

Getting to Know SMART in Northeast Oregon



Melissa Nathan, SMART Area Manager

I would like to take this opportunity to thank SMART supporters who give their time or treasure to further the organization's mission of an Oregon where every child can read and is empowered to succeed.

In 2009-10, the area I oversee grew from two counties to seven. In addition to Umatilla and Morrow counties, I now manage SMART programs in Wallowa, Baker, Grant, Wasco, and Hood River counties. Additional counties on our watch list include Union, Gilliam, Sherman and Wheeler—all of which have hosted SMART programs in the past, though are not currently running.

This year has been spent getting to know SMART volunteers and supporters throughout the newly dubbed Northeast Area. Programs vary greatly in size and personality, with all sharing the same passion for children's literacy.

The SMART program at Dayville takes place in the library where the librarian, Susan King, serves as a SMART Site Coordinator. Dayville is a small school and Susan serves 12 children there, which is 100 percent of their K-3 students.

“Every program I visited, regardless of size, was filled with smiling faces of kids and volunteers.”

In contrast, a SMART program in Baker City serves 26 kindergarten students, thanks to the efforts of coordinator Laura Bruland. When school redistricting resulted in the entire kindergarten enrollment moving to the high school in a separate wing, Laura made sure SMART could continue by finding space in a large hall accommodating over 12 reading pairs at a time.

Every program I visited, regardless of size, was filled with smiling faces of kids and volunteers.

One boy even made up his own happy song with the words “it's SMART reading time”, which he sang repeatedly on his way to his reading session.

A moment like this truly demonstrates the relevance of SMART in a child's life. Thank you for making it possible.

With warmest wishes,

Melissa Nathan
SMART Area Manager

2009-10 Site Coordinators

These extraordinary individuals go above and beyond to see that children get the support, attention and books they need.

SMART would like to thank:

Desiree Amyx-Mackintosh; Jennifer Baeth; Cheri Bellmore; Laura Bruland; Jennifer Cassella; Kristi Emerson; Barbara Frasier; Janet Holland; Anne Holmstrom; Leslie Hoover-Lauble; Susan King; Courtney Noble; Jennifer Ouzounian; Kimberly Prince; Julie Routson; Diana Rush; Karen Sceva; Michon Silaphath; Kristine Thomas; Maria Weer; Suzie Wells; Kim Wirth; and Paula Wooldridge.



S M A R T
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Northeast Area SMART Staff

Melissa Nathan, *Area Manager*
Deidre Byrd, *Area Assistant*

Greater Hermiston Chapter

Kathy Bonney; Deniece Derbyshire; Chita Gallup; Chris Hull; Carol Nevin; Eileen Perkins; Spike Piersol; and Bob Severson

Greater Pendleton Chapter

Michelle Byrd; Paul Davis; Mary Finney; Brenda Giesen; Arlene Isaacson; Harriet Isom; Evelyn Jenson; Barbara Nash; Susan Sheoships; and Pat Tempinski

541-966-3276
GetSMARTOregon.org



Brooklyn Elementary SMART

Volunteer Recruitment Happens Year-Round

Though the 2009-10 program year is coming to a close, SMART recruits volunteers year-round to ensure most spots are filled when the new program opens in the fall. More volunteers equals more children served, so please refer friends and family to SMART.

Readers help kids discover the joy of reading. Read one-on-one with two different children for 30 minutes each (one hour total) from October to May. If you are not available for that duration, apply to be a substitute reader. By doing so, children receive uninterrupted service on days when a regular volunteer is unavailable.

Site Coordinators are special people with a willingness to give their time to be on-site during reading sessions. Coordinators oversee volunteer readers who interact with children. They also recruit and schedule volunteers, set up book displays, and promote the program. The times and number of hours per week vary from two to twelve hours a week, depending on the site's schedule and the number of children served. Coordinators start in early September and the commitment is through May. Site Team Members help the Site Coordinator with tasks such as recognition events, Book Awards, book inventory and filling in as a substitute coordinator.

Volunteer Reader Q&A

My SMART child doesn't seem to be making any progress; why not?

Don't be discouraged. Remember that a child needs exposure to language and literature before her brain can start making the connections linked to the concepts of reading. This phase can last a long time while she absorbs information, suddenly she'll spring into action and everything will start to click. Relax and realize you are helping to close the gap.

Does it matter if the child picks out her own books or not?

When assisting your SMART child with book selection, be aware that when she selects her own book it empowers her to make her own choices. By selecting her own book she has already invested in reading it. This can result in greater focus and attention.

Should I insist that the child read aloud to me if she is able to?

Generally, no. Listening to a book read aloud invites the child to become deeply engrossed in the story. Also, reading aloud from a book above a child's reading ability gives her exposure to low frequency words. SMART is a low stress, non-judgmental atmosphere. In this context, reading aloud gives the child a chance to relax and helps to develop that love of reading which is crucial to becoming a life-long learner.

-- Melissa Nathan

Chapter Members--in Umatilla County the Greater Pendleton Chapter and the Greater Hermiston Chapter are the leadership groups who help to shepherd and assure the success of SMART locally. An annual dinner helps to raise funds to support the program. Leadership positions are also available in Grant, Baker, Wallowa, Morrow, Wasco and Hood River counties.

Apply online at getsmartoregon.org, or call the Northeast Area Office for information at 541-966-3276.