



words a!ive

ANNUAL REPORT

2017-2018

THE NEXT GENERATION OF READERS & LEADERS



A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

words a!ive team



Dear Friends,

At Words Alive, our hope is to create and deliver many meaningful literacy programs that help participants develop a lasting love and habit of reading that continues to be a central part of their lives for many years to come. This habit will not only reinforce their ability to succeed academically, but will also introduce them to worlds and lives beyond themselves and create opportunities to contribute fully to their communities. One great way to measure that contribution is their willingness and excitement to spread their new found passion to those around them.

This year, we focused on just that. Program participants, students, families, and communities, who, through a new connection and commitment to reading, have taken up the torch of leadership and are now advocates to others by spreading their love of reading. What's more, scholarship recipients, students, and family members have also found opportunities to continue their literacy development through the support of the "next generation" of learners.

Literacy is the skill that provides a foundation for all other learning. We read to experience life, to connect to math and science, to communicate effectively, and to participate civically. Quite frankly, without the ability to read and the desire to read regularly, we fail to realize our full potential and connect to the world around us. Recognizing this — and realizing that life-changing opportunities accompany the ability to read — we are thrilled to see participants in our program eager to share this skill with their family members, peers, and communities.

Your support remains paramount to our ability to deliver our mission — to create opportunities for life success by inspiring a commitment to reading. It takes a partnership to make this happen. Our supporters, volunteers, talented staff, committees, and board — along with enthusiastic community members — all come together to create a world where everyone is a reader! And, when everyone reads, whole communities thrive.

Thank you for your continued support.

Patrick Stewart
Executive Director,
Words Alive

STAFF

Patrick Stewart
 Executive Director

Susan Arias
 Development Director

Amanda Birmingham Bonds
 Program Director

Fran O'Callaghan
 Read Aloud Program Manager

Jessica Fryman
 Teen Services Program Manager

Vichitra Chaleune
 Associate Program Manager

Christina Meeker
 Volunteer Program Manager

Sara Mortensen
 Office & Communications Coordinator

Erin Rexin
 AmeriCorps VIP Fellow

Lindsay Marcil
 Development & Communications Coordinator

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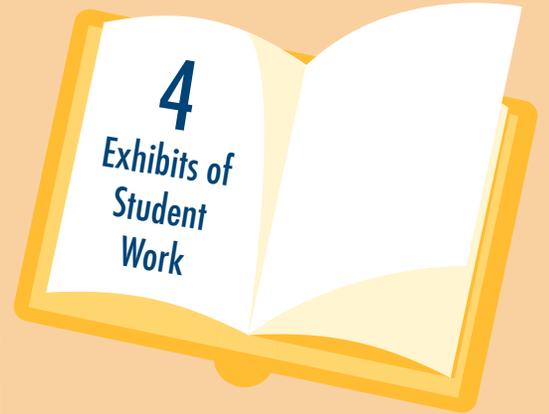
YEAR AT A GLANCE

“Having students see that others take time out of their busy work schedule to read to them shows them the importance of reading.”

