



DREAM
To Read!



READING
CONNECTIONS

2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT



Our grateful thanks to Redding Communications for their design expertise
and commitment to the mission of Reading Connections.

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Dear Friends:

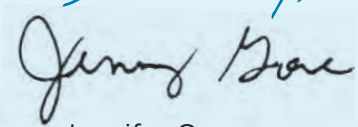
It is always a pleasure to reflect back on a year's accomplishments. We served more than 1,000 adults and children last year and saw **a record-breaking 59% of our post-tested students advance a full literacy level.** (This is compared to the average state requirement of 36% of students making such advancement.)

Reading Connections was ranked 11th out of 76 – the top 15% – of adult and family literacy programs in North Carolina, according to a performance outcome report compiled by the North Carolina Community College System. This ranking places us as **the largest community-based literacy agency in the state with the best outcomes.** We were both humbled and excited at this news, and know that this positive result for adults and their families in Guilford County would not have happened without your support.

We expanded programs deeper into the community through employers seeking to build employees' skills onsite at their workplace. Workplace Literacy is a collaboration contributing to our area's economic development efforts by supporting local manufacturers and employers with a trained and skilled workforce. These Workplace Literacy programs are **helping students gain the lifelong skills and economic independence** they need to continue being productive citizens in our community and helping employers gain employees with the skills needed right now and into the future. We continue to provide adults with a path to success through basic literacy, ESOL, and family literacy programs for children and their parents, helping individuals and families change their lives through improved education.

These results and programs are not only important indicators of agency effectiveness; they also represent real and significant changes in the lives of our students and their families. They represent 32 students who found a job and 124 children who have a better foundation for academic success. They represent 907 adults who can take better care of themselves because **they now read and understand basic health information, can complete a job application, or earn their driver's license.**

Our students' literacy struggles and successes are an inspiration to our staff and volunteers. The support of donors, volunteers, partners, and friends has made it possible for us to provide effective and innovative programs to further reach our vision of a fully literate community. Our journey is far from over and the need is great; we have set ambitious goals for further improvements over the next several years. But we know that with the steadfast support of friends like you who continue to support Reading Connections, **we will continue to see amazing results for our students and our community.**

Sincerely,


Jennifer Gore
Executive Director

Who we are and *what we're about*

Founded in 1990 by Cynthia Doyle and Mary Adams Stephens, Reading Connections has a rich history of providing high quality, individualized instruction for adults in Guilford County who lack basic literacy skills.

We believe in the right of every adult to pursue her or his ambitions to meet individualized goals. Reading Connections serves adults and children through a variety of learning methods to promote the attainment of competencies needed in today's society and workplace.

Our mission is to transform our community by improving literacy and promoting educational equity for people of all ages, empowering them to navigate changes in an increasingly complex world.



