

# Sparking Literacy



TOPLINE NEWS FROM READ TO ME PROJECT

DECEMBER 8, 2020



## Preparing children for the life of their dreams.

*Do you remember what you wanted to be when you grew up?*

Dreams change over the years as a child is exposed to new ideas, concepts, new places and stories told by a grandparent or even when an older brother or sister reads them a story about monkeys and butterflies in the jungle or a duck that wants to drive a bus! Imagination, wonder, curiosity, and a love of learning can begin developing from the day a baby is born. But sadly, thousands of children in Monterey County are not given literacy building experiences in their homes - experiences that spark their brains with knowledge that inspire curiosity and encourage a love of learning.

Research confirms that learning begins at birth and that 85% of brain development occurs by the age of 5 years. For the last 10 years Read to Me Project program coordinators have been explaining this to thousands of students each year.

For a first hand experience of what we tell our students, you might find this 8:12 minute excerpt of Program Coordinator Miss Katie's presentation to a class of 4th graders interesting. Your brain might spark up too, as a result of learning something new! [Click Class Presentation, password: RTMP \(all caps\)](#) Enjoy!

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## What's the BIG Idea?

Read to Me Project was selected by Monterey County Gives! Campaign organizers for its sustainable impacts on the community. As part of the application process, every organization is required to submit its Big Idea. Here is ours:

*Read to Me Project was founded in 2011 to address the alarming fact that 7 out of 10 children are starting school as much as 2 years behind. Most who start behind in school never catch up. The early literacy program is prevention-based for preschoolers and remedial for students in underperforming 4th, 5th, and 6th grades. In fact, a 2019 third-party impacts study showed participating students scored 68% greater on standard assessment scores compared to those not in the program. Normally, schools pay \$700 per class for the program. However, Covid-19 caused unbelievable challenges for schools. In the coming school year, they will have less money to do a nearly impossible job. For this reason, Read to Me Project is waiving its fees for the 2020/2021 school year.*

Please [donate](#) to Read to Me Project to help prevent and remediate low literacy in Monterey County.



*Myra Villagomez (left) with sons Christian, 5 yrs old, and 4 yr. old Jacob. Myra's sister-in-law Maria Miranda (center) with her daughter Johanna and son Jonathon, both 10 years old.*

**"This program invests in children to save lives."**

**- Myra Villagomez, parent**

"My sons, Christian and Jacob, have benefited tremendously from the Read to Me Project. Through the Read to Me Project my children have become excited about reading. At night, they race to the couch with a stack of books eager to read and be read to. Jacob has developed academic language and improved his sentence structure. Christian has also improved his language, sentence structure, words, and is able to read Kindergarten level books.



"Throughout the day, my children will often select reading instead of watching television or playing with their toys. It's gone from being a night routine to something they enjoy doing. As a parent, I love seeing their faces when they come running down the hall with books wanting to read with joy, excitement, and laughter. Reading has been transformed into something boring 'must do' into something fun and exciting.

"Although I consider my children fortunate to have a library of books in our home, most of the children in Greenfield do not have this luxury. Their parents work long hours farming sometimes 6-7 days per week. Typically, Sunday is the only day off, which is used to do weekly errands, attend mass, stock up on groceries, and household cleaning. Children in Greenfield are comprised of 98% low socioeconomic status, which means parents barely make ends meet. It is difficult for parents to go to the local library due to their work schedule and life demands.

"Greenfield is a rural city with limited resources and recreational programs. The Read to Me Project comes into our schools, provides a rich assortment of books with a wide range of reading levels and trains older siblings on how to engage the younger audience in reading by changing their pitch or describing the images on the pictures. The children who participate in this program bring books into their home for their entire family. Now, you have an average of 2-6 children per household being exposed to reading.

"Lastly, I want to say, most who end up in prison experienced academic failure, struggled with reading, and lacked parental guidance or support. This program invests in children to save lives."

- With gratitude, Myra Villagomez

**Our Goal is to Raise**

**Your support**

**\$45,000 by year-end.**

Please give the gift of literacy to thousands of children from no/low literacy families. Your donation to Read to Me Project will be matched through December 31st by Monterey County Gives! Campaign sponsors. Thank you!

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donate.**

**MONTEREY COUNTY GIVES!**  
Joining Together for Big Ideas

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