



**United
Way**
Rock River Valley

LEADING THE WAY

OUR MISSION

To unite the collective power of the community to improve lives.

With **more than a century** of local experience, we see how our community's most significant challenges are connected – and how to bring people and resources together to address them.



HOW UNITED WAY WORKS

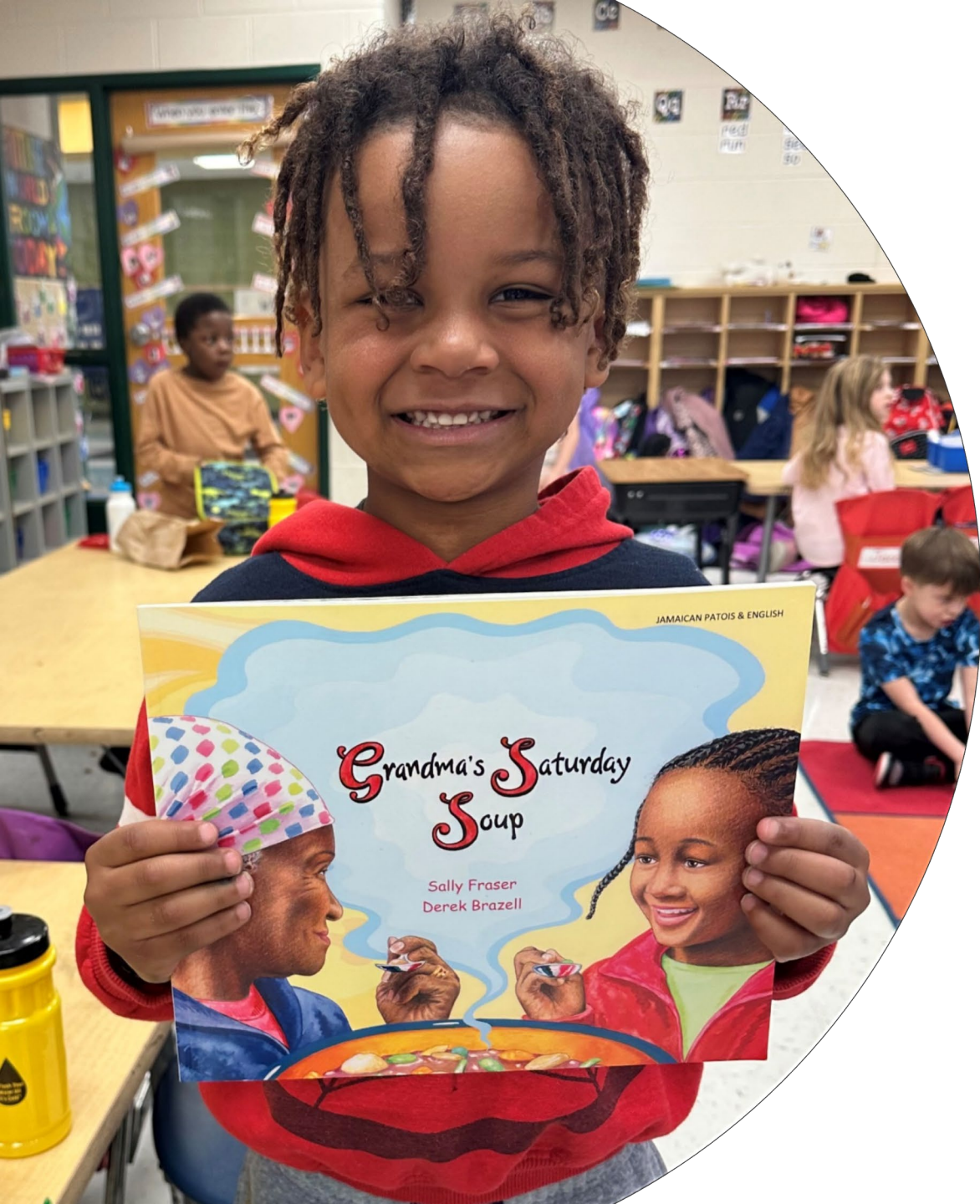
SERVICE MODEL





IMPACT AREAS

Youth Opportunity – Community Resiliency – Financial Security

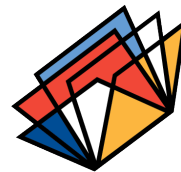


IMPACT AREA:

YOUTH OPPORTUNITY

Helping young people realize their full potential.

