



Community Reading Buddies

Outcomes Report



Aspire Education

2020

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CRB in a Nutshell

181 Youth Mentors

136 Buddies

1/3 of a grade level

Buddies' average increase in literacy in only 7 weeks

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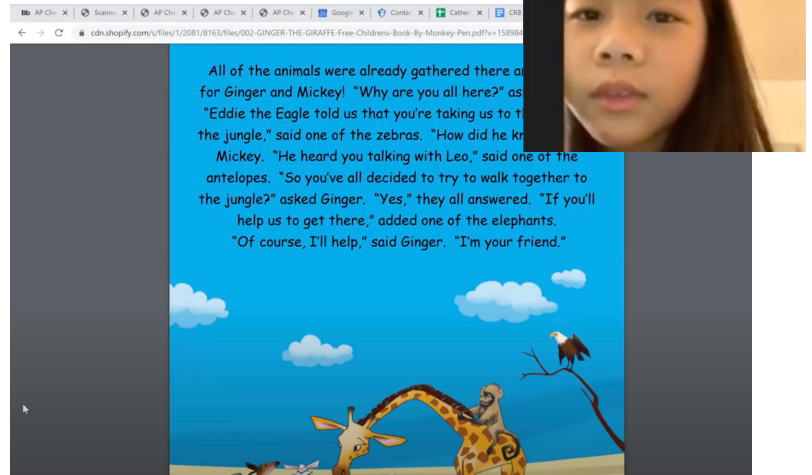
Financials

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Acknowledgements

Introduction

Community Reading Buddies (CRB) has partnered with Oakland preschools since 1994 to pair preK-3rd grade "Buddies" with highly trained middle and high school volunteer Youth Mentors who support their early literacy development. CRB is a double-impact program: young Buddies build the foundations needed to be strong readers and learners, while Youth Mentors build their social-emotional skills.



The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic presented unprecedented challenges but also an opportunity to create innovative solutions. We partnered with award-winning digital literacy platform BookNook to bring our CRB program fully online. In total, 181 Youth Mentors were trained in reading strategies and relationship-building skills to provide 1-on-1 reading support to 136 K-6th grade OUSD students, resulting in an average one-third grade level increase in reading.

Our goals

1

Shrink the literacy gap for Oakland students in preK-3rd grade.

2

Increase young people's confidence, communication skills, and connection to community.

Goal 1: Shrink the literacy gap for Oakland students in preK–3rd grade.

The Problem of Learning Loss

Learning loss as a result of not reading during out-of-school time can lead to:

1

month loss of reading ability in a normal summer...

2

years of accumulated reading loss by middle school...

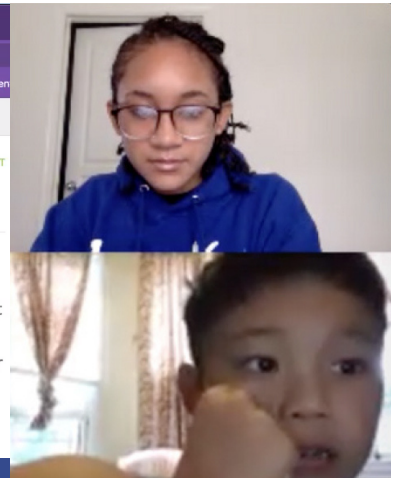
...with students from under-resourced communities experiencing higher levels of loss.

Because of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, students are starting the 2020 school year with only

63%

of the reading gains they would have had in a typical year.

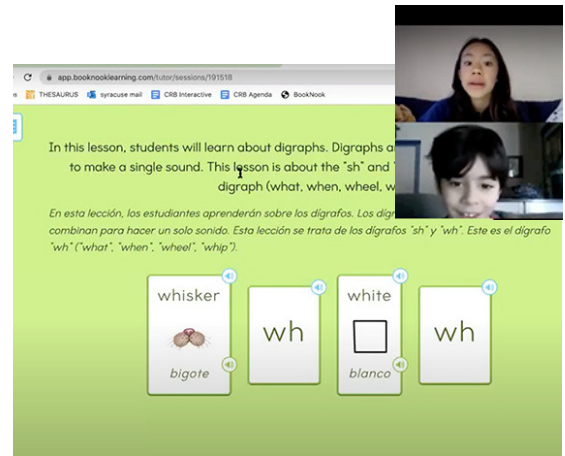
The screenshot shows a web browser window with the BookNook application. The URL is app.booknooklearning.com/tutor/sessions/202690. The interface includes a 'READER' tab, a 'Tenzin W.' profile, and a passage titled 'Home For Lunch'. The passage text is: "What's that?" asked Ana. "Dad said to make lunch while he's working," said Juan. "Are you calling that lunch?" she asked as she pointed at something that looked like a pile of mush. "I'm trying to build a banana house, but the banana slices are way too slippery," said Juan. "I can help," Ana said, pulling a jar from the refrigerator so that it could warm up. When Dad walked in, he found a surprise. Ana and Juan had built a house of food. Banana walls held up a corn-chip roof and peanut butter held everything together just like glue. Ana and Juan knew they would have to eat this mess, but the look... The interface also features a timer showing 0:12, a 'PAUSE' button, a 'RESET' button, and 'ERRORS' and 'SELF-CORRECT' counters both at 0.