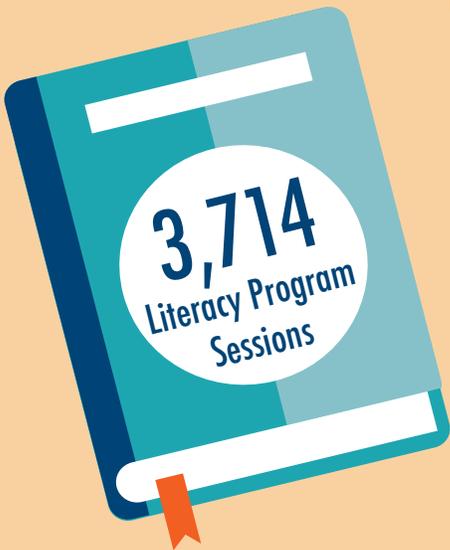
— Teacher, Read Aloud Program



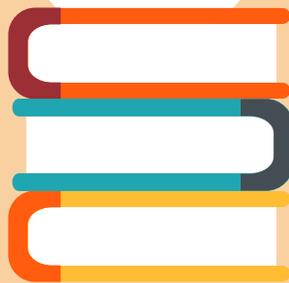
3
WAWS
Graduates



14,642
Books Donated



3
Professional
Presentations



261
Active
Volunteers



PROGRAM IMPACT: FAMILY LITERACY



MEET SHEENA

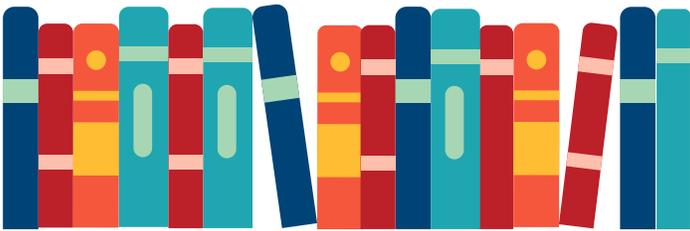
In our sixth year of the program, our expanded facilitator team included Sheena, a talented mother and preschool teacher who attended the program the past two years with her young boys. She is the first parent participant to go on to lead the program with other families. Sheena has been able to use her experience as a participant in the program to shape her leadership style. Over the past year, Sheena has inspired 72 families through the Family Literacy Program, while sharing her own stories and experiences to help strengthen their connection to reading. Through this unique perspective, Sheena has been able to see the incredible effects the program has on children and families. “I had a parent say that they couldn't get their son to read at all because he thought it was boring,” said Sheena. “But after the program, they're saying that he wants to read more and more...he's comfortable now — he's not feeling forced to read!”



REPORTING OUT

To engage returning families, Words Alive introduced curriculum such as new book titles and supporting activities — and it was a huge hit! What's more, parent knowledge in understanding child development, implementation of literacy-building activities at home, and book sharing behaviors continue to increase for our families during their time with us. With the increased knowledge and skills that come from our programs, parents are empowered in their role as their child's first and most important teacher. By the program's end:

- 68% more families reported having a routine for looking at books with their child.
- Families reported an average 38% increase in the size of their home libraries, growing on average from 11 to 16 books.
- Families that completed our program reported a 40% increase in understanding how their preschool child learns and have created a language-rich environment for them.



MOVING FORWARD

Parents play the most critical role in developing skills and abilities within their children. Parent engagement is one of the key factors in a quality childhood program. At Words Alive, we know that our Family Literacy Program is engaging parents in a meaningful way and making an impact on the families who participate each year. We have successfully collaborated with a variety of partners like the Fullerton School District, who offered four sessions of our program in their schools after we trained their staff and provided curriculum. We continue to see the same results in the families through this training model and through direct services. Going forward we want to continue to diversify where we can offer our Family Literacy Program by reaching out to families through classes located within their communities.

“Words Alive has empowered parents to support their children acquire valuable literacy skills, engage families in discussion about meaningful literature, and connect our parents into our school community.”

—Dr. Robert Pletka, Fullerton School District Superintendent



During the 2017–2018 program year, 437 families came through the door, taking home 2,511 books and clocking 1,310 hours of shared learning time.

(Far Left) Former FLP participant and current facilitator, Sheena is the first parent to ever go on to lead the program with other families.

(Above) Fullerton School District Superintendent Dr. Robert Pletka attends the Family Literacy Program kickoff week taking place last fall.

PROGRAM IMPACT: READ ALOUD

"Thank you Words Alive readers! You make me feel happy and you help us understand the words in the books. You help us read hard chapter books and you teach us cause and effect. Words Alive is here to help us learn to read, and not just give us books. They give us deeper thinking and that helps us in our regular classroom."
 —Read Aloud Program Participant

MEET GOLDEN HILL

Read Aloud facilitator Sharon has been reading in Golden Hill Elementary School classrooms since 2015. Throughout her tenure, she has watched the development of many students, from kindergarten on to 2nd and 3rd grade. Students she had read to in the past are now reading books to their own classrooms, families, and to Sharon herself, which truly exemplifies the Read Aloud spirit.



