

2020 – 2021
ANNUAL REPORT



Read to Me
PROJECT

SIBLINGS READING SUCCEEDING

Every child entering kindergarten prepared to succeed.



It is impossible to think of a more important job than building successful futures for students, families, communities, and country. Teachers helping students master literacy is that job.

To understand the literacy crisis, we must understand the critical link between language development and academic achievement. Language acquisition begins at birth. During their first five years children have the capacity to develop rich vocabulary and master mature language skills. This is the foundation upon which kindergarten and first grade students begin their deep dive into literacy.

- Barbara Greenway, M.S., Speech and Language Specialist, ret, Founder of The Read to Me Project

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Dear Friends of The Read to Me Project,

How do you prepare for a new school year when indecisions became decisions only to morph back to indecisions as to when and how schools will reopen? Lurking beneath everyone's best laid plans was something that turned our lives – and the world – upside down.

Through it all, Read to Me Project staff defined three words: resilient, tenacious, creative. They also demonstrated fortitude and positivity while helping one of the hardest hit groups of the time: Children.

Lost learning over the past year has increased the literacy gap among children who are already as much as two years behind in school. Lost time is reflected in Read to Me Project's numbers since fewer classes of students took part in the program as a result of teachers' increased workload, new logistics for teaching online, and students sheltering at home with family distractions. However, perhaps the greater measurement of success during the 2020/2021 school year is in the silver lining of change. New efficiencies for program implementation with participating students were discovered and will continue. Travel costs were significantly reduced for program staff, online programming proved to be highly effective for increasing attendance for Proyecto Léeme parent education program, and truly exciting new collaborations have been forged for extending our reach into underserved communities. Another silver lining has been a majority retention of our talented team of program coordinators who were hired for their skillful abilities to overcome the online challenges of managing and creatively engaging groups of up to 30 students at a time.

A milestone for Read to Me Project this year was the fondest of farewells to Read to Me Project Founder Barbara Greenway who retired on June 30th. Barbara's legacy will continue through the support, hearts, and hands of funders, volunteers, and staff – dedicated champions of Barbara's intention to systemically fix the cause of many societal issues: low literacy. We celebrate our intrepid visionary on page 14.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Advisory Council Members, and RtMP staff, thank you for your commitment, support, and engagement. With your help, we forge ahead to a future where EVERY child is given early literacy's silver-lined advantages for equitable opportunities.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Ortega Uribe
Board Chair



Libby McMahon, Executive Director
Libby@readtomeproject.org

MISSION STATEMENT

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.

2020.2021 GOALS

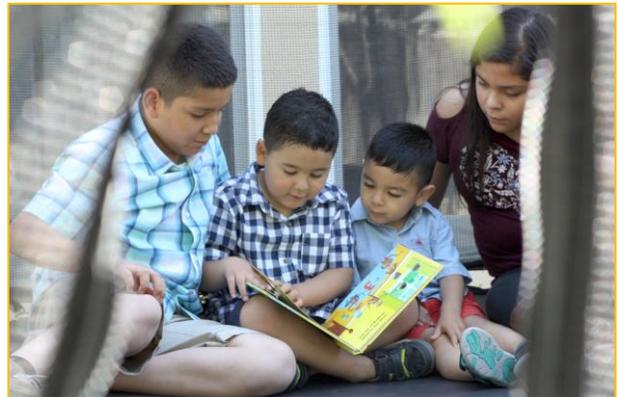
70% of teachers will implement book checkouts 25 weeks or more. Results: The goal was established prior to the Covid-19 outbreak that closed schools leaving teachers unable to ensure a weekly exchange of books among students in their classrooms. Although in-class exchanges were not possible, program coordinators conducted online check-ins with the students to encourage them to regularly read the books provided by RtMP and to stay on track with their own goal of reading to their little one at least four days a week.



80% of parents attending a Read to Me Project parent education session will have learned something new that they will use at home.

Survey Results: 84% of attendees responded that the information presented was very useful.

