

REACH OUT AND READ MINNESOTA



FY25
**Annual
Report**
7/1/24 - 6/30/25



INTRODUCTION

Making Reading a Habit for Every Minnesota Family

The young brain develops rapidly. According to the Harvard Center for the Developing Child, in the first years of life, a child's brain makes more than 1 million new neural connections every single second.

Rapidly, however, does not mean all at once. The architecture of a child's brain is formed each and every day over the course of several years. Ask any parent of a curious toddler who won't stop asking "why" — the learning brain does not have an off switch. Children are formed by their everyday experiences, by the conversations they have with their loved ones, by exploring with their hands (or mouths!), and by their daily routines.

Writer and historian Will Durant, summarizing the ideas of Aristotle, wrote that "we are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." Aristotle may not have had babies and toddlers in mind when he conceived this, but we think the idea still holds! It is our habits, how we show up every single day for our little ones, that shape them into the people they will become.

This is why our clinicians are trained to stress the importance of routine when they hand over a book to their young patients. When families incorporate reading into their daily routines, it has transformational effects on young children and their growing brains. As our Medical Director Dr. Gigi Chawla said in a recent interview, reading is "one of the most powerful tools we have to support a child's overall development, starting from birth... Reading aloud stimulates... connections, especially in the areas tied to language, memory, and emotional regulation. And when a child is read to — especially in the lap of a loving caregiver — it becomes a source of comfort, security, and joy." Those nightly bedtime stories don't just make bedtime easier, they are preparing the child for a lifetime of learning, health, and success, in other words: excellence.

Our aim is to make sharing books a habit for every family with young children in Minnesota. To make this happen, we know we, the Reach Out and Read Minnesota team, need to keep showing up every single day for our network, to make sure our clinics have the books, resources, and training they need to make a lasting impact on their youngest patients.



INTRODUCTION

Over the course of the last year, our 312 clinics served nearly 168,000 young children in every part of the state. We distributed over 300,000 books to children through our primary programming, plus nearly 30,000 additional books to children ages 0 to 5 months. We are deeply proud of the work we have accomplished in FY25, and we invite you to learn more about the impact our community has helped create in this report. However, we know now is not the time to rest on our laurels. The families we serve need us to keep showing up, to keep improving, and to keep making our program all it can be. Tens of thousands more families who we don't serve yet need us to keep putting in the work to make our program accessible to all so that they too can give their young children the support they need to learn and thrive.

The world around us is in a constant state of change and is filled with much more uncertainty than we'd like. The way we show up for Minnesota's young children and families, however, cannot be. We remain committed to showing up each day and striving towards excellence for our program, for the 169,000 young children and their families we serve, and the thousands of children we have yet to reach.

None of our work is possible on our own. It takes all of us; our network of clinicians and clinic staff, volunteers, and our generous supporters. We're in this work together. So, as we take a moment to celebrate all we've accomplished in FY25, let's remember what it will take to keep showing up and bringing families the books and guidance they need in the year — and years — to come.



Kris Hoplin
Executive Director



Janice Haines
Program Manager



Liam Mackin
Communications and Development Manager



OUR WORK

Our Mission

We seek to strengthen all families with young children in Minnesota through guidance from medical clinicians about nurturing relationships through shared reading.

Our Vision

A Minnesota where every child has the relationships essential to learn and thrive.

Our Work

At over 300 clinics across the state, medical clinicians trained in our program give books to children and give developmental guidance to parents and caregivers at their children's routine well-child visits. Our program gives young children and their families both the resources and knowledge they need to build a foundation for a healthier and happier future.

