



## ***Bringing the Community Together for Literacy***

When the Board of United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra established its goal to raise grade-level reading scores, it was with the awareness that the active involvement of the community would be necessary to achieve this goal. The organization pledged to bring the community together for a wider discussion, to create authentic systemic change.

During this past year, several meetings were held, bringing together individuals and multi-sector organizations to explore the issue. A first meeting was held in October 2015, and yielded a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and commitment for a unified community process. A number of attendees committed leadership, resources, aligned programs of their own, potential linkages, marketing assistance and planning expertise. The meeting culminated in a shared vision for literacy's role in bettering lives for people in our region: ***'Literacy is the Cure.'*** Moving forward, this inspirational phrase has since guided the informal process of this group as the energy builds toward a more formal, facilitated process.

United Way convened a follow-up meeting in May 2016, with a deeper discussion exploring types and levels of involvement, types of partners and organizations, and community agendas.

The conversation was facilitated by Dr. Steve Greeley, an expert in the 'Community Solutions Action Plan Framework,' or 'CSAP'. This model for community planning is offered by the Campaign for Grade Level Reading, a collaborative effort by foundations, nonprofit partners, business leaders, government agencies, states and communities across the nation to ensure that more children in low-income families succeed in school, graduate prepared for college and a career, and aspire for active citizenship. The Campaign focuses on an important predictor of school success and high school graduation — grade-level reading by the end of third grade. The Campaign includes more than 240 communities across the nation, many of which are United Ways. At the conclusion of this meeting, there was strong consensus for moving ahead with a formal CSAP process for Northern Nevada.

### **NOTE:**

*United Way is pleased to be moving ahead with a formal, community-wide 'Community Solutions Action Plan' in fiscal year 2016-2017.*

