



## family by family, child by child. book by book.

Make Way for Books (MWFB) is proud to celebrate our sixteenth year creating positive and sustainable change in the community through the principles of innovation; collaboration and cultivating diverse partnerships; a commitment to high-quality, measurable impact, and constant improvement; and the tireless passion for achieving our mission so more children will have the chance to read and succeed. As a valued supporter, you know that our programs are high-quality and operated with the core values of partnership, respect, diversity, bilingualism, and empowerment. Our approach is fun and meaningful, research and strength-based, culturally relevant, and as a result, truly empowers children, families, and early childhood educators to succeed.

Empowerment is about breaking down barriers, building on strengths, and creating opportunities from those strengths. It is that positive force that carries hope and opportunity and creates genuine possibility and results. This year, we continued to achieve measurable impact across all programs and are excited to report some new successes including creating new opportunities to break down the barriers that exist for many of the young children and families in our community. We know that if children are reached with quality early literacy opportunities prior to starting kindergarten, their chances for success increase substantially. Unfortunately, the gap between economically-disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers continues to grow, especially here in Tucson where 39% of children birth-to-five live in poverty. Many families struggling to make ends meet do not have access to books, to preschool, or to the quality early literacy experiences that research indicates their children need to thrive. In fact, seven out of every ten economically-disadvantaged children in our community do not have access to preschool. To further address this need, this year MWFB developed and piloted the innovative Cover to Cover program, an "early literacy school without walls," that travels via Book Bus to different community locations to reach families at locations they already visit. In addition, MWFB developed an early literacy mobile app to help families find fun and easy ways to integrate early literacy activities to support their children's emergent literacy and language development, anytime and everywhere. And, sometimes, because of our approach grounded in empowerment, we create positive impact beyond our original goals. This year, there were many amazing stories that demonstrated this, including the building of community among a group of formerly homeless young parents who came together each week around supporting their children's literacy, and as a result, formed bonds that will continue to support them throughout their parenting journeys.

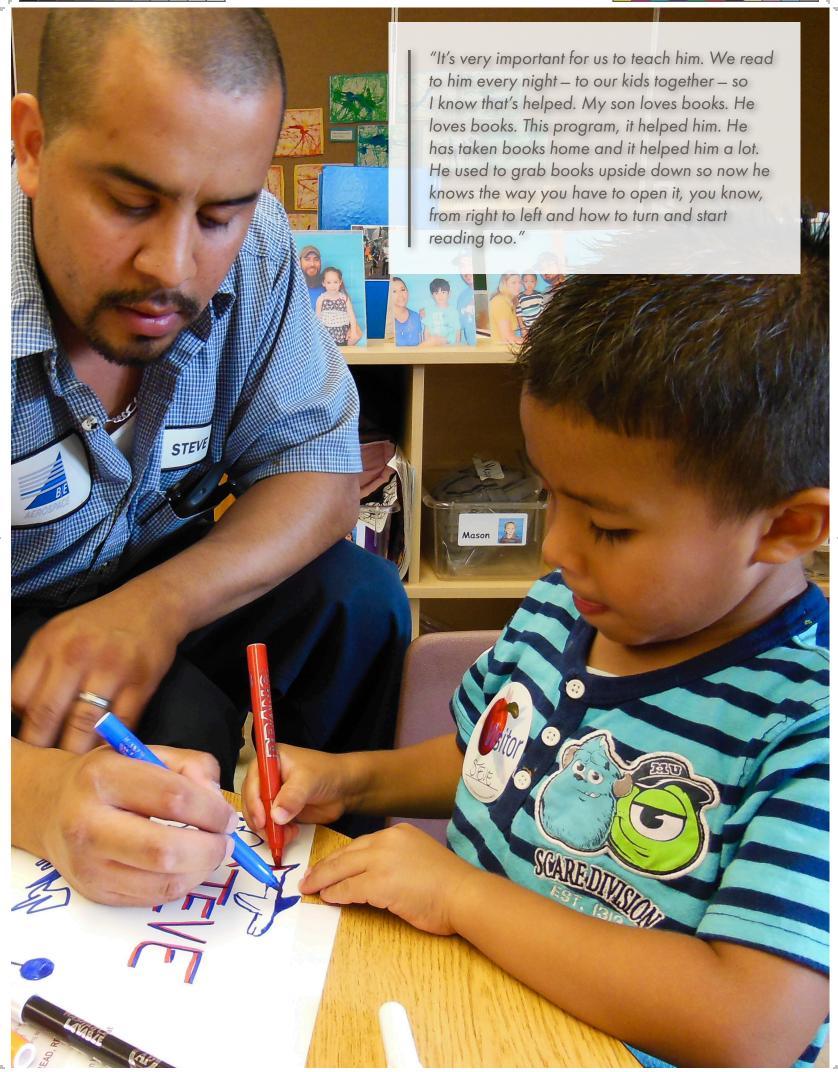
To achieve greater impact this year, we created valuable new partnerships and strengthened our existing collaborations with other organizations and agencies working to help children and families in the community. In addition, we welcomed more volunteers to help us achieve our mission and through their dedication and service more and more children are falling in love with books and reading! We could not have had the tremendous impact that we did this year without the support and collaboration of so many of our community partners and committed volunteers. I am so grateful for your investment in Make Way for Books. Literacy is the door to success and early literacy is the powerful and proven key that opens that door. Together, we ensured that more children entered kindergarten ready to read and succeed and more families were empowered to make sharing books an important and enjoyable part of their lives. Together, the opportunities we created have the power to be the difference between a child struggling to read in school or becoming a successful reader by third grade; between that child eventually dropping out or graduating high school; and could be the difference down the road between struggling to make ends meet or potentially becoming a community leader. Together, supporter by supporter, volunteer by volunteer, teacher by teacher, parent by parent, family by family, book by book, child by child, we are making southern Arizona an empowered community where more children can thrive. I invite you to read about our impact in the following report.

