



# SMART NEWSLETTER

## SPRING/SUMMER 2013

- WHAT'S INSIDE:**
- EVALUATING SMART'S EFFECTIVENESS
  - NEW GIVING OPPORTUNITIES
  - SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT
  - HELP SPREAD THE SMART WORD
  - SMART BY THE NUMBERS
  - NEW AND IMPROVED WEBSITE
  - Q&A: SMART & THE COMMON CORE
  - THANK YOU TO OUR BOARD

### EMPOWERING YOUNG READERS FOR SUCCESS MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

As we near the end of SMART's 21st year of serving children across Oregon with reading support and books, I'm filled with gratitude for the thousands of individuals across Oregon who helped make it happen.

Over the course of this year, we will serve nearly 8,500 students in more than 240 public schools, preschools and Head Start programs statewide, with the help of 5,000 volunteers.

Importantly, we made headway on our strategic goal to grow PreK programming to 10-20 percent of all programs by 2014. This goal is in line with the state's education goals emphasizing the importance of early interventions and reading support. All new SMART programs opened this year were PreK sites, and PreK programs have grown to represent 16 percent of our programs.

Last but far from least, we gave away our 2-millionth book this year.

To celebrate, we launched a statewide campaign, *2 Million and Still Reading*. We held school-based events across Oregon in which donors, educators and policymakers got to read with SMART students and experience the magical moment when each child picked out a book to take home and keep – one of 14 they receive over the course of the year.

This campaign was an important step in raising our profile and broadening support for our proven program that leverages private resources to improve outcomes for Oregon kids.

Under the leadership of our Governor, we're witnessing a recommitment to public education and a focus on collaboration across sectors to ensure children get what they need to succeed in school. A key strategy within proposed reforms focuses on improving reading skills and ensuring kids are entering school ready to learn to read. We couldn't agree more, and stand poised to join the effort as an established and capable partner.

I invite you to join SMART and our state education partners in this collective charge to ensure Oregon kids are getting the best possible start to successful, prosperous lives – and it begins with reading.

Here's to another year of empowering young readers across our state for success.

Sincerely,

Chris Otis  
SMART Executive Director



## EVALUATING SMART'S EFFECTIVENESS

Thanks to a \$600,000, three-year grant from The Ford Family Foundation, SMART has completed initial data collection in the pilot year of an evaluation and expansion of service to PreK and kindergarten students in rural Oregon communities. Led by researchers at Portland State University in partnership with SMART staff, the evaluation will provide us with useful information on the benefits of our program, and help us identify potential improvements to ensure we continue making a meaningful impact on the reading development of at-risk children.



## NEW GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

This spring, we have announced new ways to support SMART in schools across Oregon.

**SPONSOR A SMART SCHOOL** is a great new opportunity for businesses to invest dollars and lend employee volunteers to a SMART program at a particular school in your community.

As a Sponsor A SMART School partner, your business will receive exclusive recognition on signage at the sponsored school, and recognition in SMART's website and e-communications. But, the best part of sponsoring a school is knowing that your business is helping at-risk kids build their reading skills and develop their self-confidence. A future with a literate, productive work force means a future with a vibrant economy for our state.

If you are interested in sponsoring a school in your area in the 2013-14 school year, please contact our Development Team at 971-634-1634.

**SMART LEADERS FOR LITERACY** is our new giving society to recognize generous contributors who make annual donations of \$10,000 and above. A \$10,000 contribution will fund SMART for 33 children and provide 462 books during the year. These dedicated SMART supporters will receive special recognition and invitations to exclusive gatherings. To learn more about how you can join SMART Leaders for Literacy, please contact Alison Bruun on the SMART Development Team at 971-634-1620.

