



Raising
A Reader
Massachusetts

ANNUAL REPORT 2017



MISSION STATEMENT

Our goal is to close the literacy opportunity gap among children birth to age six in high-need communities by helping families develop and practice shared home reading habits.



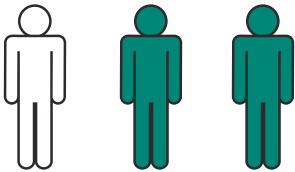
WHY EARLY LITERACY?

Statewide Issue

43% of 3rd graders are not reading at grade level.

Income Matters

61% of 3rd graders in low-income families are not reading at grade level.



In MA, 1 out of 3 students in high-need communities **will not graduate high school** because they started kindergarten behind and were unable to catch up.

Race Matters

59% of black 3rd graders are not reading at grade level.

64% of Hispanic/Latino 3rd graders are not reading at grade level.

Language Matters

73% of English Language Learner students are not at grade level by end of 3rd grade.



WHY THIS EARLY?

RAR-MA harnesses the power of the early years when 2 key factors are in play:

1. Children's brain development is at its peak.



90% of a child's brain has developed by age 5. Brain connections are fostered through interactions between adult and child, and shared reading is one of the best ways to nurture these back-and-forth interactions.

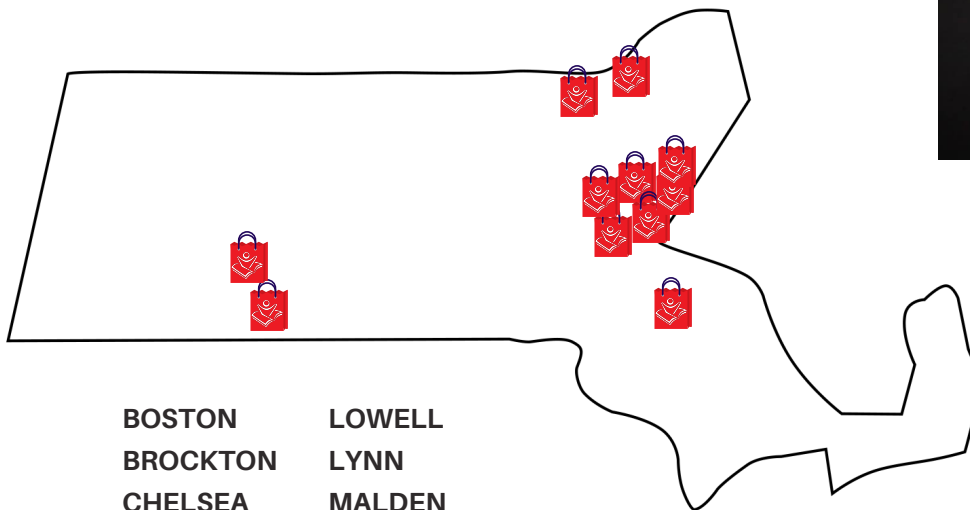
2. Parents are the most involved in children's daily lives.



Parental involvement in children's literacy practices is a more powerful force than other background variables, such as income, family size, and level of parental education. (Flouri and Buchanan, 2004)

WHERE WE SERVE

We meet parents where they are - partnering with local and community organizations to host or deliver the RAR-MA program in settings trusted by families.



- BOSTON
- BROCKTON
- CHELSEA
- EVERETT
- HOLYOKE
- LAWRENCE
- LOWELL
- LYNN
- MALDEN
- REVERE
- SPRINGFIELD
- + LOCAL AFFILIATES



“*I was at the library and saw a parent and child walk in with the child carrying the Red Bag--it was the greatest thing. And our teachers love it because it's a great way to engage and get to know the parents. All the teachers have asked for it again.”*
- Partner, Holyoke Public Schools

A NOTE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR & INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DEAR READERS,

Raising readers of their own, Amanda, as Board Chair, and Christine, as Interim Executive Director, share a passion and commitment to early literacy skills and how critical they are in preparing a child for school as they serve as the foundation for learning in all subjects. We are so inspired by the stories that we hear from our program team, program partners, and our parents. This is what motivates us every day to continue the work we do and look for ways to increase our impact. Our texting and modeling videos, created with WGBH, have been a wonderful complement to our program model, reinforcing our message and training, and allowing for convenience and ease of use. At a recent site visit in Lawrence, a parent shared "I've learned the importance of reading. My child enjoys it, and I get to see how she connects what we are reading to her own life."

