role do you believe that community members can play in improving public education?

I think that education is deeply embedded and inextricable from the challenges and opportunities of its surrounding society. I don't view "public education" as a sphere removed from public health, public welfare, or public safety. Nor do I believe that it should be considered outside of the influence of private or for-profit enterprises.

Although the methods and means are hotly contested, I think that everybody can agree that all children deserve the right to a high-quality education that empowers them with the tools to ask questions, to make sense of, and to challenge the world around them. However, I think that people also can generally agree that there are certain entrenched inequalities within our society, resulting in the fact that low-income students experience certain disadvantages that more affluent children do not.

I have observed a certain sense of defeatism in the dialogue surrounding K-12 education. Reading Partners operates from a place of hope, rather than despair. This optimism is powerful, that individuals can and should feel a responsibility to make a difference, to pay it forward. When engaging in this work, I am constantly reminded of an African proverb: "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

Supporting Success at School and Home

Reading Partners' lessons are built around carefully selected books. Books are chosen to fit the skills being taught and match students' reading levels. To be sensitive to the diversity of our student population, Reading Partners ensures that the curriculum includes many highly acclaimed multicultural texts. Reading Partners encourages reading at home. Since many families in the United States have no children's books at home, we give students books to read at home and build their own libraries.



"I feel happy because I read a lot."
— Fabrizio, Student at San Miguel Elementary

Before Jason Reads, You Have to Read Jason

When Jason Frias entered Sable Elementary School in Aurora, Colorado in November 2012, he seemed like a good fit for Reading Partners. Although he had strong conversational skills for a 9-year old, he was reading at a kindergarten level and his test scores were poor. He neglected to turn in his homework and often seemed tired and disengaged in class. A sweet and charming boy, he was full of unrealized promise.

Jason was eager to join Reading Partners, but he failed to respond to the first two volunteer tutors assigned to him. Both women

ing the inner engines that keep him going despite very hard times. There's the soldier with wings who is his guardian angel. Down toward his wrists are the symbols for his Army buddies who died in combat: the large 'P' for Gary Pilardi from Pittsburgh; the medical symbol for company medic Donald ('Doc') Fox; and the beating heart for Chris Fox, who died in Deric's arms from a sniper's bullet, but who will always live on through him.

Finally, there are the images representing the demons Deric has faced due to the

"Certainly, there are a lot of tutors out there much better than I am. I just try my hardest, and then Jason tries his hardest ... and things happen."

had experienced great success mentoring other students at the school, but they could barely get Jason to do anything more than rest his head on the desk.

Lisa Waters, Reading Partners Site Coordinator at Sable Elementary, knew that Jason was at risk; children who don't read proficiently by fourth grade—approximately 66 percent of public school students in 2011—are four times less likely to graduate high school on time. She also knew that if Jason responded to the tutoring, his reading skills would no doubt improve.

Running out of options, Lisa decided to play a hunch. Suspecting that Jason would respond better to a male tutor, she turned to Deric Pinales, a 24-year old Iraq war veteran.

THE LIFE STORY OF DERIC PINALES is told in the tattoos that cover his arms. There's the image of machinery, represent-

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) he's suffered since returning home from war. The scrolls on his left arm symbolize the demons he's conquered, the scrolls on the right those he's still fighting.

Deric was retired by the US Army with full disability benefits in 2011 due to PTSD. Although he had no need for extra income, he knew he had to keep himself busy in order to avoid the flashbacks, nightmares, and anxiety that came with his disorder. He tried working as a security guard, but it seemed meaningless to him.

Quitting the job, he began looking for volunteer opportunities. "I realized that if I couldn't help defend my country, I needed to find other ways to give back," he explains. Deric began volunteering at organizations around Denver. He solicited donations on Craigslist to feed the homeless on Thanks-



giving. He joined a nonprofit that deploys volunteers to crisis areas around the U.S.

The Craigslist ad for Reading Partners called out to Deric right away. “In Iraq, I saw kids who had absolutely nothing, and they’d be thrilled if I gave them a Sponge Bob pencil,” he says. “A lot of them hadn’t been to school in years because they had to work to provide for their families, and some could barely read. It broke my heart, because that’s no way for any kid to grow up.” He resolved that when he returned to the States he’d do anything he could to help future generations.

