Dear Friends,

At Words Alive, we envision a world where everyone is connected to the power of reading and the innumerable ways that it enriches our lives.

And at the heart of our mission to realize that vision lies a single focus—to turn people into readers. This means that children, youth and parents believe in the power of reading, and love what reading means in their lives. To get there, our programs aim to help participants build a regular reading practice; to ignite an interest in, positive attitudes about and motivation to read; and to grow the skill sets needed to connect deeply with what we read.

In the stories of impact that follow, we hope that you too are inspired by both the joy of a connection to reading and the growing momentum we are building together as a community who reads.

Here’s to writing the next chapter together,

Rachael Orose
Executive Director
Words Alive

As a believer in the power of reading—the power to transform your life and create lasting opportunities for success—you understand the role community plays in ensuring that that power is a reality for everyone.

This year, more than ever, that spirit of connection remains at the core of what we do, and the power of bringing people together to read is changing the way people experience their world. Examples include parents deepening bonds with their children, students eagerly awaiting a volunteer’s arrival, teens discovering a safe space among their peers and scholars becoming their best selves - all this from the simple, essential and effective act of reading together.

In the stories of impact that follow, we hope that you too are inspired by both the joy of a connection to reading and the growing momentum we are building together as a community who reads. Everyone has something to give and to gain in the reading movement, and we are grateful for your support in making reading matter.

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REPORTING OUT

We ignite a love of reading and plant the seeds for book-sharing habits among families with young children by focusing on the power of play and making reading more playful! This year, 356 families participated, and afterward, parents reported that they were more confident about supporting their child’s learning, were reading more with their children and had learned valuable ways to incorporate language and reading in their daily lives!

66% FAMILIES WHO HAVE A ROUTINE FOR LOOKING AT BOOKS TOGETHER

41% AVERAGE SIZE OF A CHILD’S HOME LIBRARY

*Please visit our website for the full Family Literacy Program outcomes report.

FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

NURTURING THE POWER OF READING THROUGH PLAY

“What’s most valuable is that my daughter is happy. After attending our first class, the first thing my daughter said when we got home was ‘thank you mama.’ Reading is now more of a bonding experience.”
—Parent participant

PARENT VOICES

“I have begun to read with my son, and he loves it! Also, my other 5 kids have gotten encouraged to read, read, read!”
—Parent participant
**READ ALOUD PROGRAM**

**CULTIVATING CURiosity TO SUPPORT READING DEVELOPMENT**

“Words Alive is successfully building community when it is crumbling around us. Now, more than ever, the time commitment of community members to our young ones is priceless! Modeling being of service, and the love of reading, and compassion of “strangers” are strong life lessons everyone needs!”
—Teacher, Webster Elementary

**REPORTING OUT**

We bring reading alive by inviting caring adults to share stories with children and inspiring those children to be curious, adventurous and imaginative by exploring diverse and relevant books together. In 2018-19, engaging volunteers read aloud to 2,092 children in 92 classrooms each week. Teachers at partner schools celebrated the value that volunteers provided as reading role models in building a positive culture of reading among students!

**9 OUT OF 10 TEACHERS AGREED THAT THE READ ALOUD PROGRAM POSITIVELY IMPACTED STUDENTS’:**

- **CONFIDENCE AND INTEREST IN READING**
- **VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT**
- **BASIC AND ADVANCED READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS**

*Please visit our website for the full Read Aloud Program outcomes report.*

**TEACHER VOICES**

“My students look forward to the Words Alive reader every week. They eagerly anticipate discovering what new books will be read. They are always interested and love participating in the discussions surrounding each story!”
—Teacher, Burbank Elementary
**ADOLESCENT BOOK GROUP**

**CONNECTING VOICES AND STORIES TO THE WORLD**

“The book made us laugh, smile, think and cry. Yes, there were a lot of tears because we all connected to the book, because all of us have been in similar situations as the characters. Thanks to our book group, I had a safe place where I could be myself. We created a circle where we were able to talk about our past and our present... this is our radius now, the radius of us.”

—Luis, Barrio Logan College Institute (pictured right)

**ART & LIT EXHIBIT**

Inspired by the novel *The Radius of Us* by Marie Marquardt, students worked with Words Alive and paper artist Sue Britt to explore themes of perception and transformation and the complex issues of trauma and immigration. As they digested the novel, students created blackout poetry from a page of the novel, collected needed items and wrote welcome letters to asylees or asylum seekers and produced large collaborative art pieces using an alcohol ink technique. In June, student work was publicly displayed at the San Diego Art Institute in Balboa Park.

**REPORTING OUT**

We bring reading alive for teenagers facing extraordinary circumstances by connecting them to diverse and relevant books and empowering them to change the story of their life. In 2018–19, 157 students at five partner schools participated in the program. Afterwards, students reported that Adolescent Book Group had broadened their perspective and improved their ability to express themselves as readers, speakers and writers.

- 59% of students rated themselves a good or great reader after ABG, versus 41% before
- 65% of students rated reading as a good or great way to spend time after ABG, versus 17% before

“Connecting with books and authors that reflect our diverse world drives student interest and is integral to the overall social emotional benefits of reading. Here, award winning author Mark Oshiro speaks to students about his work *Anger is a Gift*, his life story and activism.

*Please visit our website for the full Adolescent Book Group outcomes report.