50% of student program participants will read to their little ones 100 or more days during the school year. Results: Due to a reduced number of possible reading weeks in the school year, we reduced the students' goal of reading 100 days to 80 days or more. We employed online reading logs to ask the students how many days they read to their little ones during the week. While 60% of student readers had access to Scholastic's Storia e-book library, which auto-collects minutes read each session, most students did not use it. However, sample reading data was captured during the spring student check-ins when students were polled about the number of days they were reading each week. 84% of classrooms were sampled and 76% of student readers responded. When the number of reading days were applied to the average number of possible reading weeks in which students had either physical books or access to electronic books, 21% of student readers met the 80+ day goal.





*Read to Me Project is
designed to change lives.
With your help,
it is!*

\$50,001 - \$65,000

- Tanimura Family Foundation

\$25,000 - \$50,000

- Harden Foundation
- Taylor Farms
- The John & Mary Dawson Learning Fund, Paul Edward and Gay Delores Rochester Fund, Donna Roop Endowment Fund, Steven D. Kesselring, and Jean M. Forrest Fund of the Community Foundation for Monterey County

\$10,000 - \$24,999

- Barnet Segal Charitable Trust
- Nancy Buck Ransom Foundation

\$5,000 - \$9,999

- Alex Lilley
- Dollar General Literacy Foundation
- International Paper Foundation
- Lois Lensky Covey Foundation
- Manette and Stephen Rogers, I Q Devices
- Pebble Beach Company Foundation
- Rita & Luis Echenique Charitable Foundation
- St. Dunstan's Foundation
- The Upjohn California Fund

\$1,000 - \$4,999

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alexander F. Victor Foundation • Community Foundation for Monterey County: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Carmel Rotary Fund ◦ McNeely Fund ◦ Robert & Florence Slinger Fund ◦ William and Vicki Mitchell, Carmel Realty Foundation • Cynthia Hertlein • David Duty and David Taggart • David and Marylu Mesa • Kenneth Hinshaw • F. Robert Nunes Family Fund • Grainger Foundation • Laura and Brad Niebling, in memory of our grandson, John Walter Niebling • Mechanics Bank | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monterey County Gives Campaign Match • Monterey Peninsula Volunteer Services Benefit Shop • Norma Santillan • Naturipe Berry Growers • Stevenson School Philanthropy Project • Talbott Family Foundation • The Nunes Company • Union Bank Foundation • Women of St. Dunstan's Church |
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\$200 - \$999

- Aleix and Malone Hodges (Hodges Family Fund of the CFMC)
- Amy Anderson and George Somero
- Barbara and John Greenway, in honor of all who read to young children
- Bert Gerlitz
- Carmel Host Lions Club Foundation
- Charles and Patricia Asmus Trust
- Craig Kaplan
- David and Carol Jackson
- Debora Sanders
- Delta Kappa Gamma, Theta Pi Chapter
- Driscoll's
- Elaine Cardinale Charitable Fund
- Harold and Gail Glassberg, in honor of Blake Doherty
- Helen Ogden and Rick McGarrity
- Janel and Ken Yamasaki
- Juan Pablo Lopez
- Judy and Don Kirk
- Judy Wills
- Kim Gilbreath
- Laura Hooper
- Lettie Bennett
- Libby McMahon
- Michael Covey and Jacqueline DeLu
- Patty Marlow
- Randy and Debra Robinson
- Robert Taggart
- Sage Ghastin
- Shelley Sweet
- Stephanie Herrick and Stephen Mehay
- Susan Young in honor of Overreaders Anonymous Book Club and Who Read the Book? Club
- The Nancy B. Zaro Living Trust
- Tyler Greenway
- Village Mobile Home Park
- Women's Council of Realtors Monterey Peninsula