Deric met Lisa when he first came to Sable Elementary for his Reading Partners “shadow session,” when new volunteers are trained. She recognized his big heart right away and was impressed that he was prepared to give so much of his time.

JASON MET DERIC FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE Sable Elementary School library in February 2013. Deric knew instinctively that what the boy needed was one-on-one attention—someone who could listen to him and really hear him. It wasn’t time yet to start a reading lesson.

They told each other about their interests, comparing PlayStation to Xbox and baseball to soccer.

From across the room, Lisa looked on hopefully. Jason was alert and on the edge of his seat, something she’d never seen with his previous tutors. When the session was over, Jason stopped by Lisa’s desk long enough to say: “Thanks for giving me the army man with the tattoos. He’s cool.”

The second Reading Partners session between Deric and Jason set the pattern for all that followed. First, Deric and Jason tell each other about the video games they’ve played since their last visit together. Second, Deric reads to Jason from a book of the child’s choice, stopping whenever Jason seems confused about a word or a topic. “I’ll point to a comma, and I’ll say, ‘That means you have to pause and then continue,’” Deric says. Then, perhaps Jason will read aloud too.

“This is about getting the kids interested in reading books,” explains Lisa. “The mentor is showing them, ‘I’m an adult and I like reading, and I like this book.’ It teaches students appreciation for the written word.” *(continued on next page)*



"We all need to work together to ensure all students are reading at grade level by fourth grade."
— Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake

(continued from page 15) No matter what their level, Reading Partners participants learn key reading comprehension skills and develop their vocabularies using a mix of tools. Deric often utilizes a series of flashcards to focus on a particular phonics or decoding skill. Jason also responds well to 'word net' exercises, where the mentor writes challenging words on a piece of paper and the student reads them back and then writes the word himself or herself.

"We take it day by day," Deric says. "We [create] short term goals Jason can achieve—like let's move two [skill levels] next week." Whenever Jason begins to lag, Deric pulls out a stick of what he refers to as 'energy gum.' At the end of every session, Deric al-

WITHIN A MONTH AFTER JASON

began meeting with Deric, teacher Christa Burson saw changes in Jason's school performance. He began handing in homework, stopped falling asleep in class, and started bringing his backpack to school every day. He even turned in weekly book reports on a voluntary basis and prodded Burson for more books to read. "Certainly, there are a lot of tutors out there much better than I am," Deric says modestly. "I just try my hardest, and then Jason tries his hardest... and things happen."

"With Deric and Jason, their relationship is just normal," Lisa says. "That's what Jason needed. He needed normalcy in his life. You can see it in the way he looks at Deric. It's

"The great thing is that when you learn how to read, you have a choice. You can do anything."

ways includes a game of Handman using the letters of a difficult word from that day. He also makes certain to include constant positive reinforcement. "I give Jason credit all the time," Deric says. "The kid works so hard and he doesn't realize how good he is."

The bond between the two Reading Partners has been strengthened by similarities in their histories. When Deric was three years old, he woke-up one Sunday morning to get ready for church and found that his father had left home the night before and wasn't coming back. Likewise, Jason was just two when his father married a woman who didn't want him around. Three years went by before Jason's father divorced, re-entering the boy's life. But it wasn't long before he married again, this time to a woman who isn't always nice to Jason.

"There are so many kids out there without adequate father figures who are falling through the cracks," Deric says. "They need somebody—not on their age level—who can point out right from wrong. That's what I try to do with Jason."

all easy; it's not forced. It's so much more than just about reading."

