

United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra
639 Isbell Rd., Suite 460
Reno, NV 89509
775-322-8668
www.uwnns.org



United Way of Northern
Nevada and the Sierra

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 28, 2015

Media Contact: Scott Walquist, KPS3 Marketing
phone: 775-686-2116 cell: 775-287-6788
scott@kps3.com

United Way Announces \$1.125 Million in Funding Over Three Years

Reno, Nev. – In 2014, United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra (UWNNS) took an unprecedented step of identifying one clear and compelling direction for the organization and adopted the goal to double the number of children in northern Nevada who read proficiently at the conclusion of third grade by 2020. UWNNS has announced its selection of funding recipients totaling \$1.125 million over the next three years to help achieve this goal (year one: \$500,000; year two: \$375,000; and year three: \$250,000).

Nonprofits selected to receive allocations include the Wells Family Resource Center, Northern Nevada Literacy Council, Boys and Girls Club of the Truckee Meadows and Sierra Nevada Journeys. Each recipient will use the allocations in one or more key areas that include early development and learning, kindergarten readiness and early literacy, early grade success and strengthening families.

Wells Family Resource Center in partnership with Great Basin College, Nevada Early Intervention Services, and Elko, Lander and Eureka County Library Systems received \$76,328 to provide a program called “Building Blocks for Literacy.” The program will deliver a complement of programs across Elko, White Pine, Lander and Eureka counties and concentrates on the youngest learners and parents by building parent knowledge of child development, increasing library use and building reading skills and performance in early grade reading. The partnership will serve 2,245 children and parents, and 43 teachers.

In partnership with Job Opportunities in Nevada (JOIN), Sierra Nevada Journeys, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, Nevada RSVP, Seniors in Service, Lemelson Academy, Churchill County Library and Grassroots Books, the Northern Nevada Literacy Council received \$175,000 to develop a family reading program that will serve 860 children and parents throughout the UWNNS service area including Washoe, Storey, Mineral, Douglas, Lander, Churchill, Elko, White Pine, Humboldt, Lyon Counties, as well as Carson City, South Lake Tahoe and Incline Village. The program uses a three-pronged approach and involves increasing parental engagement to achieve third grade reading outcomes, increasing foundational skills to achieve behavioral changes in the family and parent literacy training.

The Boys and Girls Club of the Truckee Meadows received \$100,000 in partnership with Boys and Girls Clubs of Elko, Boys and Girls Club of Western Nevada, Boys and Girls Club of Mason Valley and Boys and Girls Club of North Lake Tahoe. Serving Washoe, Elko, Douglas and south Lyon Counties, as well as Carson City and North Lake Tahoe, the partnership will implement a program called “Reading A-Z” to complement other Boys and Girls Club reading programs. “Reading A-Z” will reach children in first through third grades to enhance reading skills, provide remedial reading help when necessary and augment summer learning. The program will serve 540 children and parents.

Sierra Nevada Journeys, who partnered with Great Basin Institute, Nevada Outdoor School and Desert Research Institute (DRI), received \$118,672 and will serve 2,300 children and parents across Washoe, Storey, Lyon, Churchill, Douglas, El Dorado, White Pine, Mineral, Elko, Humboldt counties, as well as Carson City, with a unique, science-based learning model that has been shown to enhance reading

skills. The program entails in-class, hands-on science and literacy lessons, leading to a half-day field-study science experiment.

With the goal of improving these nonprofit partnerships in the area of measurement and evaluation, the UWNNS Board also allocated \$30,000 to training for a collaborative work group around their shared purpose to create a better future for our children.

“We received very high quality proposals from across our service region,” said Karen Barsell, CEO and president of UWNNS. “The issue of early grade-level reading success was obviously very important to many organizations in our communities and there are wonderful programs addressing this critical issue. The organizations we funded will be offering innovative and unique programs that will help double the number of children in northern Nevada who read proficiently at the conclusion of third grade by 2020. Reading is the cornerstone for all learning and these programs will position our region’s children to become better learners.”

Nevada’s high school graduation rate ranks at the bottom in the nation. The cost to both the “drop-out” and the entire community is staggering. Statistics show students that do not graduate from high school are more likely to be unemployed, have a child as a teenager, and rely on government cash assistance, food stamps and housing assistance. Every “drop-out” costs the community an estimated \$260,000 in lost earnings, taxes and productivity.

UWNNS’s goal to double the number of children in northern Nevada who read proficiently at the conclusion of third grade is achieved through the nonprofit’s support for strengthening families, nurturing the early development and learning for children birth to age three, getting kids ready for kindergarten, and supporting those all-important early grade reading skills. There is a direct, proven relationship between third grade reading scores and high school graduation rates. In turn, high school graduation is a key factor in life success and our state’s economy.

About United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra

UWNNS has successfully served northern Nevada for more than 70 years. With a goal to double the number of children in northern Nevada who read proficiently at the conclusion of third grade, UWNNS concentrates on four key pillars needed to achieve the goal: early development and learning, kindergarten readiness and early literacy, early grade success and strengthening families. For more information, call 775-322-8668 or visit www.uwnns.org.

###