\$100 - \$199

- Aliceon Jones (Bookies Book Club)
- Anita and Edwin McKean
- Barbara Greenway
- Barbara Moore
- Bill Koenig In Memory of Bethany Koenig
- Blake Doherty
- Carol Williams
- Chun Lee
- Dale Hillard
- Dan Baldwin and Anne Ylvisaker Fund of the CFMC
- Daniel and Julia Gearhart
- Diana Garrett and George Wehrfritz
- Dianne Nielson and Robert Ibarra
- Donna and Allan Van Noy
- Douglas and Dorothy Rick
- Edward and Eva Parrott
- Elrond and Laura Lawrence
- Engage R&D
- Erika Takada and Kevin Wasbauer
- Gail and Lance Larsen
- Iver and M.C. Rise
- Jan Yaxtheimer
- Jennifer Uribe
- John Greenway
- Joseph and Cynthia Hertlein in
Memory of Richard Weismann
- Judith and Scott MacClelland
- Julie and Mark Davis
- Konny Murray and Dave Buckingham
- Laela Leavy
- Linda A. Press
- Lori Stewart
- Lynn Herrick
- Margaret D'Arrigo, in memory
of Alexis Claire Martin
- Margaret Hansen
- Margaret Stewart, in memory of Benita Low
- Marianne Gawain Davis
- Marli and Bob Melton, in honor
of Sage, Anya, Bodhi, Johanna, Robbie, and Cora
- Mary De Groat
- Mitchell and Carol Goozé
- Patricia McDermott
- Patricia Monahan in Memory of William Monahan
- Renee Garner
- Richard and Kathleen Franke
- Sharon Moore
- Stefanie Bingaman
- Susana Bugarin
- Virginia and Byron Bassett, in memory
of Gene Bassett

IN-KIND SERVICES

- Delta Analytics
- Luis Larrauri, website design and development
- Moranda Minds, IT support
- Trucksis Enterprises, design and printing

BOOK DONATIONS AND DRIVES

- Anita McKean
- Bob Holmes of Mind Skills 4 Skills
- Brad and Laura Niebling
- Dwight Metcalfe
- Friends of the Pacific Grove Library
- Friends of Seaside Library
- Jessica Rockwood
- Joni Kahn
- Natalie Low
- Partnership for Children
- Yale Club of Monterey County

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

SOMBER NEWS

The greatest challenges were pandemic driven delays in spring 2020 causing commitments to RtMP from schools to come in under projections and much later than normal. Undaunted, staff readily adapted to online curriculum delivery logistics while working to ease each day's new and overwhelming challenges teachers were facing. Every effort was made to at least meet last year's numbers but Read to Me Project program coordinators served 67 classes (vs. 83 classes last year) in 15 schools within Alisal, Greenfield, Monterey Peninsula, and Salinas City school districts. Though these numbers were not what were planned, 2,217 young participants were served during a difficult year for everyone.

In addition, due to constrained school budgets, it became necessary for RtMP to waive its fees. Normally, at \$700 per class, the lost revenue totaled \$46,900, 13% of RtMP's budget. The deficit left it to grants and donations to make up the nearly \$50,000 shortfall, which did not happen due to extraordinarily greater competition for grant funding.

Since program implementation took place online, we were unable to capture a meaningful amount of data on books read and the frequency of student readings. Hardcopy books were provided to students reading to children ages 6 months to 2 years. E-books were provided to students reading to children ages 3 to 5 years. In both cases, most students did not access electronic reading logs to record their reading sessions. However, we are reporting on reading participation goals based on student polls and anecdotal data captured by RtMP program coordinators.

GOOD NEWS!

Although online work with students initially had its challenges, the technology learning curve for RtMP coordinators and our partner teachers eased scheduling logistics and saved travel costs. The time gained by not traveling to schools, which had been the pre-Covid norm for in-person sessions, allowed for the full class coaching sessions plus an additional number of check-ins with the students reading to little ones at home.

With regard to RtMP's parent education component, online sessions were far better attended than last year's in-person sessions for being more convenient for parents. We even noted some parents logged in by phone from the fields. Cost savings for RtMP included staff travel, refreshments, and attendees' childcare.

