



meeting families where they are

Year in Review 2014-15

Make Way
for
Books




Dear friends,

You know that many families are struggling. You may know that research tells us that children from low-income homes enter kindergarten as much as two years behind in vocabulary and pre-reading skills. And, once children are behind, they rarely catch up. **However**, did you know that research also indicates that access to books at home has more impact on a child's academic success than their parent's education level or job? This huge and hopeful fact means that together, we can create monumental change by giving children in our community the chance to read and succeed.

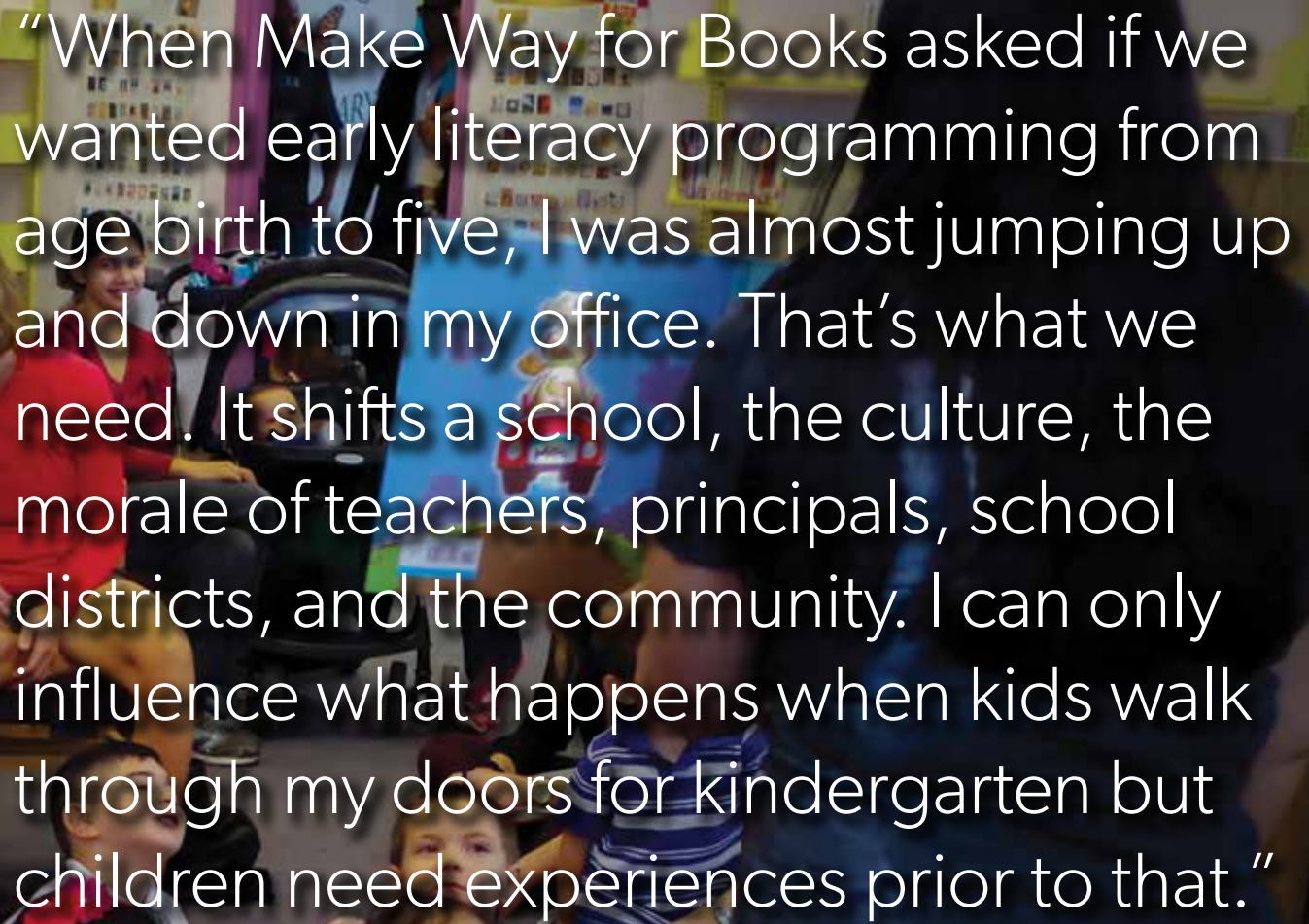
Your dedication and commitment to our mission enabled us to find innovative ways to meet the diverse needs of young children and families in southern Arizona. This meant meeting families where they were out in the community to provide books and high-impact early literacy programming. It also meant beginning a new collaboration with neighborhood elementary schools to provide programming for the 4 out of 5 young children who do not have access to preschool or quality childcare and connect them to the schools where they will attend kindergarten.

