



Little Libraries That Make a Big Difference

By Dan Franklin

RRSC Board member and LFL Team Leader

Little Free Libraries (LFL) involve small free-standing wooden boxes and their stewards. It's a free book exchange with a "take a book, share a book" motto. Raising Readers in Story County (RRSC) has a total of eight LFLs in Ames, Nevada, Gilbert, Huxley, Maxwell, Slater, Kelley and Story City. Last year RRSC contributed 1,256 books to them.

RRSC has participated in the national LFL program since 2012. We arranged for construction of child-friendly structures, recruited stewards, provided an initial collection of books, and offered more books as needed. Most of these initial LFLs were in neighborhoods where children may not have easy access to books or the public library. There are 70 LFLs in Ames and Story County and the number continues to grow dramatically,

with most constructed and maintained by residents on their property.

RRSC is currently expanding and enhancing the LFL program. Plans are underway to increase access to books for children with additional libraries in public places, with a focus on city parks throughout Story County. This expansion will be possible with the assistance of our public libraries and parks departments. Community volunteers are welcome.

To ensure our libraries are meeting the needs of the community, a QR code with our web page address will be attached to those new or replacement libraries. The QR code enables the public to provide comments, offer suggestions, ask questions, let us know if books



A very special LFL in Ames.

are needed or if damage has occurred. We appreciate the public's help in monitoring our local LFLs.

Our libraries also rely on gently-used children's books, so donations are always welcome.

From Our Director

Transitions can transcend an organization to accomplish new and exciting goals. One of the many goals of Raising Readers in Story County (RRSC) is to reach for new levels: of children served, of books given to children, of levels of reading, the list can go on. In 2018, we had some transitions in the organization in operational leadership and in program coordination. After being a member of the RRSC staff for three years, in December 2018, I transitioned from Family Literacy Program Coordinator to Executive Director. The position enables me to utilize both of my degrees in business and in education. I am excited about continuing the work of the organization to bring awareness to the astonishing, positive impacts of reading with children.



We have had some changes in the program coordination, too. We saw the retirement of Judy Dahlke, who dedicated herself as a talented Family Literacy Program Coordinator. Randie Camp also transitioned

roles in RRSC. After serving as a volunteer and Board member, Randie joined the staff as a Family Literacy Program Coordinator while pursuing her PhD. We are so fortunate to have such a multi-gifted individual as Randie is. Autumn Long is a treasure. As Data Specialist, she has supported us through this year's transitions as she continues to offer phenomenal guidance in program evaluation and meticulous data collection. Nancy Gebhart made an incredible, positive impact on RRSC with her keen eye for detail and knowledge of visual literacy prior to transitioning back to school to pursue her PhD this fall. We are delighted to have Kate Ringstad join our staff. Formerly a highly capable Site Supervisor, she is now a part-time Family Literacy Program Coordinator.

Autumn, Randie, Kate and I would like to thank our incredible donors, sponsors and partners for helping us to continue the mission of RRSC as we work with amazing volunteers in reaching for new levels of language and literacy development for the children of Story County. Together we can make the future brighter for our children.

Lisa Reeves
Executive Director
Raising Readers in Story County

The mission of Raising Readers in Story County is to improve language and literacy development in children from birth to age 8 and nurture healthy parent child relationships.

Raising Readers in Story County Leadership

Staff

Lisa Reeves, Executive Director
Autumn Long, Data Specialist
Randie Camp, Family Literacy Coordinator/Educator
Kate Ringstad, Family Literacy Coordinator/Educator

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Shellie Orngard
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Neil Rowe
Melissa Skinner

Special thanks to these individuals who also served in 2018-19:

Staff

Judy Dahlke (who retired following years of service. Thank you!)
Nancy Gebhart

Board of Directors

Reno Berg
Jennifer Dieter
Jane Halliburton
Kim Herzberg
Sue Seaton



Gift Books were distributed at a Salvation Army event on December 19, 2018. Pictured left to right are Cari McPartland, Salvation Army Service Center Administrator and RRSC volunteers Sue Seaton, Jane Halliburton, and Jerri Heid.

The Gift Books Program of Raising Readers in Story County

By Carol Elbert
Gift Books Team Leader

Can you imagine a home with children but NO BOOKS? All of us who love books hope every family has books to read with their children, but as unimaginable as it seems, not all children have books in their homes. Research shows that access to books is important for developing early literacy skills. The purpose of the Gift Books Team is to put books in the hands of children who may not have many—or any!—books of their own.

The RRSC Gift Books program distributes new and gently used books to low income families with young children. Back in the early days of Raising Readers' history, our first program was sponsoring Story County pediatricians' participation in the national Reach Out and Read (ROR) program. Doctors give gift books to children ages two months through five years at well-child check-ups, a powerful incentive to parents to read to the youngest children.

But we wanted to do more to reach vulnerable families. In 2007-2008 our first two Gift Books partners were Bethesda Food Pantry and the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Clinics. Currently we continue to give books through food banks, Mid-Iowa Community Action (MICA), and other organizations that serve low income families throughout Story County.

We provide nearly 4,000 gift books each year! How do we do it? Book drives have brought in hundreds of new and used books for preschool and school age children. Sometimes grants allow us to purchase new books. We are grateful to the many volunteers who help sort, clean, label, and deliver books to partner agencies. We appreciate the partner organizations who pass the books along to families. If you know of an organization who might want to partner with us in this effort, please let us know.

RRSC Programs Have a Positive Impact

REACHING NEW LEVELS: BIRTH TO AGE 5

ACPC Preschool Reading Buddies

RRSC engaged preschoolers at Ames Community Preschool Center in small group reading and literacy fun.