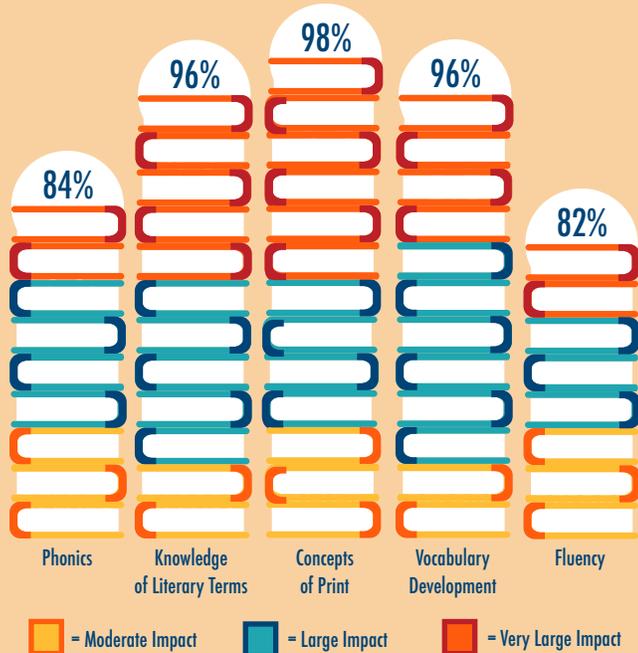
READ ALOUD PERSPECTIVES

"The exposure to other adult readers of various backgrounds has been wonderful, seeing people that look like they could be from their family or community showing such a love and excitement for literacy." —Teacher, Read Aloud Program

Building Foundational Literacy Skills

The graph below shows that nine out of ten teachers reported that the Read Aloud Program had an impact on expanding students' knowledge of literacy terms, vocabulary, and concepts of print.

Eight out of ten teachers reported the program had an impact on improving fluency and learning phonics.



Read Aloud's impact on students' foundational literacy skill development.
 (Teachers who reported 3-5 ratings on a 1=No impact to 5=Very large impact scale)

LOOKING FORWARD

While we continue to work with teachers in 103 classrooms across San Diego and Escondido School Districts, we have been excited by the impact of the Read Aloud Program outside of the school day. Summer and after-school programs have proven to be great partners in furthering opportunities for children to be exposed to an exciting world of literature, inspiring curiosity, and widening aspirations. We look forward to building on this model in 2018-19, enabling others to facilitate the Read Aloud Program and reach beyond our volunteer foundations in San Diego.

REPORTING OUT

Due to the two previous years' successes implementing the Read Aloud Program in United Way City Heights Partnership for Children's Readers in the Heights Program, we were requested this year to become their literacy experts. By training staff members and providing further resources, we created a Read Aloud Program model of delivery that could be used to serve kindergarten to 3rd grade children across seven sites. This partnership, starting in 2016 and initially reaching 40 children in the City Heights neighborhood, is helping to combat the summer slide, developing curiosity, wonder, and a love of reading for over 320 children.

Our work with BASE (Before and After School Education) in Oceanside has been an exciting new venture that has given us the opportunity to expand our program offering, creating 4th and 5th grade curriculum and furthering our impact outside of the school day. Through our partnership with BASE we served approximately 120 K-5th grade children and were able to evaluate the Read Aloud Program with children who have never experienced Words Alive before.



(Far Left) After their Read Aloud session, students read their favorite books in their 2nd grade classroom.

(Above) Congressman Scott Peters reads to a K-2 classroom as part of our annual Share Your Love of Reading Campaign.

