Our mission is to foster early literacy bonds between children and their parents to ensure that all young children from Aspen to Parachute develop a love of books and the skills to become successful readers.
Dear Friends,

Raising A Reader Aspen to Parachute has been near and dear to me since its inception 17 years ago in the Roaring Fork Valley. It warms my heart to see children smile when they open the red bags of books, listen to a story during one of our outreach groups, or cuddle on their parents’ laps while reading together at the library. These experiences are part of the programming that Raising A Reader provides 1000+ children and their families every school year.

As a longtime early childhood and elementary educator and leader, I have always believed that teaching children the joy of reading is the foundation of a child becoming a successful reader. Raising A Reader provides those critical and essential resources for our youngest learners, their parents, and their teachers that schools struggle to supply, even more so since the pandemic began in 2020.

The youngest and most vulnerable children in our area have been hardest hit during the pandemic because they missed the most critical early years of learning. Educators work tirelessly in our local schools to fill the learning gaps with limited resources. Raising A Reader Aspen to Parachute has continuously coordinated with local preschools, libraries, and early primary classrooms to provide high-quality books and rich early literacy resources. We are very proud of the services and support we have provided our children, parents, and teachers during this unprecedented time.

I am thrilled to be a part of this outstanding organization, its exceptional staff, and its dedicated board of directors. Thank you so much for supporting our work at Raising A Reader. Your support makes a difference in children’s lives, from Aspen to Parachute.

I am looking forward to meeting you and wish you a year filled with health and happiness!

With sincere gratitude,

Suzanne Wheeler-Del Piccolo
Executive Director
Raising A Reader Empowers and Inspires Families to Read Together Every Day

**Raising a Reader Red Book Bags** provide 3-4 books every week from September to early May, sent home with each child. During a school year, families receive 75-100 books for reading at home together, along with educational resources for parents to motivate and inspire families to read at home together.

**123 Let’s Read** – This program gifts a book a month for each participating preschool teacher and every student in their class. Each book comes with a list of suggested home activities to stimulate brain development, enhance vocabulary, and motivate families to read together at home.

"Before participating in the program, we did not have books at home, and thanks to your program we have already started our little reading corner."

- Bolsitas Rojas
Parent Participant
Bolsitas Rojas/ Little Red Bags — This outreach program brings together families whose children are not in preschool in all nine public libraries in the region. Each week, children and their parents engage in literacy guidance, storytime, and other fun, enriching preschool activities.

Blue Bag Library Days — Raising A Reader hosts a field trip for preschoolers, kindergarteners, and families at their local libraries each spring. Children receive their first library card attached to a free blue bookbag they can keep, filled with information about the library programming.

This year, Summer Reading Camp was new to Raising A Reader. It brought parents with preschool-age children together with our program coordinators in local parks twice a week. Families participated in literacy engagement activities and received storybooks to keep.

RAR conducts all of its programming and materials in both Spanish and English.
Raising A Reader Aspen to Parachute Update

Since its inception in 2004, Raising A Reader Aspen to Parachute has practiced a “two-generation” approach to literacy and school achievement, recognizing the importance of family – parent and child together – in ensuring success. Raising A Reader continues this tradition and legacy today in 2021.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to confront us with numerous challenges, Raising A Reader (RAR) continues to empower parents of our youngest children with books and literacy resources. One of the most valuable outcomes of the pandemic for our organization is the renewed sense of our mission to ensure that our most vulnerable families have access to books and resources to encourage reading at home.

Raising A Reader programs equip parents with the knowledge to create a home environment rich in oral language interactions as the pandemic unfolds in our communities. We know from experience and research that the parent-child bond helps children develop verbal language skills, fosters healthy brain development, and builds early literacy skills critical for school success.

- 45% of RAR children receive free or reduced price lunch
- 48% of RAR families speak mostly Spanish at home
- 50% of RAR parents have a high school education or less
More Time Reading Together

Parent pre-and-post survey data show that families increase the amount of time reading together while participating in our programs.

Families who participated in RAR’s school-based 123 Let’s Read and Red Book Bag programs spent 30% more time reading together.

Families who attended RAR’s weekly Bolsitas Rojas/Little Red Bags sessions spent 62% more time reading with their children, which amounts to an additional 52 days and 520 minutes of reading and cuddling together.

Possible through Partnership

20 Schools
8 County Libraries
124 Generous Donors
Financials

CONTRIBUTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<td>Foundations</td>
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Total Revenue: $ 192,449

EXPENSES

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<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
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Total Expenses: $ 219,766
# Donors

We are deeply grateful for the support of all our donors over the years. Please note that the list below reflects only those who gave during the fiscal year July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021.

## $20,000+
- Buell Foundation
- Pettit Foundation

## $10,000 - $19,999
- Aspen Community Foundation
- Miguel and Jacklyn Bezos
- Chevron
- Colorado Humanities & National Endowment for the Humanities
- Pitkin County

## $5,000 - $9,999
- Garfield County Board of County Commissioners
- Melony and Adam Lewis Advised Fund at ACF

## $1,000 - $4,999
- Alpenglow Foundation
- Alpine Bank
- Alpine Bank Community Inclusion & Engagement
- Aspen Skiing Company Family Fund at ACF
- Steve Casey
- Castaways Foundation
- City of Aspen
- City of Glenwood Springs
- LuLu Colby
- Lucy and Thomas Danis
- Michael and Debbi Fields Rose Advised Fund at ACF
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- Obermeyer Wood Investment Counsel
- Spidell Foundation
- Town of Basalt
- Town of Carbondale

## $500 - $999
- Bank of Colorado
- Gould Construction Inc.
- Grand Valley Kiwanis Foundation
- Nancy and Barton Levin
- Marjory Musgrave
- Jayne and Bill Poss
- Terri and Sam Potter
- SGM
- George Shaver*

## $100 - $499
- Jonathan Armytage
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- Mary Boyd
- Diane and Carter Brooksher
- Georgia Chamberlain and John Foulkrod
- Mary Kay Chesley
- Kim Coates
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- Debbie Fifer
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Pam Yarus and Theron Russell
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Carol Carl
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Kiara Christianson
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Judy and Donald Wrigley
Aimee and Luis Yllanes
Susan and Vincent Yoder*
Erin Zalinski

Honorary Gifts*
In memory of Karen Shaver -
   Deborah Dawson and Dean Gordon
   George Shaver
   Susan and Vincent Yoder

In memory of Carole Phillips -
   Ruth Harrison

In-Kind
Alpine Bank
Aspen Daily News
Aspen Times
Basalt Regiona Library
Dance Initiative
Focused Kids
Garfield County Libraries
Glenwood Springs Post Independent
La Tricolor
Parent Possible
Scholastic Books
Sopris Sun
Frank Taverna
Voices
Vroom
Raising A Reader offers unique programming that successfully connects families, schools, libraries, and child care providers with the tools to put books in children’s hands from Aspen to Parachute.
Success starts at home with a parent, a child, and a book.