



October 1, 2023

Greetings from Reading and Beyond,

In this 2021-2022 annual report we are proud to share the important work that our team took on in Luis Santana's last year as Executive Director. As he shared in his letter to all of us, while this chapter has come to a close for him, I have no doubt that his contributions to our community will continue and for that, we are all united in gratitude for what he has already planted here as the Founder of Reading and Beyond.

I want to share a little about myself. I was born and raised in Fresno. I have a strong work ethic; I value people and understand that relationships are built when we follow-through on the commitments we make. My experience as a community leader has taught me that embracing equity means truly centering the voices of the most historically disenfranchised communities. I'm committed to moving us into the next season of growth at Reading and Beyond with the following three pillars as my focus:

1. Ensure that we have a successful and seamless leadership transition that results in a strong team that is dedicated to continuing the important work we've promised our community. My commitment to our staff is to seek clarity in what I learn as I move into this role, to listen with earnest intent to serve, to speak with truth about any pending changes.
2. Build on the seeds of successful infrastructure, programming and partnerships established by my predecessor. We grew from an afterschool tutoring program to a resource hub, preconception-to-career, that supports the community as a whole.
3. Center the love for our community by being transparent about our work and its impact. We want to honor the stories of our participants and share how we have made a clear and direct impact on the lives of those we serve. We want to measure our impact, yes in data, but most importantly in the ways that those we touch have benefited from our collective effort.

In the spirit of building a long-lasting relationship, with you, my new Reading and Beyond family I want to make a commitment clear. I commit to coming to this role with my whole heart. I commit to moving forward with intention and being clear about the fact that our community is who ultimately leads our efforts. I commit to rolling up my sleeves and being ready to dig in even if...especially when it's tough.

While we have seen great success, we are hungry to do more. This is an important time in our community as we get to a new normal in the aftermath of COVID and all the challenges it brought. As we start this new season of Reading and Beyond, I invite you to renew your commitment to supporting our work. Leadership is needed from all of us and while I'm humbled to take on the role of CEO, I know I don't stand alone. Please enjoy reading where we've been and know there's more to come.

In Community,

Sandra R. Flores, CEO



# READINGandBEYOND

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



ANNUAL REPORT  
2021-2022

# From our Founder



I will already be retired when you read this message. This is my last message as the Executive Director of Reading and Beyond, a role I have held since the inception of the organization.

I arrived in Fresno in 1991 from Brazil with the desire to learn English and get a master's degree in social work then go back to Brazil to develop an "organization" to help those less fortunate to become self-sufficient. What I didn't know at that time was that I would do what my heart desired here in Fresno for the next 20 plus years.

Reading and Beyond was established in 1999 and was known as Fresno Covenant Foundation during its first decade. The original name was to honor the First Covenant Church as without their initial support, Reading and Beyond wouldn't exist. Since its establishment, the mission of Reading and Beyond has been to empower children and families to achieve productive self-reliant lives. Part of the success of Reading and Beyond has to do with our dedicated board members and committed staff and volunteers, and part has to do with the way we have chosen to operate the organization. I have relied on four unwritten points of reference which have governed the organization's actions and focus.

- 1) Long term approach. We know that the populations we serve have longer term needs.  
A short term approach doesn't help them.
- 2) Research and evidence based programs. We need to know if what we are doing is producing significant results, and if not, make the changes necessary to produce results.
- 3) The child will always be the focus of what we do but we also work with the parents.  
The dual generation approach is central to what we do.
- 4) Holistic approach. We believe that a wrap around approach is not only necessary to work with the population we serve but indispensable.

My faith has also played significant role in how I choose to live my life. It has inspired me to be a better person. Although, many times I feel I am falling short from the marks I have set for myself. Like previous years, Reading and Beyond had another blessed year by continuing to help the community to recuperate from the impacts of COVID-19 and pursuing our goal to help children and families to achieve productive self-reliant lives.

My plan to retire isn't a last a minute decision, it has been planned for the last three years in coordination with the board who has appointed my successor - Sandra Flores who I had the opportunity to spend a couple of months with, helping her with the transition. I know the future of Reading and Beyond is bright. Although I am the Founding Executive Director, I never believed that this organization belonged to me. It was started to help the community and it belongs to the community which should raise its expectation for what RaB does at the same time support it.

Regarding my future, I don't know. Brazilians have an expression that makes a lot of sense to me "o futuro pertence a Deus" - the Future belongs to God. On Him I put my trust. For those who want to keep in touch, I would love to hear from you. Please reach me on my personal email.

