

2015 Focusing Philanthropy Pasadena Match Campaign Final Report

Reading Partners is deeply grateful for Focusing Philanthropy's generous support in hosting a one-to-one match campaign to scale our proven literacy intervention program in the Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD) during the 2015-16 school year. **We are proud to report that the campaign raised a total of \$486,807.** As you know, this past year was the second of our five-year partnership with PUSD, and we continue to look forward to deepening our impact on literacy achievement over the next three years. It is our pleasure to submit a final report on the activities and expenditures of the 2015 Pasadena program from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016.

NUMBER OF YOUTH SERVED & VOLUNTEERS ENGAGED

Reading Partners had the great opportunity to serve an additional school in Pasadena this past year, enabling us to expand from four to **six schools** in the district in 2015-16. With an initial goal of serving 250 students, we are pleased to report this growth has enabled us to serve a total of **299 students**.

In addition, Reading Partners continued to actively recruit volunteer tutors from all walks of life in the belief that students benefit from the experience of meeting people of different ages,, ethnicities, and life experience. In Pasadena, we were grateful to have the support of **375 community volunteers** ranging from high school and college students, working professionals, parents, and senior citizens.

GEOGRAPHY SERVED

Reading Partners' Pasadena students resided in the following zip codes: 91001, 91003, 91016, 91101, 91103, 91104, 91105, 91106, 91107, 91731, and 91801. We were also pleased to partner with the following six Title I elementary schools at the following addresses:

School	Address
Washington Accelerated Elementary	1520 N. Raymond Ave., Pasadena, CA 91103
Cleveland Elementary	524 Palisade St., Pasadena, CA 91103
Jackson Elementary	593 W. Woodbury Rd., Altadena, CA 91001
Madison Elementary	515 Ashtabula St., Pasadena, CA 91104
Jefferson Elementary	1500 E. Villa St., Pasadena, CA 91106
Don Benito Fundamental School	3700 Denair St, Pasadena, CA 91107

METRICS/STUDENT OUTCOMES

Reading Partners' proudest accomplishment continues to be the progress we see our students make every year. To hold our organization more accountable to our vision of raising fourth-grade literacy rates, Reading Partners raised the bar around our student outcomes to better support our students in achieving grade-level proficiency. We enhanced our instructional resources, increased the rigor of our student assessment practice, and raised our student performance standards. As such, Reading Partners further differentiated our approach by grade-level: for K-2nd graders, we focused on students' mastery of foundational literacy skills, and for third- and fourth-graders, we helped students double their rate of learning and develop the comprehension skills necessary to be on track or at grade-level by the end of the year. As a result, we measured the success of our program against the following metrics and are pleased to report the tremendous gains our students made:

- 93% of K-2nd graders mastered grade-appropriate foundational literacy skills (GOAL: 72%)
- 78% of third- and fourth-grade students demonstrated growth compared to a national group of peers (GOAL: 65%)
- 47% of third- and fourth-graders who entered Reading Partners with achievement gaps of five months or less read at grade-level by year-end (GOAL: 40%)
- 24% of third graders who entered Reading Partners with achievement gaps between 6-10 months were on track to read at grade-level by year-end (GOAL: 30%)
- 79% of students showed improvement in general academic behaviors, such as class participation and regular homework completion (GOAL: 70%)
- 96% of tutors were satisfied with their experience (GOAL: 85%)
- 97% of teachers and principals identified Reading Partners as a valuable asset to their school (GOAL: 90%)

Because of our specific grade-level expectations and increased student performance standards, we saw significant gains from our students, particularly among our K-2nd graders. By enrolling students earlier in their school careers, they were able to reach grade-level expectations sooner, thus preventing them from being behind the upcoming year, particularly if they were entering third and/or fourth grade where the focus begins to shift from learning to read to using reading to learn. This is critical for our younger students, as research has shown that children who are behind in reading by the end of third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school and that once they are behind, they tend to fall even faster and further behind their peers with every passing year.

Thus, it is also not a surprise that we faced unique challenges with our third graders reading 10 months or less behind. Though they were not more than a year behind grade-level, by raising expectations that they were to be on track or read at grade-level by year-end, we were expecting them to develop the foundational skills they may not have mastered in previous years while simultaneously learning the necessary comprehension skills to read grade-appropriate books. Intensive progress monitoring and additional attention from staff was necessary to ensure as many students were hitting this year-end target and will continue to be a focus for this group of students in the upcoming school year. Though we faced challenges with this sub-group, all of our third and fourth graders, including those who were up to two-and-a-half years behind, made impressive gains as 78% showed improvement in comparison to their peers nationwide.

Our students' progress is the direct result of the **11,185 hours** of one-on-one literacy tutoring our corps of volunteers provided last year. Having provided a total of 7,661 hours of tutoring in 2014-15, this represented a **50.0% increase** in tutoring sessions by the end of 2015-16. Based on the average cost of an hour-long tutoring session, Reading Partners has brought an in-kind value of over **\$447,000** to our Pasadena schools this past year. Beyond just their time, our tutors also shared their energy, positivity, and belief in the importance of public education. **Ninety-nine percent of tutors reported that helping a student become a more proficient reader was important to them, and 87% felt that they made a difference in their community through tutoring through their experience with Reading Partners.**

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: ANTHONY AND HIS TUTOR GAYLE



As mentioned above, one of Reading Partners' most significant accomplishments is measured not in the numerical gains our students experience, nor the positive press around the importance of literacy, but in the visible changes we see in student confidence and reading ability. Anthony was a second grader at Jackson Elementary in Pasadena, and he was excited about getting extra help with improving his reading this year. Luckily, his tutor, Gayle, has been volunteering with Reading Partners over the last five years and enjoys sharing her love of reading with children to help them improve reading comprehension. "When Anthony

and I first met, he told me that his goal was to read chapter books this year," said Gayle. Thanks to her commitment, Anthony is on his way to achieving that goal. In the four months they have been reading together, Anthony's skills have significantly improved, and Anthony and Gayle have become good friends. "I love it," says Gayle. "Sometimes I feel I am getting more out of this than the students. [...] The Reading Partners program is a wonderful way to make a connection with kids. The one-on-one tutoring twice a week works, and I love watching these kids emerge as readers." Anthony and Gayle's story is just one of the more than the nearly 300 students we are serving in the Pasadena Unified School District, and we remain incredibly grateful for our volunteers' dedication and service to our students every year.

CONCLUSION

Testament to the value and impact of Reading Partners in Los Angeles County, in 2015-16, **86% of all of our K-4 grade students** met or exceeded their primary end-of-year growth goal this past year. In addition, **100% of principals** at our partner schools reported improved reading progress school-wide and felt Reading Partners was a valuable asset to their schools for a second year in a row.

Thank you, once again, for Focusing Philanthropy's commitment to the growth of our one-on-one literacy intervention program in the Pasadena Unified School District. We are grateful to continue our partnership in this upcoming 2016-17 school year and look forward to updating the foundation on our progress.