



READING and BEYOND

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



From our CEO



Dear Friends,

My first year serving as the new CEO of Reading and Beyond has been exciting, challenging, and gratifying. I have loved every minute of it! It's been a year of listening, learning, trying new things and getting to know the team, including the Board. The Board and team reflect a beautiful blend of brilliance and love for our community. The excellent work that Reading and Beyond leads is because of them. I've learned that we share a commitment and love for our community that is deeply rooted in the mutual experiences with the children and families we serve.

As you read this year's Annual Report, know that everything the Board, staff, and I do is done with the intention to position us to better serve our families. Toward that end, this year has given me the opportunity to listen and learn from my team and Board, especially as we tried new things. As I learned about all the facets of this wonderful organization, I wanted to make sure to keep in place all those processes, protocols, and practices that have been working. We haven't fixed anything that is not broken. We have only tried to cultivate what's working, so we can have more of it.

The American scholar Warren Bennis said that leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality. I fully embrace my leadership role and responsibility to serve this community and to actualize our vision to have healthy, educated, and self-reliant residents and families. I remain grateful for the opportunity to continue the work that was started under Founder Luis Santana's leadership. I commit to building on the foundation which has been entrusted to me.

I invite you again, in this next season of Reading and Beyond, to renew your commitment to supporting our work. Call or email me, schedule coffee, ask me questions about our programs and how you can help. Please enjoy reading about where we've been and know there's more to come.

In Community,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sandra R. Flores". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sandra R. Flores, CEO

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Meet Our Board of Directors



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Chairperson
Regional Vice-President
Farm Credit West



Fausto Hinojosa
Vice-Chairperson
Managing Partner
Price and Paige Company



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Heart Matters



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Sales Representative
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Antonio Avalos
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President
Valley Economics Associates
CSUF Professor



Daniel Castro
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Loza & Loza LLP





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Financial Advisor
Capital Financial & Insurance



Anita Hernandez
Member

Academic Counselor
Parent University FUSD



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Member

Former Director of Fresno
County DSS



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State Center
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Francine Farber
Member

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League of Women Voters



Vivian Sojo
Member

CEO/Owner
Keystone Kitchen and Bath



William Winchester
Member

Chief Operations Officer
Berg Mill Supply USA

**“Collaborating to
ensure success
for our families.”**



About Us

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

Our Mission

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

Recent Highlights

2022

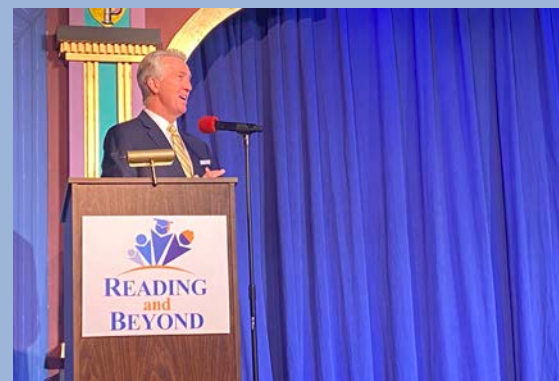
Our partnership with the City of Fresno continued:

- Renewed our contract to serve the community at the Mosqueda Community Center for an additional three years.
- Worked in partnership with the City of Fresno on the Measure P Cultural Arts Draft Plan, canvassing the community in Southeast Fresno collecting feedback for Phase I and Phase II of the Cultural Arts Plan. Collected over 1,600 community responses in Phase I and reached over 2,500 in phase II.

The Reading and Beyond board of directors announced the creation of a new \$150,000 scholarship – The Peter Weber “A Second Chance” Scholarship fund aimed at providing pathways to careers for adults who do not qualify for other forms of financial support. The fund will be used to generate new resources and annual scholarships.

2023

We celebrated our 24th annual fundraiser at Roger Rocka’s Dinner Theater on February 2, 2023. The sold-out event featured a delightful dinner, an enthralling show, and silent and live auctions. ABC-TV anchor Warren Armstrong served as emcee for the evening. This memorable gathering met its fundraising goals, providing crucial support to children and families in need.



Financials:

Assets: \$7,329,586
Liabilities: \$1,841,192
Net Assets: \$5,488,394

Total Revenue: \$6,403,931
Total Expenses: \$5,658,594

management and general expenses: **17%**

Program Expenses: **83%**



Key to Success: Dual Generation Model

Our philosophy is centered on dual-generation programming. This approach focuses on creating opportunities to simultaneously address the needs of children and the adults in their lives.

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.