United for Literacy is our primary initiative and is focused on increasing childhood literacy rates in Winnebago County.



UNITED for LITERACY

Powered by United Way

**2/3 THIRD-GRADE STUDENTS
ARE READING BELOW GRADE
LEVEL IN WINNEBAGO COUNTY.**

Only 32% of students are reading at or above third grade level.

NEARLY
12,500
OF 17,500 CHILDREN
0-5 IN WINNEBAGO
COUNTY LIVE AT
200%
FEDERAL
POVERTY LEVEL

The median annual income for a family of 3 is just over \$50k – these children risk falling into poverty after just one unexpected expense.

1 BOOK
IS AVAILABLE
FOR EVERY
300
CHILDREN
IN LOW
INCOME HOMES

There is a dire need to help families build their at-home libraries.

\$30
DONATION
GIVES
6 BOOKS
TO ONE CHILD IN
WINNEBAGO COUNTY

Literacy lays the foundation for lifelong learning, critical thinking, and academic success. Reading well early on is linked to better grades, higher graduation chances, career advancement, and long-term financial security.

However, significant gaps exist in access to becoming literate, especially for our children in Winnebago County communities.

HOW WE'RE TAKING ON THE LITERACY CRISIS

- Consulting with childhood literacy experts to create a comprehensive, collective strategy
- Gathering agencies throughout the community to work together on progress
- Providing funding to programs that benefit the critical ages of 0-5
- Distributing tens of thousands of books across the county every year



FIRST YEAR RESULTS (2023-2024)

Nearly
\$400,000
allocated to
12 AGENCIES
used for programs
and book
distribution

10,122
children impacted in
Winnebago County

79
literacy events:
48 for children,
31 for families

FIRST YEAR RESULTS (2023-2024)

63,254

books distributed
to build home
libraries

16

classrooms provided
with a dedicated
IREAD volunteer

196

professionals and
volunteers trained

THIS YEAR WE'RE DOING EVEN MORE...

2024-2025 LITERACY IMPACT PLAN

FOR CHILDREN

- Read alouds and independent reading
- In school and after school programming
- Community story times
- Book Distribution
 - Tiny Turners
 - Page Turners
 - Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
 - **Reach Out and Read**

