

SHORTCUTS

GIVING BACK



Nonprofit Builds Literacy Skills One Book at a Time

BY RENEE BRINCKS

Speech and language therapist Barbara Greenway founded the Read to Me Project, which provides books to classrooms and 4th-6th graders to read to their siblings.

As a public school speech and language specialist, Barbara Greenway spent her career supporting students who entered school behind on basic language and learning skills. She responded by creating the Read to Me Project, an initiative that boosts school readiness and literacy rates by encouraging fourth, fifth and sixth grade students to read to their younger siblings.

The program provides free lending libraries for participating classrooms, and coordinators train students to spark curiosity and engage young children as they read. Elementary students log their weekly reading hours and receive free books to build their home libraries as well. Over time, toddlers gain basic language and learning foundations and an appreciation

for books. Older students expand vocabulary and fluency skills, build confidence and create stronger sibling bonds.

Five years after its launch, the Read to Me Project serves nearly 1,000 students in 85 Monterey County classrooms—including many households where parents might not have the time or resources to work with young learners.

"This program is so simple, and it's relatively inexpensive compared to remediation," says Greenway. "It has a powerful capacity to change lives forever, for participating children, families and communities."

To learn more about the Read to Me Project, or to volunteer, donate books or contribute financially, visit www.readtomeproject.org.