- 30 Children served
- 30 Books given



ACPC Reading Buddies

Reach Out and Read

RRSC provided books for Story County physicians to give to all babies, infants, toddlers, and preschoolers at routine checkups to age 5.

Impact: Nationwide the Reach Out and Read model shows these impacts:

- Parents are 2.5 times more likely to read to their children
- Families are 2.5 times more likely to enjoy reading together or have books in the home.
- Children's pre-school language development is improved by 3-6 months.

Reach Out and Read in Story County:

- 9 Sponsors
- 39 Physicians
- 6,000+ Children served annually
- 11,781 Books given

Small Talk Story County

This 13-week parent education class helped parents and other caregivers create a quality language environment for babies 0-30 months, the foundation for language development.

Impact: 57% of children tested showed a meaningful increase of words

- 6 Partners: Ames Public Library, Ames Public Library Friends Foundation, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Lena Research

Foundation, Lena Start, RRSC

- 69 Families served
- 1,794 Books given

Step into Storybooks in Eastern Story County

Families with young children enjoyed a fun-filled morning with literacy-rich experiences.

Partners: Central Elementary in Nevada, Nevada Kiwanis, RRSC, Nevada Rotary, Nevada Jaycees, Nevada Public Library, Central Elementary PTA and other community members.

308 Books given

StoryPals

RRSC engaged preschool children in interactive play while reading and re-enacting stories in small groups.

Impact: 83.6% of preschool children tested showed improvement in pre-literacy skills

3 Sites: Central Elementary (Nevada); Colo-NESCO Elementary (Zearing); Northwood Preschool (Ames)

85 Children served
170 Books given

Super K

RRSC helped children prepare for kindergarten in a two-week half-day summer program.

2 Sites: Central Elementary School (Nevada); Meeker Elementary School (Ames)

36 Children served
36 Books given

REACHING NEW LEVELS: PRIMARY SCHOOL (AGES 5 TO 8)

Harrison Barnes Reading Academy – After School Tutoring

Students worked one-on-one with a trained volunteer tutor to support in-school reading activities.

Impact: 100% of students improved or maintained reading levels (73.5 % improved)

- 1 Sponsor
- 2 Partners: Ames Public Library, RRSC
- 3 Sites: Ames Public Library, Boys and Girls Club (Ames), Central Elementary (Nevada)



Harrison and Brittany Barnes, here with RRSC staff members Lisa Reeves and Randie Camp, read with children at Ames Public Library.

- 37 Students
- 74 Books given

Harrison Barnes Reading Academy – Summer Reading Buddies

RRSC provided reading and activities for children K through third grade to help them maintain their school year achievements over the summer.

Impact: 97.7% of students improved or maintained reading levels (79.7 % improved)

- 1 Sponsor
- 2 Partners: Ames Public Library, RRSC
- 9 Community sites
- 137 Students
- 137 Books given

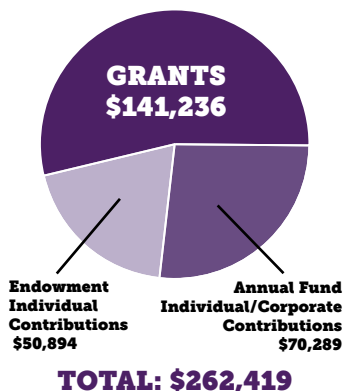
Read to Succeed

RRSC provided books for backpacks of food assembled for elementary age children identified by need.

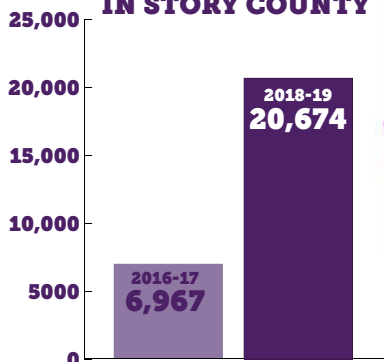
- 3 Partners: Food Bank of Iowa, RRSC, United Way of Story County
- 873 Books given

2018-19 RRSC By the Numbers

REVENUE SOURCES



BOOKS DONATED BY RAISING READERS IN STORY COUNTY



VOLUNTEERS!



Number: 411
Hours: 4,164
Value: \$106,723.32*

*\$25.43/hour, Assessed by Independent Sector

CHILDREN SERVED IN 2018-19

21,815

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

REACHING NEW LEVELS: ALL AGES

Eastwood StoryTime

RRSC provided a literacy-rich story time for parents and children at a low-income housing site.

- 24 Books given

Gift Books

RRSC distributed new and gently used books to low-income families with children.

- 7+ Sites: Bethesda Food Pantry and other food pantries in Story County, Good Neighbor Emergency Assistance, Mid-Iowa Community Action (MICA), Northwood Preschool Center, Primary Health Care, Salvation Army, Shared Blessings (Northminster Presbyterian Church), Story County Dental Clinic, Women Infants and Children (WIC)
- 3,840 Books given

Little Free Libraries

RRSC stewarded eight LFLs for children to "take a book, share a book."

- 8 towns: Ames, Gilbert, Huxley, Nevada, Slater, Maxwell, Kelly and Story City
- 1,256 Books donated

Reading Corners

RRSC installed literacy-rich bookshelves in public reception rooms to encourage families to enjoy reading together while they wait.

- 23 Reading corners throughout Story County
- 335 Books given

2018-19 Special Activities

International Paper and Coaching for Literacy joined Iowa State Cyclones fans in pledging a donation for every assist recorded by the Cyclones during four basketball games in February. Donations made to RRSC totaled \$5,140.88, and everyone had fun!

Five children RRSC treated to the game with ISU Cheerleaders



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*Donations made fiscal year 2018-19.
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Donations to the Raising Readers in Story County Annual Fund are used where the needs are greatest now.

Learn more online at raising-readers.org.