Consistent small group and one-on-one interactive reading is considered the “gold standard” to combat reading loss. Reading in early years should focus on a combination of the “science of reading” (phonemic awareness) and engagement with content.

CRB's Impact on Buddies

CRB's method is founded on using strong interpersonal relationships between Youth Mentors and Buddies to provide highly effective reading support based on proven early literacy strategies. We use a one-on-one model so that our young readers can get the individualized attention needed to combat learning loss.



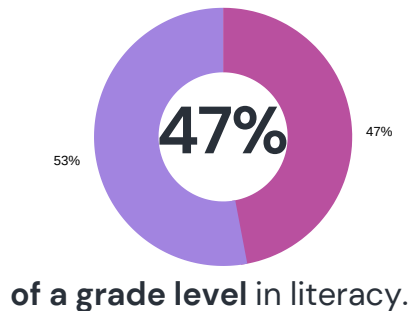
In the online program we launched in 2020, each Buddy met with a Youth Mentor for an hour twice a week, for seven weeks. Youth Mentors were trained to take time to build relationships while also engaging in BookNook lessons that are directly linked to state standards and research-based early literacy strategies.

In just seven weeks, our Buddies grew an average of

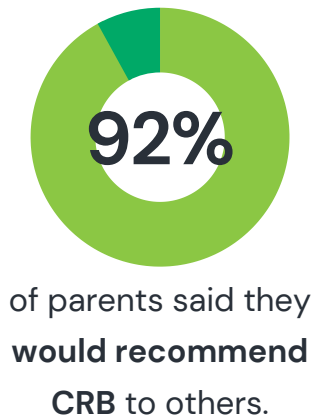
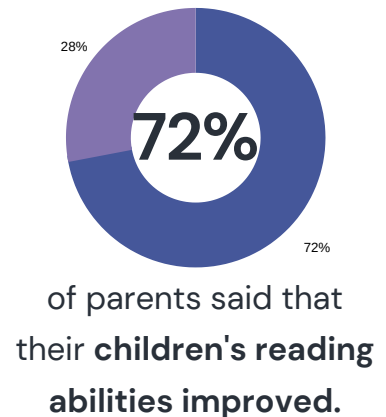
one-third

of a grade level in literacy.

Our third graders grew by



of a grade level in literacy.



“ The youth mentors were amazing and so sweet. They really engaged with my son, who is in the autism spectrum, which was incredible. Really wonderful—my son gained a lot of confidence from the program. Thanks so much! ”
—Buddy Parent

Goal 2: Increase young people's confidence, communication skills, and connection to community.

Missing Social-Emotional Skills

By 2020...

85%

of job success comes from having **well-developed soft and people skills**

Over half a million

workers will be **significantly held back** by a lack of soft skills.

The loss of productivity due to the soft skills deficit will exceed

\$10 billion

per year.



The Positive Youth Development framework outlines what young people need to be healthy, productive, and engaged: necessary resources, skills, and competencies; agency to make or influence their own decisions; engagement in a change for their own or for their communities' positive development; and an enabling environment that develops and supports their ability to thrive.

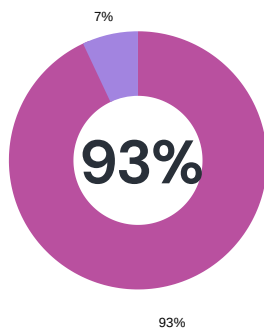
CRB's Impact on Youth Mentors

CRB takes a Positive Youth Development Approach to our Youth Mentors. As the linchpin of the program, it is essential that Youth Mentors have all of the tools and support to both provide high-quality early literacy education to their Buddies as well as develop the soft skills they need to succeed in the future.