Apparently the good-will gesture of waiving this year's program fees, normally paid by schools, further established RtMP as a true and trusted school partner. Unlike last spring, school administrators are readily recommitting to paying an increased per class fee of \$775 for the 2021/2022 school year.

Overall, flexible, resilient, and creative staff rose to unprecedented conditions and maintained focus on the county's other crisis: low literacy.





The “Key to Infinite Opportunities” parent education program is not only for parents, but for all people who nurture and care for little ones from birth to age five. The curriculum presents the key to life’s infinite opportunities that every child deserves.

COLLABORATIONS! During the 2020/21 school year, parent education sessions were delivered through important new partnerships: Door to Hope’s Parents as Teachers and South County Playgroup programs, Greenfield Union School District’s family outreach, and the South Monterey County Joint Union High School District.



TEEN PARENT INTERVIEW

Leslie is 18 years old. Her daughter Avery is 11 months old.

Did RtMP’s class change any prior opinion you had about education and literacy? *Yes! Reading to your baby at an early age helps them to learn more quickly and about a lot of things that will help them in school.*

Why should other new moms attend RtMP’s series of classes next year? *Because the information will help them to learn and they can interact with other moms. I learned why kids have trouble reading and what to do about it before my baby starts kindergarten. I also learned the ways to read to my baby that keeps her interested – and to not eat the book!*

Because one of the best ways to read to your baby is to find a quiet place, I started reading to Avery in the shower – with waterproof books – she loves looking at the pictures, the colors, and when I change my voice to make it interesting, she looks up at me with a little ‘o’ mouth and smiles.

If anything, what should we do differently next year? *Zoom classes are hard. It would be better in person and then you get to interact with other moms.*

Among the seventeen sessions attended by 107 unique parents, four sessions were conducted in Triqui, an oral-only language and normally a difficult audience to reach. Fifty-three Triqui parents attended.

For dads: Expansion of the “Infinite Opportunities” program included a for-dads series. This was an idea of the husband of one of RtMP’s program coordinators who was so impressed with the program that he became a trained volunteer RtMP presenter to other fathers.

For pregnant and parenting teens: RtMP was approved by South Monterey County Joint Union High School District (SMCJUHS) to become a part of the accredited health classes for pregnant and parenting teens at Pinnacle Charter Academy. Given the program’s success, the SMCJUHS invited RtMP to participate in their WASC* accreditation interview as a community partner and has committed to additional eight-week sessions this fall 2021 and spring 2022.



“It was rewarding to work with teen parents. Those who attended seemed to have a determination to make positive strides towards their child’s education. I was also happy to see how their previous ideas on learning took a complete 180! They used to think babies started to learn at a later age. Now they know their child is capable of a whole lot of learning right when they are born. I’m very happy with the results!”

- Rebeca Chavez, RtMP Program Coordinator

* The Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC) is a world-renowned accrediting association. WASC is a voluntary dual-purpose process for schools to demonstrate that they provide high-quality learning and model continual self-improvement.



Among the hundreds of Read to Me Project’s treasured teacher partners, Sarah Granger Mineo has been selected for being one of the program’s most powerful advocates. She is a gifted and committed teacher who inspires her students’ enthusiasm for learning. She is also tireless. Despite an increased workload due to difficulties presented by the pandemic and online teaching conditions, she provided Read to Me Project to her students and ensured their success in the program.

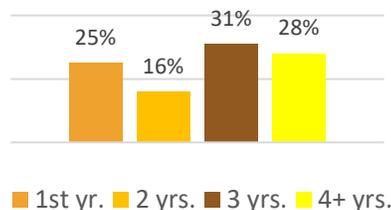
Sarah incorporated RtMP teachings into her own lessons. She also made it a point to let students enrolled in the program know the importance of reading to their youngest family members. It is no surprise that every year for the last seven years, her classes had some of the highest student participation numbers.

We suspect Sarah Granger Mineo will long be remembered as a favorite teacher by her students and their families. Sarah Granger Mineo is a Read to Me Project Hero.

