



READ TO ME PROJECT 2019 – 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Our Vision



Every child enters kindergarten prepared to succeed.

“...through the Read to Me Project, my children have become excited about reading. At night, they race and come back with a stack of books eager to be read to. Jacob, 3 yrs. old, has developed academic language and improved his sentence structure. Christian, 5 yrs. old, has also improved his academic language, sentence structure, and is able to read kindergarten level books.

“The purpose of this program is not to teach children to read, but to ignite their curiosity and excitement for reading.

“Lastly, this program invests in children to save lives. This program may be the only opportunity for many children to obtain exposure to literature and keep them away from joining gangs or using drugs. Most who experienced academic failure are in prison.”

With Gratitude,

Myra Villagomez
(parent in Greenfield, CA)

WHAT A YEAR!

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Founder

Libby McMahan
Executive Director

Mary De Groat
Director, Devel. & Mkting.

Kirstin van Gend
Program Manager

Dear Friends of Read to Me Project,

What a year this has been! Last August we began with our new full classroom model vs. pulling students with little ones at home out of class for coaching sessions. The revised model enabled us to reach more children, deepen relationships with teachers, and simplify scheduling. Early in January, among the student readers, a fantastic 80% were on track to meet their goal of reading 100 days or more to their little one by the end of the school year.

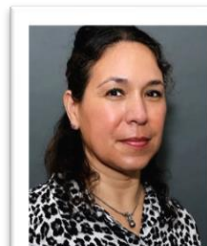
Then disaster struck. No one has been untouched by the impacts of Covid-19. We are proud of the creativity, flexibility and resilience of staff who stepped up when schools closed in March. We continued reaching the students with (sanitized) books and wrapped up program implementation for the year online. Everyone kept the program moving to the very end.

In spring we bid a sad and fond goodbye to charter Board member/outgoing Board Chair Janel Yamasaki. We welcomed Marquise Davis and Blake Doherty to the Board and applauded Jen Uribe's acceptance to become the new Board Chair. Meanwhile, Program Manager Kirstin van Gend completed one year of training with Founder Barbara Greenway. Meet Kirstin on page 11. OF SPECIAL NOTE, we announced the powerful impact that Read to Me Project is having on students.

So, yes! What a roller coaster ride 2019/2020 has been!

On July 1st Read to Me Project began its 10th year. It is a heartwarming privilege to be making a difference in the lives of thousands of young under-served children in Monterey County. With your help we have been reaching ever deeper into homes to break the generational cycle of low literacy by preparing little ones to succeed in school. Thank you for caring, connecting, sharing, and supporting the Read to Me Project. We sincerely appreciate you!

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Advisory Council Members and RtMP staff, we hope you enjoy this annual report and send best wishes for your health and wellbeing.



Jennifer Ortega Uribe
Board Chair



Libby McMahan
Executive Director
Libby@readtomeproject.org

MISSION

Read to Me Project helps under-served children achieve kindergarten readiness and a lifetime of literacy by empowering school age brothers and sisters to read to their young siblings at home. We also raise public awareness about the literacy crisis and the need for language development and pre-reading skills during a child's first five years of life.



IMPROVING LANGUAGE ARTS

4TH, 5TH AND 6TH GRADE STUDENTS' READING SKILLS ARE IMPROVED, AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND EMPATHY ARE BEING DEVELOPED.

A third-party impact report on students was released last October. It was proudly announced that RtMP students scored 68% greater improvements in language arts on standard school assessments compared to students not in the program. Hamai Consulting designed and conducted the study. [IMPACTS EVALUATION](#)

2019/2020 GOALS

- 40% of program participants will have read to the little ones 100+ days during the school year. OUTCOME: In February, 57% of students were on track to exceed this goal. Due to school closures, the top performance tier of 100+ days was lowered to 80+ days. By June, 27% of students met the new goal.
- 70% of program participants will report that reading to their little one at home helped them “a lot” to become a better reader. OUTCOME: According to the year-end student survey, 54% of participating students reported improved reading skills by “a lot”. As noted above, 68% scored higher on their standard language arts assessment scores.
- 80% of parents attending RtMP’s parent education sessions will rate the content as being useful. OUTCOMES: The program was relaunched in early March. 100% of parents attending one session reported the information was useful and they expressed interest in attending another presentation. The schedule for additional presentations was interrupted due to Covid-19.