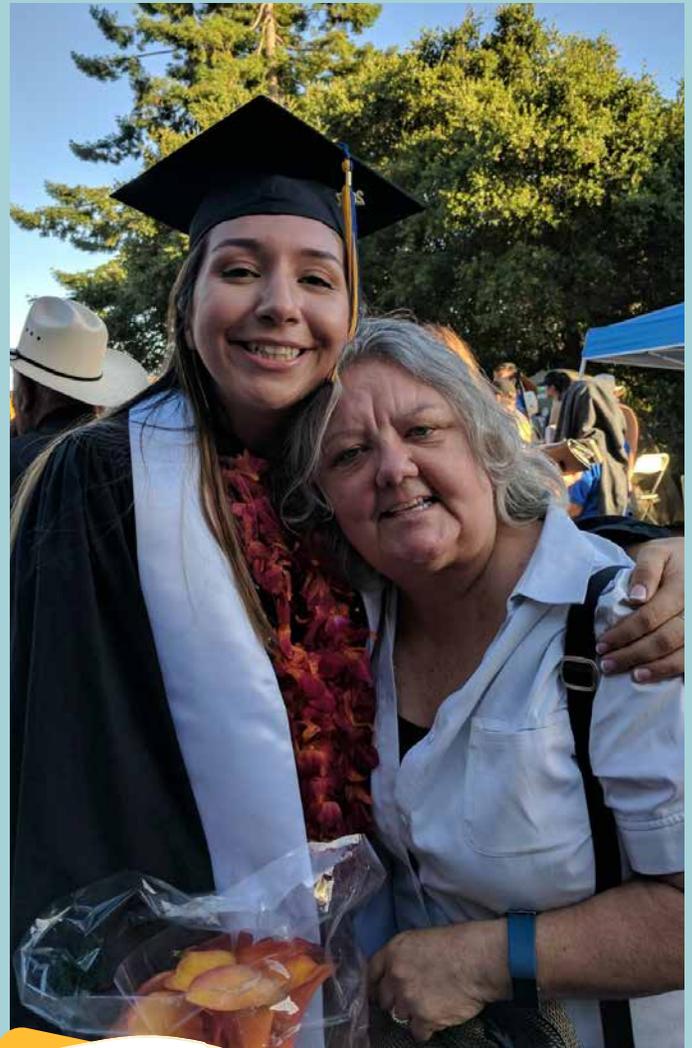
"The program is awesome! I love that you provide books for my students... many of which have none at home. They cherish the book they are given to keep to read at home. They love it!" —Teacher, Read Aloud Program

PROGRAM IMPACT: ADOLESCENT BOOK GROUP

MEET BRITTANY

Brittany Jackson truly represents our next generation of readers and leaders. Just seven years ago, Brittany was sitting on the other side of the Adolescent Book Group (ABG) discussion circle. Her first experience with Words Alive as an ABG participant was at Monarch School for homeless youth. After graduating from high school, Brittany became a Words Alive Westreich Scholarship (WAWS) recipient and her ABG volunteer mentored her through her college years. Now, the duo is back in ABG where it all began — this time as co-facilitators. Brittany is our first Teen Services participant to become a volunteer. She is both an ABG facilitator and WAWS mentor. Talk about full circle!

(Right) Brittany with her WAWS mentor Sarah Archibald at her graduation ceremony from the University of California, Santa Cruz. (Below) Brittany being interviewed by Channel 8 News reporter, Jeff Zevely, during our annual Share Your Love of Reading campaign.

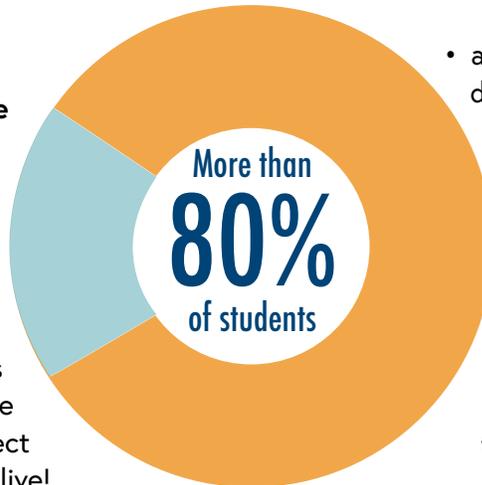


"Words Alive has supported me throughout the years, and I wanted to give back to them, and those involved, to show that same support. There's not a day that I volunteer with Words Alive where I wish I wasn't there. I love seeing all of the different youth involved in the program and how Words Alive positively impacts each of them."

— Brittany Jackson

REPORTING OUT

This year, ABG more than tripled the number of program sessions delivered within Juvenile Court and Community Schools. As students and volunteers met more frequently (bi-weekly or weekly), they not only developed a greater rapport, they dove deeper into the books. New extensive curriculum guides gave students the opportunity to explore more real-life contexts in order to connect the texts to themselves and bring books alive!



- agree that ABG has helped them develop a positive attitude toward books.
- agree that ABG has helped their ability to express themselves in group discussions.
- agree that ABG has improved their literary analysis abilities.
- agree that ABG has improved their vocabulary.