IMPACT NUMBERS

300,979 books

distributed in our primary programming
up to age 5

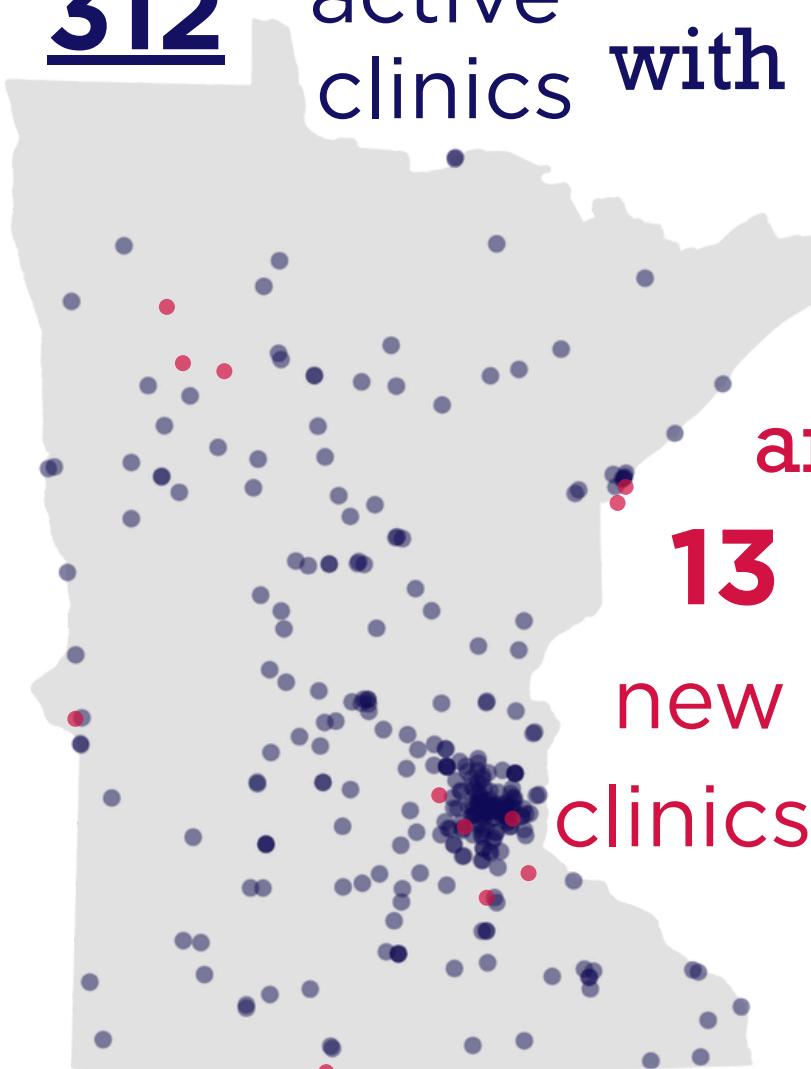


29,806 books

distributed to children in our expanded
early infancy programs, ages 0 to 5 months



312 active clinics with **2,713 clinicians**



and

13

**new
clinics**

including pediatricians, family physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants who use our program as a regular part of their well-child visits.

Including Essentia Health clinics in Bagley, Fosston, Gracebille and Oklee, the Center For American Indian Resources and Aspirus St Luke's Lester River Medical Clinic in Duluth, Northfield Hospital & Clinics Lakeville Clinic, Cornerstone Clinic in Fairmont, Allina Health Cottage Grove, and three Laborers Health and Wellness sites in the Metro Area.