Our Leadership

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2017-2018

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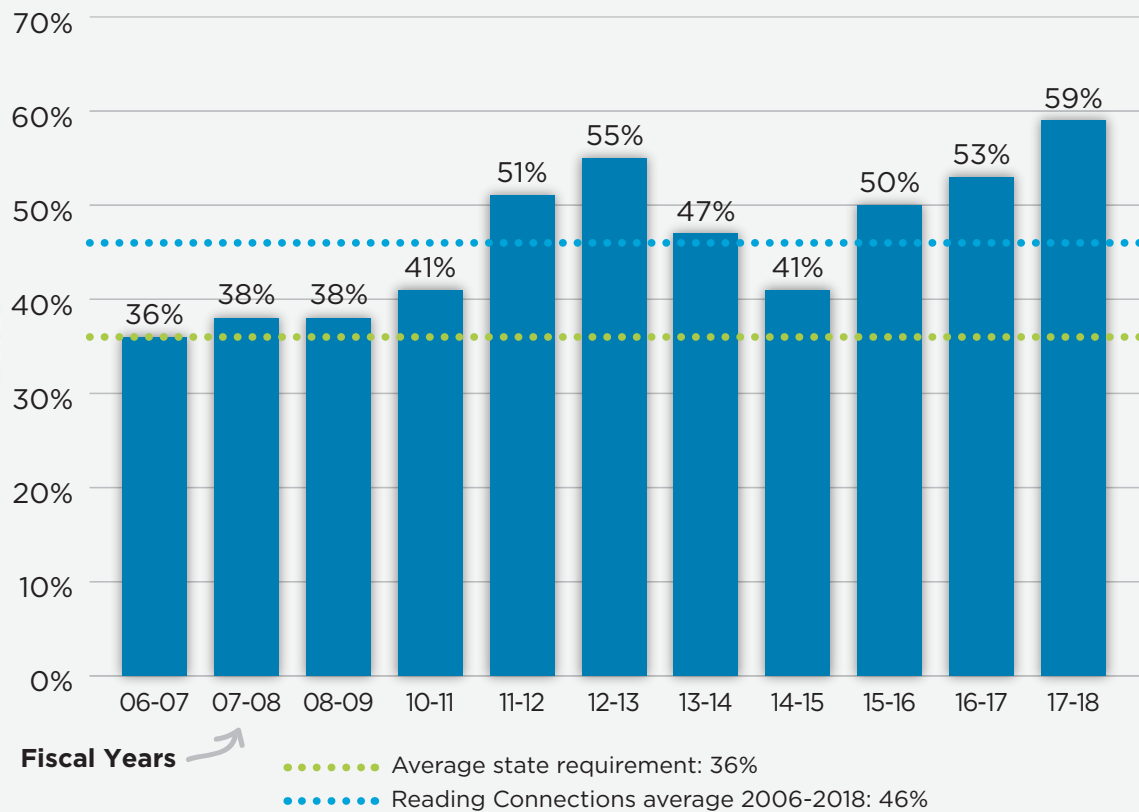
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Geraldine Eban, Family Literacy Child Instructor
Victoria Brownlee, Family Literacy Child Instructor
Sharon Cox, Family Literacy Child Instructor
Jacqueline Garrett, Family Literacy Child Instructor
Tamaiya Stocks, Family Literacy Parent Instructor
Rebekah King, AmeriCorps Member and Family Literacy Child Instructor
Alexandra Bernosky, AmeriCorps Member and Family Literacy Program Assistant

Results and accomplishments

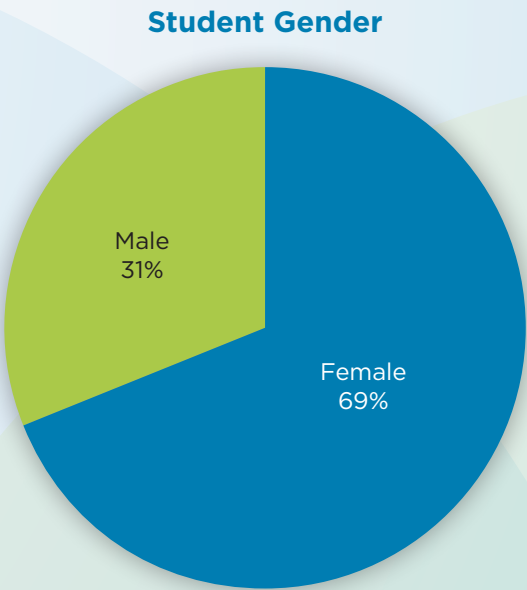
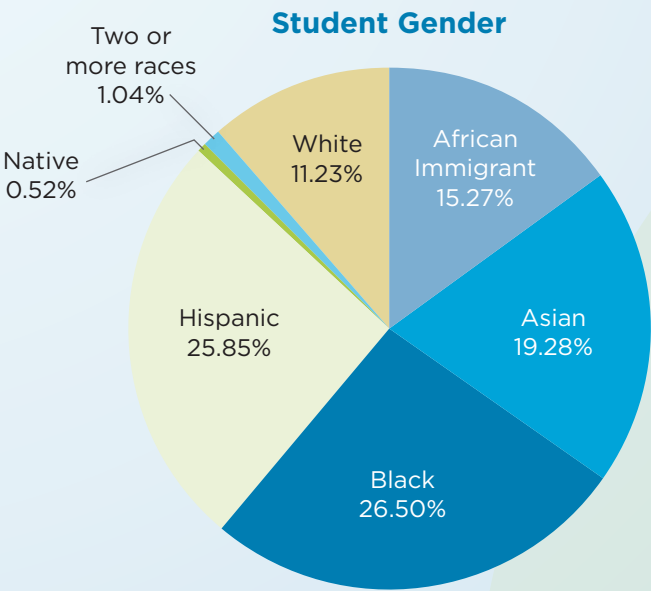
Last year was a record-breaking year as we saw tremendous and historic increases in the percentage of students making significant progress. **The result of 59% of full-time students advancing a literacy level (2-3 grade levels) was astounding compared with the average state requirement of 36%.**



