

EARLY READING MATTERS—HIGHLIGHTS

Reading together brings huge rewards

United Way's funded partnership, the 'Family Reading Program,' engages families in early literacy and nurtures the joy of reading.

The program works with parents and their children from birth through third grade, modeling techniques and activities that parents can use to support their emergent literacy. Parents who are English Language Learners also learn to read more fluently to their children in English.

Results! In 2015-16, parents increased time reading with their children by 83%, pre- and post-tested.

This year, this impactful program is offered at Inter Tribal Head Start of Nevada sites. Sessions have been held in Fallon, Owyhee, Elko and Yerington, with more slated for McDermott, Lovelock, Pyramid Lake, Reno/Sparks, and Walker River.

By working directly with Tribal Head Start, the program is reaching families with some of the greatest need in our region.

Family literacy activities in Yerington.

Family Reading activities in Reno

The 'Family Reading Program' site in Reno has added more innovative elements for the youngest children and a music component this past session. In the latest session, the two-year-old-and-younger children and their parents participated in the toddler *Family Storyteller* sessions where they read books, sang songs, and enjoyed art activities.

In the program, parents learn how to 'extend the literacy value of a book' by reading with their child, then singing a song or doing an art activity that relates to the story and asking questions about the characters in the story.

Each session includes *Paws 2 Read* dogs and their handlers. Children get to visit the dogs and read to them in a quiet, relaxed environment. New this year is an expanded music component, provided by a volunteer who is a retired music teacher. Under her guidance, groups of parents and children learn parts in a short musical which they perform at the end of the session.



Reading together in Fallon



Since coming to the Family Reading Program, we spend more time talking about the books that we read together. Please do this program more often.

—Claudia Chavez, mother of Delisarith



United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra



Did you know?

Families are the foundation for early childhood reading.

A **strong family** is better able to support a child's growing literacy. Some of the ways United Way provides support:

- * Families can save big on prescriptions through United Way's **Familywise** card (average savings 43%). Over \$3.7 million in northern Nevada savings to date.
- * Families keep more of what they earn through using **MyFreeTaxes.com** for free income tax preparation, provided through United Way.

United Way Funded Partnerships:

Northern Nevada Literacy Council 'Family Reading Program'

Sierra Nevada Journeys 'Nature's Transformers'

Boys & Girls Club of Truckee Meadows 'Boys and Girls Club Reads'

Wells Family Resource Center 'Building Blocks to Literacy'

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“The Jeffrey Pine smells like vanilla ice cream!”

‘Nature’s Transformers’ uses science-infused lessons to spur natural inquiry and enhance reading skills.

A recent class traveled to Galena Creek Park for the field-day portion of the program held in Washoe County. Kids got to explore outside, interact with nature, and learn about the outdoors from the instructors at the Great Basin Institute.



Field trip to Galena Creek Park.

The Education Program Manager said, “One of the best parts of the day was when the kids were partnered up. One had to walk into the woods and bring an object back to their partners. The partner then had to describe what the object smells like and what it feels like.” She could hear students excitedly talking about the find, with observations, exclaiming, “It feels soft.” “It feels wet.” “It feels prickly.” “It smells sweet!”

Results! In 2015-16, as a result of the program, there was a 46 percentage point increase in pre- and post-testing of literacy and science program knowledge and concepts.

Reaching kids ‘where they are’

‘Boys and Girls Club Reads’ is in big demand with kids and their parents throughout the region. The partnership offers a flexible program in five communities led by each area’s Club — in Reno/Sparks, North Lake Tahoe, Yerington/Silver Springs/Dayton, Elko, and Carson City/Gardnerville.

Each site works with kids who are already attending the out-of-school programs, so they can improve their reading without having to go to another site — making it much easier on parents.



At the Boys & Girls Club of Truckee Meadows, John is showing Alex how to find the book they read that day on their tablet, while Abel is going through the tablet and getting familiarized with how it works.

The program focuses on kids in kindergarten through third grade to either develop new literacy skills or work on bringing reading skills back up to grade level. Progress is measured by a comparison of

Results! In 2015-16, as a result of the program, 66% of children were reading at grade level, pre- and post-tested.

reading levels before and after the program is completed. Word is getting out at each Club that kids are improving their reading by participating in this program!



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639 Isbell Rd., Ste. 460, Reno, NV 89509 775.322.8668

Tax ID # 88-0059327

www.uwnns.org

Why does United Way focus on ‘grade level reading’?

- Nevada ranks at the bottom nationally in high school graduation.
- Students that don’t graduate from high school are more likely to be unemployed, and rely on government cash assistance, food stamps and housing assistance.
- There is a direct connection between **third grade reading success** and high school graduation.
- Over 70% of our children do not read at grade level.
- People who lack a high school diploma will qualify for only about 10% of new jobs.
- With new companies and jobs coming to our area, the future of our economy is at risk if we don’t have the people to fill those jobs.
- Successful early readers are our future high school graduates.
- There are great opportunities to change lives by developing young readers!

United Way’s goal is to double the number of children reading proficiently by the end of the third grade — by 2020.