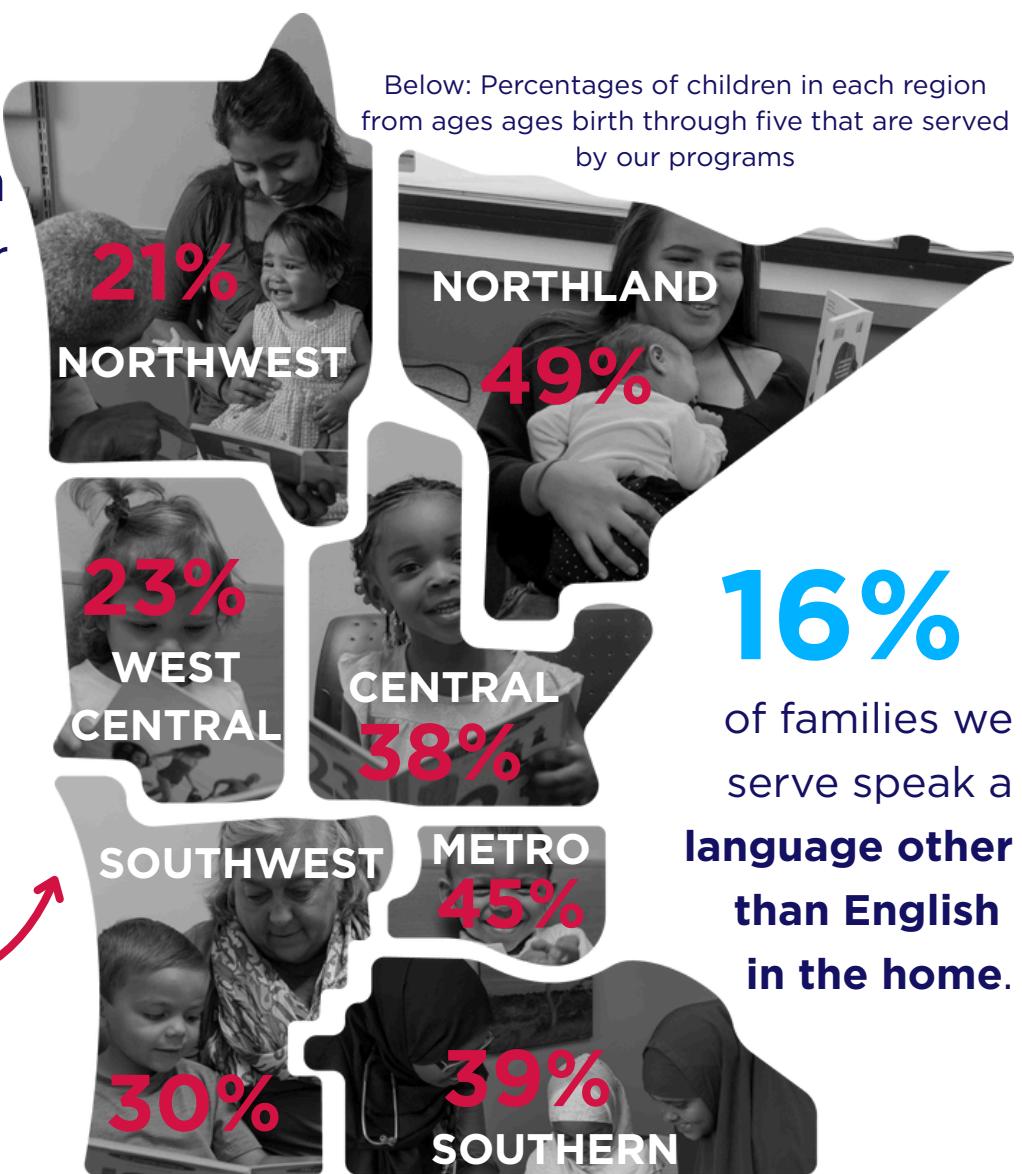
Existing (blue) and new (red) participating clinics in MN.

DEMOGRAPHICS

167,921

estimated children
served through our
primary
programming

That is more
than **41%**
of all children 5
and under in
Minnesota!



We seek to provide **bilingual books**, featuring the preferred home language of families combined with English for those we serve across our clinic network.

This includes **Spanish, Somali, Hmong, Karen, and many others**, as well as books which feature **Native languages, such as Dakota and Ojibwe**.

NEWS AND UPDATES

Holiday Impact Prize + WCCO Feature

Last year, writer Nicholas Kristoff selected Reach Out and Read as a winner of the annual Holiday Impact Prize in the [New York Times](#). Urging his readers to support the program, Kristoff wrote:

“Books were my childhood’s magic carpets that lifted me on the lifelong journey that now leads me to write this column...

Because [Reach Out and Read] relies on doctors already seeing children in their offices, the cost is only about \$30 per child per year, for a seat on that magic carpet of reading that transports a child to lifelong success.”

The New York Times

OPINION

NICHOLAS KRISTOF

Gift Ideas That Push Back the Darkness

Nov. 23, 2024

New York Times Holiday Impact Prize



Dr. Gigi Chawla on WCCO

The national spotlight also brought local attention.

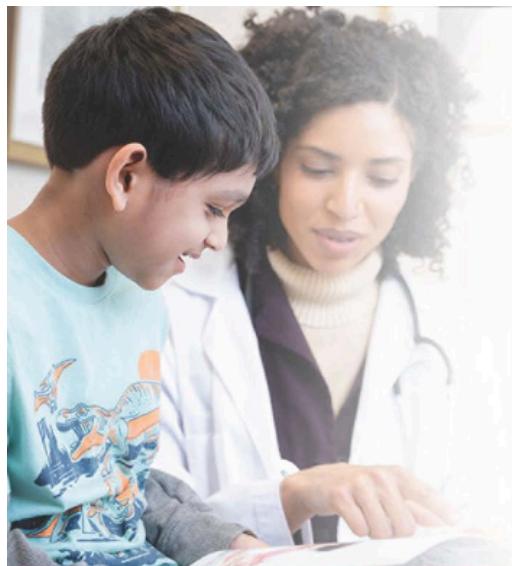
In December, [WCCO's Derek James visited Children's Minnesota](#), where he spoke with our Medical Director, Dr. Gigi Chawla.

Public Awareness Project

With support from our National Center, Reach Out and Read Minnesota embarked on a public awareness campaign to boost our program's key messages beyond the exam room. Through a multi-channel, multi-media approach, we sought to educate Minnesota families about how reading, singing, and talking with children helps to build their brains and prepare them for a brighter, healthier future. Through this campaign we made a special effort to reach audiences whose access to early learning resources may be more limited, including low-income areas, rural communities, and speakers of languages other than English. We shared our message across a wide variety of platforms, including online articles and advertisements, community radio ads, indoor digital billboards at local businesses, and boosted social media content, garnering hundreds of impressions from our audiences.

Check out a few of our examples below:

- [**6 Simple Ways to Boost Your Child's Brain**](#) - Mshale
- [**Why books are now a vital part of children's check-ups**](#) - Sahan Journal
- [**Make the most out of reading with your little one**](#) - Sahan Journal



Remember, reading is doctor recommended!

Find a site: reachoutandreadmn.org



Books Build Better Brains — and Bonds!

Reading, singing, and talking to your young child prepares them for a happier and healthier future.

Scan to explore
brain-building
resources.



One of the indoor digital billboards placed in local businesses, such as nail salons and grocery stores

NEWS AND UPDATES

Spring Benefit with Kao Kalia Yang

We were thrilled to welcome Kao Kalia Yang as our keynote speaker at our Spring Benefit this year. Yang, who won a record three Minnesota Book Awards in 2025, is the author of memoirs, including *The Latehomecomer* and *Where Rivers Part*, as well as numerous children's books. During her keynote, Yang shared from her book *The Rock in my Throat*, which describes her experiences as a young Hmong refugee navigating life at home and at school and overcoming selective mutism. She shared how her early experiences with storytelling and books helped to form her as a person.

Reach Out and Read Minnesota is delighted that Yang could join our team, along with our many supporters, clinicians, partners, and community members in support of our program. With nearly 130 people attending our event at Wilder and more joining online, our 2025 Spring Benefit was our biggest yet!



Our Gilchrist Award Winner, Dr. Angela Erdich of Indian Health Board

Our Spring Benefit also provided a wonderful opportunity for our team to connect with and celebrate the clinicians who make our program possible in their practices across the state. This year we were pleased to present our Gerald Gilchrist Medical Champion Award to Dr. Angela Erdich, a pediatrician practicing at Indian Health Board (IHB) in Minneapolis. IHB was one of the first Minnesota clinics to join the Reach Out and Read program in 1999, and they have been providing stellar, culturally responsive care for their youngest patients ever since. In her nomination for the award, staff at IHB noted that Dr. Erdich "not only demonstrates genuine concern for the community she serves but also has a deep understanding of its members. This understanding is crucial in delivering high-quality care that can truly impact people's lives."



IHB created a [video](#) to celebrate Dr. Erdich and share more about the early learning support they provide to families at their clinic, including providing books in Native languages, maintaining a Little Free Library at their clinic, and providing "doctor kits" to inspire the next generation of Native physicians.

IN THE COMMUNITY

The Reach Out and Read Minnesota team is always eager to share about the brain-building power of books, whether that's in the clinics or out in the community!

Janice Haines, Program Manager, at the North American Refugee Health Conference



REACH OUT AND READ MINNESOTA

Cate Bellevue, Program Specialist for Northern Minnesota, at the Tiny Tots Health and Wellness Fair in Bemidji



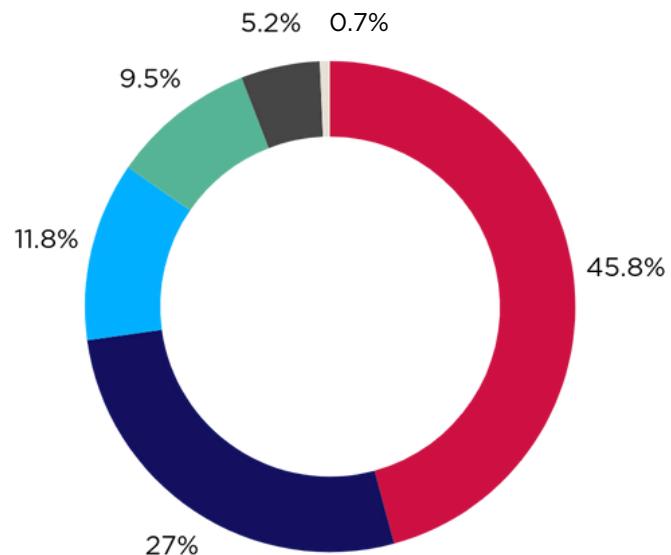
Danette Kubit, Program Specialist for Southern Minnesota, and Dr. Seth Gregory, Pediatrician at Mayo Health System Red Wing, at the Minnesota Children's Book Festival in Red Wing