Reading Connections continues to demonstrate that it is an effective literacy program. Additional results from 2017-2018 include:

Adults Served:	907
Children Served:	124
Volunteers Served:	274
Student Hours:	23,641
Volunteer Hours:	15,525

Demographics



Financials

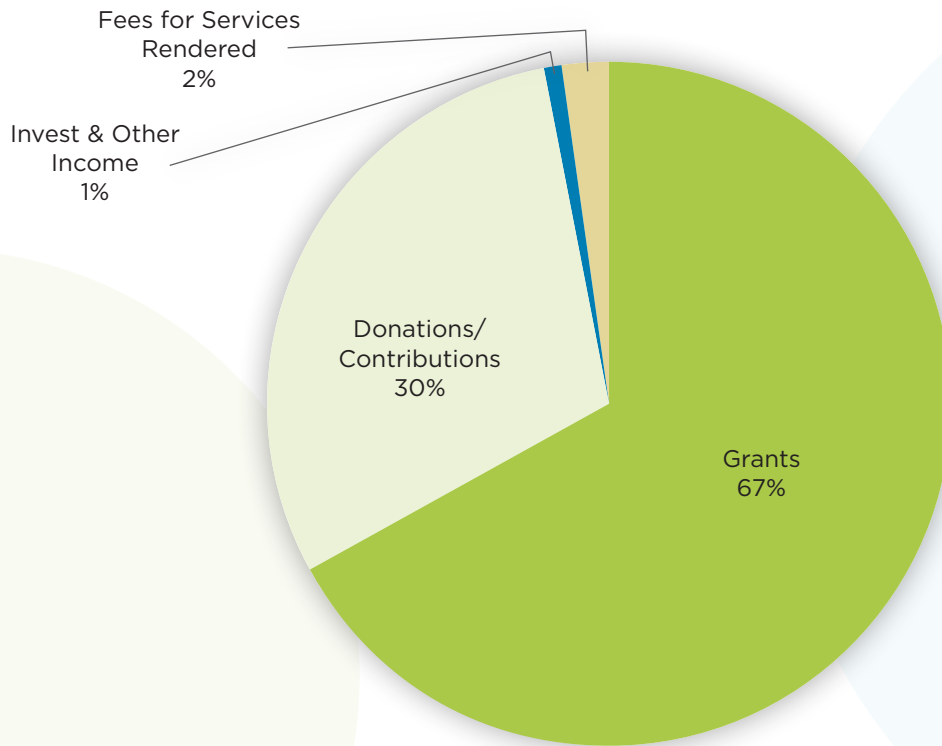
for years ended June 30, 2018 & 2017

REVENUES	2017-2018	2016-2017
Grants	\$523,858	\$573,332
Donations/Contributions	\$234,575	\$156,699
Investment Income	\$8,436	\$11,754
Fees for Services Rendered	\$14,526	\$2,675
Other Income	\$2,582	\$1,952
Total Revenues	\$783,977	\$746,412

EXPENSES	2017-2018	2016-2017
Tutor Services	\$229,707	\$233,225
Student Services	\$355,187	\$292,022
Administration	\$62,827	\$59,681
Fundraising	\$110,687	\$68,271
Total Expenses	\$758,408	\$653,199