## SPECIAL ADIDAS OFFER FOR SMART VOLUNTEERS

Our friends at adidas are granting SMART friends and families access to the Employee Store in Portland! From May 15-31, SMART volunteers and supporters can enjoy 50 percent discounts at the adidas Employee Store, located at 5060 N. Greeley Ave. in Portland. Visit [getSMARToregon.org/adidas](http://getSMARToregon.org/adidas) to print your shopping pass. Email SMART@getsmartoregon.org with questions.

Thank you, adidas!

## HELP SPREAD THE SMART WORD

Right now in Oregon, we're witnessing a heightened public interest in ensuring our children are getting the resources they need to succeed academically, regardless of circumstance. Oregon's Administration has put a stake in the ground on public education, making the improvement of our education system and student achievement top priorities.

Key within the proposed education improvements are strategies that boost reading skills, ensure kids are prepared to learn to read when they enter school, and leverage cross-sector resources and infrastructures to create better futures for kids. By its very definition SMART embodies these strategies.

Since 1992, SMART has engaged 103,000 Oregon citizens to provide one-on-one reading support for 153,000 at-risk children. We've partnered with more than 240 primarily low-income schools and early education programs statewide to implement our proven reading support and book program. And, we've done it with private resources raised from businesses, foundations and individuals.

But, SMART has reached a critical mass with leveraging private dollars. With the State's education goals directly in line with what SMART can help achieve, the time is right for Oregon to support SMART in getting to the next level. To that end, SMART is lobbying for state funding this legislative session to buy books for SMART students and expand into the schools that need us most.

### CAN YOU HELP?

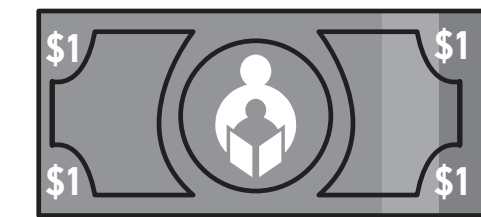
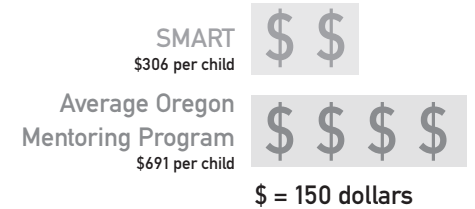
If you're interested in sending a letter on SMART's behalf to your local legislator(s), please contact Jessica Corcoran, Communications Director, at [jcorcoran@getsmartoregon.org](mailto:jcorcoran@getsmartoregon.org).

Thanks to the more than 50 volunteers, educators and supporters across Oregon who've sent letters in support of SMART to their local legislators!

## SMART BY THE NUMBERS

### AVERAGE COST PER CHILD

The average cost for one child to participate in SMART for one year is \$306.\* This figure includes all of the tangible and infrastructure costs necessary to implement the SMART program, from providing new books for children to take home and keep; to recruiting, training and retaining volunteers; to research and data collection; and more. \*Average cost per child varies from year to year. Figure based on 2011-12 data.

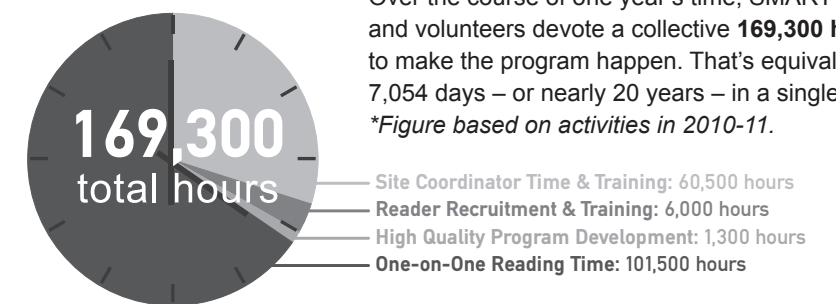


### WHERE THE MONEY GOES

Program 73%  
Fundraising 16%  
Management 11%

### SMART TIME

Over the course of one year's time, SMART staff and volunteers devote a collective **169,300 hours\*** to make the program happen. That's equivalent to 7,054 days – or nearly 20 years – in a single year. \*Figure based on activities in 2010-11.