This is the start of an incredible change in our community. I invite you to read through our annual report to learn how, together, we are harnessing the power of school, home, and community to ensure that all young children have access to life-changing early educational experiences.

My utmost gratitude,

Jenny Volpe
Executive Director

P.S. Our most tweeted phrase last year was "meeting families where they are." We are proud of that and you should be too. You made it happen.

A photograph of a classroom scene. A teacher, seen from the back, is reading a book to a group of young children sitting on the floor. The children are looking up at the teacher with interest. In the background, there are bookshelves and educational posters on the wall, including one that says "ANZO".

“When Make Way for Books asked if we wanted early literacy programming from age birth to five, I was almost jumping up and down in my office. That’s what we need. It shifts a school, the culture, the morale of teachers, principals, school districts, and the community. I can only influence what happens when kids walk through my doors for kindergarten but children need experiences prior to that.”

-Mark Alvarez, Manzo Elementary School

NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL READINESS MODEL

In 2014, we piloted the Neighborhood School Readiness Model, a coordinated project that engages multiple community partners and combines all of Make Way for Books' work at and around elementary schools where an estimated 91% of children qualify for free/reduced lunch and a high number of children have poor 3rd grade reading scores. The program met the diverse needs of young children and families in our community by meeting them where they are. As a result, thousands of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers have access to early literacy programming.

Our Preschool Program

Make Way for Books partners with more than 180 under-resourced preschools and childcare centers to provide high-quality early literacy programming and to create literacy and language-rich environments for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Parents learn how to read books with their children and as a result of the program they share books more regularly. Last year, 763 educators received professional development through 26 content-based workshops and on-site coaching. 95% of educators said the program helped them better support the children in their care. Each week, 53 Storytime Volunteers read to infants, toddlers, and preschoolers at participating preschools and childcare centers.



Raising A Reader

Families meet at neighborhood schools for weekly family engagement programming. Children and families become familiar with the school while participating in programming that helps children develop pre-reading skills to ensure they enter kindergarten ready to read.



Children at all project sites receive support to transition to kindergarten.

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Nontraditional community locations