Early Childhood Education: Preschool

The preschool program provides full-day quality early childhood education to low-income families who have children ages 3 to 5 years. We are a five-star program as measured by the Quality Rating Improvement System implemented by the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools. The rating system emphasizes the preschool fundamentals that shape our children for kindergarten readiness. In addition to providing high quality learning experiences, we serve three nutritious meals daily.

This year the preschool program took three field trips-to the Big Fresno Fair, Hobbs Grove Pumpkin Patch, and the Fresno Chaffee Zoo. The trips provided education and exploration opportunities for our children and their families. Parents learned alongside their children while being supported by teachers. These opportunities served as a perfect way for our families to engage with, and appreciate, the natural environment. Before the trip to Chaffee Zoo the children spent three weeks learning about animals and their habitats. In preparation for the trip to the Hobbs Farm, the children learned about the life cycle of plants by planting their own pumpkin seed and observing and documenting its growth.

Our family engagement event, Art Hop introduced families to the wealth of services offered by Reading and Beyond. Art Hop included different art projects created by the preschoolers and on display for parents and the community to view. We also developed a position for an Enrollment and Support Specialist to assist with recruitment and enrollment, develop parent engagement opportunities, and support the preschool with administrative duties. The Enrollment and Support Specialist has been a great addition to the team!



84
Preschool
Students
Served

78
Families
Served

GLOW! Group Prenatal Care

The Glow! Group Prenatal Care and Support Program is an innovative and comprehensive model that incorporates enhanced prenatal care with free wrap-around services such as childcare, food support, transportation stipends and community resources. This program takes place at participating clinics and brings together cohorts of 8-12 pregnant patients to receive their prenatal medical care, education and peer support. The concept is rooted in a deep sense of community where women and birthing people can feel supported and learn from one another while also learning from their Medical Provider and receiving respectful prenatal care in a facilitative manner.

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. These agencies have 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 prenatal care research study called EMBRACE (Engaging Mothers and Babies; Reimagining Antenatal Care for Everyone). This study compares 657 pregnant patients who are randomly assigned to one of two prenatal care models: either group prenatal care through the Glow! Program or individual prenatal care through the Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program based on their delivery date, over the span of 5 years. The goal is to determine which type of care is best suited to address maternal mental health stressors such as depression and anxiety, preterm birth and satisfaction of care. Findings will inform policy decisions determining the type of prenatal care available to women and birthing people locally, statewide and nationwide impacting the lives of future mothers and babies!



Youth: Afterschool Program

The After School program operates year-round providing innovative, research-based learning solutions to support children who are struggling with literacy. In order to help these students to read at grade level or higher, the After School program focuses in 3 three key areas: **Literacy Intervention, Homework Assistance and Enrichment.** Programming takes place in southeast Fresno at the Mosqueda Community Center in the heart of a historically disadvantaged community. Our goal is to help students reach their reading grade level by improving their reading grade level by at least one grade level every 6-9 months.

The program operates all year because studies show low-income students score significantly lower in standardized tests at the end of summer than they do before summer. The Summer Academy Program is designed to prevent summer learning loss by providing academic and enrichment programming in a fun and safe environment.

76 Students
and
65 Families
Served

"As a father I am deeply grateful for the support of my three children... Jayden managed to reach his reading grade level and a little more."
- Gabino



Youth and Family Strong

The Youth and Family Strong (YFS) program is focused on supporting youth ages 15-18 who have been touched by the Juvenile Justice System or are at-risk in getting involved. Programming is focused in southeast Fresno at the Mosqueda Community Center, located in an area with high rates of poverty, unemployment and gang violence.

YFS is centered on transformational healing through the implementation of the evidence-based curriculum El Joven Noble, a character and leadership program fostering the continued “rites of passage” development of youth.

Core Services Include:

Individualized case management

Educational workshops including post-secondary exploration for education, job readiness and career, applying for financial aid, mentorships

Reading and Beyond was awarded a 3-year state grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in the fall of 2022. During the early months of 2023 we began program on-ramping, hired three youth and family navigators, and initiated program development and implementation.

Hosted two successful open houses for families and their youth

Started a cohort of thirteen young men



Family Success: 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 to unemployed and underemployed adults. The goal is to provide opportunities for economic mobility for the most vulnerable and underserved population. 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.

Program participants are connected with a Career and Family Navigator (CFN) to help them:

- Understand their strengths, interests and support systems
- Identify areas of improvement and/or barriers to success
- Draft individualized plans to achieve barrier resolution and reach educational/employment success.

In this last year our California Bridge Academies extended employment and training services to our immigrant community through our Common Spirit Employment and Training program.

**1039
Families
Served**

**1250+
Referrals**

**210 families
enrolled into
training
programs**

**175 families
obtained
employment**



California Bridge Academies offered six programs across three counties (Fresno, Kings, and Madera) and served a total of 1039 families. (676 enrolled with case-management programs, 363 in coaching/barrier removal services.