REACH OUT AND READ MINNESOTA

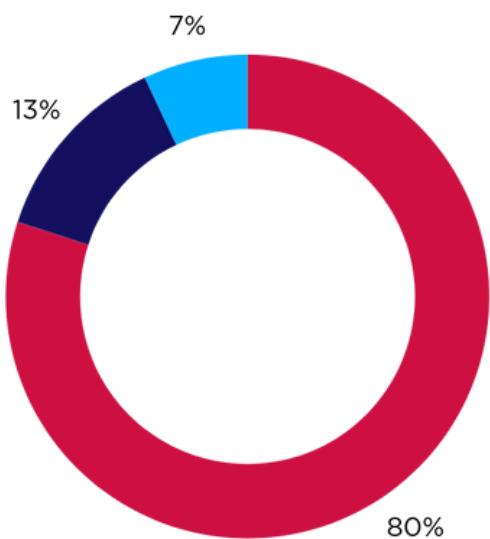
FINANCIALS

REVENUE: \$545,923



- Government Grants - \$250,000
- General Grants - \$147,500
- Individual and Corporate Contributions - \$64,326
- Events - \$52,001
- In-kind donations - \$28,444
- Investments and other - \$3,652

EXPENSES: \$554,320



- Program
- Fundraising
- Admin

Note: This year's expenses exceeded revenue by \$8,397. This differential is primarily due to changes in grant funding and the timing of grant cycles and is not indicative of a cash flow issue.

"It is the best thing in the world to be able to tell a family, "I have a gift for you," especially for those families who are receiving their first book."

Michael Arenson, MD,
Hennepin Healthcare, Minneapolis



OUR SUPPORTERS

Foundations, corporations, and other organizations who stepped up to support
Reach Out and Read Minnesota in FY25

\$250,000

Minnesota State Department of Education

\$20,000-\$40,000

CenterPoint Energy Foundation
Ciresi Walburn Foundation
St. Croix Valley Foundation

\$10,000-\$19,999

Hugh J. Andersen Foundation
Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
CAW Memorial Foundation
Richard M. Schulze Foundation

\$5,000-\$9,999

All About Books
Indian Health Services (via Reach Out and Read Inc)
Z Foundation

\$2,500-\$4,999

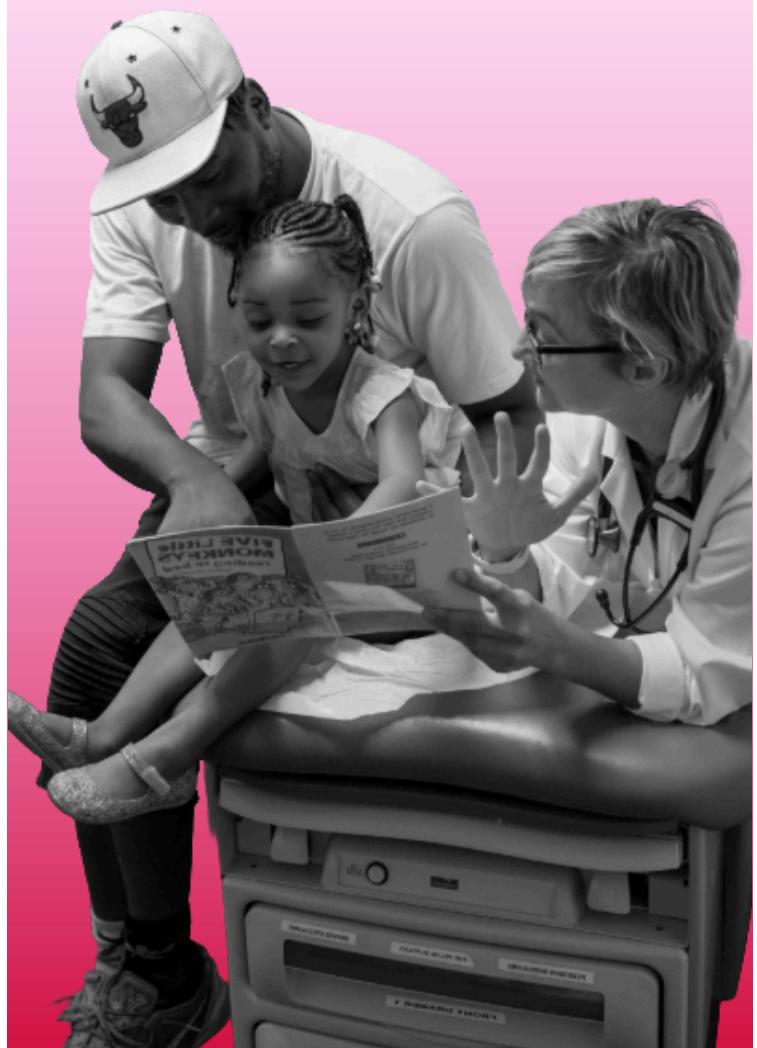
Children's Minnesota
University of Minnesota Medical Center,
Fairview Medical Executive Committee
Best & Flanagan
HealthPartners
M Health Fairview