Its [it's] important because it helps there [their] little brain grow and grow into a big smart intelligent brain. It makes me feel happy and smart.

- 5th grader, Valente Perez, reads to a 4-year-old family member

FUNDERS

Read to Me Project was made possible in 2019/2020 by the following donors and everyone listed on our [Funders page](#). Your caring concern and generosity have set thousands of children on course for a lifetime of literacy and greater opportunity.

*Thank you, champions
of early literacy!*

\$50,001 - \$65,000

- Tanimura Family Foundation

\$25,000 - \$50,000

- DeWitt Fund of the Community Foundation for Monterey County
- Harden Foundation
- Monterey Peninsula Foundation, host of the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am
- Taylor Farms

\$10,000 - \$24,999

- Barnet Segal Charitable Trust
- Community Foundation for Monterey County:
 - Colburn & Alana Jones Fund
 - Jean and Jim Duff Fund
- Nancy Buck Ransom Foundation
- Pebble Beach Company Foundation

\$5,000 - \$9,999

- Alex Lilley
- The Bolton Foundation
- Rita & Luis Echenique Charitable Foundation
- St. Dunstan's Foundation
- The Upjohn California Fund
- Lois Lenski Covey Foundation
- Manette and Steve Rogers, IQ Devices
- Monterey County Gives! Percentage Match
- International Paper Foundation
- Rabobank

\$1,000 - \$4,999

- Alexander F. Victor Foundation
- Community Foundation for Monterey County:
 - Carmel Rotary Fund
 - McNeely Fund
 - Robert & Florence Slinger Fund
- David Duty & David Taggart
- David & Marylu Mesa

(Why is it important?) "So they can know how to read and to write so when they get into school they don't have to sturgle [struggle] that much"

- 4th grader Diego reads to his baby God-brother

- Norma Santillan
- Naturipe Berry Growers
- Cynthia Hertlein
- F. Robert Nunes Family Fund
- Grainger Foundation
- Laura and Brad Niebling, “in memory of our grandson, John Walter Niebling”
- Monterey Peninsula Volunteer Services
- The Nunes Company
- Ralph Knox Foundation
- Talbott Family Foundation
- Union Bank Foundation
- Women of St. Dunstan's Church
- Yellow Brick Road



\$200 - \$999

- Antine Stenbit
- Bert Gerlitz
- Carmel Host Lions Club
- Community Foundation for Monterey County:
 - Clint and Karen Miller Fund
- Daniel and Linda Obrien, Plaza Properties
- Debbie Howitt
- Dianne Nielson & Robert Ibarra
- Don & Judy Kirk
- Donna Van Noy
- Driscoll's
- Erik's Deli Café, Main Street Salinas
- Grace Merrill
- Helen Ogden and Frederick McGarrity
- Janel Yamasaki
- Jennifer Uribe
- John & Barbara Greenway, “in honor of all who read to young children”
- Juan Pablo Lopez
- Julia Veitch
- Kim Gilbreath
- Laura Hooper
- Letitia Bennett
- Libby McMahan
- Linda McCarthy
- Marianne Gawain Davis
- Mary De Groat
- Melanie & Eric Allen, in memory of David G. Barth
- Michael Covey & Jackie DeLu
- Molly Nance, The Sunrise Challenge
- Nishan Moutafian
- Patricia Asmus
- Randy and Debra Robinson
- Susana Bugarin
- Youth in Action, Tularcitos Elementary School

“I feel like I am doing something important in her life.”

