



#### Program Visited

- Reading Partners, Cesar Chavez Elementary School, Alum Rock School District

#### Staff

- Aarika Riddle, ED Bay Area & Silicon Valley
- Sydney Burrell, Deputy Program Director, Silicon Valley (former AmeriCorps volunteer)
- Monique Garcia, External Relations Manager, Silicon Valley
- Mario Vargas, Executive Director Silicon Valley – started just a week ago

#### Focusing Philanthropy Staff

- Parnia Banki

#### Executive Summary

Parnia Banki visited the Reading Partners classroom at Cesar Chavez Elementary School in San Jose, California on March 25, 2019. The purpose of the visit was to see a Reading Partners site in San Jose, learn more about the program, observe students and tutors, and meet with staff.

#### Background

- The Silicon Valley Reading Partners program serves the following cities: Redwood City, Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Milpitas, and San Jose.

#### Visit

##### Cesar Chavez Elementary School

- Total enrollment: 300 students
- RP just passed the 65 students mark. They've been at the school since 2011
- Goal: 50 students
- Students receive 2 tutoring sessions per week for 45 minutes each
- 70-80 volunteers spend 1 hour per week, the extra 15 minutes are for preparation and record-keeping
- Program runs 8:55am – 5pm, Sessions run all day
- Challenges at Cesar Chavez: recruiting more tutors

#### Book Donations & Supplies

- Students receive a book of their choice at the end of every lesson
- Books are donated by San Jose State University, local high school book drives, and local companies
- Reading Partners also holds supply drives. Tutors also donate supplies.

#### Contact with Parents

- Reading Partners opens their centers to parents during school events such as Open Houses, Parent-Teacher Conferences, and School Literacy Nights in order to meet parents and highlight their work.
- They also try to be accessible to all parents by distributing permission forms in several languages.



- Parents who pick their children up after school have more contact than those whose children are tutored during the school day.

#### Conversations with RP staff:

- We did not interview any of the volunteers or students as they were in the middle of session
- In response to a donor question about how RP teaches the alphabet to the youngest students, Sydney Burrell, Program Director, demonstrated how RP teaches the alphabet to young students, starting with tactile lessons, and then moves on to how a letter sounds in a word, short vs. long sounds, and then to simple words.
- In response to donor questions about the need for RP, Aarika explained that RP students don't read at grade level because they live in under-resourced communities, often with parents who don't speak English and cannot read to them in English. RP does not address students with learning disabilities.

#### Institutional & Program Takeaways

I was very impressed with Aarika and her dedicated team. I've seen the program at multiple locations and am always impressed by the fidelity of the program across various geographies.

