OUR MISSION

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.

"Parents hold the key to their child’s future. They play a more important role than they know in preparing their child for school and life success. What Raising a Reader MA does is give them ideas of how they can help their child come to love and understand books and reading." - Sally Fuller, Davis Foundation

WHY EARLY LITERACY?

STATEWIDE ISSUE
In MA, 53% of third graders are not reading at grade level

INCOME MATTERS
71% of third graders in economically disadvantaged families are not reading at grade level

LANGUAGE MATTERS
80% of English Language Learner third graders are not reading at grade level

RACE MATTERS
71% of black and Hispanic third graders are not reading at grade level

73% of families that RAR-MA serves have a household income of less than $43K.
SUCCESS STORY

Elbia Rodriguez learned about RAR-MA through her work as a Parent Partner with ABCD Roslindale’s BFEN playgroups. Already an active and involved mother to four children, RAR-MA’s style of dialogic reading felt like a natural form of interacting. Elbia now uses it with her youngest daughters, Angelique (4) and Aniyah (7), as well as with the families that participate in the Roslindale BFEN community events!

NEW INITIATIVE
RAISING A READER IN THE WORKPLACE

RAR-MA partnered with UniFirst to launch its pilot workplace program. UniFirst offered the RAR-MA Red Book Bag rotation and parent workshops to its employees as a benefit. Workshops and Red Bags were delivered on-site at UniFirst.

Cynthia Croatti, Executive Vice President, UniFirst was awarded the Leadership in Literacy award for her initiative to bring this extended benefit to her employees. Speaker of the House, Robert A. DeLeo received the Legislator of the Year award for his efforts in early education.
WHY THIS EARLY?

Up to 90% of a child's brain is developed by age five.

Parents are most involved in their child's daily lives at ages 0-5.

Shared reading is one of the best ways to combine these 2 factors for optimal child development.

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.

DID YOU KNOW?

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

Boston
Brockton
Chelsea
Everett
Holyoke

Lawrence
Lowell
Lynn
Malden
Revere
Springfield

Program Partner Examples:
ABCD, Adult Learning Center,
Crossroads, Headstart, Horizons
DEAR READERS,

Celebrating almost a decade with Raising A Reader MA, most recently in the role of Executive Director, I have had the pleasure to visit our sites more, meet with our donors, learn from our partners, and interact with our constituents. Every time I visit one of our program partners, I am reminded of the importance of our work. I see enthusiastic parents who are grateful for the books their children bring home and partners who embrace the opportunity to engage, creating an important bridge between the daycare or school environment and the home. For example, a partner shared how she visits family homes where there are simply no books in the home. Imagine a home with no books or a library with bare shelves. And a parent shared how ‘when she asks questions, her son pays more attention to story time because he loves to give the answers.’

It’s been a good year. We started off with a successful Leadership in Literacy breakfast, honoring UniFirst and Speaker of the House, Robert A. DeLeo. The public and private support is a testament to the strength of our program and our collaboration with the communities we serve. Our fabulous Dinner with an Author gala celebrated a dozen years, and 30 esteemed authors came to share their love of literacy while helping to raise funds for our important work. Nine-year old Lulu, a proud Raising A Reader MA alumnae, told her personal story as to what our program has meant to her and her family as they navigate life in a new country.

Looking ahead, we are fortunate to start work with Bridgespan’s Leading for Impact cohort this year to help redefine our value proposition. We will be in a better position to demonstrate impact and increase efficacy as we navigate a changing funding environment. Our Parent Ambassador program continues to grow as we dedicate resources and deepen our relationship with our valued partners with the help of these program champions.

Together, we can continue to support families across the Commonwealth so that young children will reap the benefits of being read to as part of their early foundation for a lifetime of learning.

With gratitude,

Christine Ward
Raising A Reader MA
Executive Director

“We will never close the achievement gap, we will never solve our dropout crisis, we will never break the cycle of poverty that afflicts so many children if we don’t make sure that all our students learn to read” - Ralph Smith, Executive Vice President, Annie E. Casey Foundation

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Director and Senior Counsel, Carbon Black

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Managing Director, State Street Global Exchange

Francine Rosenzweig

Jonathan Slawsby
Owner & COO, Madison Food Corp.
MAKING AN IMPACT

After participating in our Red Book Bag program and/or parent workshops, parents reported increases in reading frequency and in reading behaviors (strategies for dialogic reading).

47% of families parents say their child is more involved in reading as a result of RAR-MA.

85% of families are reading with at least 3 new reading strategies after RAR-MA

FROM THE PROGRAM PARTNERS

94% report that children show greater interest in books/reading after RAR-MA

90% report that children have increased oral language skills after RAR-MA

"I learned how to make it fun so she will end up learning. We take our time on each page and picture. When she speaks both Spanish and English, she uses sentences and not just words."