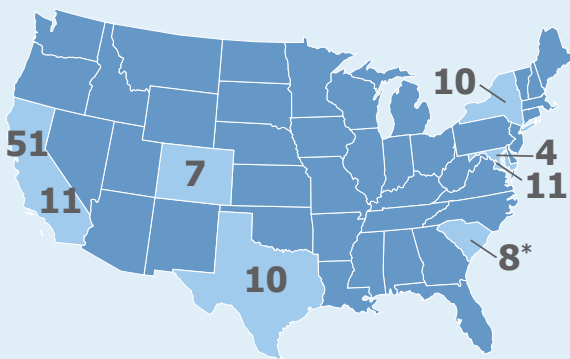
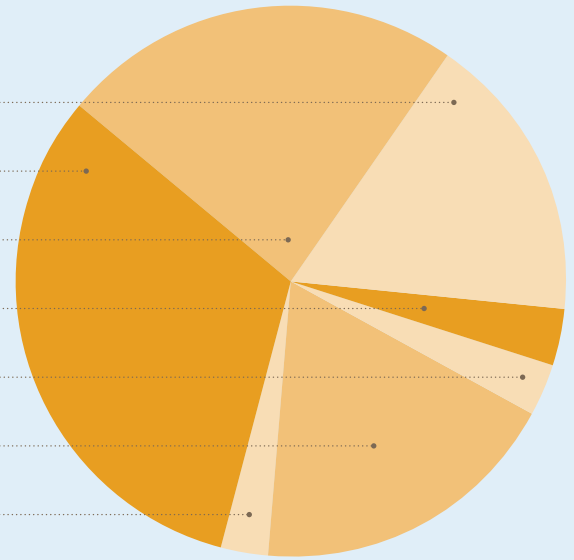
"I hang out with Jason because I enjoy his company," says Deric. "He says funny things and he cracks me up. I love this kid because I see him as a younger version of myself. I wasn't the biggest fan of reading back then, but I am now." According to Burson, Jason was beyond excited when it was decided that the two Reading Partners would go to a Colorado Rockies baseball game using donated tickets. The boy was thrilled to sit in the stands with Deric, and he enjoyed the hot dog and soda his mentor bought him.

BY THE END OF THE 2012-13 SCHOOL

year, Jason's reading had advanced two full grade levels, and it was very clear that both student and mentor had benefitted greatly from the program. "Deric is so grateful to tutor with Reading Partners," says Lisa, who is hoping the veteran will take more children under his wing next year. "I have a lot more troubled boys who can use him. You just never know what one interaction like this can do to change a life."

Volunteers by Demographic

High School student	17%
College or Graduate Student	32%
Working Full-Time	23.7%
Working Part-time	3.3%
Parent, Guardian, or Caregiver	3%
Retired and Transitioning Adults	18.3%
Other	2.7%



Areas Served 2012-13

Number of School Partners:

- 38** San Francisco Bay Area, CA
- 13** Sacramento, CA
- 11** Los Angeles, CA
- 7** Colorado
- 10** Dallas, TX
- 8** Charleston, SC*
- 11** Washington, D.C.
- 4** Baltimore, MD
- 10** New York

*A Collaboration between Charleston Book Buddies and Reading Partners. In 2013, Charleston Book Buddies officially became Reading Partners Charleston.

Not surprisingly, Jason has altered his long-term goals. Instead of becoming a janitor like his father, he now hopes to be a soldier. "If you want to be in the military, you'll have to know how to read," Deric reminds him, but then continues: "The great thing is that when you learn how to read, you have a choice. You can do anything. All you have to do is put your mind to it and work at it every day."

Although Reading Partners was originally intended for first to third grade students at Sable Elementary, the program recently has been extended to the fourth grade. Of course, both Jason and Deric are thrilled with the change. When he first heard about it, Jason turned to Waters: "Are they going to change me to a different tutor again?"

Lisa let Deric give him the answer: "Nope you're stuck with me," he said as he reached out to hug the boy, Jason hugging him back.





"They got my daughter to read. She didn't know how to read and now she does."
— Sylvia Sanz, Parent at San Miguel Elementary

Looking Ahead to Reach the Next Generation of Readers

The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation (EMCF) is one of Reading Partners' most significant supporters. For over a decade EMCF has been selecting outstanding nonprofits with a potential for growth and compelling evidence that their programs help young people become successful, productive adults. In 2011, Reading Partners received a \$3.5 million, three-year Social Innovation Fund award from EMCF and became a True North Fund grantee.

Q&A WITH

Jehan Velji, Portfolio Manager, EMCF

As Portfolio Manager, Jehan Velji manages the EMCF's relationships with West Coast-based grantees. In addition to helping them execute their growth plans, she identifies new investment opportunities in promising youth development organizations. Velji has more than 14 years' experience in strategy consulting and organizational capacity-building.

