

# FY2024 Buncombe County Strategic Partnership Grant Report

<b>Organization Name:</b>	Read to Succeed	
<b>Project Name:</b>	Positive Experiences Around Reading (PEAR)	
<b>Reporting Quarter:</b> (Check one)		Quarter 1 (July 1, 2023 - September 30, 2023)
	X	Quarter 2 (October 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023)
		Quarter 3 (January 1, 2024 - March 31, 2024)
		Quarter 4 (April 1, 2024 - June 30, 2024)

## Narrative summary of grant related activities

Please provide a brief summary (no more than 1500 characters). You may attach supplemental documents if needed.

<b>Quarter 1</b>	<p>R2S kicked off Q1 with incredible engagement across multiple family and community events and literacy enrichment activities.</p> <p>In July, we kicked off a new partnership with Asheville PEAK Academy, beginning with supplying 100+ culturally-responsive book bundles for students in the Read to Achieve summer camp. Two Black community members also joined students during the camp to lead read-alouds of Black children's books, exploring vocabulary and comprehension questions together. In September, R2S and PEAK launched a library chaperone program where K-5 PEAK students visit the West Asheville Library accompanied by their teachers, R2S staff, and volunteers.</p> <p>R2S hosted and participated in more than 8 community/family events in Q1, distributing more than 700 books and engaging 400 families with literacy resources and activities. Events included read-alouds with Books Alive! at Chosen PODS summer camp, United 4 Youth Block Party, Edington Back to School Bash, Hillcrest Head Start Open House, Johnston Elementary Summer Institute, Youthful HAND end-of-summer celebration, and Claxton Ice Cream Social Family Night.</p>
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<p><b>Quarter 2</b></p>	<p>R2S distributed another 1,100+ children's books in Q2, prioritizing Black main characters, authors, and illustrators. Books are shared with families in a variety of ways, including at on-site family reading and community events, through more than 625 Winter Break Book Bundles, and via school and community partners, incl. Claxton, Jones, Johnston, and Hall Fletcher Elementary schools; early childhood students at CWA, YWCA, and Community Action Opportunities' Lonnie D. Burton, Hillcrest, Johnston, and Pisgah View Head Start Learning Centers; Asheville PEAK Academy, Youthful HAND in Hillcrest, Children First/Communities in Schools, Lucy S. Herring, and Chosen PODS After-School.</p> <p>R2S hosted &amp; participated in 13 community/family events in Q2, reaching 800+ families and community members with literacy resources and activities. Featured guest reader and celebrated children's book author Derrick Barnes engaged students with a visit to Asheville in December - more on that below! Three additional R2S guest readers from the Asheville community joined early childhood students 15 times in Q2, sharing books and literacy-centered extension activities.</p> <p>R2S staff continued to build out the revamped Resource Library located in the R2S office with now more than 2,000 literacy-based activities, worksheets, books, games, and more. R2S tutors and after-school reading instructors started meeting with students in late October and early November and access to the resource library is integral to their lesson planning.</p>
<p><b>Quarter 3</b></p>	

Quarter 4	
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## Progress toward annual goals

		Actual Results (Enter Data) Please only include new data for the specific quarter				
Measure	Annual Goal	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Progress
# of culturally responsive books and family reading resources delivered	1000	700	1110			1810
# of season Book Bundles distributed through community partnerships	200	150	670			820
# of visits to school, after-school, and/or summer partners by Black children's book authors or guest readers	10	9	17			26
# of school/partner-based community or family reading events and workshops	10	8	13			21

### Comments:

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## Use of funds to date and any budget considerations

Spending Category	Starting	Total Spending (Enter Data)				Amount
		Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	
Personnel	\$ 8,000	\$ 3,090	\$ 4,910			\$ 0
Travel	\$ 800		\$ 169			\$ 631
Supplies/Materials	\$ 2,000	\$ 440	\$ 1,560			\$ 0
Meetings	\$ 2,000	\$ 414	\$ 564			\$ 1,022
Printing/Marketing	\$ 1,000	\$ 554	\$ 133			\$ 313
Contracts/Vendors	\$ 4,000	\$ 1,526	\$ 2,000			\$ 474
Insurance and Bonds	\$ 1,000	\$ 368	\$ 67			\$ 565
Culturally Responsive Books	\$ 8,000	\$ 1,774	\$ 6,165			\$ 61
Total	\$ 26,800	\$ 8,165	\$ 15,569	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,066

**Comments:**

# FY2024 Q1 Strategic Partnership Grant Report

October 1 - December 31, 2023

## Summary (1500 characters)

R2S distributed another 1,100+ children's books in Q2, prioritizing Black main characters, authors, and illustrators. Books are shared with families in a variety of ways, including at on-site family reading and community events, through more than 625 Winter Break Book Bundles, and via school and community partners, incl. Claxton, Jones, Johnston, and Hall Fletcher Elementary schools; early childhood students at CWA, YWCA, and Community Action Opportunities' Lonnie D. Burton, Hillcrest, Johnston, and Pisgah View Head Start Learning Centers; Asheville PEAK Academy, Youthful HAND in Hillcrest, Children First/Communities in Schools, Lucy S. Herring, and Chosen PODS After-School.