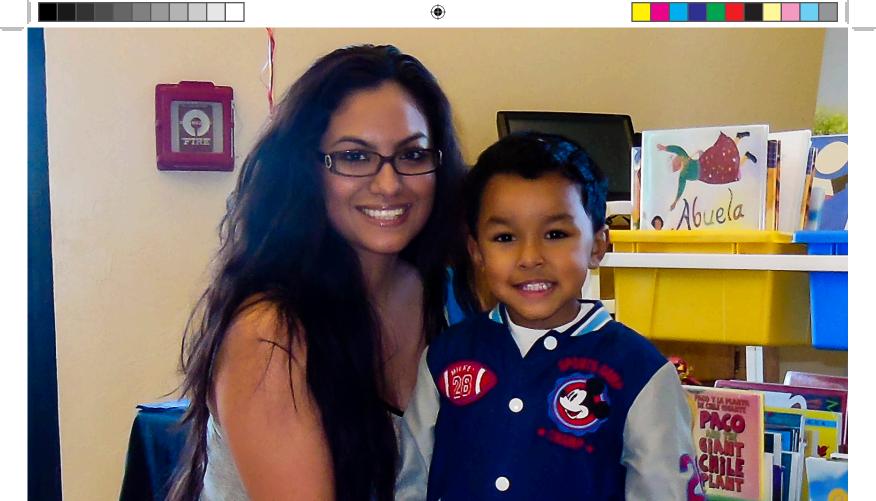
With utmost gratitude,

Jenny Volpe
Executive Director
Make Way for Books









school Program

We know that to make a real impact in the lives of children in our community, we need to partner with both families and educators. Our Preschool Program is an intensive and comprehensive approach that uses multiple evidence-based components to ensure that children gain emergent literacy and language skills that help them enter kindergarten ready to read. We support educators and home-based care providers through regular one-on-one mentoring and professional development workshops. The program engages parents through Family Literacy Events where we show families how to share books intentionally and connect them to their lending libraries. This empowers parents and caregivers with knowledge and resources they need to make early literacy an important and enjoyable part of their children's lives. This year we partnered with more than 130 preschools, childcare centers, and home-based providers. According to an educator who participated in the Preschool Program last year, "Several of the parents had mentioned on their first home visit that they had never read to their four-year-old. Because of Make Way for Books' services, by the end of the year all of my students were being read to daily."