**STUDENT VOICES**

“I have a bookshelf at home now and each book has a meaning to me. Before the program, I didn’t care about reading. With Words Alive, I found the first book I ever really liked, which is *Anger is a Gift*. I re-read it all the time. I enjoy reading more and now reading is an everyday thing.”

—Esther, The Monarch School
**WESTREICH SCHOLARSHIP**

**EMPOWERING SCHOLARS THROUGH MENTORSHIP**

Mentors support scholars’ personal development by balancing guidance in school and career matters with broader cultural experiences. Here, scholar Alicia and mentor Keri enjoyed a play at the Cygnet Theater.

**REPORTING OUT**

We launch life-long learners into their next chapter by providing individualized support as they pursue their higher education and vocational goals. Eleven scholars progressed along their college and vocational paths in 2018–19, including three who successfully completed their first year at San Diego State University!

**AFTER THE PROGRAM, 100% OF SCHOLARS REPORTED:**

- Feeling more hopeful about their education and future
- Knowing what it takes to have a healthy relationship with another adult
- Using budgeting skills and other tools to manage their financial situation

*Please visit our website for the full Westreich Scholarship outcomes report.

“Words Alive has encouraged and inspired me to become the best version of myself. They have shown support and always make sure we have that extra push to stay focused. I’ve grown in many ways, but I still have more to learn and I’m present for it.”

—Paulina, scholar

**SCHOLAR VOICES**

“It has changed my life by giving me a mentor and an organization I can call home and share what’s going on in my life without a second thought whether or not I can trust them. They have made me a better person throughout college and professionally and given a lot of insight into expanding on my dreams.”

—Damieon, scholar
COMMUNITY PARTNERS

GREATER IMPACT TOGETHER

Our greatest impact comes as part of coordinated efforts in the community, and we are proud to call 89 schools and organizations partners during the 2018–19 program year.

FAMILIES EXPLORE

In our third year as a “pARTner in Creativity” with The New Children’s Museum, families spent a day exploring together and enjoyed a private series of art projects in the museum’s education center. The day served as a perfect extension of our central themes—the power of play and finding ways to make reading more playful!

STOP THE SUMMER SLIDE

In a collaborative effort to combat the summer slide, we teamed up with United Way for the second year of Readers in the Heights, training prime time providers to implement our Read Aloud Program. Excitingly, 77% percent of attending children had gained or maintained reading skills by the program’s end.

SCHOLARS GIVE BACK

Here, scholars Domminiece and Antonise prepare meals for those in need with Kitchens for Good after learning about the organization’s health and social enterprise programs.

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FISCAL INTEGRITY
WORDS ALIVE AUDITED FINANCIALS JULY 2017-JUNE 2018

7,323 hours of service donated by Words Alive volunteers during the 2018-19 program year, valued at $219,323

INCOME
- Unrestricted Contributions & Grants: $551,132
- Program Contracts: $81,868
- Special Events: $134,977
- Total Income: $767,977

EXPENSES
- Program Service: $495,837
- Management & General: $104,287
- Fundraising: $119,978
- Total Expenses: $720,102
- NET INCOME: $47,875

Our Supporters
We are grateful to the 650+ supporters who make our work possible, including the following who have contributed to our Read for Life Campaign, or who contributed $1,500+ during the 2018-2019 Fiscal Year.

$20,000+
Anonymous
Carlson Family*
Comcast NBC Universal Foundation
Dr. Seuss Fund at the San Diego Foundation
Kay & Bill Gurtin*
The Westreich Foundation*
William Gumpert Foundation*

$10,000+
Bravo Foundation
Christensen Family Foundation
City National Bank
Craft-Demeules Family Fund*
Toby Eisenberg*
Fischer Family Fund * **
Kimberly & Jeffrey Silberman Family Fund* **
Arthur & Jeannie Rivkin
Cynthia & Aaron Shenkman

$5,000+
BetterWord Trust
Daphne Seybolt Culpeoper Memorial Foundation, Inc.
Samuel & Katherine French Fund
Lee Goldberg
Kimberly & Doug Harrison
Hunter Industries
Hema Lall
Nordson Corporation Foundation
Rice Family Foundation
Hal & Debbie Jacobs Family Fund**

$2,500+
Believe in Reading
Boys & Girls Foundation
City of San Diego
Silvisa & Brian Devine
First Republic Bank
Geppetto's
Lynn Gorguze

$1,500+
Jane Banash Sagerman
Orville Brown
Carol Goodman * §
Julie Harrison
The Nora Roberts Foundation
The Timmstrom Family Fund
§ In Memoriam

* Member of Read for Life
** Gift from the Jewish Community Foundation
§ In Memoriam

Champions for Youth
Thank you to our partners at the Century Club of San Diego and Farmers Insurance, our fundraising ambassadors, and the hundreds of donors who supported the 2019 Champions for Youth campaign. Through your generosity and partnership, we received more than $100,000 in support for our programs.

Heritage Circle
Join the Words Alive Heritage Circle founding members Toby Eisenberg and Rick Seidenwurm by leaving a planned gift that will support future generations of readers. Contact us for more information about how easy it is to leave a lasting gift for Words Alive.

Special thanks to Golden Ratio Design for layout of this annual report: www.goldenratiobookdesign.com

*Please refer to our website for 2018-2019 audited financial statements as they become available.
When everyone can read, whole communities thrive. Join our movement to make reading matter.

INVEST
VOLUNTEER
CHAMPION