R2S hosted & participated in 13 community/family events in Q2, reaching 800+ families and community members with literacy resources and activities. Featured guest reader and celebrated children's book author Derrick Barnes engaged students with a visit to Asheville in December - more on that below! Three additional R2S guest readers from the Asheville community joined early childhood students 15 times in Q2, sharing books and literacy-centered extension activities.

R2S staff continued to build out the revamped Resource Library located in the R2S office with now more than 2,000 literacy-based activities, worksheets, books, games, and more. R2S tutors and after-school reading instructors started meeting with students in late October and early November and access to the resource library is integral to their lesson planning.

## In-Depth Narrative

### Book Distribution & Resource Library

R2S distributed another 1,100+ children's books in Q2, prioritizing Black main characters, authors, and illustrators. Books are shared with families in a variety of ways, including at on-site family reading and community events, through Winter Break Book Bundles, and via community partners.

Additional resources distributed with books include Developmental Milestones for Children 0-5 (translated into Spanish with the help of a local Head Start parent), comprehension guide (general version \*and\* versions customized to a bundle-specific book), directory of free reading apps, and more.

More than 625 Winter Break Bundles went out to students in December involved in R2S programming at Claxton, Jones, Johnston, and Hall Fletcher Elementary schools as well as early childhood students at CWA, YWCA, and Community Action Opportunities' Lonnie D. Burton, Hillcrest, Johnston, and Pisgah View Head Start Learning Centers. We also distributed Book Bundles to students at Asheville PEAK Academy, Youthful HAND in Hillcrest, Children First/Communities in Schools, Lucy S. Herring, and Chosen PODS After-School.

Winter Break Book Bundles featured two children's books, a winter-themed word search, a small toy, pencil, comprehension guide, and family reading newsletter. 16 volunteers from Junior League Asheville helped purchase some of the supplies and assemble elementary-age book bundles as part of their November Day of Service.

R2S also distributed more than 20 classroom resource kits to partners including Foundations PreK curriculum, phonological awareness kits with multi-sensory letter-sound activities, and curated read-aloud kits with books, scripts, and extension activities.

R2S staff continued to build out the revamped Resource Library located in the R2S office with now more than 2,000 literacy-based activities, worksheets, books, games, and more. We are utilizing inventory management software to catalog each item with a photo, description, and literacy skill - for example, materials focusing on vowel team practice are all categorized and cataloged together, making them easy to find and check out for lessons with students. R2S tutors and after-school reading instructors started meeting with students in late October and early November and access to the resource library is integral to their lesson planning.

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## Guest Readers

R2S launched a weekly guest reader program in Q2 in partnership with CAO. Ms. Ann of Books Alive!, R2S staff member and Community Engagement Coordinator Toshia Sitton, and local community member Devon Lockett visited with 3 - 5 year old students at four CAO centers October through December for 15 total weekly read-alouds and extension activities. Center locations include CAO's most racially diverse - Lonnie D. Burton in the Southside Community, Hillcrest, Pisgah View Apartments, and Johnston (near Deaverview).

The student demographic breakdown of the 128 total students enrolled in those centers reflects ~ 48% Black, 22% Hispanic, 11% multi-racial, 19% white/other.

These visits typically involved a guest reader reading 2 - 3 books aloud and engaging students in rich discussion of the themes, illustrations, and vocabulary in the book. Then the guest reader worked with staff to lead students through a related extension activity or craft to "extend" their experience with the text. For example, on one visit to the PVA Head Start Center, Ms. Ann of Books Alive! read "Alma and How She Got Her Name" with students. She then led them through a craft of writing the uppercase first letter of their name on a blank page and gluing torn strips of

colored construction paper over the outline of the letter. Students practiced saying the letter name and sound as they crafted (all while practicing listening and fine motor skills too!).

Featured guest reader and celebrated children's book author Derrick Barnes engaged students with a visit to Asheville in December - more on that below!

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## Community & Family Reading Events

R2S hosted and participated in 13 community/family events in Q2, reaching 800+ families and community members with literacy resources and activities. Barnes & Noble donated over 250 new books during Q2, which we used in combination with books we purchased to distribute to families at events. R2S intentionally sourced 180+ books by Derrick Barnes through Noir Collective, a local Black-owned boutique and bookstore on The Block, a historically-Black neighborhood in downtown Asheville. Junior League Asheville also supported the purchase of supplies (bags, pencils, toy) to fill 200 elementary kits with books provided by R2S.