Apartments and mobile homes



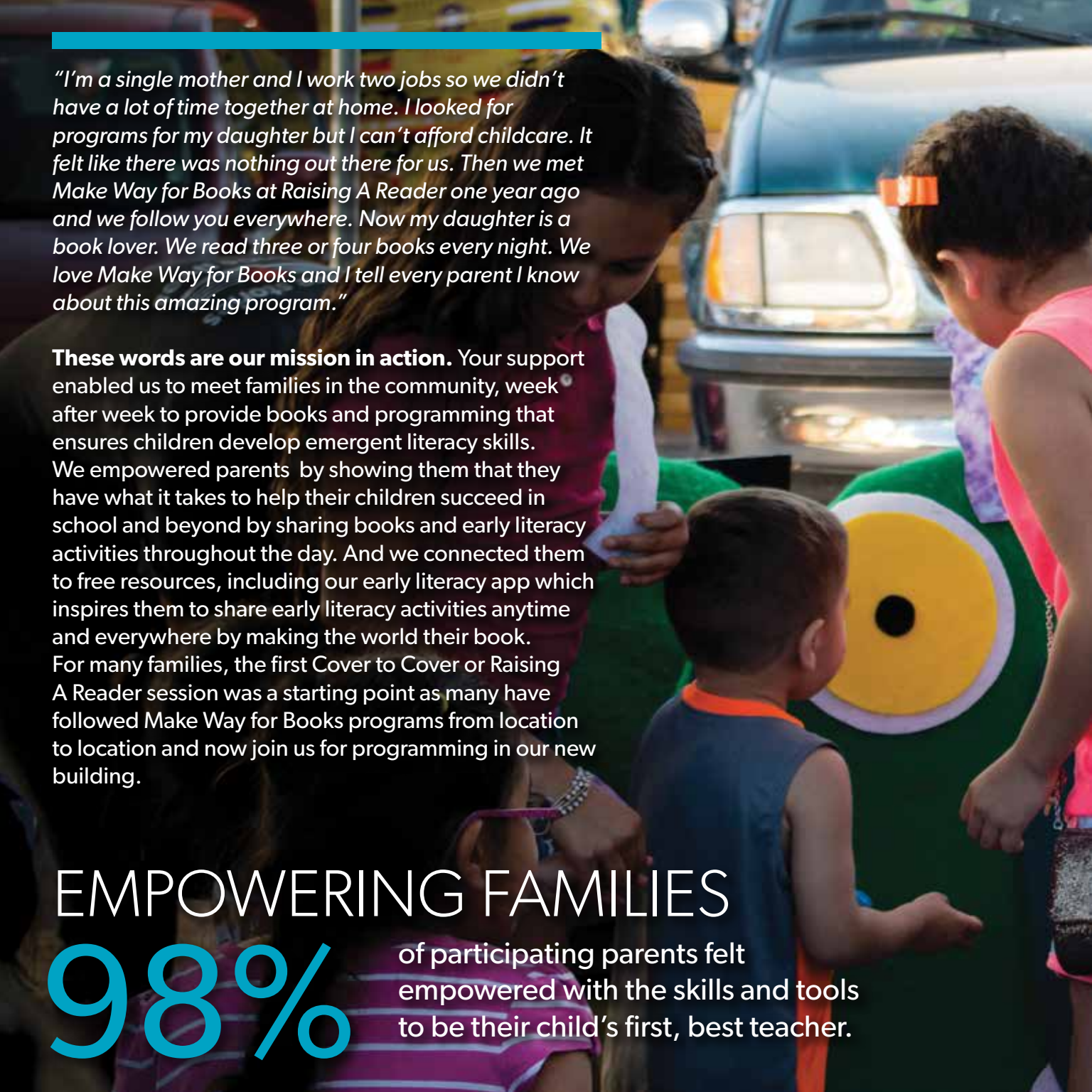
Cover to Cover

4 out of 5 children in Arizona do not have access to preschool or quality childcare. Through Cover to Cover, we meet families at the Swap Meet, food banks, parks, social services agencies, etc. for weekly programming. Children gain access to books and develop pre-reading skills and parents are empowered with the skills, knowledge and confidence to help their children succeed.

Raising A Reader Intensive

We meet children and families in low-income apartment complexes and mobile home communities with weekly family engagement programming. Children discover the joy of books and develop emergent literacy and language skills. Parents learn that they have what it takes to be their child's first, best teacher.

...then at their local neighborhood school, ready to read and succeed.




"I'm a single mother and I work two jobs so we didn't have a lot of time together at home. I looked for programs for my daughter but I can't afford childcare. It felt like there was nothing out there for us. Then we met Make Way for Books at Raising A Reader one year ago and we follow you everywhere. Now my daughter is a book lover. We read three or four books every night. We love Make Way for Books and I tell every parent I know about this amazing program."

These words are our mission in action. Your support enabled us to meet families in the community, week after week to provide books and programming that ensures children develop emergent literacy skills. We empowered parents by showing them that they have what it takes to help their children succeed in school and beyond by sharing books and early literacy activities throughout the day. And we connected them to free resources, including our early literacy app which inspires them to share early literacy activities anytime and everywhere by making the world their book. For many families, the first Cover to Cover or Raising A Reader session was a starting point as many have followed Make Way for Books programs from location to location and now join us for programming in our new building.

EMPOWERING FAMILIES

98%

of participating parents felt empowered with the skills and tools to be their child's first, best teacher.

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a dark t-shirt with the 'Make Way for Books' logo, is kneeling and reading a book to a young child. The child is wearing a green and blue outfit and a backpack. They are outdoors at what appears to be a community event or festival, with other people and colorful balloons in the background.

“I looked for programs for my daughter but I can’t afford childcare. It felt like there was nothing out there for us. Then we met Make Way for Books one year ago. Now my daughter is a book lover. We read every night...”