What are the main reasons that The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation continues to be such a strong supporter for Reading Partners?

We support Reading Partners because they help young people in schools in impoverished communities at a critical juncture in their trajectory as readers and learners. Exactly when students need help the most, Reading Partners provides a high-quality program that is delivered consistently across different schools and states. They have a strong leadership team focused on continually learning, evaluating, and improving the program as it expands to reach more young people across America.

As an expert in the field of educational nonprofits, what sticks out to you as special about Reading Partners?

Reading Partners is special in its ability to leverage volunteers to help young people measurably advance their reading skills, which it confirms through ongoing data tracking. Reading Partners' promising results with students are now attracting increasing levels of public and private resources to support its program. It's also special to see Reading Part-

ners undertaking an external evaluation of its program by its own desire to increase its impact for young people.

How have you seen Reading Partners change and mature in the past few years?

We've been impressed with what Reading Partners has achieved so far. To support its expansion into New York, Colorado, and other states, Reading Partners added functional expertise and upgraded its systems to manage its rapid growth. They also have evolved their approach to growth, carefully assessing criteria for entry into a new location, determining the appropriate timing for adding new geographies, and understanding what financial commitments are required before they enter a new state.

What are you interested to see Reading Partners do in the future?

We'd like to see Reading Partners continue its focus on maximizing results for kids by maintaining its quality, while also expanding its reach and using what it learns to inform policymakers and other practitioners.



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Q&A WITH

Michael Lombardo, Chief Executive Officer, Reading Partners

What drove Reading Partners to think about taking its program to national scale?

In 2010-11 Reading Partners was approaching an inflection point and the Social Innovation Fund provided a critical opportunity to launch our organization into the next phase of our growth. I was drawn to EMCF's focus on evidence-based practice and deeply impressed by the rigor with which they approached evaluation. We had an instant cultural click as two organizations that make decisions based on data and that value the quality of service and impact above all else.

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) cycle was particularly exciting given the added prominence it brought to our work and the opportunity to deepen our existing relationship with the Corporation for National and Community Service. Receiving a SIF grant through EMCF was really the confluence of a number of great factors that ultimately played a huge role in the trajectory of Reading Partners.

How has Reading Partners had to change since going to national scale?

One of the hardest things about being a high growth organization is holding on to the aspects of your culture that make you special while letting go of the ones that can't scale—and being able to tell which is which!

From my first day on the job, Reading Partners has first and foremost been an organization with incredibly high standards, for our students as well as ourselves. There's no such thing as 'good enough', and at each stage of our growth we've maintained our focus on continuous improvement for every aspect of our organization, from curriculum to accounting.

The more we scale nationally and expand our team, the more important it is for us to value our people and partners and to

seek opportunities to highlight the great work they're doing all the time—even as we're all pushing ourselves to do better and better.

What makes Reading Partners unique?

Our high standards and evidence-based practice are big parts of what makes Reading Partners special, but those same values are held by a number of great nonprofits. I think what really sets us apart, and what has inspired me most about this organization, is the grassroots approach to our work.

By engaging directly with students in schools, there is a place for anyone from age 14 to 80 (and up!) to participate in Reading Partners. All we ask for is one hour a week. No matter how busy you are, everyone can spare an hour—especially when it is for something as important as helping a child learn to read.

Real transformation can't just be about the insiders. At Reading Partners, we believe that to create meaningful reform in education it is essential to invite the whole community into the movement. That is what we are doing by bringing thousands of citizens into schools every week.

What have been the most important lessons during Reading Partners' expansion?

Have a vision for what you want to change in the community, and pursue it relentlessly. Whenever someone tells you no, instead hear 'not now.' Keep tying everything you do to the students you work with and what you hope they'll accomplish for themselves. Never stop being a student yourself. Measure everything. Create a community of thought partners around you, and encourage them to challenge your point of view. Spend time on culture. Read something not work-related every day. Share what you're reading with your colleagues, literally.



