




UNITED
THROUGH **READING**®

20
23

ANNUAL REPORT

From the Chair of the Board and Chief Executive Officer

Dear Friends of United Through Reading,

For 35 years, United Through Reading has ensured military families have access to shared storytime experiences and literacy advancement through video recorded stories, book distributions, and literacy resources. In fact, our Board recently approved new mission and vision statements to better reflect our ongoing purpose:

Mission: United Through Reading strengthens military families' literacy, emotional bonds, and well-being through the power of reading together at every age, no matter the distance.

Vision: A nation of thriving military families whose strength is amplified by a shared love for reading.

As you might know, numerous studies show that reading with children is a powerful educational tool that nurtures children's self-esteem, instills the joy of reading at an early age, and strengthens the bonds children need with their families. United Through Reading is proud to connect our military families through reading together and building home libraries. A two-decade-long study found that the mere presence of a home library increases children's academic success, vocabulary development, attention, and job attainment — outcomes that we hope to enable for our beneficiaries.

In 2023, United Through Reading embarked on our campaign to connect #TheNextMillion military families through shared storytime thanks to a \$1 million pledge from our Five-Star Operation Storytime Sponsor, Reader's Digest Foundation. Additionally, we are grateful to our Operation Storytime Four-Star partners, including:

Mission READ: Dollar General Literacy Foundation

Mission READY: BAE Systems, Inc.

Mission RECONNECT: Carter's Charitable Foundation, Inc.

Mission REACH: Gillette Antiperspirant

This past year, we served nearly 350,000 military family members worldwide, and we couldn't have done it without you! We hope you will enjoy reading this 2023 annual report, which recognizes the tremendous impact United Through Reading has had in one short year. As we look to 2024, we are excited to continue to grow and explore new and impactful ways to meet the needs of the military families we serve, along with your help!



Sean Mchugh

SEAN MCHUGH

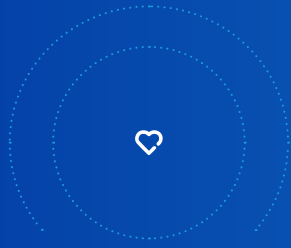
Chairman, Board of Trustees



Sally Ann Zoll

SALLY ANN ZOLL, Ed.D.

Chief Executive Officer (Interim)



OUR VISION:

A nation of thriving military families
whose strength is amplified by

**a shared
love for
reading.**



OUR MISSION:

United Through
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85,683

BOOKS INTO
THE HANDS
OF MILITARY
FAMILIES



Building home libraries is essential to increasing literacy and instilling a love of reading in children. United Through Reading is grateful to our many partners who understand the importance of receiving a brand-new book to call their own.

This past year, we joined the **Diverse Books for All Coalition**, a consortium of more than 30 other organizations whose goals are to:

1. **Double the number** of quality and affordable diverse children's books over the next five years
2. **Leverage the power of aggregate book buying**, which influences pricing and availability
3. **Promote the need** for diverse books
4. Ensure parents, caregivers, and educators have **access** to these books for their homes, communities, and curriculums.

With this in mind, we increased the number of diverse titles on our curated book list to ensure ALL military families see themselves in our books. We also made it a priority to work with organizations that serve underrepresented and historically marginalized groups. We distributed over 5,500 books through our partnerships with the Modern Military Association of America, Foundation for Women Warriors, Military Special Operations Family Collaborative, The Jewish American Military Historical Society, Exceptional Families of the Military, Fisher House, Wounded Warrior Project, Partners in Promise, and Wyandotte Nation.



1,288

STORY STATIONS AROUND THE WORLD



United Through Reading Story Stations allow us to serve military families where they are located. We have supported 1,288 Story Stations, including those on ships at sea, pre-deployment events, and community gatherings. These stations have been set up in all 50 states, 3 U.S. Territories, and numerous overseas countries, ensuring that military families worldwide can access our services.

In April 2023, our **Mobile Story Station West** completed an 800-mile roadshow serving five remote military bases: Edwards Air Force Base, Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, Marine Corps Base 29 Palms, and National Training Center Fort Irwin. Staff distributed 750 books, facilitated 74 recordings, and ensured military families living in remote areas learned about United Through Reading and the importance of shared storytime experiences.