ART & LITERACY EVENT

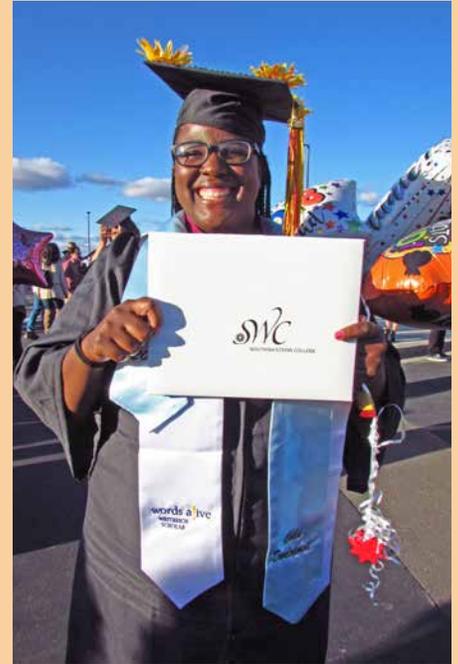
The Love You Give Event was a response to *The Hate U Give*, Angie Thomas' best-selling novel. The project creatively weaved the book's message and themes into communal wood sculptures (pictured above) designed by local artist Isaias Crow, facilitated by Words Alive volunteers, and produced by students who attend alternative schools between North County and the border. Using the book as inspiration, students explored the duality of themes that they read about while expressing what it all meant to them and their world. San Diego Art Institute hosted a public exhibition of their work in June of 2018.

STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

"Whenever I read a book that really interested me, I liked how we would all have a discussion about it by sharing thoughts and opinions. I have always liked creative writing, especially when it is about a subject that has always fascinated me. The projects have helped me delve deeper into the story and learn more about the setting and the characters...Words Alive was helpful in expanding my interests in other reading genres."

—Student, Adolescent Book Group

PROGRAM IMPACT: WORDS ALIVE WESTREICH SCHOLARSHIP



MEET OUR GRADUATING SCHOLARS

Zaphire Alonso Duarte

College: Graduated from San Diego City College, transferring to San Diego State University in Fall 2018

Area of Study: Social Work

WAWS Recipient: 5 Years

“Words Alive has helped me more than just financially. The Words Alive program has been my support system both personally and academically. I am extremely thankful for all the people who are part of the staff; they are the best at always being on top of our schoolwork and lives.”

Zaira “Lexi” Martinez

College: Graduated from San Diego City College, transferring to San Diego State University in Fall 2018

Area of Study: Clinical Social Work

WAWS Recipient: 2 Years

“My experience with Words Alive has always been extremely positive. My love for reading has been restored since I have been involved with them and I've always found a valuable support system within the organization.”

Domminiece Willis

College: Graduated from Southwestern College, transferring to San Diego State University in Fall 2018

Area of Study: Child Development

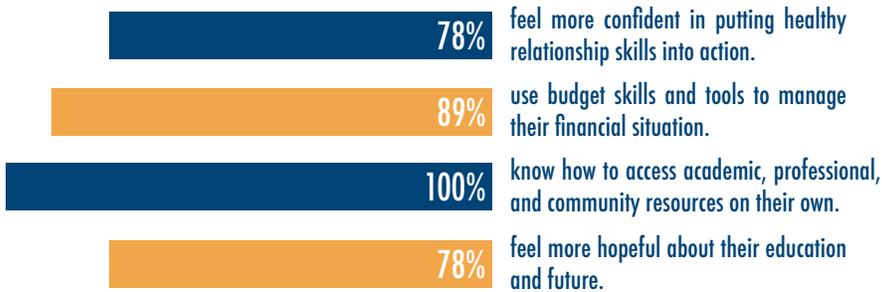
WAWS Recipient: 5 Years

“Since becoming a WAWS scholar, I have focused more on celebrating my achievements, big or small. I understand that my educational journey is not like everyone else's and that I will move at my own pace and in my own way, but I will make it to the finish line.”

REPORTING OUT

The Words Alive Westreich Scholarship (WAWS) program supports scholars' whole-person development by providing 1:1 mentor support and personal and professional development workshops.

Take a look at the impact!



MOVING FORWARD

We'll be enhancing the mentorship program by providing scholars and mentors better tools for building their relationship and tracking their progress. Through a deep evaluation process of the WAWS program with Dialogues in Action, we discovered that a high level of consistent mentor engagement is the key to success for our students!