- Jose, Brockton
**OUR DONORS**

**$100K**
- Barr Foundation

**$50,000 - 99,000**
- MassMutual Financial Group

**$25,000 - 49,999**
- Amelia Peabody Foundation
- Cabot Family Charitable Trust
- Community Foundation of Western Mass
- Cummings Foundation
- Funder Collaborative for Reading Success
- Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation
- John & Sue Simon
- The TJX Foundation
- UniFirst Corporation

**$10,000 - 24,999**
- A.C. Ratshesky Foundation
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- Bunzl/R3
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- Lawrence J. and Anne Rubenstein Charitable Foundation
- Jessica & Josh Lutzker
- Nathaniel and Elizabeth Stevens Foundation
- Reeder Foundation
- Rodman Ride for Kids
- Vertex Foundation

**$5,000 - 9,999**
- Beier Foundation
- Couch Family Foundation

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**FINANCIALS**

- Revenue: $913,320
- Expenses: $824,330

- Donations/Grants: 68%
- Programs: 6%
- Events: 29.5%
- In-Kind/Other: 1.5%
- Administration: 14%
- Development: 16%
- Program: 70%
Francine Rosenzweig
Jonathan Slawsby
TD Bank
Wells Fargo
Yellow Wood Partners

**$2,500 - 4,999**
ADP, LLC
Daryl & Christopher Andrews
Kimberly & Eric Aulenback
Leah Bundy
CHT Foundation
William Cowan
Steve DiPietro
DST Systems
Edwards Garment Co
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Helen G. Hauben Foundation
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Lewis Family Foundation
Jon Nesbit & Gillian Meek
Stephen Rosen
Progress Partners
Stefan Spazek
Stephanie & Brian Spector
United Way of Greater Plymouth County

**$500 - 2,499**
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Melissa Alexander
John Anthonakes
American Dawn
Chris Andreotes
Aubert J. Fay Charitable Fund
Elizabeth Bagnani
Bill Barke
Samir Bhattacharyya
Brian Bell & Rakel Meir
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William Howe
Nina Hughes
Jeffrey Johnston
Lisa Kerrigan
Don & Anne Kilburn
Kronos
Anne Kuuskvere
WHAT YOU’VE MADE POSSIBLE

40,288 books

10,072 families

111 partners

Thank you!

LENA Foundation
Judith & Eric Lubershane
Nick MacShane
Madison Food Corp of Washington Park
John & Margaret Malicki
Stefania Mallett
Hiren Mankodi & Devika Kapoor
James Masur
Jo Mayer
Merrill Lynch
Yvette Lowenthal Mulderr
Heather Murray
Mercer Health & Benefits LLC
Peter Wheeler & Elizabeth Munro
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Susan A. and Donald P. Babson Foundation
Jen Tribush
Robert & Becky Vail
Jean Verbridge
VF Imagewear
Thomas & Andrea Ward
White Fund
Robert White

Funder Collaborative for Reading Success

$100K for 100 Cummings Foundation

United Way of Greater Plymouth County
DINNER WITH
AN AUTHOR
MAY 31, 2018

Our signature gala featured 30 local, esteemed authors. Guests were invited to mingle and dine with the authors, participate in a live and silent auction, and support RAR-MA.

This year was our most successful gala yet, raising $243,000 of unrestricted funds to support our programming!

“I believe that helping students and parents can ensure a great future to become anything they want to, and dream like myself. Thank you Raising A Reader and all the great donors for helping children like me feel successful and confident to achieve our dreams.
- Lulu, age 9, RAR-MA graduate

Dialogic Reading Techniques

The PEER Method:

Prompts the child to say something about the book,
Evaluates the child’s response,
Expands the child’s response by rephrasing and adding information to it, and
Repeats the prompt to make sure the child has learned from the expansion.
NOTE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

I have always believed that literacy is a fundamental key to unlocking potential and providing a path to individual and societal success. During the time I have worked with Raising A Reader MA, including most recently as Board Chair, the organization has consistently strived to improve its model, increase its impact and identify new opportunities to bring the Raising A Reader MA program to those most in need of our services. This past year we continued to successfully execute on these efforts, and I am proud of the work we do and all that we have accomplished together.

Evidence shows that a non-trivial literacy gap in the Commonwealth persists. At Raising A Reader MA, we are committed to ensuring that our tools and techniques are accessible for everyone, irrespective of language or background. This past year we reached over 10,000 children in 10 gateway cities (high need communities) plus Boston, to build a foundation for a lifetime of success. We have continued to grow opportunities to connect with our children and families, including through our parent ambassador program which has demonstrated a positive impact on how we engage our families. Our RAR in the Workplace initiative continues to show promise as we reach parents at their place of work, reducing barriers such as travel, time, and child care, all while improving employee retention and referrals.

I am pleased to report we ended the year in a strong financial position and strategically aligned to deepen our impact. Thank you for your ongoing support for our work to eliminate the literacy opportunity gap. We would not have accomplished so much without you. Looking forward, your continued support is critical to the future of many children and families across the Commonwealth.

Finally, it has been a pleasure to serve Raising a Reader MA over the years. As I transition at the end of my term I am delighted to announce that Gregg Dooling, our current Treasurer, will serve as Board Chair. He brings a wealth of ideas, experience and expertise, and he will no doubt continue to take Raising A Reader MA to new heights. Please join me in welcoming Gregg into his new role.

With sincere thanks,
Amanda Hall, Board Chair

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.