- 4th grader Brianna reads to her 1-year-old niece

\$100 - \$199

- Aliceon Jones
- Amy Anderson & George Somero
- Anonymous
- Bubba Pickens Band
- Carol Jackson
- Charlotte Noyes
- Cheryl Block
- Christine Christian
- Dale Hillard
- Dion & Judith Dow
- Edward & Eva Parrott
- Elizabeth & Brian Birkeland
- Elisabeth Johnson
- Erika Takada & Kevin Wasbauer
- Excelligence Learning
- Gail & Lance Larsen
- Ginger and Byron Bassett, in memory of Gene Bassett
- Jason Baskett
- Jenni Watkins
- John Stenbit
- Kathryn L. Bendel
- Konny Murray & Dave Buckingham
- Linda Walsh
- Marianne & Arnold Owens
- Patricia Monahan
- Patrice Vecchione & Michael Stark
- Sonia Taddy
- Stephanie Herrick & Stephen Mehay
- Susan Kingsley

Please visit [Our Funders Page](#) for the complete list of wonderful Read to Me Project donors.



5th grader Victor Cano reads to his 3-year-old brother. He says, "They [Read to Me Project] make me a better reader when I read to my brother."

IN-KIND GIFTS

- Delta Analytics, Data Analysis
- Luis Larrauri, Web Developer, Luislar.com
- Moranda Minds, IT Support
- San Miguel Market, Parent Education Sponsor

BOOK DONATIONS AND DRIVES

- Friends of the Seaside Library
- Natalie Low
- Partnership for Children
- BookWorks, Pacific Grove
- River House Books, Carmel
- Taylor Farms
- YMCA, Monterey Peninsula
- Youth in Action, Tularcitos Elementary School

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES IN 2019/2020

The program was implemented in 43 fewer classrooms than projected. This was due to school budget limitations and the reduction in student enrollment in the Alisal and Salinas City School Districts, the largest RtMP participating districts. In addition, we were unable to obtain meetings last spring before budgets were determined by district decision makers and principals who represent new opportunities for RtMP expansion.

However, the year ran smoothly in 83 classrooms in the capable hands of our new program manager, Kirstin van Gend and an outstanding team of program coordinators: Holly Davis, Maria Lopez, and Linda Seldomridge. This year, as of January 2020, a record 80% of students were reading at least 4 times a week to the little ones at home.

When schools closed in March, staff regrouped to collect, sanitize, and distribute more than 2,000 books to students who could take advantage of having more time to read to the little ones while sheltering in place. In addition, to continue the year's momentum, five RtMP videos were produced for engaging students to apply the "9 Best Ways to Read to Young Children". Teachers incorporated the videos into distance learning sessions with their students in May and June.

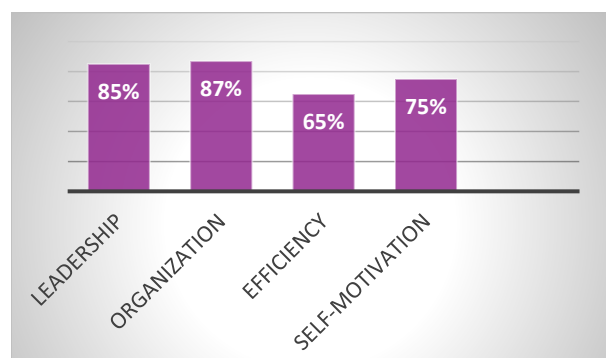
The real scramble involved gathering year-end data. Normally students would take a survey in the classroom however, online surveys and implementation logistics were quickly adopted. Fewer students took the survey this year and the number of responses to our teacher survey increased. In both cases, a meaningful cohort of each group provided statistically reliable measurements.

TEACHER SURVEY: RESPONSE SUMMARY

We received positive feedback from teachers who agreed that the program benefited both their students and the little ones at home. Most returning teachers — those who have included RtMP in their classes for two or more years — preferred the new whole-class model to the original pull-out model. The pull-out model involved separate coaching sessions for students reading to little ones ages 6 months to 5 years at home. The program benefits listed by teachers include the opportunity for students to practice reading more, improved reading skills, and how their students grew to love reading. Also listed were the facts that their students were taking books home, spending time with the little ones, and ultimately benefiting the little's ones learnings. Their students' sense of responsibility was also often mentioned.