“United Through Reading is a way to help my kids read to Dad, and Dad can read to the kids. Even when we are far apart. We love it. It has been such a blessing to our homeschool families because books are expensive. And we live in the middle of nowhere, so we don’t have a lot of resources here. I’m so grateful we have United Through Reading.”

L. KAUFMAN, USMC SPOUSE



7,410

VIDEO-RECORDED STORIES







Service members and veterans recorded 7,410 stories to remain connected with their children through shared storytime. Of these, **5,369 stories were recorded via the United Through Reading App**, highlighting the increasing utilization of technology to bridge the distance between service members and their families.

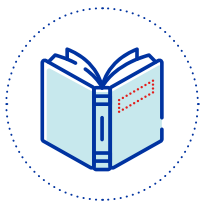


“There is no substitute for having a parent physically there, but United Through Reading has found a way for families to stay connected and help ease the pain a child feels when their parent is away. Instead of crying every night, the child can look forward to seeing their mom or dad on camera reading to them! This is an amazing and impactful program! I hope all of the children experiencing the pain of a long deployment have the opportunity to be touched by the benefits of having mom or dad reading to them on-demand.”

GRIMES FAMILY

BENEFITS OF UTR'S APP INCLUDE

-  Allows service members to create their story recordings and securely deliver them from **anywhere** worldwide.
-  Supports eBooks for use when a physical children's book isn't readily available
-  Easy to use for service members, quick to install, login, and make a story recording
-  Provides access to **request children's books** to build home libraries
-  Expands access to Veterans, Reserves, and National Guard members
-  Recordings are kept **forever** in the cloud



LITERACY ADVANCEMENT

United Through Reading encourages military families to take proactive steps to ensure literacy enrichment becomes part of their daily routine. Thanks to our Five-Star partner, Reader's Digest Foundation, we offer families age-appropriate reading trackers and educational blog posts crafted to make reading accessible and enjoyable for all ages. With the support of the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, we created three age-appropriate Literacy Guides, designed to help military families understand the importance of reading daily with their children.



BOOK FOR THE MILITARY CHILD

Every April, we celebrate our nation's 1.6 million military children through the Month of the Military Child. Military children face unique experiences, including frequent relocations, a parent often away from home, and academic, social, and emotional challenges. In a word, these military-connected kids live out BRAVERY every single day.

In 2023, we launched our Book for the Military Child initiative. The goal was to choose a book that united and celebrated military children through their shared experiences. Our inaugural choice was *The Kissing Hand*, written by Audrey Penn and illustrated by Ruth E. Harper and Nancy M. Leak. It perfectly captured something all military kids relate to: the need to stay connected to a loved one, even when they can't be with them. We distributed over 13,000 copies of *The Kissing Hand* to military children worldwide.





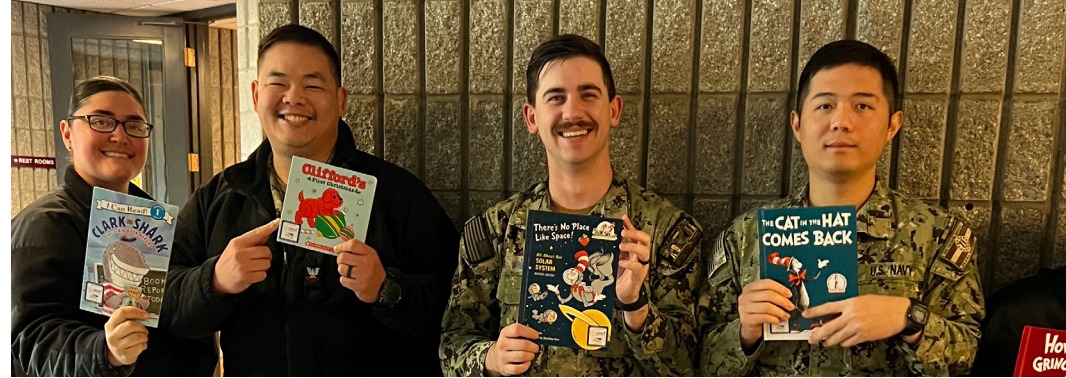
CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER PARTNERSHIP (3,610 READING READY KITS DISTRIBUTED)