Blessings and thank you for your support and friendship throughout the years,

-Luis  
1991luissantana@gmail.com

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# About Us

Reading and Beyond is actively serving thousands of families and individuals throughout the Central Valley, providing an array of services from cradle to career. We are working diligently to keep our work sustainable, effective, and relevant to the needs of the communities we serve so we can continue to serve families for decades to come.

## Our Mission

To empower children and families to achieve productive, self-reliant lives.

## Recent Highlights

**2019:** Reading and Beyond celebrated its 20th anniversary of lifting neighborhoods out of poverty one family at a time. We were also the first non-profit Preschool program in the Central Valley to have received a 5-star rating from Fresno County Office of Education's Early Stars Program.

**2021:** Reading and Beyond conducted a survey focused on Southeast Fresno (a huge achievement for the organization) by knocking on thousands of doors and collecting over 1,000 unique surveys. The survey enabled us to gather valuable insight from the community and service gaps. The findings were then presented to civic leaders, including the Mayor and City Council. The survey provided an opportunity for the community's voice to be heard and considered by those in leadership positions.

**2022:** Reading and Beyond, in partnership with our Cultural Community Wellness Coalition, hosted our first Cultural Wellness Fair at the Mosqueda Center. Over 500 community members attended the health fair.



Reading and Beyond leadership team along with City Council Member Luis Chavez and City of Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer.



## Key to Success: Dual Generation Model

Our philosophy is centered on two-generation programming. Dual-generation approaches focus on creating opportunities for and addressing the needs of both children and the adults in their lives together.

A growing body of evidence illustrates that dual-generation strategies -- which integrate education, employment, parenting and peer supports for parents alongside developmental, academic and social supports for children -- are most successful at improving economic mobility for families and education outcomes for children.



### Financials:

Assets \$6,979,986  
Liabilities \$2,236,929  
Net Assets \$4,743,057

Total Revenue  
\$7,448,212  
Total Expenses  
\$7,589,723

12%

management and general expense

88%

program expense

# Meet Our Board of Directors



**Harinder "Randy" Dhindsa**  
**Chairperson**

Regional V.P., Farm Credit West



**Francine Farber**  
**Vice-Chairperson**

Vice-President,  
League of Women Voters



**Katie Dill**  
**Secretary**

Wellness and Health Coach



**Flavia Flores**  
**Treasurer**

Business Owner  
Sales Representative



**Antonio Avalos**  
**Member**

Valley Economics Associates  
CSUF Professor



**Daniel Castro**  
**Member**

Attorney, Partner  
Loza & Loza LLP





**Robert (Bob) Gunning**  
**Member**

Financial Advisor  
Capital Financial & Insurance



**Anita Hernandez**  
**Member**

Academic Counselor  
Parent University FUSD



**Catherine Huerta**  
**Member**

Former Director of Fresno  
County DSS



**Robert Pimentel**  
**Member**

President  
State Center  
Community College



**Jodie Rolih**  
**Member**

Senior Manager  
Sensiba San Filippo



**Vivian Sojo**  
**Member**

CEO/Owner  
Keystone Kitchen and Bath



**William Winchester**  
**Member**

Chief Operations Officer  
Berg Mill Supply CO.,

**“Working Together to Bring  
Success to Our Families.”**





# School Readiness: Preschool

Reading and Beyond Preschool Program provides families a comprehensive full day State Preschool Program. Preschool services cater to low-income families who are employed, seeking employment, pursuing education and/or training programs. To meet the ongoing demand for quality early childhood education, Reading and Beyond operates two locations serving children aged 3 to 5 years.

## 95 Students Served

The Mosqueda Community Center in Southeast Fresno has two full-day classrooms serving 45 children and Northeast Fresno campus has two full-day classrooms serving 48 students.



Our preschool program celebrated the graduation of 30 children, marking an important milestone in their educational journey. During this memorable event, we heard children express their dreams of becoming doctors, police officers, princesses, and even ninja turtles! Their imaginative and ambitious career choices remind us that these children are the future leaders of our community.



# School Success: Afterschool Program

Reading and Beyond After School Literacy Program provides innovative, research-based, and effective learning solutions to children grades K-6 who are struggling with literacy and being able to read at grade level or higher. The program places emphasis on three fundamental areas: literacy, homework assistance, and enrichment activities.

Volunteers and local college work-study students from Fresno State work closely with the children in small groups to enhance their literacy and language skills. This collaborative approach enables us to operate cost-effectively with a high impact return. Our tutors and instructors are trained to provide the most effective strategies to improve the reading skills of the students. A key component of the program is to enhance the reading grade level of all students by one grade.