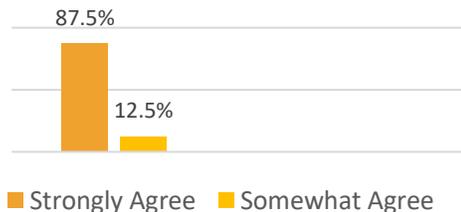


TEACHER SURVEY: Thirty-two teachers completed the twenty-question survey. Overall, responses were positive. Teachers saw improvements in their students’ reading as well as an increased desire and purpose to read. The challenges related to new online learning conditions and the year’s uniquely complex access to RtMP’s books.

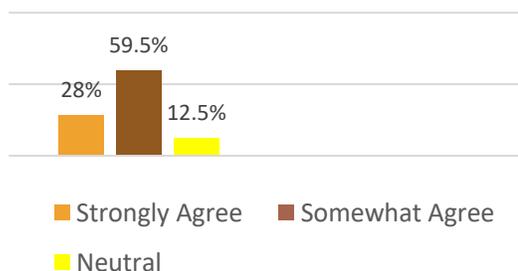
How many years have you participated in the Read to Me Project?



Read to Me Project can have a significant impact on student readers and on kindergarten readiness of younger children.



Read to Me Project benefited my students.



I feel honored that you would choose me. I have been teaching for 26 years with 25 of those years here at Virginia Rocca Barton Elementary School. Hard to believe! I truly value what Read to Me Project does for the children. The program is important on many levels. It benefits the children not only academically, but also emotionally, as they build stronger relationships with their younger siblings. The children love the program and so do I.

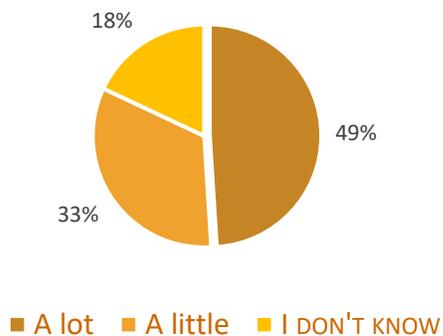
Thank you for allowing me to be part of the Read to Me Project!

Sincerely,

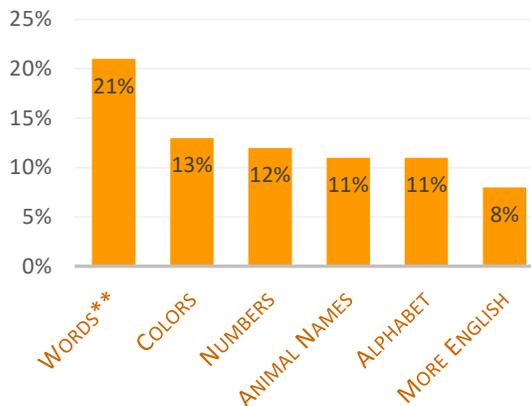
Sarah Granger Mineo
 4th grade teacher
 Virginia Rocca Barton School,
 Alisal Union School District,
 Salinas, CA

STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

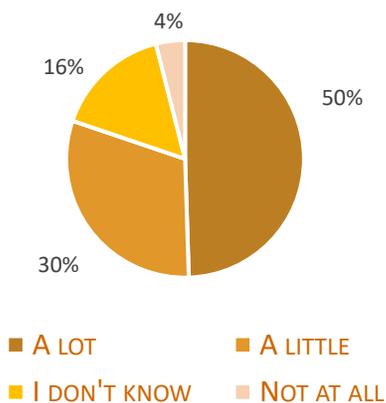
HOW MUCH HAS YOUR LITTLE ONE LEARNED?