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## Creating Access to Books and Literacy-Rich Environments

Our Preschool Program gives children greater access to books and literacy-rich environments in the preschool classroom and at home through classroom book collections, lending libraries, and book distributions.





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#### **Supporting Educators**



779 educators supported through MWFB professional development workshops and ongoing mentoring

100% of educators said they would use what they learned in workshops to better support the children and families they serve

According to an educator who attended one of our professional development workshops last year, "I loved the workshop. It reminded that I need to give my students more experiential and fun learning activities that they will remember for the rest of their lives."

#### **Empowering Families**



5,843 children and parents impacted by the MWFB Preschool Program 100% of parents said they shared more books as a result of the MWFB Preschool Program

According to a participating educator, "Children really loved to take books home. I like to hear from them all of the amazing stories / time they spend with their families while they read books together. I really like this program. It helps the children to improve their language skills and to share time with their parents or family."





Through our family literacy programs, Make Way for Books seeks to empower parents with the skills, knowledge, and confidence they need to embrace their role as their child's first, best teacher. For three years we have offered Raising a Reader (RAR) at lowresource apartment communities throughout southern Arizona. One such apartment community provides housing for teenage mothers who have struggled with homelessness and are working to create a more secure home for their children. RAR has been a tremendous success for these mothers who, through the program, have strengthened a community among themselves. According to Marissa, "RAR helped my daughter learn how to talk and learn. It expanded her mind and helped her become more imaginative." Now Marissa's family visits the library and she reads to her daughter. Marissa says that RAR not only helped her daughter, but also helped her as she learned to be a better reader as a result of the RAR program and thanks to the practice she now gets while reading to her daughter.

According to an on-site therapist at the apartment community the program has created intrinsic benefits for participating families,

"There is not value that can be placed on hope and confidence. As a young parent grows in positive experiences, gains some basic skills, practices those skills and is rewarded for it, that parent is able to create a home in which the child is valued, loved, and nurtured. The parent is more apt to meet their primary goal of 'I want my child to have a better life than I did.'



# **Family Literacy**

Make Way for Books Family Literacy Programs give parents resources, books, and the opportunity to gain skills they can use to support their children's development and take on their role as their child's first, best teacher. Sometimes our family literacy programs impact families in unforeseen ways. For instance, Peyton is one of several older siblings who attended RAR with her younger brothers and sisters. Peyton used to hate to read, however, she became a better reader as a result of learning how to share books with her younger siblings. Two years ago, Nikki received one of our baby bags when her daughter Karyna was born. Remembering how helpful the bag was to her, she stopped in to meet us and say thank you. A year later, Nikki has become a completely indispensable part of our office, volunteering a total of 245 hours in the last year. We have seen Nikki grow in confidence as she takes on a greater role in our community at Make Way for Books and we have benefited greatly from her insight and knowledge which have strengthened our approach to serving the needs of families in our community.

2,749



Families gained resources, books, and skills to support their child's emergent literacy and language development.

"We became a book family, instead of a t.v. family. Now, we share books together and have a lot of fun doing it."

3,243



Books were given to families to share together through MWFB Family Literacy Programs. "It is fantastic to see the children hungry for books and it is always a delight to see them sitting and reading. I especially like to see them have an open book and share a page with their mom. Please share our appreciation with the others involved in this project."

35

Parent Educators and professionals from social service agencies were trained to engage parents in supporting their children's literacy development.

"I have learned so much from your program. I love to share my knowledge with little ones and families. Thanks for the knowledge and skills you have given me. I am truly grateful."

App



Make Way for Books developed a free, bilingual app to give families strategies for making early literacy a part of their lives. Our app makes early literacy accessible for all families by giving them fun and intentional activities, book suggestions, and music they can use to help support their child's emergent literacy development at home, at the grocery store, on the bus, and beyond. According to one parent, "My son and I really enjoy sharing the activities together when we are out-and-about."





For 16 years we have served children, families, and educators at low-resource childcare centers, preschools, and home-based care sites. However, a great majority of children from struggling families are not enrolled in preschool or childcare and do not have access to early education opportunities that will set them up for success.