(Below) The scholars attended a comprehensive and hands-on workshop at Junior Achievement's Finance Park. While there, they learned the true cost of living in San Diego, budgeting tools, and all about the impact of credit.



COMMUNITY & PARTNERS

SPECIAL PROJECTS



Boochcraft is a San Diego-based kombucha brewery that focuses on not only brewing kombucha but also giving back to the community by facilitating various projects that support initiatives such as education, food, and energy. In April of 2018, Words Alive partnered up with Boochcraft to celebrate their new special release flavor (Carrot Vanilla Pear!). We celebrated this partnership with Boochcraft at an event for their 2nd Anniversary, hosted at local venue, Moniker General. All gross proceeds from this special release went to Words Alive, resulting in an \$11,000 donation!



Words Alive provided the literacy piece of the Holocaust unit for Monarch School's 8th graders. The students read three books — *Night* by Elie Wiesel, *Maus* by Art Spiegelman, and *American Ace* by Marilyn Nelson — then discussed the books and wrote about the themes with their volunteer team in bi-weekly sessions. As a culminating project, Words Alive partnered with The Butterfly Project, a local Holocaust education initiative. Children of Holocaust survivors led an engaging presentation and invited the Monarch students to each paint a butterfly to represent a child who died in the Holocaust as part of a larger global awareness campaign.

GREATER IMPACT TOGETHER

Our greatest impact comes as part of coordinated efforts in the community. We are proud to call the following organizations partners during the 2017–18 program year:

- AMN Healthcare
- Armed Services YMCA
- BASE in Oceanside
- The Butterfly Project
- CalSERVES AmeriCorps VIP
- Caster Family Center for Nonprofit and Philanthropic Research, University of San Diego
- Councilmember — District 2 — City of San Diego, Lorie Zapf
- Dialogues in Action
- Diamond Educational Excellence Partnership
- Escondido Union School District
- Fullerton School District
- The Gumpert Foundation
- Good Life Property Management
- HandsOn San Diego
- Isaias Crow, Muralist
- Jewish Family Service of San Diego
- Junior Achievement
- La Jolla Country Day School
- Linda Vista Kindergarten Readiness Network
- Live Well San Diego
- Neighborhood House Association
- The New Children's Museum
- Nonprofit Management Solutions
- Oceanside Promise
- Quality Preschool Initiative
- San Diego Art Institute
- San Diego Council on Literacy
- San Diego County Office of Education
- San Diego Mentor Coalition
- San Diego Public Library
- San Diego State University
- San Diego Social Venture Partners
- San Diego Unified School District
- Seer Interactive
- Special Libraries Association San Diego Chapter
- United Way City Heights Partnership for Children
- Vista Hill – Incredible Families
- Volunteer Administrator's Network
- Warwick's
- YMCA Childcare Resource Service

MEET KAY

Kay Gurtin has been a part of the Words Alive family for 14 years. She helps foster the next generation of readers as a volunteer facilitator in our Adolescent Book Group, board member, and donor. The classroom in which Kay volunteers is a juvenile court system high school for paroled students who have just been released from incarceration. Fostering discussion and engaging these students who are mandated by the court to be in the classroom can be a **challenge**. Fortunately, there is always a **ray of hope**: when Kay and her team of volunteers re-enacted the “Toast for Change” from the book, *Freedom Writers Diary*, one young man meekly lifted his plastic champagne flute and shared: “My toast for change is to break the cycle and get a job, and for once, not just to gain my father’s respect, but my **OWN!**” Kay shared, “It is those ‘ah-ha’ moments where you connect with a student, see that light bulb flicker, or hear that awe-inspiring insight from a book we are discussing that keeps **me inspired by the Words Alive mission** and invested in the organization.”

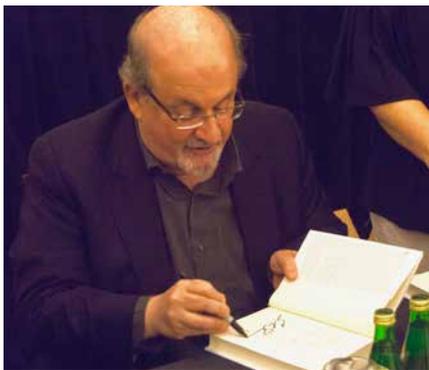


Through partnership with Jewish Family Service, Words Alive became an AmeriCorps host site. With the support of the AmeriCorps Fellow, Erin Rexin, we have expanded volunteer service and leadership opportunities, fundraised to support volunteer engagement, and created new processes to support sustainable growth. We look forward to another year with AmeriCorps.