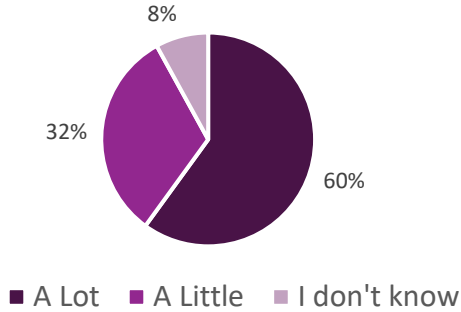
The main areas noted for improvements involved refining the book check-out process and resolving the rate of book return in general.

The teacher survey results also showed high percentages of leadership, organization, efficiency, and self-motivation developments among RtMP students who were selected to manage the classes' bins of books for weekly check outs.

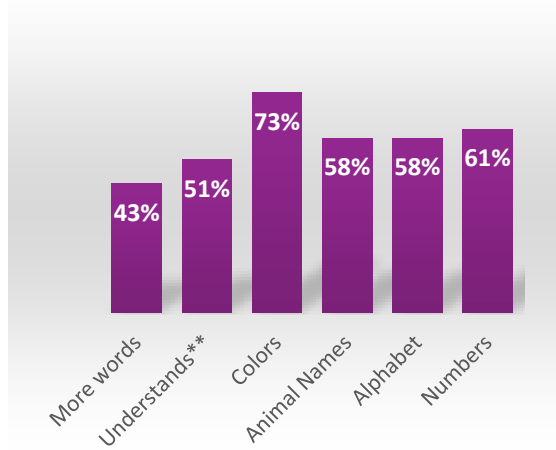


STUDENT SURVEY & PARTICIPATION RESULTS

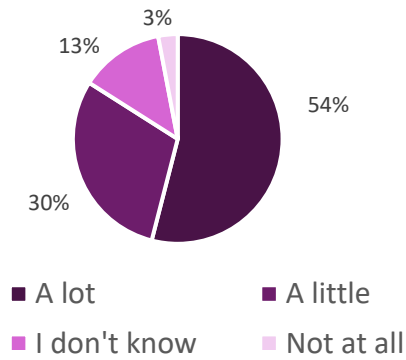
How much has your little one learned?



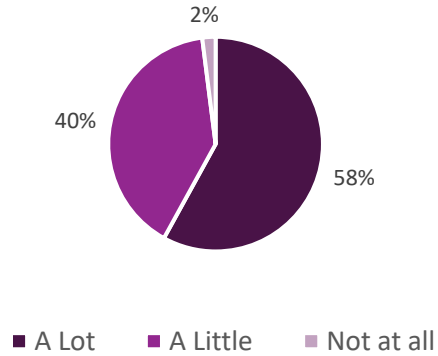
What did your little one learn?*



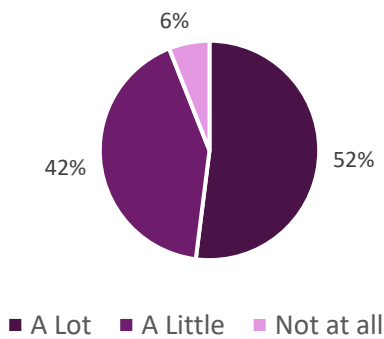
How much has it helped you to be a better reader?



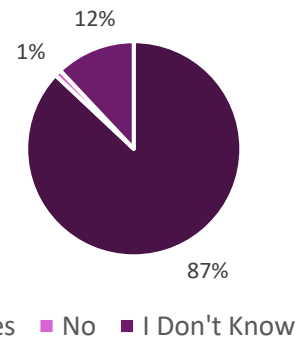
How much did you like reading to your little one?



How much does your little one like being read to?



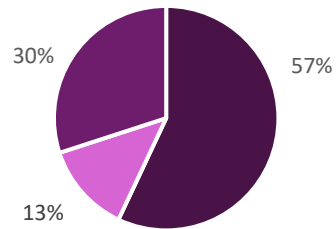
Do your parents like it when you read to your little one?