- Ana, participating parent

CREATING ACCESS

63,783

books were placed in children’s homes and preschool classrooms as well as checked out to share at home.

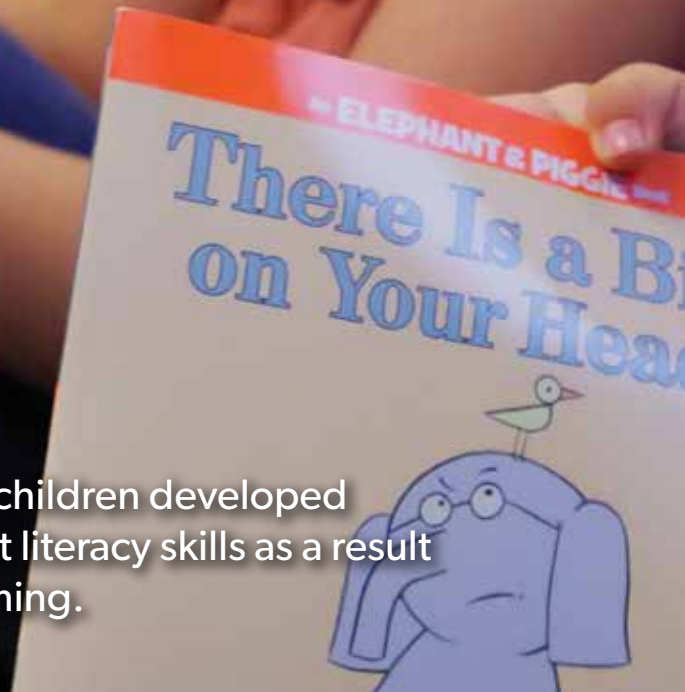
"I wasn't a good reader and I'm still not. But my daughter goes to get the books. She knows where the front page is. This program taught her a lot. Now we read together..."