FOR CAREGIVERS

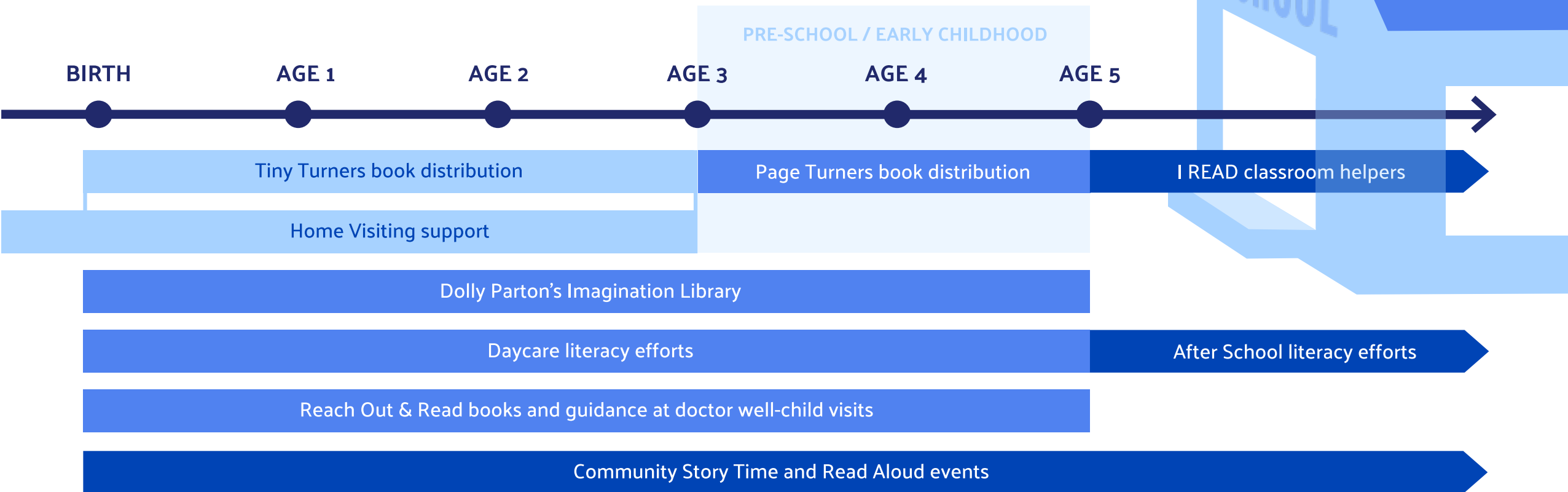
- Family literacy nights
- Engagement materials
- Training / outreach

FOR THE COMMUNITY

- Training and professional development
- Advocacy
- Public awareness
- Bonus book distribution

TOTAL CURRENT INVESTMENT: \$624,309

PAVING THE WAY FOR SCHOOL READINESS



OUR BOLD GOAL: FOR 75% OF THIRD-GRADE STUDENTS IN WINNEBAGO COUNTY TO READ AT GRADE LEVEL OR ABOVE BY 2034.

Why third grade?

- This is the time when education shifts from “learning to read” to “reading to learn,” and children must have a basis of reading to advance in other topics.
- There is measurable testing data for third graders that we can use to track our progress!



IMPACT AREA:

COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

Addressing urgent needs today for a better tomorrow.

211 Helpline is a 24-hour free call and text line we fund in Winnebago County that helps individuals in crisis.

Strong Neighborhoods is a collaborative effort with other organizations to provide houses with resources in neighborhoods that need them.

211 HELPLINE

- Connects thousands of people with trained specialists
- Crisis and emergency counseling
- Disaster assistance
- Food
- Healthcare and insurance
- Stable housing and utility assistance
- Childcare and family services



STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS

- United Way collaborates with other local impact organizations to operate in the houses
- Pathway for community residents to gain support
- House locations:
 - 908 8th Avenue, Rockford
 - 312 Irving Avenue, Rockford
 - 825 Marie Avenue, Machesney Park



STRONG HOUSE PARTNERS

8th Avenue

- Zion Development Corporation
- Carpenter's Place Family Services

Marie Avenue

- Tommy Corral Memorial Foundation
- Secondary Success
- Winnebago County Chaplains

Irving Avenue

- Get Connected 815
- Rockford Police Department
- Children Exposed to Violence
- Brightpoint



IMPACT AREA:

FINANCIAL SECURITY

Together, we can meet people's most basic needs and create a stronger financial future for every generation.

Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) is a federal program that we administer in Winnebago County to provide resources to non-profit agencies such as shelter, food, and homeless prevention services.



**UNITED WAY OF ROCK RIVER VALLEY
MOBILIZES COMMUNITIES TO ACTION
SO ALL CAN THRIVE.**



GET INVOLVED

Volunteers transform their communities. Visit wevolunteer.org to find local opportunities!



GIVE BACK

Your generosity helps to create real, lasting, local change.



TAKE ACTION

Your voice is powerful. Use the power of your network to spread the word!



United
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Rock River Valley

THANK YOU!