

Laci Grows in Leaps and Bounds



Laci and her SMART volunteer Oscar

“About 100 times!” She enjoys talking about the things she loves—princesses and animals—and she loves all of the books available in SMART. The books that Jeanie and Oscar share with Laci make her happy, teach her about new ideas and concepts, take her to other worlds, and help her imagination soar.

At the beginning of their SMART session, Jeanie asks Laci what book she would like to read. She excitedly replies, “Polite as a Princess!”. Adding to her excitement, Jeanie lets Laci

know she may also take the book home because it’s book giveaway day.

According to Laci’s teacher, Mrs. White, she has progressed leaps and bounds this year. She said, “Laci has improved in all areas in literacy. She went from knowing zero letters and sounds to 26 letters and 10 sounds! She also knows 16 sight words.” Laci shows a longer attention span, is more enthusiastic about reading,

shows greater confidence and self-esteem, has better comprehension of what she reads, has better attendance and an improved attitude towards school, and wants to learn about new subjects.

Laci may not realize that her weekly SMART reading sessions are actually helping her to excel in reading, writing, communication, identification of letters and sounds, and socializing; she just sees it as a time to share in reading with a caring adult.

“Laci has improved in all areas in literacy.” Mrs. White, Kindergarten Teacher

This year, over 6,500 children like Laci and her friends have benefitted from SMART programs throughout the state. The one-on-one reading time not only gives the children the attention they deserve, but it also gives them a buddy they can rely on every week to bring a smile to their faces and an adventure in their minds.

*Written by Amy Kucharski,
SMART Site Coordinator*

Site Coordinator Shout-Out

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

SMART would like to thank:
Amy Kucharski; Bill Ruitter; Carol Blackwood; Donna & John Weekley; Jamie Martinez; Jamie Ralph; Joy Doyle; Kathie Helser; Kathy Knower; Lisa Logan; Lisa Markle; Maika Klages; Marcia Sanchez, Marlene Gaidosh, Mona Wyman; Nancy Green; Roian Santos; Sharon Campbell; Staci Thompson; Stacy Stabil; Susie Conte; and Tammara Waterman.



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Volunteers Needed for New, Year-Round SMART Program

While most SMART programs are coming to a close, a new program just opened in Madras and is seeking volunteers for the summer and beyond. It will be part of the Jefferson County Kids Club after-school program hosted at Madras Elementary.

Daleena Green, SMART Area Manager, said “children’s reading skills often backslide in the summer.” This new program model not only makes SMART service available to children year-round, but also offers flexibility to schools. The teachers are pleased that students do not need to be pulled from the classroom to attend SMART, as there are already so many interruptions during the school day.” Besides the timing, everything else about the Jefferson County Kids Club SMART program remains the same including one hour volunteer slots, and book giveaway days.

Hundreds of kids from throughout Jefferson County are bussed to Madras Elementary to take part in the after-school program. SMART hopes to serve 20 of those children this year, while growing to meet the estimated actual need of 30 by October 2010.

The program takes place Mondays and Wednesdays from 4:00-5:00pm.

During that time, these budding readers thrive in a one-on-one setting with caring adults. Kids can read at their own pace or be read to by the volunteer. As a bond develops, even reluctant readers want to demonstrate that they can read words, sentences or pages.

Kristin Viscaio is the Executive Director of the Jefferson County Kids Club, as well as serving as the SMART Site Coordinator. Those interested in volunteering may contact her with questions at 541-475-7028 or by email at jeffersonkidsclub@getsmartoregon.org. New volunteers must complete a SMART application online at GetSMARTOregon.org or by calling the local SMART office at 541-355-5600.

Donor Spotlight: Jane Teater



SMART recognizes Jane Teater for her long time support. As a 30 year elementary school teacher and reading specialist, she sees the positive effect SMART has on students.

Jane said, “through the schools, we the teachers are doing a better job of making sure kids get the mechanics of reading; however, we don’t always make them into readers. That takes engagement with the reading, which is often created through a relationship with someone who shares that experience with you. When you revisit that book, or think about reading, you also think fondly about that person and that experience.”

Jane has been a SMART supporter and leader for over a decade, while continuing to make herself available as a liaison to the school, offering reading strategies for volunteers, and providing visibility for SMART in the community. Thank you, Jane!

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