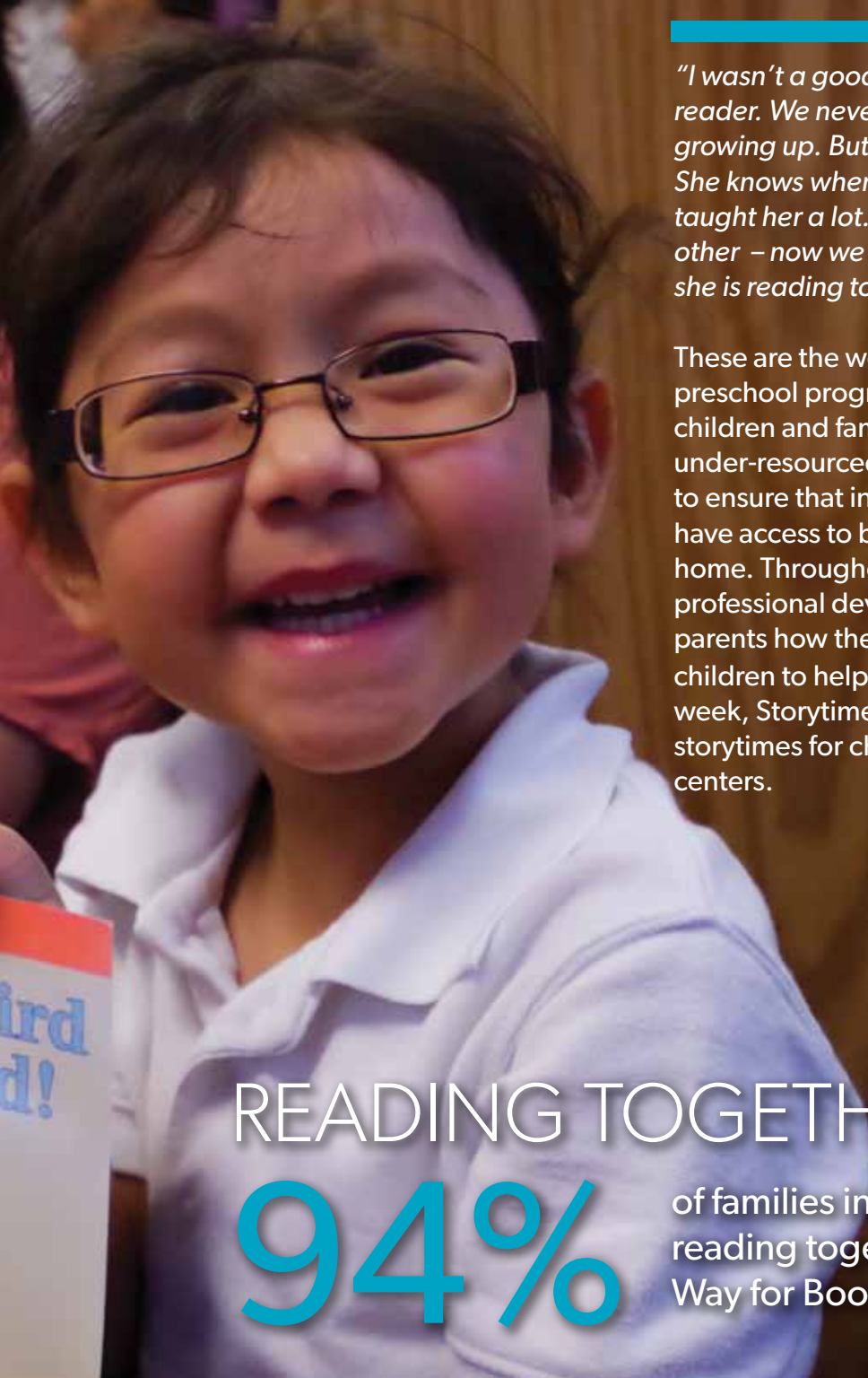
- Julian, participating parent

BUILDING SKILLS

96%

of participating children developed critical emergent literacy skills as a result of our programming.





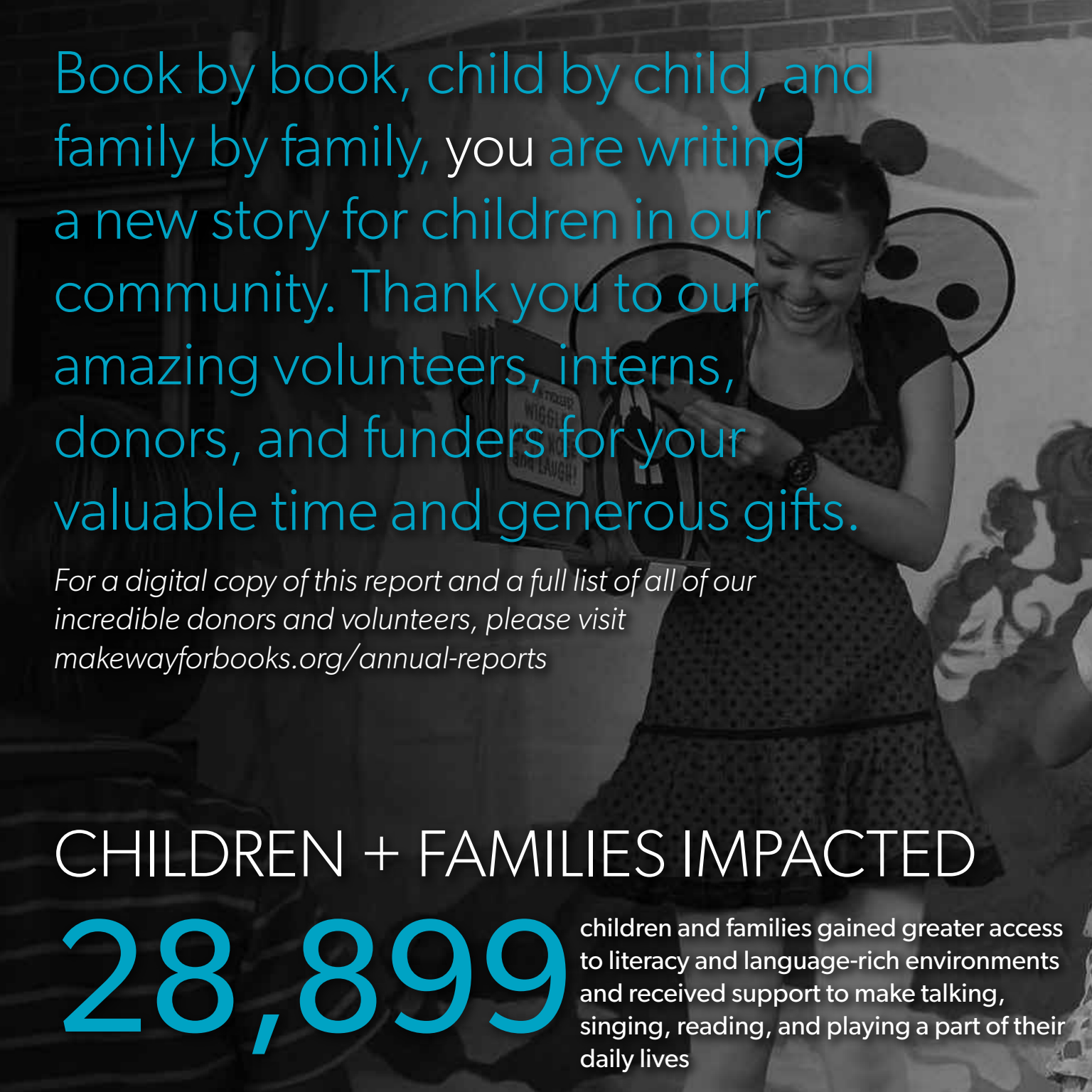
"I wasn't a good reader and I am still not a good reader. We never had a program like this when I was growing up. But my daughter goes to get the books. She knows where the front page is. This program taught her a lot. Now we are interacting with each other – now we read together. She likes to pretend she is reading to my younger daughter too."