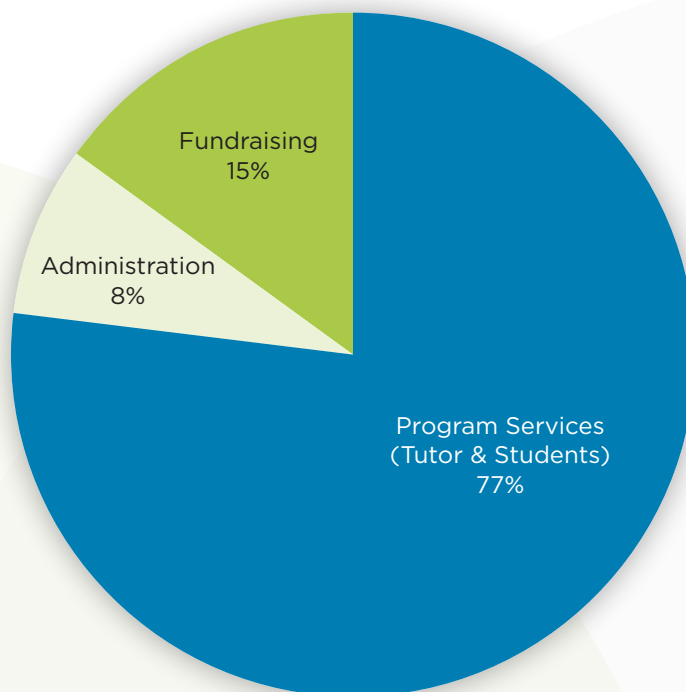
Revenue

Fiscal Year 2017-2018



Expenses

Fiscal Year 2017-2018



Literacy Programs

Workplace Literacy

Do you remember how great it felt when you got your first job? What about when you got your last raise? Or how about when your manager recommended you for important job skills training? That's the feeling shared by three cohorts of men and women who graduated from Reading Connections' Workplace Literacy programs this year. Reading Connections tailors each session to meet the demands of each unique workplace – from sewing to manufacturing. Enrolled adults build language skills with vocabulary and phrases they'll need on the job to communicate, understand safety standards, and meet production goals. Congratulations to employers leading the way at **Horizon Tool** and **UltraCraft Cabinetry**!

Our workplace sewing program is the first of many planned programs that help people gain the language and skills they need to find jobs that support them and their families. Our students learn English while also learning how to operate a sewing machine and use scissors, seam rippers, and threaders. Our sewing collaborative included local partners, employers, and manufacturers ~ **Montagnard Dega Association, Industries of the Blind, CULP, HBD, Insect Shield, and Stage Decoration & Supplies**. Participants included men and women from Sudan, Myanmar, Iraq, Syria, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Yemen, and Brazil.



Literacy Programs

Spotlight on HBD Inc.

HBD Inc. is a small, family-owned company providing bags, covers, and storage items to various industries, governments, and the US military. The company has around 40 seamstresses on the production floor. Two of their newest employees are graduates of Reading Connections' Sewing Machine Operators Training program.



Tasneem, an HBD employee, came to the United States as a refugee from Pakistan in 2016. She had to leave her country because of religious persecution and experienced many obstacles on her journey. Like so many immigrants and refugees, Tasneem faced what many new North Carolinians experience upon their arrival--anxiety, uncertainty, and the pressing urgency to find work to support herself and her family.

Then, Tasneem found Reading Connections. She began to work with her tutor, Vicki McCready, in the spring of 2017. In the beginning, they focused on speaking, writing, listening, and reading. In 2018, Tasneem joined the Sewing Machine Operators Training Program.

"Reading Connections changed my life and helped me become more independent," said Tasneem

She has proven that, with hard work and perseverance, anything is possible. She has inspired us all along the way.

"One of the things that makes Tasneem, and another Reading Connections' student, Mak, great workers is that they come to work, every day, ready and wanting to work," said Bayard Collins, Vice President of HBD Inc. "They're great employees, and you can see them improving more and more every day, not just their job skills, but their spoken English as well. They know what they're doing, what we need them to do, and how it should be done."

Collins and the HBD staff have seen the dedication of our students in the workplace. "They're demonstrating a tremendous commitment to their own self-improvement, namely improving their English skills. Because they work hard to succeed at Reading Connections, that tells me they'll work hard to succeed in the workplace."

At HBD, they believe people should have a comfortable working environment, earn a livable wage, and receive support and work-life benefits that help the entire family. For many people, Reading Connections is the first step on the road to self-sufficiency and workplace success. We are looking for a few more employers, like HBD, to support our students on that journey.

Tasneem, Mak and others are just a few of the adults you helped last year. Your support of Reading Connections makes successes like theirs possible. Thank you!

Literacy Programs

Innovations in Family Literacy: Growing Together

Imagine being an adult who struggles to read and your child is entering school. What if you grew up speaking another language, so you sometimes struggle to understand English and communicate with others? That's the case for many of the 59 parents in our Family Literacy program. This multi-generational program works with parents and their young children (birth to 5th grade).

Edna and Dominga are the working parents of three busy children: 5-year-old Arianna, 3-year-old Freddy, and 8-month-old Christopher. This year, both Mom and Dad attended Reading Connections' Family Literacy Academy.

Dad normally works a 12-hour shift but asked his boss if he could end his shift two hours early each Tuesday and Thursday so that he could attend Family Literacy classes with his wife and children. The boss agreed.