1. Upward Mobility Pathways (UMP) is a partnership with Fresno City College and focuses on college level success by offering third party, off campus support to students enrolled in vocational, accredited certificate or degree programs who are receiving CalFresh (food stamps) benefits.

2. Irvine Upskilling is a partnership with the James Irvine Foundation and Fresno City College which focuses on finding and helping previously enrolled, low-income, college students return and complete college degrees.

3. Prosperity Coaching is a partnership with United Way of Fresno and Madera Counties to assess the needs of a person/family, beginning with the most urgent needs and utilize that information to establish a relationship of mentorship and guidance to connect individuals to community programs and services.

4. Common Spirit Employment and Training funding from the Sisters of the Presentation allows us to provide support to our immigrant community members, documented or not, by identifying and establishing employment and training goals and needs.

5. CalFresh Employment and Training programs (Fresno Bridge Academy, Kings County Bridge Academy, and Madera Bridge Academy), is the original CBA model. It offers an 18-month program to provide a “bridge” for qualified and motivated individuals with services such as job search assistance and vocational training. Program participants work with an assigned Career and Family Navigator to determine and eliminate barriers that may be keeping participants and their families from success and self-sufficiency.

Success Story: At intake, our participant was unemployed and seeking assistance with improving his English, obtaining his GED, and seeking employment. During his time in the program, he worked with his Career and Family Navigator (CFN) to write a resume and set up a job searching account. While actively applying for jobs and with the support of his CFN he was able to enroll at the Fresno Adult School to work on obtaining his GED. He also enrolled in an ESL class to help improve his English. With never-ending persistence in applying for employment he was able to find an opportunity through an apprentice union and was hired by Giroux Glass, Inc. in Fresno with a starting wage of \$25.50 an hour. Now our participant is focused on completing this new apprentice program in the field of glass installation. The participant was happy and grateful his CFN was able to provide the support needed to stay positive and persistent.

Family Success: Emergency Rental Assistance

The City of Fresno has received nearly \$54 million in funding from the federal and state government to provide emergency rental assistance to improve housing stability. Fresno, along with six community-benefit organizations provide rent and utility relief to both landlords and tenants through the Emergency Rental Assistance Program. This program is available to qualified applicants who have been impacted by COVID-19 and are unable to pay any portion of rent and utilities since April 1, 2020.

The Emergency Rental Assistance Program ended in June 2023. Our team of housing navigators work strategically to assist tenants and property owners who continue to face housing challenges by hosting housing workshops every Monday beginning in February 2023. These meetings are open to the community to meet one on one with a housing navigator for direct services, attend small group housing resources presentations, receive referrals to other services, and gain access to Reading and Beyond's other programs. More than 300 tenants have received help through the housing workshops.

All families were referred during their enrollment in the program to receive emergency rental assistance. All are referred to Reading and Beyond's internal programs to receive career navigation support from the California Bridge Academies, health education from Health Literacy, and mental health services referrals from Family Advocacy.

**Total Funds
Distributed
\$6,353,244.68**

**Funds
Distributed in
2022/2023
\$2,147,293.42**



Family Advocacy Services

The Family Advocacy program is a partnership between the Fresno County Department of Behavioral Health and Reading and Beyond. Its primary function is to assist family members in coping with the mental illness of their loved ones through the provision of information, education, and support. The Family Advocacy program provides information and assistance to family members in their interactions with mental health service providers and systems in an effort to foster and strengthen these relationships. The contract with the Department of Behavioral Health was extended through June 2024.

"My exchange with the family advocacy services was positive. I was directed to the appropriate resources seeking care for my son who has mental health challenges. The representative was compassionate, kind and attentive. Thank you!" - family member

"FAS cared enough to give me the time to understand higher levels of care." - family member

"Family advocacy helped me with my daughter's case and explained the hospitalization process thoroughly. " - family member

We participated in 28 outreach events and presentations with various community partners. These events included large-scale events hosted by local school districts, community college health and wellness programs, and community organizations focusing on underserved populations. Our primary goal was to provide outreach education to the public regarding access to mental health services. By engaging in meaningful conversations with community members at these events, we were able to connect individuals to mental health services and community resources.



**945
unique
individuals
served**

**2312 contacts
with family
members or
support
individuals**

**450
referrals
provided**

Health:

Covid-19 Equity Project

The Covid-19 Equity Project consisted of six community-based organizations: Reading and Beyond, Fresno Building Healthy Communities, Jakara Movement, Cultiva La Salud, Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries, and Fresno State Central Health Policy Institute, coming together as the Immigrant Refugee Coalition to support immigrant and refugee communities during the Covid-19 pandemic. The coalition worked in a joint effort to keep everyone safe and focused on reaching out to underserved communities during the pandemic to provide health education, personal protective equipment, and easy access to testing and vaccines. People who have been exposed to Covid-19 were also identified and tested and given access to resources including financial support to enable sheltering-in-place and quarantine.