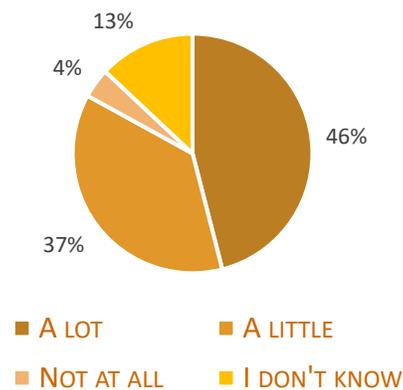
WHAT HAS YOUR LITTLE ONE LEARNED?*



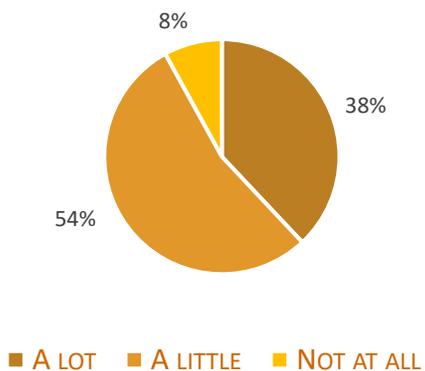
HOW MUCH HAS RTMP HELPED YOU TO BE A BETTER READER?



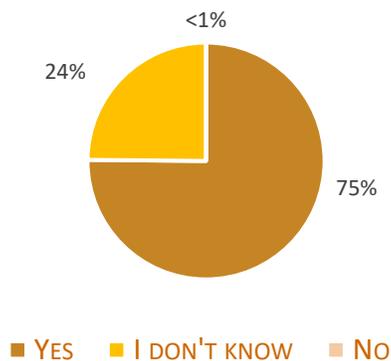
HOW MUCH HAS RTMP HELPED YOU TO BE A BETTER SPEAKER?



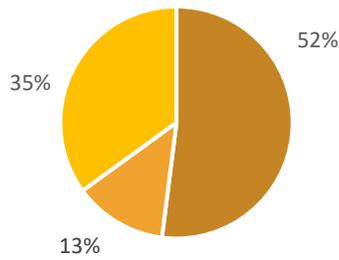
HOW MUCH DOES YOUR LITTLE ONE LIKE BEING READ TO?



DO YOUR PARENTS LIKE IT WHEN YOU READ TO YOUR LITTLE ONE?

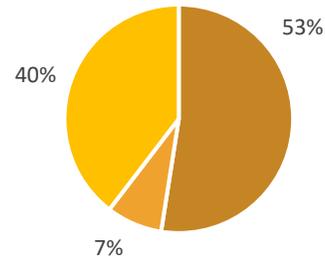


**WOULD YOU LIKE TO PARTICIPATE
IN RtMP AGAIN NEXT YEAR?**



■ YES ■ NO ■ I DON'T KNOW

**WILL YOU READ TO YOUR LITTLE
ONE OVER THE SUMMER?**



■ YES ■ NO ■ I DON'T KNOW

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

**Understands and uses more words.

IMPLEMENTATION AND PARTICIPATION DATA

School Districts	4
Schools	15
Classrooms in the Program	67
Fourth Grades	33
Fifth Grades	32
Sixth Grades	1
Fourth/Fifth Grades Combined	1
Students reading to little ones	601
Little ones	687
Student participants w/out little ones at home	928
Total: All students and little ones	2,216

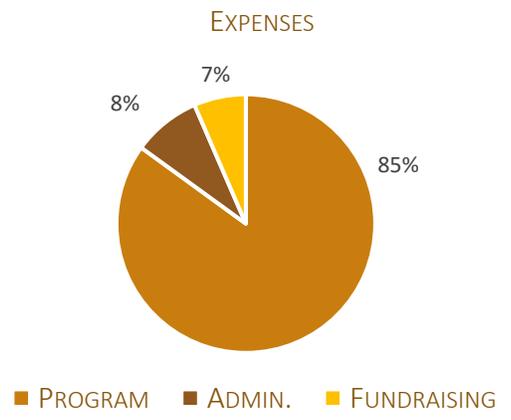
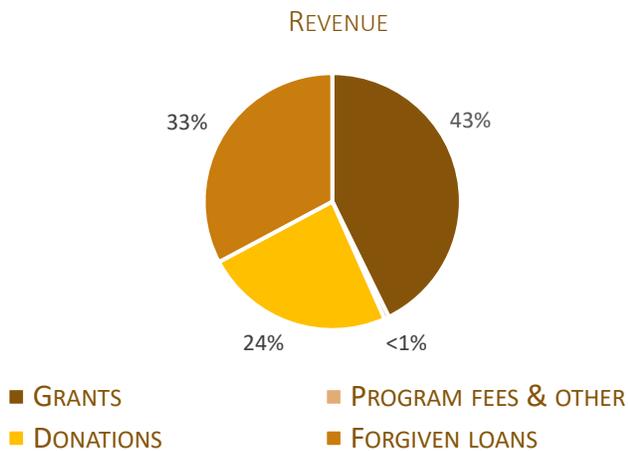
DAYS STUDENTS READ TO THEIR LITTLE ONES