85  
Students  
Served





# College and Career Readiness: California Bridge Academies

The California Bridge Academies is a system of programs designed to offer individualized case management and navigation services around educational and employment goals. The goal is to provide on-ramps to economic mobility for the most vulnerable and underserved communities. Through engagement with Career and Family Navigators, our participants are connected to programs and services that place them on pathways towards stabilization and self-sufficiency.

The California Bridge Academies offered four programs in three different counties (Fresno, Madera and Kings) and served a total of 1042 families. (676 enrolled with case-management programs, 366 in coaching/barrier removal services)

**1042**  
Families  
Served

**676**

Enrolled in case  
management programs

**179**

Obtained  
permanent  
employment



Other California Bridge Academies program components include supporting college students to enroll and complete vocational, accredited certificates or degrees at partnered State Center Community College District. In addition, other key areas of focus are supporting low-income students who previously had attended post-secondary education but withdrew before completing their degree, ensuring their return to college is successful.

# Family Success:

## GLOW! Group Prenatal Care

The Glow! Group Prenatal Care and Support Program is an innovative and comprehensive model that incorporates wrap-around services with enhanced prenatal care. This program is rooted in a deep sense of community where women can feel supported and learn from one another while learning from their provider and receiving respectful prenatal care. In September 2019, Reading and Beyond was selected to join the Glow! Contractor Network with two other agencies, Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission (Fresno EOC) and West Fresno Family Resource Center. Each agency has been funded by First 5 Fresno County to serve as Glow! facilitators and support the implementation of the program. Glow! is implemented exclusively under the EMBRACE (Engaging Mothers and Babies; Reimagining Antenatal Care for Everyone) Study. This study aims to compare 1,300 women receiving individual prenatal care (Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program - CPSP) with 1,300 women receiving Glow! Group Prenatal Care. The hope is that the results of the study will help future patients decide which approach is best for them and help providers and policy makers decide which program is best suited to address high rates of prematurity, depression and anxiety, and disrespectful care.



Claudia is now the mother of 2 girls and a 2-time Glow! Participant! Claudia credits Glow! for the information, encouragement and support that got her through it. She recommends Glow! because it is informative and a safe place to express oneself and talk to other pregnant women. "I am healthy and my babies are in good health. I had a wonderful experience with Glow! I will gladly recommend Glow! to any pregnant mother!"

Although we faced many obstacles due to COVID, we were able to successfully complete a cohort, where all participants successfully gave birth.

# Technology Enrichment

The Technology Enrichment program, funded by First 5 Madera County, was a one year pilot project designed to empower parents and caregivers with the skills and confidence to effectively utilize technology to support their child's educational journey. This program specifically focused on parents and caregivers residing in Madera County who have children between the ages of 0 and 5.

By establishing a solid foundation, the program equipped parents and caregivers with the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate technology, including tele-school options, accessing age appropriate content and internet safety. These skills ultimately enabled them to play a more active role in their child's education and help them realize their full potential.

**100%** of the families reported feeling confident in creating a safe learning environment at home.

**92%** felt more comfortable accessing online educational resources for their child's education.

**121**

Families Served

**600**

Hours of Digital Literacy Training

## Success Story

Holly, who recently relocated to Madera County, found herself lacking in available resources and support. Recognizing the need to enhance her child's education at home, Holly enrolled in our program. Through our program, Holly acquired essential skills, including creating a secure learning environment for her child and evaluating online educational tools to ensure safe and effective technology usage.

Upon completing the program, ongoing discussions with Holly led the staff facilitator to connect her with our Madera CBA program. This additional support aimed to assist Holly in securing full-time employment. Presently, Holly is actively engaged with the Madera CBA team, focusing on improving her soft skills and enhancing her job search capabilities.

Holly's journey exemplifies the transformative impact of our program, providing not only technological knowledge but also a pathway to broader personal and professional development.





# Digital Literacy

The Digital Literacy Program provided free computer education to community members interested in learning basic computer skills. Individuals received eight hours of training in a one-on-one setting or in small group sessions. During the sessions they were introduced to basic computer terminology and functions. They had the opportunity to learn how to use Microsoft Office, Google Suite, and internet safety tools for kids. Participants also learned how to navigate the internet and create and manage email accounts. The project also provided a safe space for people to access the internet to do a job search, homework and other training.

