

2016-2017 Final Grant Report to Focusing Philanthropy

Reading Partners is thankful for Focusing Philanthropy's generous support to grow our program in the Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD) in 2016-17. It is our pleasure to provide a final update of the activities of our 2016-17 grant from September 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017.

NUMBER OF YOUTH SERVED & VOLUNTEERS ENGAGED

In the fall of 2016, Reading Partners had the opportunity to expand our program to a total of seven schools in the Pasadena Unified School District. With an initial goal of serving 325 students, we are pleased to report this growth enabled us to serve a total of **343 students** this past school year. Our Pasadena students ranged from five to eleven years old and 52% were female and 48% were male.

In addition, Reading Partners actively recruited 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 are grateful to have **nearly 400 community volunteers** ranging from high school and college students, working professionals, parents, and senior citizens. Our tutors range in age from 14 to 86 years old, with a large majority of them being on either end of that spectrum- high school and college students made up approximately 30% of our tutors, and adults over the age of 55, largely retirees, was 35%.

GEOGRAPHY SERVED

In 2016-2017, Reading Partners' Pasadena students resided in the following zip codes: 91001, 91003, 91016, 91101, 91103, 91104, 91105, 91106, 91107, 91731, and 91801. We served the following seven 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
Longfellow Elementary	1065 E. Washington Blvd Pasadena CA 91104
Jefferson Elementary	1500 E. Villa St., Pasadena, CA 91106
Don Benito Fundamental School	3700 Denair St, Pasadena, CA 91107

METRICS/OUTCOMES

This past school year, Reading Partners raised the bar around our student outcomes to better support our students in achieving grade-level proficiency. During the 2016-17 school year, we enhanced our instructional resources, increased the rigor of our student assessment practice, and raised our student performance standards. In addition, we created some new tools and strategies to further differentiate student support, including individualized instructional reading plans for specific gaps. 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:

- 97% of K-2nd graders mastered grade-appropriate foundational literacy skills
- 84% of third- and fourth-grade students demonstrated growth compared to a national group of peers
- 84% of students showed improvement in general academic behaviors, such as class participation and regular homework completion
- 91% of tutors were satisfied with their experience
- 100% of teachers and principals identified Reading Partners as a valuable asset to their school

In addition, Reading Partners provided **12,020 hours** of one-on-one literacy tutoring by the end of the school year. Based on the average cost of an hour-long tutoring session, Reading Partners has brought an in-kind value of over **\$481,000** to our Pasadena schools this past year.

PROGRAM SUCCESS AND CHALLENGES

Reading Partners' proudest accomplishment continues to be our students' success every year. Due to the further differentiation of grade-level expectations and raising our student performance standards, we saw tremendous gains from our students, particularly with K-2nd graders this past year. By enrolling students earlier in their school careers, they were able to reach grade-level expectations sooner, thus preventing them from being behind during 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 they tend to fall faster and further behind their peers with every passing year.

Our biggest challenge and opportunity remains in recruiting the volunteers needed to serve the ever-growing number of students that are struggling with reading. While we served more students in Pasadena Unified School District than ever before in 2016-2017, there is a growing waiting list of students waiting for a reading partner. We were fortunate to expand the number of partner organizations we worked with this year- adding new partnerships in Pasadena including Pasadena Village, Pasadena Fire Department, Podley Properties, Keller Williams, and Altadena Town Council. In the upcoming school year we will continue to build more resources in our community engagement department so that we can engage more volunteers to support our ever-growing list of students waiting to be match with a tutor.

STORY OF SUCCESS: ELISSA AND ELIZABETH

In her fifth year of tutoring with Reading Partners at Washington Accelerated Elementary School, retiree Elissa reflects on her experiences as a reading partner, "I've seen so many improvements with every child that I've had. It's kind of like a game to see how much you can get them to improve." This year, Elissa is working with first-grade student Elizabeth, who she describes as "awesome, delightful, and motivated."

When Elizabeth started Reading Partners in September she did not have mastery over her letter names and sounds. After only six months of working with Elissa, Elizabeth not only knows letter names and sounds, she has also shown mastery of two other foundational skills for reading. "Reading is fun," Elizabeth states as she discusses her favorite things about Reading Partners, "I like when she [Elissa] reads to me and I like to get new books". Now an experienced reading tutor, Elissa wasn't always confident about her role as a tutor, "I thought it sounded interesting to do even though I wasn't a teacher prior to this. It was scary at first, but the program makes it so easy for you to follow what needs to be done and what needs to be taught."



CONCLUSION

We are thrilled with the outcomes of our students as well as the growth of our partnerships in Pasadena. 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 thrilled to partner with you again in support of our programming in Pasadena. We look forward to keeping you abreast of our work in the upcoming months.