

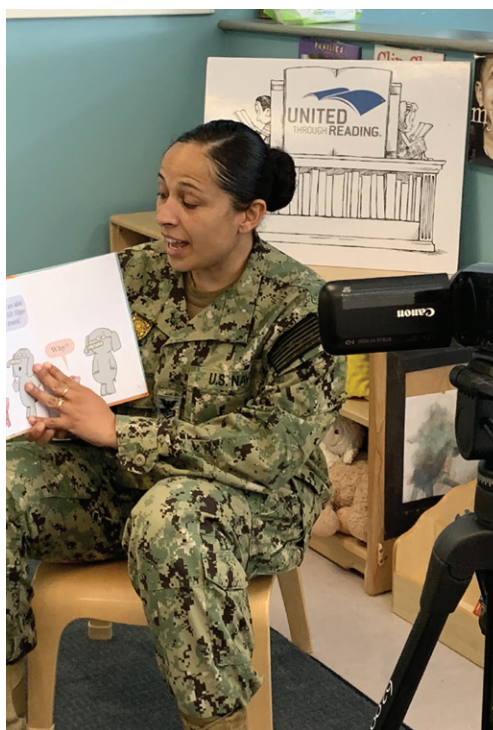


# A YEAR IN REVIEW

2021 ANNUAL REPORT









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CEO, United Through Reading

### HONORARY ADVISOR

In Memoriam

**Audrey Geisel**, Dr. Seuss Foundation

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## LETTER FROM OUR CEO & BOARD CHAIR

As we report on another year's progress, we are grateful for the opportunity to serve our military and Veteran communities through shared storytime. Despite continued challenges presented by COVID-19, we broke our own records, serving nearly 200,000 military family members and distributing nearly 50,000 books to military children.

In 2021, we were able to return to in-person events around the country, including our celebrations honoring our reading families, Tribute to Military Families and Storybook Ball. Additionally, we continued to improve and grow our UTR App usage so that service members and Veterans could make storytime recordings anytime, anywhere in the world.

All our work is made possible because of friends like you. Your steadfast support means that military-connected families are able to read together every day, with a new book and storytime recording, even when military service takes their loved one far from home. United Through Reading is particularly grateful to Readers Digest Foundation, BAE Systems, Inc., Dollar General Literacy Foundation, USAA Federal Savings Bank, Veterans United Foundation, Carter's Charitable Foundation, Northrop Grumman, Pilot Company, and many more for their years of support for our program.

Our year ended on a very high note when we hosted a holiday party with First Lady Jill Biden for the families of the USS Delaware. We were honored to help Dr. Biden spread holiday cheer to these Navy families while their Sailors were out to sea, making sure each military child had a book to go home with to remember their time together.

Since 1989, we have connected more than 2.7 million military family members – we could not do this work without your support. Thank you for all you do to help United Through Reading keep military families reading together every day no matter the distance.

With gratitude,  
Sally and Sean



**Sally Ann Zoll, Ed.D.**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Sean McHugh**  
Chair, Board of Trustees

# UNITED THROUGH READING APP CONTINUES GROWTH

With the world still facing a global pandemic, United Through Reading continued to focus on growing our mobile reading app. Thanks to support from **BAE Systems, Inc.**, we were able to grow our number of users as well as the number of stories recorded on the UTR App. Our users recorded and shared over 5,000 stories on the app to stay connected with their family, no matter the distance. We also reached a milestone in November when the 10,000th story was shared by a Navy sailor for his 8-month-old son prior to deployment.

**“He won’t remember the deployment, but United Through Reading makes me feel more connected to him,” he said.**

Our team focused on improving the app for our users by introducing new features thanks to investment from **USAA**. We added new spotlight videos featuring stories from special VIPs, festive frames, and the ability to edit recipients. The app is also now available on Kindle devices through the Amazon Appstore.

The United Through Reading App was named the winner of the Ed Tech Cool Tool “New Product or Service” category, and a finalist in the Cool Tool “Mobile App Solution – Early Childhood, Elementary” category.



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# 5,094

RECORDED BOOKS  
SHARED VIA UTR'S APP

.....

Hitomi McAbee, a military spouse born and raised in Japan, doesn't always know the American nursery rhymes and stories that her 2-year-old son asks to hear. That's where the UTR App has come in for their family.



**“It was very helpful for me to have my husband record those rhymes and songs so that both my son and I could listen to them over and over again. It is culturally important for us to have United Through Reading,” she said. “The app helps me learn more about American culture, and feel more connected to it. I’m inseparable with this app and am very thankful for what it provides us.”**

# UNITED THROUGH READING EVENTS & STORY STATIONS



We love helping service members and Veterans in person, so we were excited to get back to events and stocking our Story Stations with new books around the world in 2021.