Make Way for Books launched Cover to Cover, a community-based emergent literacy program to meet families where they are in the community. Cover to Cover empowers parents and caregivers with strategies for making early literacy a part of their child's life. With the support of Mayor Jonathon Rothschild, we kicked off Cover to Cover at the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona. The program has been a great success and has been welcomed by families in our community. According to one parent, "I think it is a very important issue that parents need to learn to read to our kids."

2,089



Families received books and parent education to empower families to continue sharing books together through Cover to Cover and MWFB community outreach events.

5,398



Books were given to children and families to build their own home libraries through Cover to Cover, MWFB community outreach, and Blue Book Houses placed at locations such as social services offices.



# **Our Team**

#### **Board of Directors**

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Wayne Peate, M.D. Well America

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Greg Curtis Wakefield, Morning DJ, 94.9FM

#### **Storytime Volunteers**

Alison Carter I Allan Resnick I Allan Tractenberg I Ally Baehr Andi Sanes I Andrea Goodrich I Anne Wood I Arthur Goldberg I Barbara Arissa I Barbara Nelson I Bridget Magee Charl Maynard I Cheryl Ridgley I Colette Price I David Van Houten I Debbie Lingrey I Debra Winstead I Dee Ann Sakrison I Derek Schull I Ellinor Angel I Enrique Aviles I Erica Swalec | Gail Franklin | Gloria Suarez | Helen Robinson Jackie Garcia I Jackie Knobloch I Janet Castillo I Jennie Merkle I John Ross I Kathy Bell I Kay Spencer I Kelsey Self Kerry Wingate I Kristina Burdine I Liz Benham I Lola Devenny Marie Graninger I Marilyn Freeouf I Marsha Schull I Marsie Habib I Maureen Bike I Monique Perez I Nancy Resnick Nat Franklin I Natalie Sanchez I Pat Mackey I Patricia Kucharski I Rene Malmgren I Rhoda Babis I Rita Olsen I Rita Pollak I Rose Mayer I RoseAnne Essig I Roz Bishop I Stuart Salasche I Susan Wells I Suzy Hunt I Violeta Phillips

#### Staff

**Diane Altieri** Program Asst. and Storytime Volunteer Coordinator

Ally Baehr Director of Community Engagement
Kristina Burdine Financial Manager
Alison Carter (AmeriCorps VISTA) Community-Based
Literacy Specialist

Melinda Englert Communications Specialist
Karina Estrada Family Literacy Specialist
Monica Farmer Preschool Program Manager
Julie Friberg Early Literacy Consultant
Nöel Hennessey Family Literacy Specialist
Natalia Hoffman Family Literacy Program Manager
Sunni Lopez Early Literacy Consultant
Thania Mayorga Family Literacy Specialist
Rita Olsen Family Literacy Specialist
Violeta Phillips Family Literacy Specialist
Frances Romero Family Literacy Specialist
April Turner Early Literacy Consultant
David Van Houten Early Literacy Consultant
Jenny Volpe Executive Director

1,431



Hours given by Make Way for Books Storytime Volunteers who visit preschools and childcare centers to make stories come alive for young children each week.

Thank you to our Storytime Volunteers and all of ou other volunteers (recognized as in-kind donors) who support our mission and the children and families in our community.

Learn more about Make Way for Books and how you can get involved at www.makewayforbooks.org.

# Empower Our Community. Donate.

Each year Make Way for Books serves more than 20,000 young children, families, and educators throughout southern Arizona. We depend on the generosity of our community members to continue to provide high-quality learning experiences and books that support educators and empower families to make early literacy a part of their children's lives. If you are interested in being a part of our work to create more opportunities for children to learn and thrive, please consider making a donation to Make Way for Books.

#### Thank you to all of our generous supporters. Your donation empowers

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#### children, families, and educators.

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### Funding Impact

2013-2014 Year in Review

Income

Grants

\$541,844

Individual Gifts **\$77, 125** 

Gifts In Kind **\$56,000** 

\$3,910

Expenses

\$513,005

Administrative \$88,487

Fundraising **\$36,723** 

Thank you to our many donors, supporters, and partners who help to strengthen a culture of literacy in southern Arizona and ensure that our community is one where every child can thrive. You make our work possible.





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