Unique Individuals Served: 798

This great work led to the start of the Fresno Unified School District summer contract in August 2022. The summer contract provide internship to ten middle school students to serve as junior community health workers for sixteen weeks. The goal of the program was to have them promote Covid-19 safety and vaccine information to their peers within schools, families and communities. At the end of the summer program, the junior community health workers presented to the coalition partners, parents, and families about their outreach work in the community, highlighting the importance of dedicated work in canvassing and community events.

Advancing Health Literacy

The Advancing Health Literacy Program (AHL) focused on promoting health awareness in several ways:

- Enrolled 20 participants in chronic disease presentation workshops to help them learn more about helping themselves and working with their healthcare providers.
- Partnered with Saint Agnes Medical Center to implement Healthier Living, Healthier You workshops for seniors and individuals who are living with chronic health conditions or know someone with chronic health conditions.
- Hosted the 2nd Annual Community Health Fair in April 2023. A total of 480+ community members participated, along with 40 community vendors.
- Through the program's health and wellness promotion efforts, 450 community members were referred to our health education workshops and presentations.
- More than 200 plus community members were referred to vaccine clinics and covid testing sites.
- Held a Provider Forum to address health disparities in the City of Fresno. We partnered with The Cultural Community Wellness Coalition (CCWC), a collaboration with a long history of advancing equity and improving the health and well-being of communities of color, immigrants and indigenous communities, as well as the uninsured.

Health Disparities

The Health Disparities Program is a three year contract working with the Department of Public Health and other community partners to serve vulnerable communities. **Reading and Beyond has a deep understanding of the cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity needs in the City and County of Fresno.** The work includes providing Covid-19 testing and vaccine access, creating educational pathway support, and sustaining the efforts of Community Health Workers and the Advancing Health Literacy Program. The program's goal is to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services and referrals to enroll community members into the Care Coordination System (CCS). CCS will screen community members using the social determinants of health screener to assist clients with developing a family care plan that leads to better and healthier living. Reading and Beyond will focus on four zip codes-93702, 93727, 93721, and 93701.

The Program launched Community Wellness Wednesdays in June 2023. The events occur on the 1st, 2nd and last Wednesday of the month and promote health and wellness activities through presentations highlighting family health, chronic health diseases, and self-care. Participants advance their health literacy, get connected to services, and are encouraged to interact and develop better health relationships with health professionals and healthcare providers while learning about their own health needs.



"Reading and Beyond helped me stay active and continue to learn more. I go to Wellness Wednesday presentations and workshop classes. I like the class. I like that I get to learn something new every month and from other people."
- Maria, community member



Community Partners and Donors

Adela Jones
AIMS Foundation
Ana Zarco
Brooke and Dennis Frost
Buzz & Faith Nitschke
Catherine Huerta
Charles Kavanagh
City of Fresno
Cultural Arts Rotary Foundation
Dan Darchuck
Daren Stemwedel
David and Karen Luchini
Deborah Martinez
Donald George Larson
Educational Employees Credit Union
Enterprise Holdings
Eric & Pam Johnson
Erick Wickson
Fresno Unified School District
George & Lynette Brietigam
Golden 1 Credit Union
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Harinder Dhindsa
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Marianne Kast
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Skyler Cleveland
State Center Community College
The Benevity Community Impact Fund
The James B. McClatchy Foundation
The Wonderful Company Foundation Inc.
United Way of California
Vesper Society
Vivian Soto
Wayne & Katie Dill
William & Karen Podolsky
Yvonne Juarez

Grants and Funders

California Department of Education
City of Fresno
College Futures Foundation
CommonSpirit Health
First 5 Fresno County
Foundations for California Community Colleges
Fresno Building Healthy Communities
Fresno County Department of Behavioral Health
Fresno County Department of Public Health
Fresno County Department Of Social Services
Fresno County Superintendent of Schools
Fresno Unified School District
James Irvine Foundation
Kaiser Permanente
Kings County Department of Social Services
Madera County Department of Social Services
Rockfeller
United Way Fresno and Madera Counties

Staff



A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Volunteers:

Aidee Alvarado
Aleaha Richard
Amya Perez
Antonio Richardson
Araceli Ramirez Quezada
Bianca Carillo
Brianna Santos
Bryce Whitesand
Christina Estrada
Dallas Echavarria
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