**Carter's Charitable Foundation** supported six Story Stations for service members stationed in Georgia, Texas, Bahrain,

.....

WORKED WITH

# 590

MILITARY COMMANDS  
+ MILITARY VETERAN /  
SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

.....

Germany, Greece, and Hawaii. These Story Stations alone recorded 656 stories, supporting the family bonds of 2,624 service members, children, and caregivers (typically spouses). Carter's support also helped United Through Reading staff educate 1,486 military and Veteran spouses about United Through Reading's free services at six MilSpouseFest events.



Our **Mobile Story Station** was out and about across San Diego but also ventured to Fort Irwin, CA thanks to the Henry L. Guenther Foundation. Our team brought the Mobile Story Station to this remote California Army training base for their Harvest Festival, where we distributed over 600 books. The Fort Irwin Library is now a Story Station, available to the community to make United Through Reading storytime recordings for their families.



Our staff started a new program called **Storytime with a Service Member** at bases across the United States. These events are a great way for families to join together as a community to read together, complete craft activities, and connect.

Iliana, a military spouse and mom, attends each Storytime with a Service Member at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst with her toddler. She said, "It's marked on our 'kid calendar' and he looks forward to it every week. Right after nap time we head over to the playground down our street, filled with excitement, to listen as service members read the most entertaining books. It's a wonderful event that breaks up the day with learning, friends, and fun!"



# HONORING MILITARY FAMILIES

A major highlight this year was our visit to the **Tomb of the Unknown Soldier** to lay a wreath ahead of the 100th Anniversary of the Tomb. We were joined by *Twenty-One Steps* author and illustrator Jeff Gottesfeld and Matt Tavares, who joined us throughout the year both at Tribute to Military Families and Storybook Ball, where they received the Audrey Geisel Friend of Military Children award for their support of the military community.



"How do you connect with this young child who you want to be there for? I turned to my own life experiences. I can close my eyes and see myself listening to my dad reading *Black Beauty* until I fell asleep...It's United Through Reading that creates that bridge," **LCDR Graham Van Hook** shared at Tribute to Military Families. United Through Reading has connected three generations of his family, from his father's recordings for him, to his recordings for his young son.



We honored **Veterans United Home Loans** and **Veterans United Foundation** for their longtime support of military families, including United Through Reading.

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# 199,892

MILITARY FAMILY  
MEMBERS SERVED

.....



"United Through Reading makes a difference every day, connecting families and building literacy," said **Patricia Barron, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy**. She shared how literacy and education are an important focus of the Department of Defense's support of families.



**Vice Admiral Stephen Koehler**, 31st Commander of the United States Third Fleet, joined us as our military guest of honor and reminded us all that, "One of the biggest burdens our service members face is being separated from their families. Being apart makes you realize the importance of routine like reading together."

"To have someone who is deployed, especially at the holidays, I think it's really, really very hard," said **First Lady Jill Biden** at a holiday party hosted by United Through Reading for the USS Delaware families. "I teach English and I teach writing. So I know how important it is that you read so that you become good readers and writers." Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro joined Dr. Biden, the ship's sponsor, at the Submarine Veterans Club to bring holiday crafts and cheer to every family. Each military child went home with books to read with their family, a special reminder of a special day.



"Amylia loved reading with daddy all day long and I loved having him with us even if virtually," said **Christy VanVleck**, a Navy spouse. At Storybook Ball, the VanVleck family shared how the UTR App has kept their family connected during a trying year, which included a deployment.



## FOCUS ON MILITARY FAMILY LITERACY

.....

# 49,973

BOOKS DISTRIBUTED

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Nearly all families faced obstacles with their children's educational development due to the impacts of COVID-19. Military families were no exception. In fact, their challenges came with added complications, such as moves mandated by military service causing academic disruptions and stressful family separations due to deployments, mobilizations, and duty-required quarantines.



**"The teacher was saying how Mackenzie's confidence was boosted," says Kelly Cheeseman. "She started to volunteer to read out loud in school after participating in United Through Reading."**



With support from **Reader's Digest Foundation**, we convened doctors, educators, elected officials, and military advocates to discuss how reading is attainable, accessible, and adaptable for every child in our diverse military community. We released a white paper, "**Reading and Resiliency: Making Literacy a Military Community Priority**," and held a webinar series in Spring 2021.

With support from Reader's Digest Foundation, our READiness365 Keystone Sponsor, we also focused on increasing our books distributed to United Through Reading families around the world. We broke records when we sent out nearly 50,000 books this year with substantial help from **Dollar General Literacy Foundation**, our Books for Ownership Partner.



# STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Year ended December 31, 2021

## Support & Other Revenue

	WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS	WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS	TOTAL
Corporations and Corporate Foundations	\$1,520,232	\$271,757	\$1,791,989
Foundations and Civic Groups	\$194,692	\$61,971	\$256,663
Individuals	\$256,571	–	\$256,571
In-Kind Contributions	\$120,027	–	\$120,027
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	\$347,102	(\$347,102)	–
<b>TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	<b>\$2,638,624</b>	<b>(\$13,374)</b>	<b>\$2,625,250</b>
Special Event Revenue	\$259,767	–	\$259,767
Less: Cost of Direct Benefits to Donors	(\$123,258)	–	(\$123,258)
Investment Income	\$1,903	\$10,829	\$12,732
<b>TOTAL OTHER REVENUE</b>	<b>\$138,412</b>	<b>\$10,829</b>	<b>\$149,241</b>
<b>TOTAL SUPPORT &amp; OTHER REVENUE</b>	<b>\$2,777,036</b>	<b>(\$2,545)</b>	<b>\$2,774,491</b>

## Expenses

	WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS	WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS	TOTAL
Program Services	\$1,966,013	–	\$1,966,013
Management and General	\$153,670	–	\$153,670
Fundraising	\$219,766	–	\$219,766
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM &amp; SUPPORTING SERVICES</b>	<b>\$373,436</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>\$373,436</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$2,339,449</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>\$2,339,449</b>
Change In Net Assets	\$437,587	(\$2,545)	\$435,042
Net Assets At Beginning Of Year	\$856,660	\$437,527	\$1,294,187
<b>NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$1,294,247</b>	<b>\$434,982</b>	<b>\$1,729,229</b>

# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Year ended December 31, 2021

## Assets

	TOTAL
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$1,643,973
Investments	\$4,230
Contributions Receivable	\$33,595
Prepaid Expenses	\$65,836
Beneficial Interest in Endowment Funds	\$87,729
Furniture & Equipment, net	\$98,619
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$1,933,982</b>

## Liabilities

	TOTAL
Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses	\$204,753
Deferred Revenue	–
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$204,753</b>

## Net Assets

	TOTAL
Without Donor Restrictions	\$1,294,247
With Donor Restrictions	\$373,497
Perpetual in Nature	\$61,485
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$1,729,229</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$1,933,982</b>



# FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Since our founding in 1989, United Through Reading has been committed to accountability, efficiency, and transparency, with a dedication to good stewardship of the funds entrusted to us by our investing partners. Our organization manages funds with great care, prudent annual budgeting, and analysis of current trends and projections in today's world. United Through Reading meets all 20 of the Better Business Bureau's Standards for Charity Accountability, receives a Charity Navigator coveted 4-star rating, and ranks at the Platinum level on the Guide Star Seal of Transparency.



United Through Reading is audited by an external auditor on an annual basis and has consistently received a discrepancy-free report, noting that financials fairly state the affairs in all material aspects. As we seek to grow the number of military families we serve, we will remain prudent in our fiscal management and accountable to our donors, supporters, and the thousands of military families we connect through the act of reading stories.

Like countless organizations, United Through Reading experienced challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic and worked hard to navigate the uncertainties of a potentially unstable economic environment. As a result of these factors, United Through Reading, guided by its Board of Trustees, sought funds available under the Paycheck Protection Program to help maintain financial stability and program continuity during this unprecedented situation. Receiving these funds allowed us to maintain 21 jobs, with 96 percent of those jobs belonging to Veterans and military spouses.

## 2021 DONORS

### \$500,000+

Reader's Digest Foundation

### \$100,000-499,999

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Dollar General Literacy Foundation  
USAA Federal Savings Bank  
Veterans United Foundation

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### \$25,000-49,999

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.....

# THANK YOU SALLY!

FOR AN INCREDIBLE 15 YEARS

.....

Since 2007, Dr. Sally Ann Zoll has served as United Through Reading's CEO. For the past 15 years, she has served as the chief guardian, helping to build, grow, and sustain our program through technology changes, the end of the war on terror, and a global pandemic. On behalf of the Board of Trustees and staff at United Through Reading, we want to express our heartfelt thanks for her service to military families as she retires this year.

Sally led a team of remote staff long before it was the norm and oversaw the launch of an app that makes our program accessible to all service members and Veterans, no matter where they are in the world. She built long-lasting relationships and friendships with our partners and donors that will last for years to come. Her commitment to military-connected children's education is always at the forefront of everything she does.

We are honored to have worked  
alongside Sally for as long as we have  
and we are excited for her to enjoy  
her retirement with her family.  
Thank you, Sally!