Events included:

1. **UNCA Reparations Summit** - in October, R2S participated at the expo portion of the Reparations Summit at UNCA. Co-ED Ashley, Community Engagement Coordinator, Toshia, and long-time tutor and board member, Linda, shared more information about the work of Read 2 Succeed and distributed Black children's books.
2. **Christine W. Avery (CWA) Fall Festival** - CWA hosted its annual Fall Festival at MLK, Jr. Park. R2S set up a tent with games and prizes, gave away almost 100 culturally responsive books, and shared family resources like reading comprehension guides and developmental milestone documents.
3. **Chosen PODS Trunk-or-Treat** - In October, Edington hosted their Trunk or Treat event on Halloween. Not only did R2S Staff and volunteers come out, but we also recruited over 20 UNCA athletes to volunteer in addition to a member of Junior League Asheville. 175+ families attended this event and enjoyed face painting, games, literacy centers, bookmark decorating, live read-alouds, cotton candy, hot cocoa and cider, and more!
4. **Hood Huggers Agricultural Fest** - In October, the Hood Huggers Ag Fest took place at Burton Street Community Center. R2S showed up to share books from Black-owned Asheville boutique Noir Collective centering Black characters and The Hop ice cream with families. We also stocked up the little free library outside the Burton St Community Center, which Hood Huggers youth repaired as part of a separate grant project with R2S. That Little Free Library is registered nationally.
5. **R2S 2023 Fall Mixer** - October also brought with it R2S' annual Fall Mixer where over 70 community members and partners came out to celebrate social impact and our literacy ecosystem! There was music and food by Black-owned businesses, door prizes donated from local companies, and a ton of fun for the whole family.
6. **Pisgah View Head Start Fall Family Fun** - PVA's Head Start Center hosted a parent engagement event in late October during their school day. R2S came out at 9 AM to



entertain the kids with literacy games and free bilingual and culturally responsive books, while parents and caregivers got to hear about programs and opportunities at Head Start for them and their students.

7. **Johnston Pajama Reading Night** - R2S loves showing up for our public schools! Johnston Elementary, one of our tutoring sites, hosted a Pajama Reading Night in December. R2S staff, tutors, and volunteers came out to give away culturally responsive books, help support students making holiday crafts, and build relationships with Johnston families.
8. **Claxton Thanks for Reading** - R2S reading tutors and volunteer coordinator, Mary Lawson, showed up to support students at Claxton, for their annual Thanksgiving meal and Title 1. Tutors were able to share a meal with students and watch them perform in their class's literacy-based showcase.
9. **Community Holiday Extravaganza** - R2S was honored to be in community with over 250 families and students at our 2nd Annual Community Holiday Extravaganza. This event featured two Black-owned food trucks, local Black performer Virtuous and DJ Big Wave, and nationally acclaimed children's book author Derrick Barnes. We served hot cocoa and snacks and families played loads of fun literacy carnival games with prizes; Buncombe Partnership for Children hosted a cookie decorating table, and R2S gave away 100+ curated reading kits with Derrick Barnes' new book Santa's Gotta Go, comprehension guides, and a holiday toy. Derrick Barnes also read his book to families and signed copies! *Check out event highlights in this quick video:*  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hlwhg9ZsqL\\_Khvtq51jEidPldqBeQk-G/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hlwhg9ZsqL_Khvtq51jEidPldqBeQk-G/view?usp=sharing)
10. **Derrick Barnes at PEAK** - the day after the big community holiday event, Derrick Barnes visited more than 90 elementary students at Asheville PEAK Academy. Derrick read his books Santa's Gotta Go and Like Lava in My Veins for students, took questions, and talked about his journey becoming a children's book author. R2S shared a signed copy of "Santa's Gotta Go" for each teacher to keep in their classroom at PEAK.
11. **Derrick Barnes at Chosen** - Derrick Barnes also visited 100 K-12 students (some of them overlapping from PEAK) at Chosen PODS After-School. Derrick met with assemblies of K-3 and then 4th+ students. He read his books Santa's Gotta go and Like Lava in My Veins for students, took questions, and talked about his journey to becoming a children's book author. R2S provided brand new copies of his books for students to get signed and curated literacy kits with custom comprehension guides and activities to do over Winter Break.
12. **Community Action Opportunities (CAO) Training** - R2S Co-ED Ashley Allen led a training with all 60 Community Action Opportunities staff members in early October focusing on phonological awareness in early childhood and best practices for implementing the evidence-based phonemic awareness curriculum Heggerty with children 3 - 5 years. All participants received lunch and classroom resources for their Head Start and PreK centers, including culturally-responsive board books and letter-sound manipulatives.
13. **BCPL Training** - In November, Allen led a training with all 10 youth services librarians representing 12 Buncombe County Public Libraries (BCPL) branches in early November. Participants learned how children build foundational comprehension skills through

read-alouds and “critical crafting.” Critical crafting explores extension activities that accompany rich culturally-responsive texts and dive into higher-order comprehension and critical thinking.