"I love Reading Partners! Being a reading tutor is a highlight of my week!"
— Carol Miller, Tutor

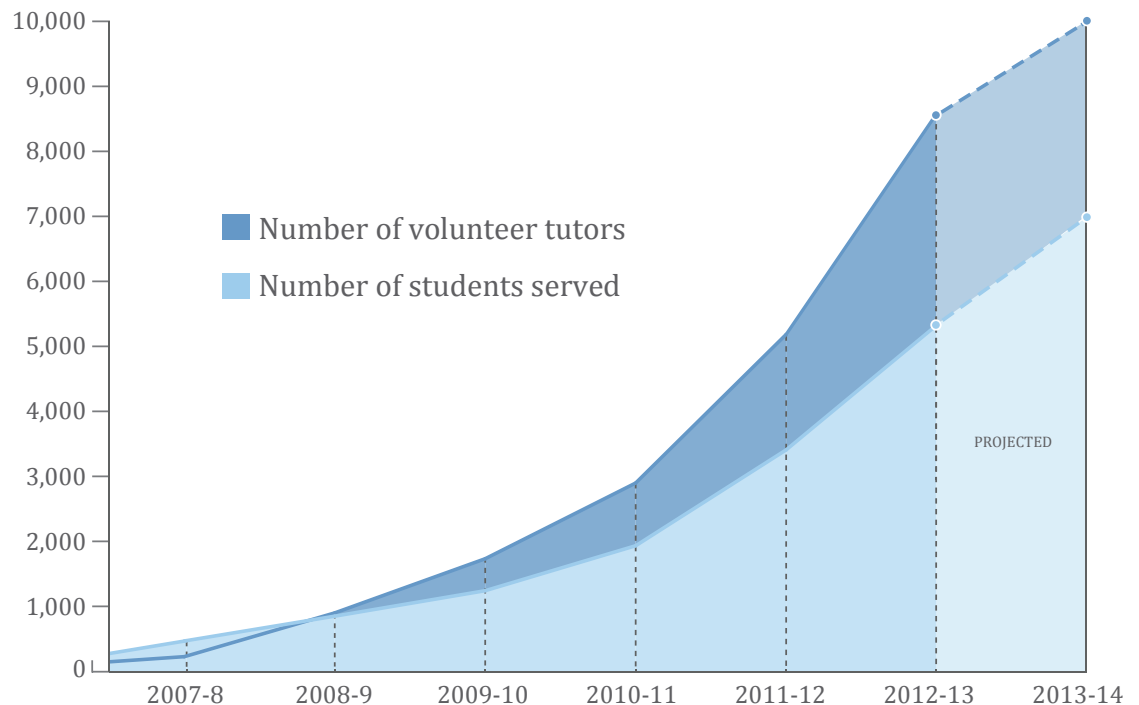
Going to Scale: 2013-14

Since our founding, Reading Partners has grown exponentially, shifting from a local California organization to a national organization that is serving over 7,000 students from more than 130 schools throughout California, Colorado, Dallas, New York, Charleston, Tulsa, Baltimore, and Washington, DC during the 2013-14 school year.

This year, we welcomed two new regions into the Reading Partners family: Tulsa, Oklahoma and Charleston, South Carolina. Reading Partners selected Tulsa as an expansion site based on interest from school district leaders in partnering with us to provide our high-quality literacy intervention program to address the region's significant achievement gap. Today, only 1 in 4 Oklahoma fourth graders is reading at a proficient level and 36% lack even basic literacy skills.

In Charleston, Reading Partners began a partnership with the Charleston Volunteers for Literacy Book Buddies program in the 2012-13 school year. In the fall of 2013, Charleston Volunteers for Literacy officially became Reading Partners Charleston, our 11th region.

Projected Growth





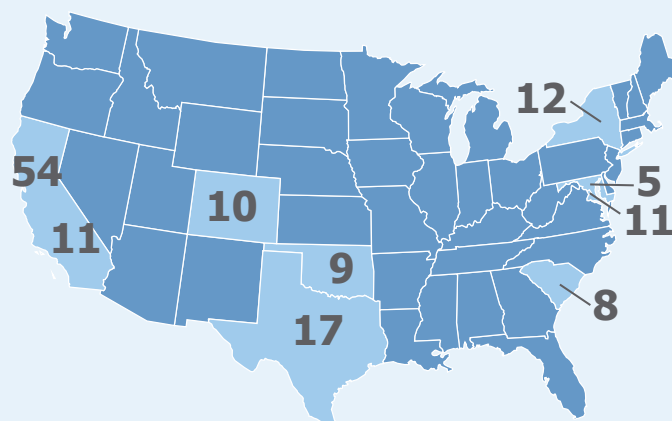
National Service: 2013-14

Reading Partners continues to be a proud partner with the Corporation for National and Community Service. Our reading centers are powered by dedicated AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers. In 2013-14, Reading Partners received \$1,993,740 from the Corporation for National and Community Service and AmeriCorps State Commissions to support the work of 155 full time AmeriCorps members and 26 AmeriCorps VISTA members.