The entire family had perfect attendance during all 10 weeks! Mom and Dad learned how to support their three children in their reading development. They were able to help Arianna with her schoolwork and read stories to baby Christopher. Importantly, three-year-old Freddy learned many new skills at the Family Literacy Program, like how to hold a book and "read" from left to right and identifying letters, numbers, and colors. Freddy is well on his way to being ready for kindergarten.

885

**Free Books Distributed
To Families Last Year**



Literacy Programs

Detention Center Literacy Program: Gaining a New Perspective

One of the tenets of our learner-centered approach is meeting students where they are, literally and figuratively. That's why we take our literacy programs into the Guilford County Detention Center. Each week our staff and volunteers lead 15-20 students in reading a novel together, and other reading, writing, and math activities to reconnect them to education and prepare them for later success. Every day we see how improved confidence in reading and math can change people's lives and help adults see life through a whole new lens.

Detention Center Literacy classes are held on weekdays. It takes a special volunteer and Reading Connections provides a thorough volunteer orientation, resources, and training. We would love your help as a volunteer!

In the News

Honoring Kem Ellis With the first Annual Kem B. Ellis Service Award

There are times in an organization when you realize the significant impact one person has had on us all. Reading Connections is establishing an annual award to recognize one such person and someone hereafter who demonstrates their character, integrity and unwavering commitment to helping adults and children reach their dreams through literacy. The inaugural award, and the Award Title, honors Kem Ellis.

As the former Director of the High Point Library, Kem was a strong ally when Reading Connections needed new office space. He incorporated our needs into the design of the new library building. This space, and the proximity of the library meeting rooms and computers, has been a terrific support for our program.

Kem's involvement and service these past six years on the Reading Connections' Board is where we have really seen his impact. In his Board leadership, in his constant efforts to connect more people and resources to our work, we see efforts that have helped this organization grow. Kem's calm, steady support has helped Reading Connections welcome more leadership and try new strategies. He always says yes and is a constant source of encouragement and joy.

He is a friend we all treasure. Going forward, The Kem B Ellis Service Award will be presented to someone who demonstrates character, integrity and unwavering commitment to helping adults and children reach their dreams through literacy. **Congratulations and thank you Kem!**

Pictured L to R: Jenny Gore, Executive Director, Kem Ellis, Board Member, and Susan Harman, Board Member.



ANNUAL H.O.R.S.E BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

How do you spell fun? At Reading Connections, we spell it **H.O.R.S.E.** In this fun twist on the classic basketball challenge, donors like you are **Helping Our Readers Succeed Everyday.**

The inaugural event raised more than \$40,000. More importantly, it raised awareness about adult literacy issues in our community.

When you support Reading Connections, you're helping us meet our vision of 100% literacy in Guilford County. Thank you. **And, a special thank you to our sponsors, partners and supporters!**