United Through Reading launched a project to provide a Reading Ready Kit to each military child enrolled in San Diego's twenty Child Development Centers (CDC). United Through Reading's Mobile Story Station and staff visited each CDC to distribute the Reading Ready Kits and provide opportunities for parents and caregivers to video record themselves reading a story for their children. The Reading Ready Kits and App-based services build upon CDC's curriculum to facilitate at-home learning, continue comforting routines, and strengthen family connections even when the service member can't be home to read to their child.

Each Reading Ready Kit was presented in a branded, reusable bag and contained:

- ▶ An age-appropriate children's book
- ▶ Family literacy activities
- ▶ Information on the benefits of a read-aloud routine for young children
- ▶ Information encouraging the military member to utilize United Through Reading's App
- ▶ A children's toy





PACIFIC NORTHWEST OUTREACH

Through the generosity of funders specifically targeting the Pacific Northwest region, United Through Reading expanded its reach and grew the number of military families served. United Through Reading distributed 6,188 books within the Pacific Northwest at seven military installations across 35 military-affiliated events, positively impacting 24,752 parents and children within military families.

United Through Reading equipped three US Navy Destroyers with video cameras, SD Cards, and a library of children's books, allowing service members to stay connected throughout their deployment and make homecomings easier. Additionally, we established a new recording site at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor, where we held two submarine pre-deployment recording events.



“A focus area for 2023 was connecting with the submarine community. With a new site at NB Kitsap-Bangor, submariners who will experience months without contact with their families will stay connected through shared storytime. In a poignant moment that vividly captures the resilience of military families, one female soldier at a JBLM recording event, accompanied by her three children, engaged in a heartwarming reading session. This recording allows her children to revisit the recorded story repeatedly, providing comfort and connection during the inevitable separations caused by their mother’s dedicated service taking her to Poland.”

LILY CARLTON,
SENIOR DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS
UNITED THROUGH READING



STORYBOOK BALL HONORS MILITARY FAMILIES

We hosted Storybook Ball, our signature event, on October 28, 2023. Since the event was so close to Halloween, we encouraged attendees to dress as their favorite book characters. In attendance we had The Man in the Yellow Hat, Peter Pan, Olivia, multiple Dr. Seuss characters, several princesses, Carmen San Diego, and Maleficent. We heard from so many inspiring speakers during the evening who highlighted the profound impact United Through Reading has on military families every day. RADM Yvette Davids, USN, Acting Commander, Naval Surface Forces, US Pacific Command and Acting Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, shared her experience using United Through Reading while her twin children were home and she was on deployment. RADM Davids also shared the story of Senior Chief Ramons, a Navy sailor stationed in San Diego.



“I would sit in front of a camcorder, pick any children’s book, and read as if my kids were right in front of me. I picked books, like *Llama Llama Red Pajama* or *Curious George*, making multiple videos and then mailing them off whenever we pulled into port. My kids absolutely loved it! For weeks, they would play the videos before bed as if they were bedtime stories. And I made sure before I ended each video to tell them that I loved and missed them and that I couldn’t wait to be home with them soon.”

SENIOR CHIEF RAMONS



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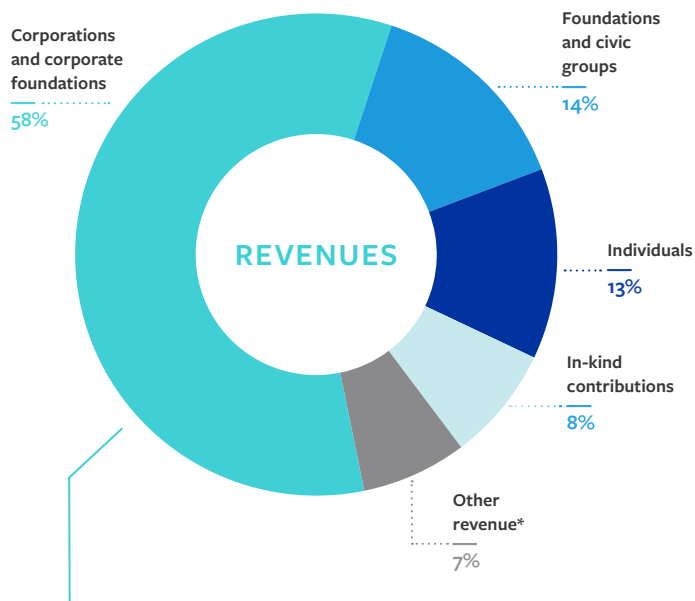
*Chief Executive
Officer (Interim)*
United Through Reading