## NEW AND IMPROVED WEBSITE

SMART has a new website! The new site includes a variety of new features, like a Why Reading Matters section that offers helpful resources on early reading, and local pages for regional SMART offices across Oregon. Thanks to our friends at **Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Oregon**, who made the site possible through our Community Partner Organization grant. Check out the new site at [getSMARToregon.org](http://getSMARToregon.org)!

## 2013 SMART GALA SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT: KNOWLEDGE UNIVERSE



A huge thank-you to our friends at Knowledge Universe for their longtime support of SMART. Since 1998, Knowledge Universe has donated more than \$114,000 to support SMART programs statewide.

Not only was Knowledge Universe the presenting sponsor of our annual gala for the last two years, last fall, they also partnered with KGW NewsChannel 8 and OnPoint Community Credit Union to help raise awareness of and books for SMART. The company has 20 employees who volunteer as SMART Readers.

"Knowledge Universe supports SMART because our people have experienced for themselves the

magic that comes with being SMART Readers," explains David Roy, Senior Director, Community and Communications, Knowledge Universe - U.S. "Across the country, we serve tens of thousands of at-risk children, and every second of the day, we celebrate the power of literacy in our centers. What SMART does for children throughout Oregon—building confidence and reading skills, while providing regular mentoring moments—aligns with what we believe in and what we try to do every day. Knowledge Universe is proud to be a partner with SMART and humbled by the positive impact SMART has made in our home state."

SMART is grateful for Knowledge Universe's generous support, and we look forward to our future partnerships in support of Oregon's kids.



Knowledge Universe CEO Tom Wyatt and SMART Board Member Elizabeth Large, Executive Vice President and Legal Counsel for Knowledge Universe, pose with Portland Timbers' mascot, Timber Joey Webber, at the 2013 SMART Gala. The Gala raised more than \$360,000 to fund programs across Oregon.

## 2013 GALA GOLD SPONSORS



# SMART AND THE COMMON CORE

The Common Core State Standards are a new set of educational standards in the U.S. designed to prepare K-12 students for college and career success.

As a program that partners with more than 240 public schools, preschools and early education centers across Oregon, SMART set out to explore how our reading support program fits into the Common Core.



## ***What do the Common Core State Standards address?***

The Common Core State Standards are a progression of learning expectations in English, language arts and math. The standards define the knowledge and skills students should have in their K–12 education, emphasize learning goals, describe end-of-year expectations and focus on results, leaving room for teachers to determine how these learning goals should be achieved.

## ***Why and how were the Common Core developed?***

The Common Core project was initiated in 2009 by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices. States across the country collaborated with teachers, researchers, and leading experts to design the clear educational standards that all states can voluntarily adopt. A common set of educational standards ensures that all students can graduate from high school prepared for postsecondary education and careers.

## ***Does Oregon use Common Core?***

Forty-five states have adopted the Common Core, including Oregon. Oregon approved the Common Core in 2010 and will implement the new standards in the 2014-15 school year.

## ***What are key reading standards?***

Common Core reading standards for K-5 students focus on providing a variety of reading material, and getting students more deeply engaged in the text to improve their comprehension of what they're reading.

## ***How do Common Core reading standards align with SMART?***

The primary way SMART aligns with Common Core reading standards is in volunteers' engagement with students in the reading process.

SMART volunteers are trained and encouraged to engage students in the books they're reading by asking questions such as who, what, where, when, why, and how. This engagement in the text will help students reflect on what they are reading and improve their comprehension.

The Common Core reflects these as key strategies that help children deepen their understanding of key details in a text, which contributes to literacy development and learning overall.

For more information on the Common Core State Standards, visit [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org).

# THANK YOU TO SMART'S STATEWIDE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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