Kay Gurtin accepting her Volunteer of the Year award at the 2018 Volunteer Appreciation event held at the Central Library in Downtown San Diego.



BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF READERS



Best-selling author and British Knight, Sir Salman Rushdie, joined us at our 14th Annual Author’s Luncheon & Fundraiser. Alongside moderator Dr. Seth Lerer, Rushdie presented insights from his latest novel, *The Golden House*, to a sold-out crowd of 600+ supporters.



The 2018 Share Your Love of Reading Campaign was our most successful yet, reaching new supporters through social media, television, and online news. Featuring local political and celebrity guest readers, such as Miles Himmel from the Larry Himmel Neighborhood Foundation, our sponsor for the book giveaway, allowing us to give out over 2,500 books throughout the month of May.

CONTRIBUTING TO THE FIELD



Program Director, Amanda Bonds, presented on Building Book Sharing Habits in Any Language at the National Center for Families Learning Conference in Tucson, AZ in October 2017.



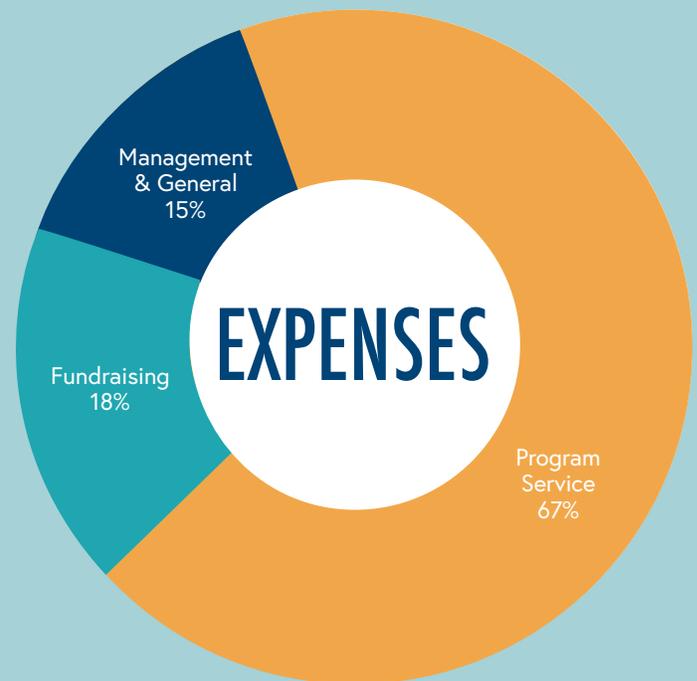
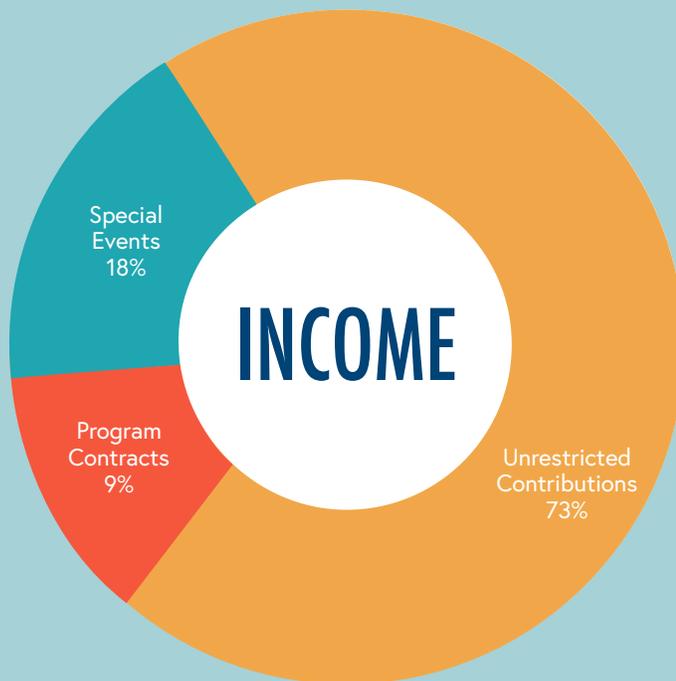
Volunteer Program Manager, Christina Meeker, was a panelist at the San Diego County’s Annual Live Well Advance in November of 2017, providing tips and solutions for successful volunteer engagement.