Areas Served 2013-14

Number of School Partners: **137**

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 23 San Francisco Bay Area, CA | 17 Dallas, TX |
| 11 Sacramento, CA | 8 Charleston, SC |
| 20 Silicon Valley, CA | 11 Washington, D.C. |
| 11 Los Angeles, CA | 5 Baltimore, MD |
| 10 Colorado | 12 New York |
| 9 Tulsa, OK | |



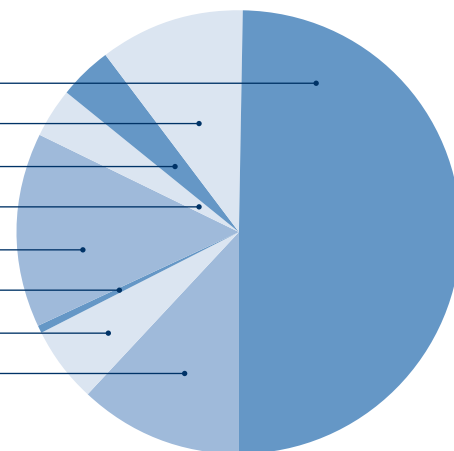
Finances

Pre-Audit Financials for Fiscal Year

ENDING JUNE 30, 2013

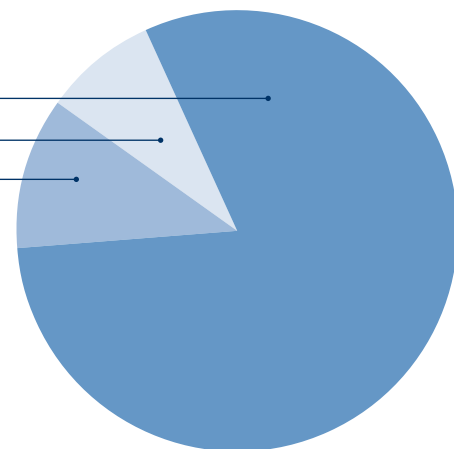
Income

Foundation Grants	\$7,564,263*	50.0%
Fee for Service	\$1,582,666	10.5%
Individual Contributions	\$603,155	4.0%
Corporate Gifts/Grants	\$538,510	3.6%
In-kind Donations	\$2,139,727	14.1%
Investments & Other	\$61,258	0.4%
Government Contracts	\$857,024	5.7%
Government Grants	\$1,786,253	11.8%
Total	\$15,132,856	100%



Expenses

Program Services	\$10,593,580	80.6%
Fundraising	\$1,086,837	8.3%
Management & General	\$1,462,021	11.1%
Total	\$13,142,438	100.0%



Net Income **\$1,990,418***

Statement of Financial Position

	June 30, 2013	July 31, 2012
Current Assets	\$2,850,191*	\$3,083,398
Fixed Assets	\$474,498	\$499,245
Other Assets	\$1,279,967	\$264,326
Total Assets	\$4,604,655	\$3,846,969
Current Liabilities	\$1,221,005**	\$2,032,738
Equity	\$3,383,650*	\$1,814,231
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$4,604,655	\$3,846,969

* Includes \$1.95M, 2014-2016 restricted grant from the George Kaiser Family Foundation and related FY14 grant payment.

** Include 2014 SIF grant cash payment from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation.

Thank You

Reading Partners is deeply grateful for our generous supporters. The following supporters gave to Reading Partners between July 1, 2012 and June 30, 2013.

*Indicates single year of multi-year commitment

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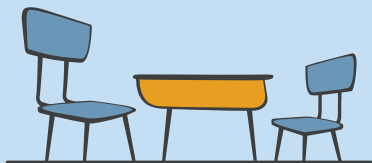
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