*Top 6 out of 10 answer choices. Students were asked to check all answers that applied.

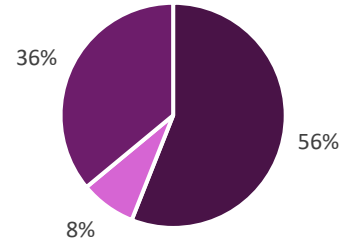
**Understands and uses more words.

Would you like to participate in RtMP again next year?



■ Yes ■ No ■ I don't know

Will you read to your little one over the summer?



■ Yes ■ No ■ I don't know

IMPLEMENTATION AND PARTICIPATION DATA

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| School Districts | 5 |
| Schools | 15 |
| Classrooms in the Program | 83 |
| Fourth Grades | 38 |
| Fifth Grades | 29 |
| Sixth Grades | 15 |
| Fifth/Sixth Grades Combined | 1 |
| Number of Students | 2,222 |
| Number of Siblings Read to | 963 |
| Average Number of Weeks Students Read | 15 |

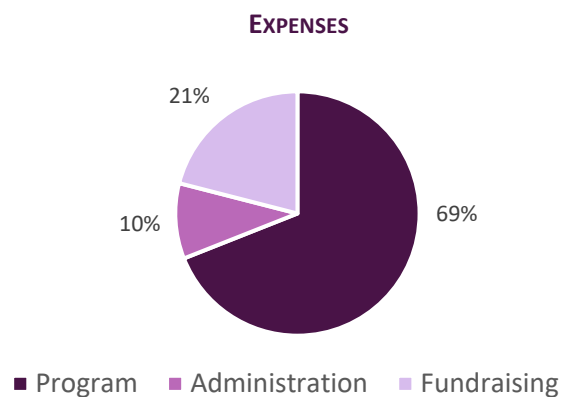
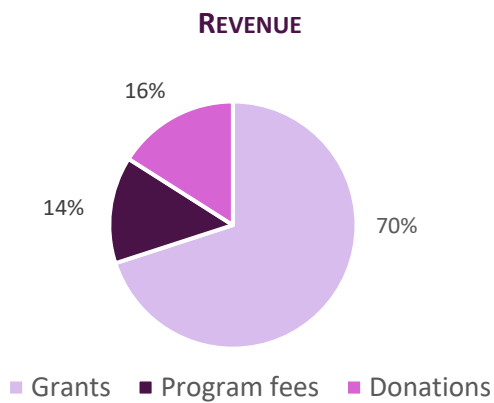
DAYS STUDENTS READ TO THEIR LITTLE ONES

| | |
|-------------|-----|
| 80+ days* | 27% |
| 60- 79 days | 26% |
| 40-59 days | 25% |
| < 40 days | 22% |

**Students are given the goal to read at least 4 days a week to reach 100 reading days by the end of the school year. However, due to Covid-19, Monterey County schools closed in mid-March giving student readers approximately 8 fewer weeks to check out and read new books to their little ones. We therefore lowered the top performance tier to 80 days read or more, though 10% of Student Readers still read for 100 days or more.*

Read to Me Project Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2020

| REVENUES | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Grants | \$ 291,340 |
| Donations | 65,551 |
| Project fees | 58,100 |
| Other income | |
| | 414,991 |
| EXPENSES | |
| Program expenses | 253,686 |
| General and administrative | 37,849 |
| Fundraising | 78,567 |
| | 370,102 |
| INCREASE IN NET ASSETS | \$ 44,889 |
| NET ASSETS | |
| Beginning of year | \$ 363,164 |
| End of year | \$ 408,053 |





KIRSTIN VAN GEND
PROGRAM MANAGER

The final phase for strategically passing the program’s “baton” from Founder/Program Director Barbara Greenway to Kirstin van Gend is in motion. Since May 2019, Kirstin has worked closely with Barbara gleaning institutional knowledge, details of program implementation, brainstorming new efficiencies, and determining solutions to past challenges. Kirstin was vital to the organization’s quick adaptations for continuing program delivery when schools closed in March due to the Covid crisis. She was integral to developing the new implementation logistics with others on the leadership team for delivering the program in 2020/21.