The following is based on a mid-year (March 2021) poll of participating students who read to a little one. Among RtMP readers, 21% were on the track to meet or exceed the goal of reading to their little ones 80 days or more by the end of the year.

80+ days	21%
60- 79 days	45%
<59 days	34%

**Read to Me Project
Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets
for The Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2021**

		FYE 6/30/21
REVENUES		
	Grants	\$ 151,658
	Donations	82,963
	Program fees	1,698
	Payroll Protection Program (loans forgiven)	117,316
	Other income	720
		<u>354,355</u>
EXPENSES		
	Program expenses	312,638
	General and administrative	31,047
	Fundraising	23,070
		<u>366,755</u>
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS		<u><u>\$ (12,400)</u></u>
NET ASSETS		
	Beginning of year	\$ 408,053
	End of year	\$ 395,653





Read to Me Project Founder
Barbara Greenway

THE HEARTBEAT OF READ TO ME PROJECT

If students are the heart of Read to Me Project, the heartBEAT is Read to Me Project's Founder Barbara Greenway.

Barbara Greenway retired early from 30 years of work as a speech and language specialist to pursue an epiphany. Since founding Read to Me Project in September 2011, her bright idea for engaging and training students to provide language-, vocabulary-, and cognitive-building knowledge to their youngest family members has impacted the lives of nearly 16,000 children in low-literate families.

Ideas come to everyone that may be a solution to a serious issue, but most move on at the slightest resistance or sign of hard work. Others, fearless and passionate, grasp their idea, wrangle it into shape, test it, and persuade others to help make it happen – tirelessly pushing through logistical challenges. In this case, Barbara knew that her prevention-based solution for Monterey County's early literacy crisis would work. She designed the program to uniquely reach children ages 6 months to 5 years in their homes through their older siblings. The added impacts are on the students who have become mentors to the little ones and are showing significant improvements on standard assessments.

Barbara shares, "As of June 30, 2021, I will have retired with great confidence in the leadership of an extraordinary executive team, staff, and dedicated board, who together, will carry Read to Me Project to new heights.

"From the first seeds sown by four amazing Alisal teachers, 50 inspired students and 60 little ones read to at home, the program has taken root, sprouted, and spread. The time has come for me to thank everyone who helped sow the seeds of early literacy in thousands of homes across Monterey County.

"Whether you are an educator, funder, fan, friend, or volunteer, I thank every one of you for saying 'yes' to the Read to Me Project, 'yes' to the 4th, 5th, and 6th grade student readers and 'yes' to the little ones who have grown and flourished by being read to by a loving, older sibling. The literacy bond between family members is precious and powerful – and most importantly is passed along to the next generation.

"Literacy transforms lives, and love for reading and learning is forever. Thank you all - I am filled with gratitude and joy and am looking forward to what comes next."

It is not "good-bye" to Barbara, but a turned page to a new well-deserved chapter in her personal book of accomplishments that has helped so many. Read to Me Project's heart will continue beating steady and strong as Barbara's legacy. One that will set the lives of many, many thousands more children on track for a lifetime of literacy, equity, and greater opportunity.

Blake Doherty, long-time teacher and new member of the Read to Me Project board of directors, was one of four teachers to try out the program in 2011.