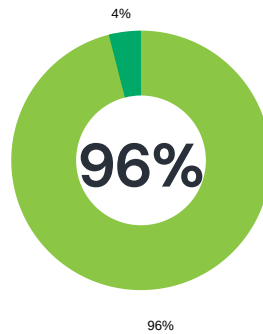


In 2020, we established a new youth development curriculum designed to:

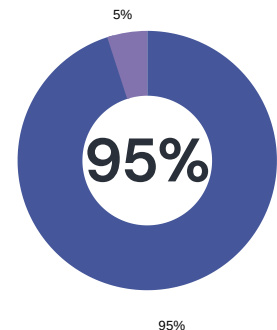
1. Grow Youth Mentors into empathetic listeners and creative mentors
2. Encourage Youth Mentors to build and maintain strong community connections
3. Empower experienced Youth Mentors to be Lead Mentors who can facilitate small-group discussions with their peers
4. Reflect on their experience as Youth Mentors to develop their confidence, communication skills, and connection with their community



of Youth Mentors **grew in at least one social-emotional trait** within connection, confidence, or communication.



of Youth Mentors said they now feel **more empowered as a leader and contributor.**



of Youth Mentors felt their **thoughts and opinions were valued.**

“Reading Buddies helped me grow as a mentor by making me think quickly on my feet to adapt to the technical and/or communication mishaps. I saw myself as a guide, leading my buddy through these literacy activities and how it truly made a difference.”
–Youth Mentor