**Kirstin was one of nineteen accepted into the acclaimed LEAD Institute for 2019/2020 (Leadership Education and Development). LEAD is a year-long program for nonprofit managers conducted through the Community Foundation for Monterey County and its Center for Nonprofit Excellence.*

WHAT INSPIRES YOU ABOUT READ TO ME PROJECT? What is inspiring is that we value elementary school children and see them as part of the solution to a huge struggle in the education system. We see our students as the change-makers in the world that they are! I am inspired by the students’ desire and excitement to do something for their family and community. I love hearing how excited they get when talking about enjoying the responsibility of helping their little one and that they are getting along better with their siblings.

HOW DO YOU APPLY YOUR AREAS OF EXPERTISE TO YOUR ROLE AS PROGRAM MANAGER? I love thinking about all the details that make the program work and playing around with them to make things run more efficiently and effectively. The vision that Barbara has, and her passion that brings it to life, created this awesome program that I enjoy being a part of. I make sure that all the nuts and bolts are taken care of so that passion and joy of the program comes to life in our coordinators and is experienced by the students.

IS THERE A FAVORITE ASPECT OF YOUR ROLE? My favorite aspect is relationship, team, and community building. Getting to talk with the kids individually and hearing about what kind of books they like to read, and the books their little ones like to read was such fun! The moments when I worked with a student on practicing her “I Wonder” statements, or encouraged another to keep checking out books and just talk about the pictures and make up his stories together with his little one since he struggled with reading — those are the moments I cherish. They remind me that although we are working towards the vision of *EVERY child entering kindergarten prepared to succeed*, every child is just one child with a unique experience and story.

DO YOU HAVE A VISION FOR HOW TO SCALE THE PROGRAM OVER TIME TO REACH MORE CHILDREN IN LOW-LITERACY FAMILIES? COVID-19 has forced many organizations, including ours, to really think outside of the box. We are growing in leaps and bounds in our understanding of technology as we move our program online for the next year. I think it is this type of thinking that will get us to the ideas to scale our program. Really bringing in the voices of our community, from the schools and other community organizations to the parents themselves, will help us to expand our program as we more clearly understand all the resources and strengths in our community.

AS A LEAD* PARTICIPANT, PLEASE SHARE A LEARNED INSIGHT THAT YOU ARE APPLYING TO YOUR POSITION. There are many great tools that I have been learning at LEAD and hope to apply to my work at Read to Me Project. One thing I have already been putting into practice is the idea of *Conocimientos*, which is the idea of taking time before you dive into the work to really get to know the people you are working with. As I lead our staff meetings, I have intentionally started the meeting with a check-in, giving people a chance to share about how they are doing or just share something interesting they are doing. *Conocimientos* is important because it builds trust and trust is key in development of a strong team.

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

More than 2,000 books were donated this year and put into the hands of children in homes where books are uncommon.

BookWorks, River House Books and the YMCA accommodated a large barrel on loan from the **Food Bank for Monterey County** during National Reading Month for collecting book donations. In all, the following participated in RtMP's book drive.

- **BookWorks in Pacific Grove**
- **Friends of the Seaside Library**
- **River House Books in Carmel**
- **YMCA, Monterey Peninsula**
- **Taylor Farms**



CREATIVE FUNDRAISER. Philanthropist, organizer, creative spirit and talented videographer **Molly Nance and co-producer Maya Wolf of the annual Sunrise Challenge**, chose Read to Me Project to be the beneficiary of the event.