We are thrilled with the success of our Parent Ambassador program. It has taken a life of its own, serving as a leadership experience for our champions and a step into future work opportunities. Parents build skills and confidence and give back to their community. We are also excited about implementing a new program model with our RAR in the Workplace. This new delivery model allows us to work with corporations and our constituents by extending our program model in the workplace as an enhanced employee benefit. We are optimistic about how this new delivery model will grow as we launched in early summer.

Our evidence-based program remains strong as we serve 10 gateway cities (high-need communities) and Boston, plus our fee-for-service partners, and we are happy with the good results from our newest gateway city, Holyoke. Our new RAR in the Workplace model shows early promise as we continue to innovate and find new ways to reach our constituents and strengthen their home literacy environment while serving our communities.

We had a good year. We could not do this work alone. Thank you to our donors, program partners, and parent ambassadors who help make such a huge impact on the young children and families we support and the important work of eliminating the opportunity gap.

With sincere thanks,


Amanda Hall


Christine Ward

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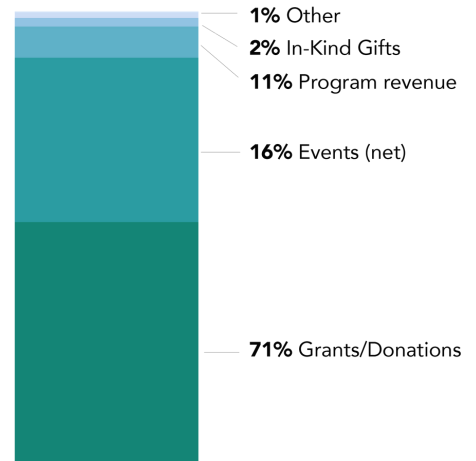
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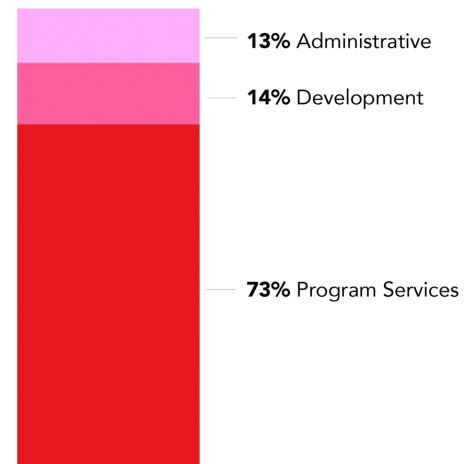
FINANCIALS

REVENUE & SUPPORT



Total: \$1,108,648

EXPENSES



Total: \$1,000,169

We take pride in spending our money efficiently. We are proud to announce that we ended FYE2017 with a surplus.

THIS IS WHAT YOU'VE MADE POSSIBLE

44,692



books

11,173



families

134



partners

PARENT AMBASSADORS: RAR-MA CHAMPIONS

19 in **10**
ambassadors gateway cities
(includes Boston)

RAR-MA Parent Ambassadors are the key to our success. They are an amazing group of individuals who are passionate to share their acquired dialogic reading strategies with other parents.

AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT

Somaya Ouard (pictured right, on the left) immigrated to the US from Morocco in search for a better life. She resides in Chelsea with her husband and two children, ages 5 and 2.

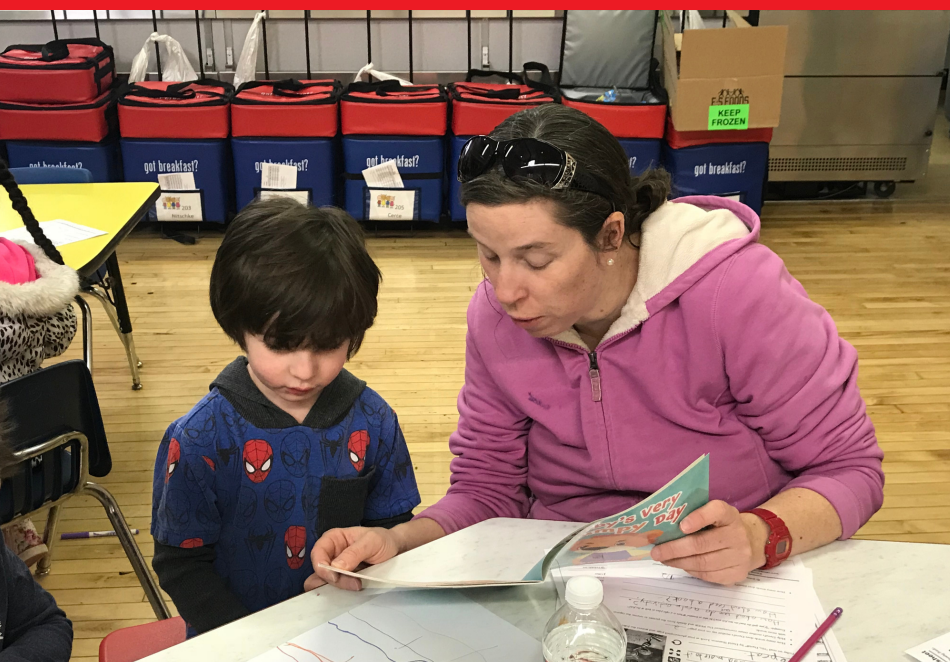
She first learned about RAR-MA when her daughter received a Red Book Bag from the Chelsea-Revere Family Network. Eager to learn more, Somaya attended a workshop at the Chelsea Public Library.