\$500 - \$2,499

Delta Dental of Minnesota
Blaze Credit Union
Hennepin Healthcare
Interstate Books4School
CliftonLarsonAllen

“Some kids are so happy to get a book. It's such a sweet gesture and reminds me to always endorse reading at home. The absolute best is when the kid immediately digs into the book and starts looking at it while I ask parents questions.”

Clinician at Children's Minnesota, Minneapolis



Note: this list does not include individual
donors or anonymous donors

OUR TEAM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Gigi Chawla, MD, MHA (Medical Director)

VP Chief of General Pediatrics, Children's Minnesota

Nathan Chomilo, MD, FAAP

Medicaid Medical Director, State of Minnesota
Senior Equity Advisor to the Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Health
General Pediatrician and IM Hospitalist, HealthPartners/Park Nicollet

Tricia Dege

Founder & CEO, Mom Mastermind

Amy Fields, CPA (inactive)

Business Development Executive, Brown & Brown Insurance

Lauren Gilchrist, MPH

Senior Director, Collective for Community Health, Children's Minnesota

Alicia Huckleby

Resident Initiatives Director/Human Resources Director, St. Paul Public Housing Agency

Kate Keiper, SPHR, CPC (Vice Chair)

Vice President of Human Resources and Physician Services, HealthPartners/Park Nicollet

John C Markham, JD

Lawyer, Contracting and Vendor Coordinator with Minnesota Department of Information Technology

Molly Martyn, M.D. (Secretary)

Pediatrician, Children's Minnesota

Mike Mercer, MD

Physician and faculty, United Family Physicians and United Family Medicine Residency Program

Anna Regas Paulson, M.Ed.

Grant Project Coordinator, Help Me Grow

Liza Soto De Cichowicz, MBA, CMA (Treasurer)

Financial Executive, Life Floor

Christina Tibesar

Senior Client Solutions Director, Brillect

HaiVy Thompson (Chair)

Managing Director, Medical and Health Content, American Cancer Society

Leann West, MD

Pediatrician, HealthPartners/Park Nicollet



OUR TEAM

STAFF

Cate Belleveau

Program Specialist

Gigi Chawla

Medical Director

Eleanor GrandPre

Program Coordinator

Kris Hoplin

Executive Director

Janice Haines

Program Manager

Danette Kubit

Program Specialist

Liam Mackin

Communications and
Development Manager

Kristi Woods

Program Specialist*

Faisa Ali, Program Specialist**

*new as of FY26

**left September 2025

"It's wonderful to see the variety of clinics in different pockets of the state that are all engaging with Reach Out and Read in their own unique ways to meet the distinctive needs of the families they serve. The chance I have to help clinics meet those needs, whether that's finding books that meet language or representation needs, helping to create literacy-rich spaces in clinics, or sharing additional learning resources, like reading tip bookmarks or posters promoting their local library, is a really cool window into that work. Each clinic in each neighborhood and area of the state doing this program is doing it in pursuit of the same goal — healthy kiddos and healthy family relationships through shared reading!"

**Eleanor GrandPre,
Program Coordinator**



CONNECT WITH US:

INSTAGRAM



FACEBOOK



LINKEDIN



YOUTUBE



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