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MILE HIGH UNITED WAY SURPASSES GOALS FOR NEW LITERACY PROGRAM

Significant Second-Year Gains Demonstrated for Colorado Reading Corps

DENVER, CO – January 20, 2015 – DENVER, CO – Mile High United Way today announced significant gains for the second year of its Colorado Reading Corps program. Building on successes from the 2012-13 school year, over 80 percent of participating third graders who were previously reading below grade level showed improved academic performance and are now scoring at or above grade level for reading comprehension. As Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper noted in his second-term inaugural address last week, “We will continue to build...a Colorado where all of our children have access to a first-rate education, regardless of zip code.”

To that end, Colorado Reading Corps in 2014 met or exceeded benchmarks in a number of important categories, including fluency, vocabulary, phonemic awareness and comprehension. “Colorado Reading Corps is dedicated to our goal that 100% of our children are reading at or above grade level by the end of third grade,” said D.J. Close, Colorado Reading Corps Program Manager for Mile High United Way. “And we’re encouraged by last year’s results.”

“By starting early in childhood,” said Colorado Lieutenant Governor Joe Garcia, an outspoken advocate of the program, “Mile High United Way’s Colorado Reading Corps program is ensuring that our kids will have a lifetime of opportunity.” The program’s 50 tutors serve 41 schools in Jefferson County Public Schools, Adams 12 Five Star Schools and Aurora Public Schools. In 2013-14, Colorado Reading Corps tutors worked with more than 1,400 students in the Denver Metro area. “We saw such positive results that we’re expanding the program



from four to 23 schools in the 2014-2015 school year,” said Chris Gdowski, Adams 12 superintendent. “It’s a cost-effective way to provide intervention for many more students.”

Christine Benero, President and CEO of Mile High United Way notes, “We are thrilled at the success of the program, it’s a wonderful testament to how data-driven programs can truly create impactful results.”

Due to its proven success, United Way of Larimer County launched the program in their community last year. Loveland’s Thompson School District is already seeing strong results only a few months into their pilot year. “Colorado Reading Corps has been successful in closing the learning gap early in life to help our children reach their full potential,” said Gordan Thibedeau, President and CEO of United Way of Larimer County. Nearly 90 percent of the 295 students that have participated in the program are showing improved academic progress, and 32 kids have graduated from the program.

Colorado Reading Corps is made possible through committed program sponsors including the Corporation for National and Community Service, Serve Colorado, Target and QEP Resources, Inc. Beginning in 2014, school districts who have already seen proven results from the program are investing their own dollars to ensure all students receive the added supports necessary to all be successful readers.

Colorado Reading Corps uses research-based approaches replicated from the successful Minnesota Reading Corps (MRC), established in 2003. Early results there showed the program model was effective, and it quickly expanded to serve children in more locations throughout the state, growing each year to become the largest state AmeriCorps program in the country.

Building on that proven model, Colorado Reading Corps applies rigorous metrics to demonstrate clear results, with an emphasis on the following:

- Scientifically based interventions
- Frequent progress monitoring
- Clear literacy targets at each age level
- High-quality training of tutors



The tutors often find that the program spurs wonderful opportunities in their own lives. Those who lend their time and dedication to the program enjoy professional development, job training, a modest living allowance and a \$5,750 education award. “In the time I’ve served with Colorado Reading Corps, I’ve been able to experience much of what I had hoped for,” said Taleen Terjanian, a first-year literacy tutor at Vaughn Elementary in Aurora, Colorado. “What I didn’t anticipate was just how magical it would be to introduce children to new worlds through reading.”

ABOUT COLORADO READING CORPS

Colorado Reading Corps is a strategic program of Mile High United Way’s School Readiness Initiative. Through the program, K-3 grade students gain access to additional reading support in the form of weekly one-on-one tutoring by AmeriCorps tutors. The goal of Colorado Reading Corps is to ensure that all children are competent readers by the end of third grade. Learn more at: www.UnitedWayDenver.org/CoReadingCorps.

ABOUT MILE HIGH UNITED WAY

Mile High United Way unites people, ideas and resources to advance the common good. For 128 years, the organization has worked to create a better life for individuals, children and families in the Metro Denver community. They partner with hundreds of local nonprofits, government agencies, policy-makers and businesses to identify and collectively solve community-wide problems in the areas of School Readiness, Youth Success and Adult Self-Sufficiency.

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