

Fostering Grade Level Readers Project Team



Deborah Gitlitz, Community Librarian/Bibliotecaria Comunitaria, Wilsonville Public Library

I have over 20 years of experience as a bilingual community/youth librarian, accompanying families through the joyful skill-building of storytime and the complexities and excitement of learning to read. As manager of a bilingual family literacy grant at Multnomah County Library and as a certified Oregon Registry trainer, I've taught both national curricula and my own customized trainings in support of family literacy and teacher education. Both in and out of schools, as a librarian, educator and mentor, I've developed and led hundreds of literacy-supporting programs for children of all ages, striving to nourish that potent connection between curiosity and reading.



Jen Burkart, District Literacy Specialist at Beaverton Public School District, Adjunct Professor of Reading Endorsement and Special Education programs at Lewis and Clark College

I design and deliver customized staff development on literacy best practices, collaborate with administration to pioneer complex change initiatives, support school-based literacy specialists to ensure quality coaching practices are in place and specialize in developing effective individual and school-wide reading interventions for our most tangled readers. My husband and three boys keep me happily adventuring around the beautiful Pacific Northwest in my free time.



Kari Kunst, Youth Services Librarian, Tigard Public Library

Prior to becoming a Youth Services Librarian, I worked with struggling young readers and their families as the education and literacy supervisor with the Boys & Girls club. Through this work I learned what happens when kids struggle, and what happens when they begin to get the support they need to succeed. As a Youth Services librarian I get to see and be a part of the work that libraries do to help build strong readers through early literacy programming, community partnerships, out-of-school time activities, collection development, and interactions to help young readers find just-right books.



Kelli Scardina, ELL Teacher/Reading Specialist, Beaverton School District

As a dual language teacher I have always worked closely with the school and public librarians to bring high-interest literature and non-fiction texts in both English and Spanish to my students. I am excited to combine my love of literacy and language learning in a broader setting, exploring additional ways to meet the diverse needs of our community here in Oregon. I believe my passion, skills and vast experience as a bilingual educator — teacher, literacy specialist, curriculum developer, collaborator, leader, presenter and family advocate — are a great match for this innovative project.



Chad Rodi, Senior Associate and Director of Education and Child Wellbeing, NPC Research

During my time as a teacher of students with disabilities and later as a school administrator, I was witness to the importance of equal access to educational and social resources. In my current role as a researcher and program evaluator, I focus on services and supports that are effective in addressing these inequities. My specific interests lie in supporting programs designed to improve the lives of children and youth at the intersections of education, child welfare, and public health. NPC Research recently completed a 4-year evaluation for Reading for Healthy Families (RFHF), a partnership of the Oregon State Library and the Oregon Commission on Children and Families (now the Early Learning Division) supported by collaborative grants from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation and The Oregon Community Foundation. The goal of the RFHF project was to train Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon home visitors and children's library staff to implement the Every Child Ready to Read @ your Library® early literacy curriculum in their work with parents.



Katie Lakey, Data and Grant Coordinator, OregonASK

As a preschool instructor, a camp counselor, and a facilitator teaching first and second graders in afterschool, I've witnessed the meaningful, supportive learning that can take place outside the classroom, whether it's at a library, an afterschool program, or a community organization. Now, as an employee of the Statewide Afterschool Network, I've dedicated the last four years to creating and evaluating the resources that informal educators need to create dynamic, engaging learning experiences that support children of all backgrounds.



Susan Zundel, Quality Improvement Coordinator and Master Trainer, OregonASK

I have been working in afterschool in a variety of ways for 20 years including community children's theater, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and at the Oregon Afterschool Network, OregonASK. I hold trainer certifications for the Beyond the Bell Program Management Toolkit, Science Action Club, InventionX, Techbridge, Crypto Club, Code.org, and is a Click2Science Coach/Trainer. I served for several years in state PTA leadership, ultimately serving as the Oregon PTA State President from 2013-2015. I bring my dedication to parent and community engagement in education to my work in after school.



Bryce Kozla, Youth Services Librarian, Washington County Cooperative Library Services

I studied literacy research for 15 years, and have a Master's in Reading Education as well as an Master's in Library Science from Florida State University. Before becoming a librarian, I worked as an elementary teacher and reading coach. As an Assistant in Research at the Florida Center for Reading Research, I worked on several projects including Empowering Teachers and the Florida Reading Assessment; I also created multiple curriculum crosswalks and accompanying training manuals. I authored articles published in *Multicultural Education & Technology Journal* and *Children & Libraries*, and firmly believe in the power of research in youth services librarianship.



Katie Anderson, Youth Services Librarian, Washington County Cooperative Library Services

As a teacher, I saw what happens when kindergarteners lack early literacy skills and 4th graders are not reading at grade level. In Early Childhood Resources at Multnomah County Library, I learned about the positive impact public library early literacy and summer reading programs can have on reading readiness and summer learning. At the State Library of Oregon, I delved into brain and socio-emotional development, public-school library partnerships, and the impact library programs and other out-of-school time programs have on student success.