We are proud to partner with the next generation of community leaders and philanthropists at La Jolla Country Day School. Students support Words Alive with service and book drives, and \$1,400 for the Family Literacy Program through their new Youth Philanthropy Education Initiative.

FISCAL INTEGRITY

WORDS ALIVE AUDITED FINANCIALS JULY 2016–JUNE 2017



INCOME

Unrestricted Contributions & Grants	\$542,039.00
Program Contracts	\$62,448.00
Special Events	\$133,999.00
Total Income	\$738,486.00

EXPENSES

Program Service	\$494,438.00
Management & General	\$108,056.00
Fundraising	\$132,883.00
Total Expenses	\$735,377.00

NET INCOME

\$3,109.00

Words Alive volunteers donated 15,992 hours of service during the 2017–18 Program Year, a value of \$455,132.32!

**Please refer to our website for 2017–2018 audited financial statements as they become available.*

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 gave \$1,500+ during the 2017-18 program year.

\$20,000+

Anonymous
 Carlson Family*
 Dr. Seuss Fund at The San Diego Foundation
 Toby Eisenberg*
 Fischer Family Fund*/**
 Kimberly & Jeffrey Goldman*
 Kay & Bill Gurtin*
 Jordan Ressler Charitable Fund*/**
 Neighborhood House Association
 The Parker Foundation
 San Diego County Office of Education
 Karen & Jeffrey Silberman*/**
 S. Mark Taper Foundation
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 The Westreich Foundation*
 William Gumpert Foundation*

\$10,000+

Boochcraft
 The Bravo Foundation
 Christensen Family Foundation
 Camille Cicinelli*
 Craft-Demeules Family Fund
 Gurtin Municipal Bond Management
 The Patricia & Christopher Weil Family Foundation
 The Schoenith Foundation
 Cynthia & Aaron Shenkman
 United Way of San Diego
 Wells Fargo Foundation

\$5,000+

Boys & Girls Foundation
 Dan Cameron Family Foundation Inc.
 Daphne Seybolt Culpeper Memorial Foundation, Inc.
 First Republic Bank
 Fullerton School District
 Lee Goldberg
 Hal and Debby Jacobs Family Fund**
 Pi Beta Phi Foundation
 Rice Family Foundation
 Tina Thomas

\$2,500+

BetterWorld Trust
 Orville Brown
 Vivian Chang & Danny Cung*
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 Orange County Department of Education
 The Samuel I. & John Henry Fox Foundation
 Sandra Timons
 Heidi Weisbaum

\$1,500+

Sharon Bakcht
 Christopher Weil & Company, Inc.
 Valerie Cooper
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 Ellen G. & Edward G. Wong Family Foundation
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 La Jolla Kiwanis Foundation
 Qualcomm
 San Diego Gas & Electric
 Jeffrey Schneider
 Rick Seidenwurm
 Barbara Sherman
 The Timmstrom Family Fund of the Ayco Charitable Foundation
 Union Bank
 WD-40 Company Foundation

*Founding member of Read for Life

**Gift from the Jewish Community Foundation

Heritage Circle

Toby Eisenberg*
 Rick Seidenwurm

Join the Words Alive Heritage Circle 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.

DONOR PERSPECTIVES

"I am committed to the mission of Words Alive because I believe reading is truly a gift that keeps on giving. It opens doors, windows, and opportunities for the students we serve who are facing extraordinary challenges. Words Alive not only helps level the playing field of life, but through literacy helps our students from pre-k to College experience people, places, and cultures to which they would not otherwise be exposed." — Kay Gurtin, ABG volunteer, board member, and supporter since 2004

Literacy is the foundation of
community and economic
development. When everyone can
read, whole communities thrive.

Join our movement to make
reading matter.

INVEST

VOLUNTEER

CHAMPION

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5111 Santa Fe Street, Suite 219 | San Diego, CA 92109 | 858-274-9673