Thank you for the wonderful donation of event proceeds and for helping to build awareness of the low literacy crisis in Monterey County. *(pictured L to R: Molly Nance, RtMP Exec. Director Libby McMahon, RtMP Director of Development & Marketing Mary De Groat)*



OUT of the BLUE! We were contacted by **Erik's Deli** headquarters last summer about becoming their Dine for a Day beneficiary of proceeds from a day's worth of sales at the Main Street, Salinas location. Not only did we receive a generous check, but the local community was reminded of Read to Me Project's work to help children in low literacy families. Thank you Erik's Deli!

Thank you all!



SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

Long overdue, special recognition was given to Read to Me Project's Champions of Early Literacy during a reception that was hosted and sponsored entirely by Champions themselves, David, and Marylu Mesa. Long-time supporters who have given their heart, time and generous funding over the years were honored. Certificates of appreciation were presented by Read to Me Project Founder Barbara Greenway (left) and Executive Director Libby McMahon (right). While not all attendees are pictured here, they are equally appreciated!



Janel Yamaski, a retired teacher served RtMP for nine years during which time she was a charter Board Member, co-creator of the program curriculum, education advisor and Board Chair for two years until resigning the position in May.



David Taggart, President CTB/McGraw Hill, ret., not only generously funds RtMP, he has structured strategies for scaling RtMP, served on the Board, and continues to work countless hours on program measurements, research, and data analysis.



Cynthia Hertlein, also a charter Board Member since 2012, continues her vital role as treasurer. A retired CPA, Cynthia completes RtMP's legal filings and provides financial management and account reporting to staff and the Board.



David and Marylu Mesa, event hosts, long-time volunteers, and generous funders themselves, patiently tackle the most daunting of data entry tasks and book inventorying. They have never said no to calls for volunteer help.



A fantastic group of volunteers from **Wells Fargo's** Monterey branch on Alvarado St. spent hours measuring and cutting more than 2,000 sheets of wrapping paper.

This preparation is necessary for the Holiday Book Wrap event, when students choose and gift wrap a new book to give as a present to the little one at home.



ONLINE PROGRAM MODEL

As of July 2020, school districts have committed to 100% distance learning during the first few months of the school year with plans (and hope) to phase to an in-class/distance learning hybrid model later in the year, which may eventually lead to a return to the full in-classroom model by the end of the school year. No matter the teaching model a school employs, which may vary from school district to district, Read to Me Project is ready for the new school year. To begin, the program will be delivered remotely as part of participating teachers' lesson plans. RtMP program coordinators will conduct whole class lessons and small group coaching and problem-solving sessions via live video. We will be using a digital library for those students reading to little ones ages 3-5, and providing bags of curated, sanitized, hardcopy books to students who will be reading to babies and toddlers.

Electronic reading log forms and other online monitoring mechanisms will be used for tracking each student's reading activity and program measurements of how well we are achieving the year's goals.

When the happy day comes and it is safe to do so, we will resume our work with students in person. Until then, the program is highly adaptable to any scenario a school chooses without compromising impacts on the families we serve.

PROGRAM FEES

Schools will receive far less money from the state of California than they have in the past to do a nearly impossible job. Their costs will increase to integrate new protections for their students' health and safety, and to install or update technologies for distance learning. Normally schools pay \$700 per classroom for Read to Me Project. Grants and generous donations will make it possible for us to provide the program to a limited number of classrooms free of charge for the 2020/21 school year.

Direct per classroom costs for the coming year are based on the final number of classrooms and projected to be \$2,200. Classroom sponsorships will benefit approximately 50 students and little ones per class.

PARENT EDUCATION



Early in the year, *Read to Me Project* was translated into Spanish. *Proyecto Léeme*, along with the tagline *Oportunidades Infinitas* will be prominently placed on new RtMP parent education materials, which will include a series of videos and new written materials.

The videos will be distributed beginning this fall through collaborations with schools and established groups with built-in access to under-served families. A plan for reaching parents through their favored social media applications is in development.

Each year we strive to reach more parents to share the importance of building a deep and strong learning foundation that begins at birth and how simple home activities can build brain power for their child's kindergarten readiness, school success and a lifetime of opportunity.



Read to Me
PROJECT

SIBLINGS READING SUCCEEDING

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Tax ID# 47-1224251