1010

Participants provided with  
broadband access

300 hours of digital literacy training completed



# Emergency Rental Assistance Program

The City of Fresno (City) received nearly \$54 million in funding from federal and state government to provide emergency rental assistance to improve housing stability. The City, along with six community-based organizations (Reading and Beyond, The Fresno Center, Centro La Familia, Education & Leadership Foundation, Jakara Movement, and West Fresno Family Resource Center) provided rent and utility relief to both landlords and tenants through the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). Qualified applicants who experienced hardship due to COVID-19 and were unable to pay any portion of rent and utilities were eligible to receive financial assistance.

# 842

ERAP tenants were approved and funded.

# \$3,568,663.80

was spent on rental assistance for tenants who were been financially impacted by COVID-19 and has a past due unpaid rent balance

## Success Story

After the City of Fresno's Eviction Moratorium ended on June 10, 2022 a tenant was served a 30 days' notice prior to June 30th stating that tenant had to relocate and move out of the apartment due to remodeling of the unit and unpaid rent. The tenant contacted us on June 28, 2022, two days prior to the eviction day. Recognizing the urgency, the assigned Housing Navigator, with the support of the supervisor, promptly referred her to the Eviction Protection Program (EPP) and connected her with Central Legal Services (CLS) for legal assistance. To address the situation, we engaged the property manager to discuss extension and ERAP payment plan for the tenant. Through several conversations with the property manager and West Care Foundation (whom the tenant was also associated with for relocation support), a resolution was achieved. The property manager agreed to extend the tenant's stay until the end of August 2022, granting her sufficient time to secure a new residence and our program to provide rental assistance to cover 100% of the tenant outstanding past due balance. The tenant expressed heartfelt gratitude for the support and guidance received during a challenging and uncertain experience.



# Health: Advancing Health Literacy

The City of Fresno partnered with Reading and Beyond, West Fresno Family Resource Center, Centro La Familia, Jakara Movement, Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries, Central Valley Health Policy Institute and the County of Fresno Department of Public Health to address the ongoing health disparities, and more specifically, the health disparities amplified by Covid-19 pandemic. Community Health Workers' (CHWs) provided support leveraged this project to target minority groups who were not participating in vaccination and testing opportunities at the same rate as other groups. According to data collected by the Fresno County Department of Health in 2021 these specific zip codes: 93701, 93702, 93703, 93705, 93706, 93722, 93726 lagged behind others in vaccination participation.

## AHL Program Data:

### AHL Program Reach

Type of Event	Number of Events	Number of People Reached
Direct	135	12,123
Indirect	42	9,167

Quarter 2 Total Reach: 21,290

Program Total Reach (Q1 + Q2): 46,546

FRE

### General Population Surveys

General Population Surveys collected in Quarter 2:

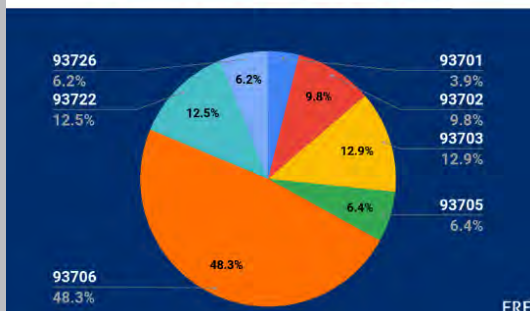
845

Total General Population Surveys collected in Q1 and Q2:

1,213

FRE

### General Population Surveys - Breakdown by Zip Code (Q2)



FRE

### Performance Measure #3 - Event Tracking Data

The demographic characteristics of the total population reached...	From DIS	Y1
Black/African American	1,040	1,500
American Indian/Alaska Native	122	100
Asian	3,916	2,500
White (Non-Hispanic)	646	500
Hispanic or Latino	2,866	5,000
Other, Decline to State	12,684	400
Denominator (Total number of individuals reached)	21,274	10,000

AHL partners have reached and reported all race/ethnicities aligned with our Disparities Impact Statement goals for Grant Year 1, except among Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinos. They may have already been reached, but data was not collected with the previous version of the AHL Event Tracking sheet.

FRESNOSTATE



# Covid Equity Project

The COVID-19 Equity Project (CEP) provided support to underserved and hard-to-reach communities, focusing on Covid-19 educational support, the distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and vaccines. The CEP was a collaboration among six community-based organizations (CBOs) collectively known as the Immigrant Refugee Coalition (IRC). The IRC included Reading and Beyond, Fresno Building Healthy Communities, Jakara Movement, Cultiva La Salud, Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries (FIRM), and Fresno State Central Health Policy Institute (CVHPI).