These are the words of one of the parents in our preschool program which has been impacting children and families for 17 years. We partnered with under-resourced preschools and childcare centers to ensure that infants, toddlers, and preschoolers have access to books in the classroom and at home. Throughout the year we provided ongoing professional development for educators and showed parents how they can share books with their young children to help them thrive in school and in life. Each week, Storytime Volunteers shared highly-engaging storytimes for children at preschools and childcare centers.

READING TOGETHER

94%

of families increased the time they spent reading together as a result of Make Way for Books programming.

A woman wearing a black polka-dot dress and large black polka-dot ears is smiling and reading a book to a child. The child is partially visible on the right side of the frame. The background is a light-colored wall with a brick pattern at the top. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Book by book, child by child, and family by family, you are writing a new story for children in our community. Thank you to our amazing volunteers, interns, donors, and funders for your valuable time and generous gifts.

For a digital copy of this report and a full list of all of our incredible donors and volunteers, please visit makeawayforbooks.org/annual-reports

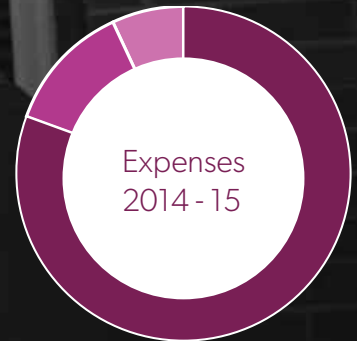
CHILDREN + FAMILIES IMPACTED

28,899

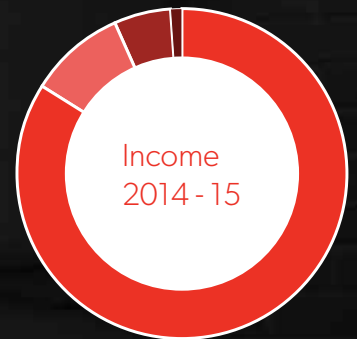
children and families gained greater access to literacy and language-rich environments and received support to make talking, singing, reading, and playing a part of their daily lives

Every dollar invested in early education yields a \$7 return down the road. Your support of Make Way for Books is a tremendous investment in our youngest children, families, and entire community for years to come.

- Programs (80.7%)
\$778,452
- Administrative (12.4%)
\$119,860
- Fundraising (6.9%)
\$66,165



- Grants (84.3%)
\$789,497
- Individual gifts (9.4%)
\$87,689
- Gifts in kind (5.5%)
\$51,949
- Earned Revenue (0.8%)
\$7,448



In addition to the individual gifts reflected above, Make Way for Books received generous donations in the amount of \$829,000 for a down payment to purchase and renovate our new building at 700 N. Stone Ave. in 2014-15.

Thank you to our
tremendous donors
and volunteers. You
make this incredible
work possible.

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together, empower.