2023 Financials: Growth and Strategic Investment

United Through Reading has diverse, sustainable funding sources and strong relationships with generous investing partners. With 88% of our funding directly benefiting program expenses, United Through Reading is fiscally responsible and a steward of our donor dollars. The Board of Trustees' Advancement Committee guides our strategy in seeking donations from individuals, corporations, and foundations. We conduct a detailed review of our revenue each year and set goals and strategies to diversify the funding sources. The Board's Advancement Committee works closely with staff to monitor progress toward goals and ensure that strategy implementation yields desired results. **United Through Reading meets all 20 Better Business Bureau Charity Standards and has consistently earned a Charity Navigator 4-Star rating and Platinum Seal of Transparency from Guidestar.**

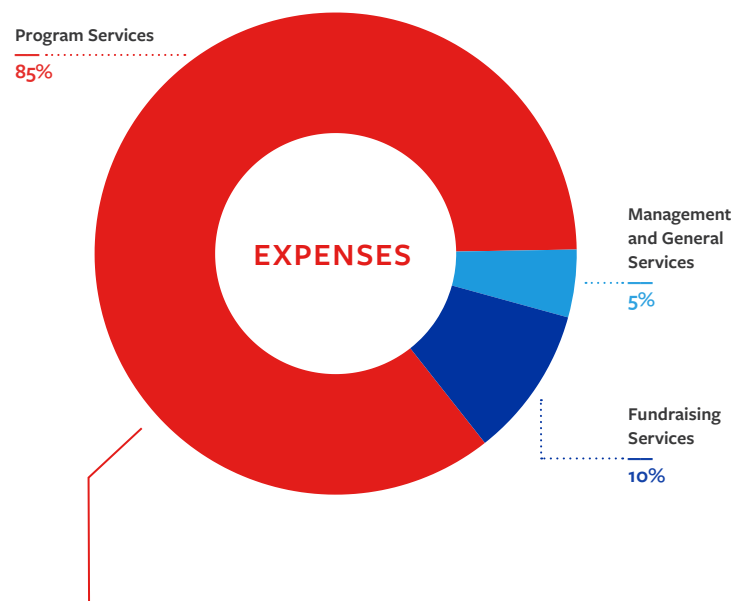
United Through Reading is externally audited annually and consistently receives clean reports. The auditor noted our financials fairly state the affairs in all material aspects. As we look toward the future, we remain steadfast in our commitment to fiduciary responsibility.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY



REVENUES	
Corporations and Corporate Foundations	\$1,420,340
Foundations and Civic Groups	\$345,774
Individuals	\$311,485
In-kind contributions	\$187,880
Other revenue*	\$146,085
Investment income	\$13,175
Total	\$2,424,739

*Other revenue includes special event revenue.



EXPENSES	
Program Services	\$2,308,505
Management and General Services	\$122,699
Fundraising Services	\$273,390
Total	\$2,704,594

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	
	-\$279,855
Net Assets as of January 1, 2023	\$1,102,613
Net Assets as of December 31, 2023	\$822,758

THANK YOU

2023 DONORS

\$250,000-499,999

Reader's Digest Foundation

\$100,000-249,999

BAE Systems, Inc.

Carter's Charitable Foundation, Inc.

Dollar General Literacy Foundation

Procter and Gamble

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\$50,000-99,999

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 The Wawa Foundation

\$1,000-2,499

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 American Legion Auxiliary Unit 82
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 Fort Liberty Spouses Club
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