of Lead Mentors developed their **public speaking and facilitation skills.**

About Our Buddies & Youth Mentors

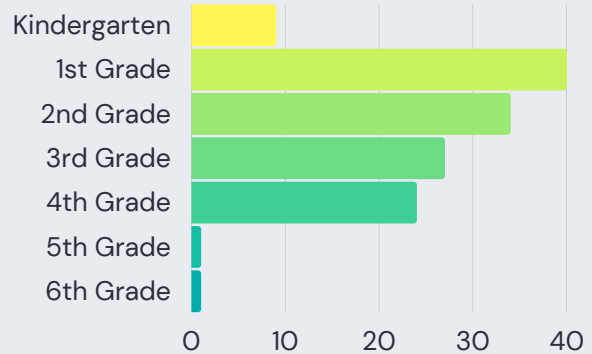


136
Buddies

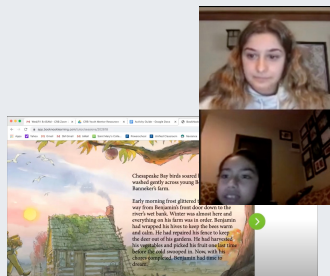


1,462
reading
hours

42
OUSD
Elementary
Schools



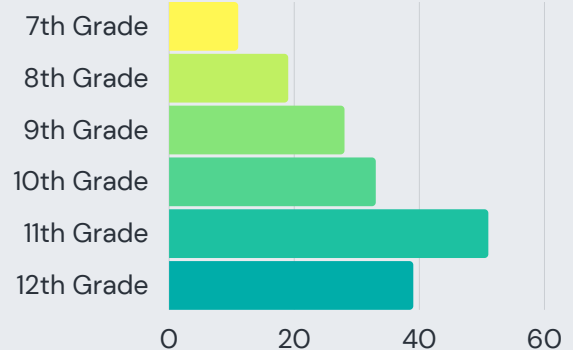
181
Youth
Mentors



3,120
hours
volunteered



58
Bay Area
middle &
high schools



Cost per Participant

\$321

Total Program Cost

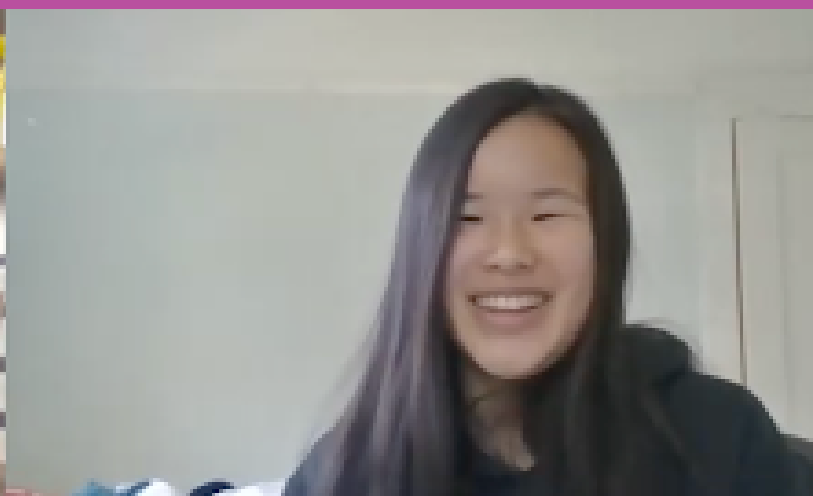
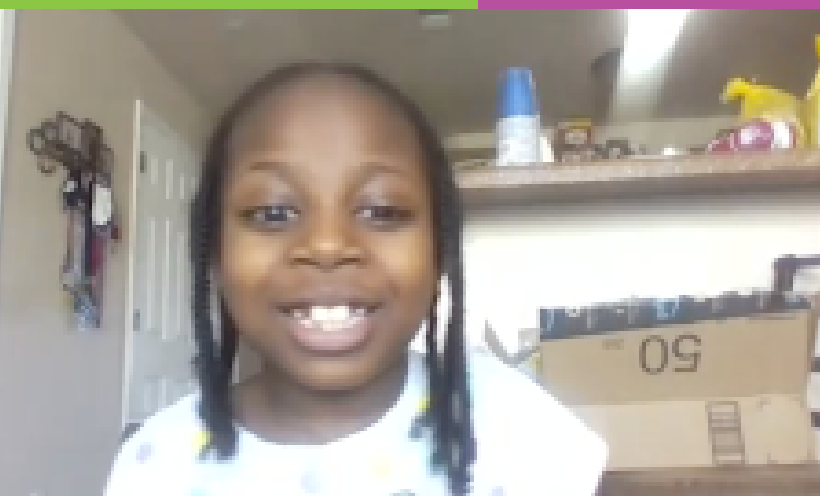
\$101,795

Cost per Program Hour

\$22

Number of Individual Supporters

40+



What are key details of the story?

0
POINTS

CHOOSE 4

baking a cake

playing catch

a tornado

a bus ride

eating watermelon

a friendly dog



We thank you for your ongoing support of



Acknowledgements

Special thank you to our partners, team members, grantors and donors who made this program possible:

Grantors

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Partners

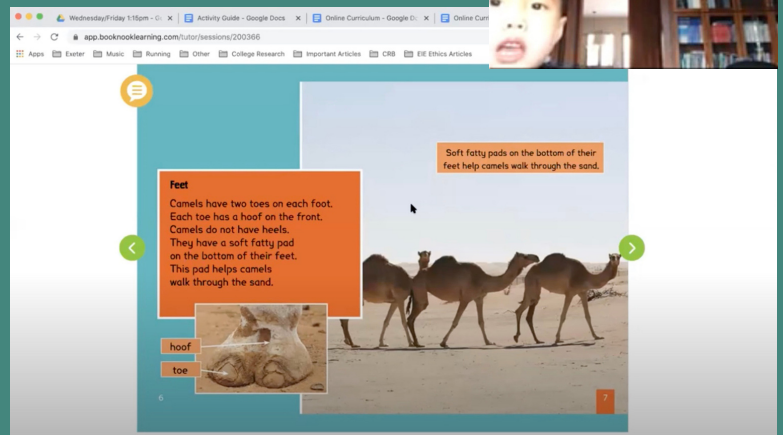
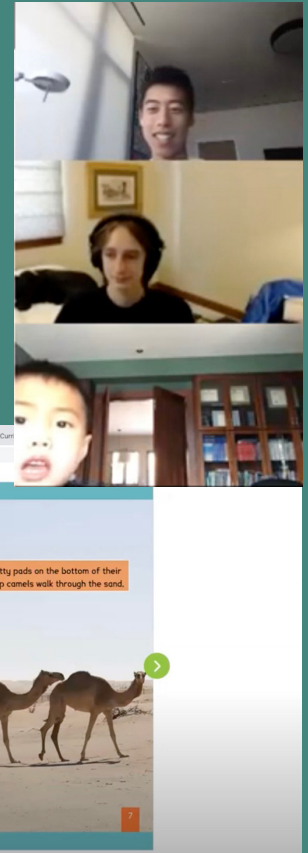
BookNook
Boys Team Charity
National Charity League
OUSD ECCCO Internship Program

Donors

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Carole King
Elaine Joe
+40 additional individual donors

Team Members

Genni Low, Director of Early Literacy
Allison Duncan, Program Coordinator
Casey Costello, Lead Mentor Coordinator
Anna Knezevic, Tutoring Program Coordinator



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