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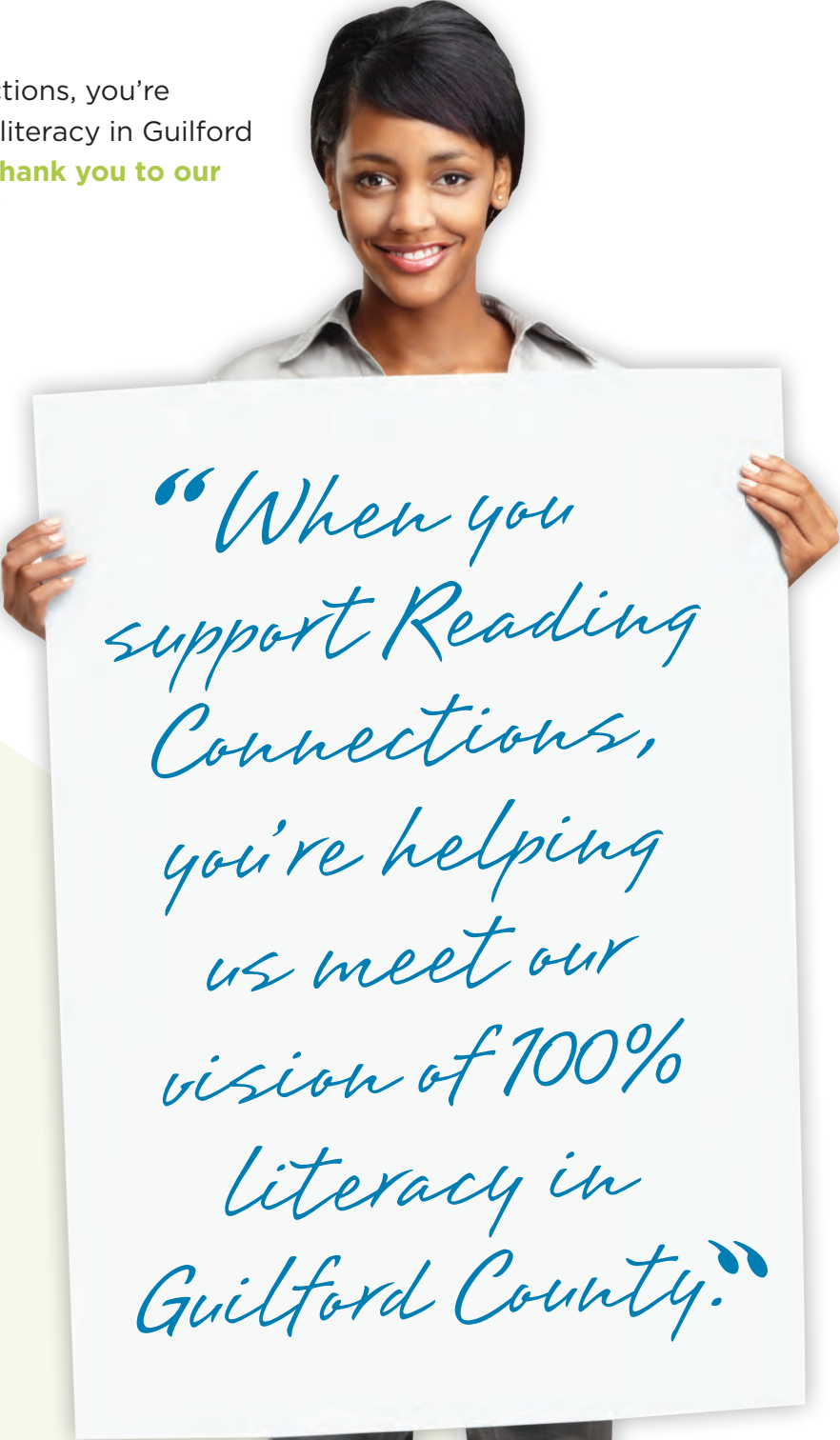
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"When you support Reading Connections, you're helping us meet our vision of 100% literacy in Guilford County."

Supporting Reading Connections in *in 2018-2019*

You can join Reading Connections and become a reading, writing, math, or computer tutor. If you have two to four hours available each week to volunteer and are passionate about helping others, then we'd love to have you join our volunteer team. You do not have to know another language to provide instruction to students who speak English as a second language (ESOL). You can also help with fundraising and volunteer for special events in March, April and May.

Volunteer Opportunities include:

- Adult Basic Education (ABE) Tutor
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Tutor
- Literacy Corrections (Detention Center) Program Tutor
- Office Volunteer
- Development/Fundraising Volunteer
- Family Literacy Volunteer

We invite you to learn more about Reading Connections and how you can get involved by visiting our website at www.readingconnections.org or calling us at (336) 230-2223.

A smiling man with grey hair, wearing a light green sweater, is holding a large white rectangular sign. The sign has a blue cursive message on it. The background of the entire page features large, overlapping light blue and light green circles.

*“Thank you for
your support and
donations!”*

Reading Connections'

Donors & Supporters

7/1/2017-6/30/2018

Thank you to our generous donors and supporters this year. Because of you, we positively impacted the lives of our students, their families, and our community. If your name has been mistakenly omitted or listed improperly, we sincerely apologize. You are important to us. Please advise our Development Department at (336) 230-2223. Thanks again!

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Partnership for Children
Guilford County
Piedmont Chapter of the
NCACD
Piedmont Natural Gas
Pig Pounder

The Printery
Proehlfic Park
Publix
David and Claudia Babb
Reich Family Foundation
The Rendle Family
Foundation
Rockingham County
Literacy Project
Rotary Club of High Point,
NC
Scuppernong Books
SmallCakes Cupcakery &
Creamery
The Social Impact
Foundation
South University
Soviero's Tri-County
Garden Center & Feed
St. Francis Episcopal
Church
St. Mary's Episcopal Church
High Point
St. Paul the Apostle
Catholic Church

Starbucks
Starmount Presbyterian
Church
Summit Rotary Foundation
Talbots
Tannenbaum-Sternberger
Foundation
TEGNA Foundation-WFMY
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The High Point Public
Library Foundation, Inc.
The Wiseman Family
Foundation
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