The message and trainings were so powerful that she kept attending and asked to increase her involvement in the organization, eventually taking on a leadership role as a Parent Ambassador. She was instrumental in accessing the Arabic speaking population and now regularly delivers workshops in Arabic.

Somaya feels that Raising A Reader MA has helped her in many ways: with access to books, strategies on how to read with her children and the importance of asking questions. Finally, it gave her the opportunity to get the training and become a Parent Ambassador, which she believes will open more doors.



*Our program helps
the parents grow,
just as much as it
does the kids.*



*“That time we spend
together is one of my
favorite times.”*

*- Parent, Breen School,
Lawrence*

WHAT THE PARENTS HAVE TO SAY

I have learned that my child is not too young to read. The more I read to him the more I see his vocabulary becoming stronger. - Parent, Brockton MA



65%

of families who read < 3x per week before the program have increased their reading frequency

50%

say they increased the use of the dialogic reading techniques after RAR-MA

No matter how busy I am I still need to make time for reading. The red bag is a good reminder to read a book with my kids. - Parent, Lynn MA



2/3

of partners reported noticing changes (which they attributed to RAR-MA) in how often families read and the way in which they read

41%

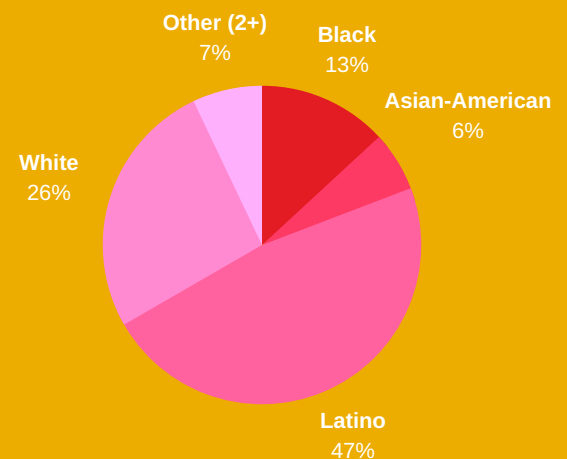
of families who were only in the Red Book Bag rotation (no workshop attendance) increased their reading frequency

OUR POPULATION

A large portion of the population we serve are immigrants and speak English as a second language. We welcome all languages and English proficiency levels. We teach parents that books are the tools through which parents and their children can have conversations. You don't have to be reading the words on the page to have an effective experience. Between our Parent Ambassadors & Program Managers, we communicate with parents in 4 languages:

ENGLISH
ARABIC
SPANISH
CAPE VERDEAN CREOLE

Ethnicities of families served based on the demographics of our communities:



GOOD TIMES FOR A GREAT CAUSE

DINNER WITH AN AUTHOR GALA

The 2017 Dinner with an Author Gala raised a total of \$226,000 in net revenue, which was an 80% increase in revenue from the 2016 gala.



“ Thank you so much for including me in last night's wonderful and memorable evening. From the cocktail hour, to the dinner, the auctions, and the presentations, and, most especially, the lovely women who shared my table--I am honored and inspired by Raising A Reader's great mission.”
- Jessica Keener, Author



“ It was my pleasure to attend yesterday's Dinner with Author. It was one of the best nights of my life. I'm so happy and honored to be part of RAR! I'm living the American dream!”
- Somaya Ouard, RAR Parent Ambassador



Raising A Reader MA is an independent affiliate of the California-based Raising A Reader. Raising A Reader MA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization (EIN 80-0297898). All contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed under the law.

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Headquartered in Boston
9B Hamilton Place, 3rd Floor
Boston, MA 02108

617-292-BOOK (2665)
info@raisingareaderma.org
www.raisingareaderma.org