Blake shares, *When Barbara first asked me to pilot the Read to Me Project, my immediate response was yes, absolutely! I thought it was a brilliant idea. A perfect way to promote early childhood literacy, fluency for older students, and build better bonds between siblings. The concept was so simple and yet extremely important and impactful.*

Eagle Scout Project
Sage Ghastin
Troop 60, July 2020



High School Sophomore Sage Ghastin of Salinas earns rank of Eagle Scout with literacy-building project benefiting Read to Me Project.

To earn the prestigious life rank of Eagle Scout, a scout must complete and present a project to their troop council by the age of 18. Sage Ghastin, a North Salinas High School sophomore, wanted to achieve the rank well before the deadline and got started on his project early in 2020.

He researched area non-profit websites and found Read to Me Project fit his interest and purpose. He wanted to tie his scouting project to the alarmingly low literacy rate in Salinas and to pay forward the early literacy benefits he gained as a child. "While in kindergarten I would read to my grandpa, mom, and others," says Sage. He adds, "Life is easier when you have a higher reading level. It also makes school easier", and he suggests that "reading anything of interest is helpful [for developing literacy]."

Read to Me Project inspired his idea for putting books into the hands of families by providing free-access mini-library boxes throughout Salinas neighborhoods. It took 150 hours to plan, persuade and deliver. With the help of fellow Scouts to build the library boxes, he fearlessly persuaded eight homeowners to agree to having a box installed in their yard. Sage gathered donated books and installed and stocked each box with books and bookmarks that explain Read to Me Project's "9 Best Ways to Read to Young Children."

During all this, Sage also led a fund drive and donated \$500 to Read to Me Project!

He is a Senior Protocol Leader in charge of local group leaders, a highly responsible position in Scouting. His current interests for college include pursuing a degree in Physical Therapy.



**LEVERAGING NEW
BEST PRACTICES**

Read to Me Project will implement next year’s program with students and parents primarily online for the cost savings, scheduling flexibility, and continued health protections in partnership with schools that are limiting the number of non-school faculty and staff on campuses. In-person sessions will take place as possible and as allowed by schools.

The traditional role of the RtMP book bin manager will resume now that students are back in the classroom, but with a key improvement. The teacher-appointed student for this leadership responsibility will electronically record their classmate’s weekly reading sessions. The online book check-in/out and reading log forms, managed by the book bin manager, will enable regular monitoring by their RtMP program coordinator. The program coordinator’s any-time review of each student’s reading frequency will improve response time to any student’s lagging participation.

Another new program feature is a revised curriculum for 6th grade students. There has been a need for different approaches for engaging this group of students and particularly for those who have heard the same presentations as 4th and 5th graders.

**SCALING THE
PROGRAM**

Testing a new RtMP licensing model, a former Monterey County teacher persuaded her school principal to include the RtMP program in five classrooms at Gerber Elementary School located in Northern California. Licensing fees will cover 100% of expenses for this school.

PARENT EDUCATION



RtMP’s school district partner in South Monterey County plans to recommend to the Monterey County Adult Education Consortium that they, too, use the RtMP curriculum (for a fee) to deliver early literacy parent education to other districts with similar educational settings for teens and parents enrolled in “School Success” classes. Proyecto Léeme is projected to impact twice the number of 2020/21 parent education attendees and deepen existing collaborations, while forging new allied partnerships with other organizations with built-in access to parents and other adult childcare givers next year.



Babies are born ready to learn, which means their education begins at home. Early literacy involves words, pictures, sounds, shapes, and colors. The children showing up on the doorsteps of schools with exposure to books and words - written and oral - are the ones best prepared to learn and succeed in the classroom, year after year.



Read to Me
PROJECT

SIBLINGS READING SUCCEEDING

readtomeproject.org

info@readtomeproject.org

831.275.1300

Tax ID# 47-1224251

Prickly pinecone



acorn

Big black dog

A B C D E F G

H



Round rock

Zero 0 Jump UP 5

6 7



White

Fly, flying, flew



Moo



Bubbles!



Blue water

waves

wind