123

Health Education  
Outreach Events

1086

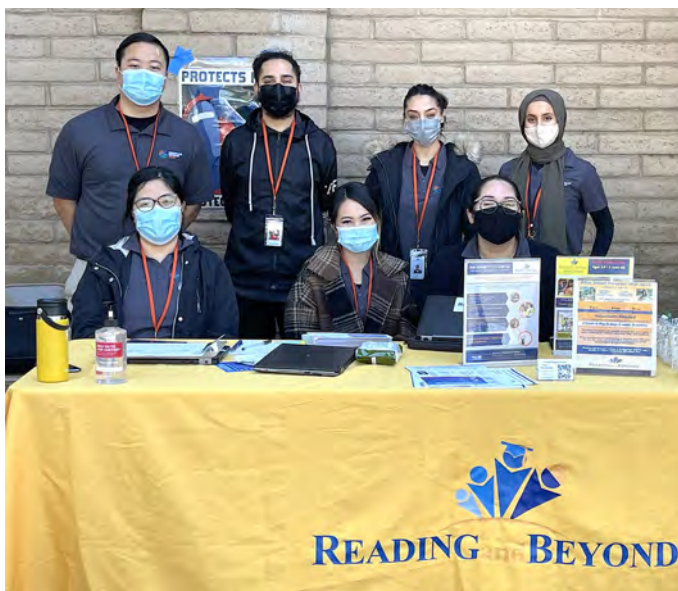
Covid-19 tests  
administered at the Mosqueda  
Community Center

\$131,659

Isolation/Quarantine  
Support  
benefiting 124  
families with a  
member who  
tested positive for  
COVID-19.

4451

Vaccines administered through  
medical providers



# Advocacy:

## Family Advocacy Program

The Family Advocacy Program is a partnership between Fresno County Department of Behavioral Health and Reading and Beyond. The services provided are driven by the needs of the family and individual and focus on wellness, education, advocacy, and support. Family Advocate Navigators (FAN) invest establishing rapport and fostering trust to create a safe place for families.

Located in an underserved neighborhood within a community center, RaB regularly receives inquiries from individuals seeking resources through walk-in visits. In response to these needs, our dedicated Family Advocates offer mental health education and provide families with valuable resources, empowering them to access the services they require.

1219  
total  
contacts

540  
unique  
customers

2938  
services  
provided



Annual  
Survey  
Results

98%

of the families and individuals who completed the survey felt empowered, supported, and cared for by program staff.

100%

of respondents would recommend the Family Advocacy Services Program to their family and friends.

95%

increase in knowledge of the mental health system and community resources reported by respondents.



# Special Thanks to Our Community Partners:

Andres R. and Anita Hernandez  
Anne Hendrickson  
Gordon & Judy Bowman  
Dale Bierce  
Diana Myers  
Katherine Dill  
Donald George Larson  
Enterprise Holdings Foundation  
Francine Farber  
Rogelio & Flavia Flores  
Gustavo Cavalcanti  
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Kevin Wray  
Luis Chavez  
Miles Basurto  
Buzz & Faith Nitschke  
Randy Dhindsa  
Kao & Mai Saetern  
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The Wonderful Company Foundation Inc.  
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William & Carol Winchester  
Zinpro Corporation

## Grants:

AT&T  
Blue Anthem  
Building Healthy Communities  
Child and Adult Care Food Program  
California Department of Education City Of Fresno  
Comcast  
County of Fresno DBH  
First 5 Fresno County  
Fresno County Office of Education Fresno  
Fresno Unified School District  
Fresno County DSS  
Golden 1  
James Irvine Foundation  
Kaiser Permanente  
Kings County Department of Social Services  
Madera County Department of Social Services  
Public Utilities Commission  
United Way Fresno and Madera Counties

## A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Volunteers:

Amandeep Kaur  
Amrit Kaur Aulakh  
Andrea Cota  
Cameron Brito  
Carolina Lee  
Christopher Roderiguez-Escamilla  
Dimitri A. Hernandez  
Gabriela Richardson  
Ian Guerrero  
Jaqueline Ceballos Ayon  
Jaliah B. Yang  
Jary Canafuego  
John P. Castillo  
Julia Machado  
Keely Aguilar  
Kyle Lyman  
Liliana Mendoza  
Lykamae Alacar  
Mai Neng Xiong  
Nina Chairez  
Noemi Lopez  
Paris Bowden  
Pamela Vue  
Phim Thao  
Serenity Saetern  
Turanjot Chanal  
Yosselyn Flores





## GET IN TOUCH



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