

BECOME A READINGPAL TODAY!



**UNITED WAY OF THE BIG BEND** is changing this statistic. Now in its seventh year, **ReadingPals** is continuing to work to improve the reading skills of students in Gadsden and Leon Counties.

Last year, our **ReadingPals** volunteers read for **3,600** hours to over **200** students and gifted over **3,000** books!! As a result, more than **70%** of our ReadingPals students achieved at least one year's worth of reading growth.

**ReadingPals** relies on hundreds of volunteers every year to read one-to-one with students who have been identified as struggling readers.

- Mentors are matched one-to-one with students in kindergarten, first, or second grades
- Mentors report during the after school setting for one hour a week during the school year
- Mentors choose the school and the day that best fit their schedule
- Mentors utilize a curriculum created by LCS District and UWBB that is tailored to children's reading needs
- Mentors present each student with a brand new book every week
- Mentors receive training from UWBB on school district and ReadingPals program policies and procedures. (includes background screening)

EVERY YEAR, ONE IN FOUR STUDENTS FAILS TO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL ON TIME!



2018-19 READINGPALS SCHOOLS

LEON COUNTY:

- Apalachee Tapestry Magnet School of the Arts
- Astoria Park Elementary School
- Bond Elementary School
- Conley Elementary School
- Desoto Trail Elementary School
- Fort Braden School
- Hartsfield Elementary School
- Hawks Rise Elementary School
- Killearn Lakes Elementary School
- Oakridge Elementary
- Pineview Elementary
- Riley Elementary School
- Roberts Elementary School
- Ruediger Elementary School
- Sabal Palm Elementary School
- Sealey Elementary School
- Woodville Elementary School
- WT Moore Elementary School

GADSDEN COUNTY:

- Greensboro Elementary

For more information about becoming a **ReadingPals** mentor, please contact **Rebecca Weaver** today at [rebecca@uwbb.org](mailto:rebecca@uwbb.org)



MENTOR TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE





**ReadingPals** offers volunteers an opportunity to build meaningful relationships with young children in Florida, while helping them improve their social-emotional development and early literacy skills. ReadingPals is managed by **The Children's Movement of Florida** and administered through **17 United Ways** -- with the help of numerous community partners across the state.



## What Is ReadingPals?

**ReadingPals** is a statewide early literacy initiative that provides volunteer mentors for students from Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) to 3rd grade who may need extra help, utilizing one-on-one or small group settings. Utilizing one-on-one or small group settings.

## Why Is ReadingPals Important?

**45%** of children in Florida are not ready for Kindergarten<sup>1</sup> and **43%** of Florida students cannot read at a minimally proficient level by the end of third grade.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, studies show that children with mentors are more confident and have fewer behavioral problems.<sup>3</sup> Early intervention and individualized attention gives students the best likelihood of success.

### SOURCES:

1. Florida Office of Early Learning (2018)
2. Florida Department of Education (2018)
3. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada (2013)

## What Do We Hope To Achieve?

- 1. MENTORING:** To build genuine, impactful relationships between students and our volunteer mentors.
- 2. EARLY LITERACY:** To improve students' understanding of the fundamental building blocks of early literacy.
- 3. SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** To help students build a strong social-emotional foundation through self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.



## Where Is ReadingPals Available?



We offer programs in **27** counties via **17** local United Ways and other community partners, with opportunities in more than **200** schools and childcare centers around the state. We provide over **3,000** students every year with a mentor. This is all made possible thanks to the Barnett family's passion for promoting literacy and early childhood development in Florida.

## What Is The Commitment?

**ReadingPals** volunteers are asked to commit an hour per week with their student(s) for 25+ weeks during the school year (some programs may offer a 30-minute per week or half-year option). Each school year, more than 2,300 volunteers statewide make this commitment, and at least 40% return for another year!

## How Can I Get Started?

Once signed up through the United Way or The Children's Movement of Florida, volunteers are connected with a regional coordinator at United Way (or other partner agency) who will provide details about participating schools in your area, volunteer time-slots, background screening, training and curriculum.

## What Else Can I Do?

**ReadingPals** volunteers see the importance of early education first-hand, and gain exposure to the challenges many teachers and students face in the classroom. We hope the ReadingPals experience will inspire our volunteers to become advocates alongside The Children's Movement, promoting greater investment in Florida's youngest children. Learn more at [www.childrensmovementflorida.org](http://www.childrensmovementflorida.org).



# MENTOR TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE