



Read Better Be Better.®

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24



Letter from the CEO

When I started this journey 10 years ago, I was working at another local nonprofit, new to Arizona, and couldn't understand how a group of kids from one community could so consistently academically outperform another group. With a little investigation, I discovered the bleak disparity between how communities are resourced, and how history too often drives a cycle of poverty. Then it became about justice.

I wanted to change the system and the kids, at first, were just a conduit. My research pointed to 3rd grade being an inflection point in a child's life: a kid who can't read at grade level by the end of 3rd grade is four times less likely to graduate high school. But, if given access to adequate literacy instruction, a child can pass 3rd grade and have an 89% chance of graduating high school.

And 3rd graders weren't the only beneficiaries. The program we built relied on older kids for delivery. Having mostly lived in the same communities, they experienced the same struggles and became our experts who could more effectively implement the curriculum with their younger peers.

I expected our younger readers and the older leaders to grow up to be more informed, empathetic adults and future leaders and advocates for their communities. But I underestimated the kids. The change doesn't happen when they're older. It's immediate.

We've been able to serve 8,386 readers because 7,213 leaders volunteered their time. Our readers have come back as leaders to give back to others. Some are embarking on an education career to ensure that every child in their classroom has access to these skills. Others joined our civic leadership programming to better advocate for change and are ALREADY advocating in their schools and beyond. Kids are taking this program home and implementing it with younger siblings in the home. The change didn't happen later. It happened with and from these kids reading better and being better.

To every child that has taken the time to participate, thank you. I was wrong. It's ALL about you. To say you make the future bright is an underestimation. You make us better right now. And we sure need it.

Sincerely,
Sophie Allen- Etchart



Founder & CEO
Read Better Be Better



Sophie Allen-Etchart
Founder & CEO

MISSION

Read Better Be Better's mission is to connect young readers with youth leaders to inspire a love of literacy and leadership.

VISION

Read Better Be Better envisions a world in which empowered communities demand equitable access to foundational skills.

VALUES

Be Excellent. Be Kind.

Be the best that we can be while cultivating a space of resiliency, grace, and understanding for ourselves and others.

Read Better Be Better Leadership

THANK YOU, BOARD MEMBERS!



Thank you to two outgoing board members who have just completed their board terms, Rachel Aja and Dawn Wallace.

Rachel Aja recently became the new Cox Communications Market Vice President in Kansas City. She started with Read Better Be Better in 2016 as a Program Coach, facilitating our reading program, and in 2019 began her tenure on our Board of Directors, serving as chair since 2023. She has led our organization through transformational moments in our growth, and tirelessly championed our efforts to connect as many Arizona students as possible to our highly effective curriculum.



Dawn Wallace oversees the nonpartisan Arizona Center for Civic Leadership at the Flinn Foundation, which enhances civic life in Arizona through civic education, engagement, and leadership development programs. She has been an incredible champion of Read Better Be Better for six years, playing a vital role in board development and governance, organizational strategy, and our Pathway to Civic Leadership program. Thank you to Rachel and Dawn for their service!

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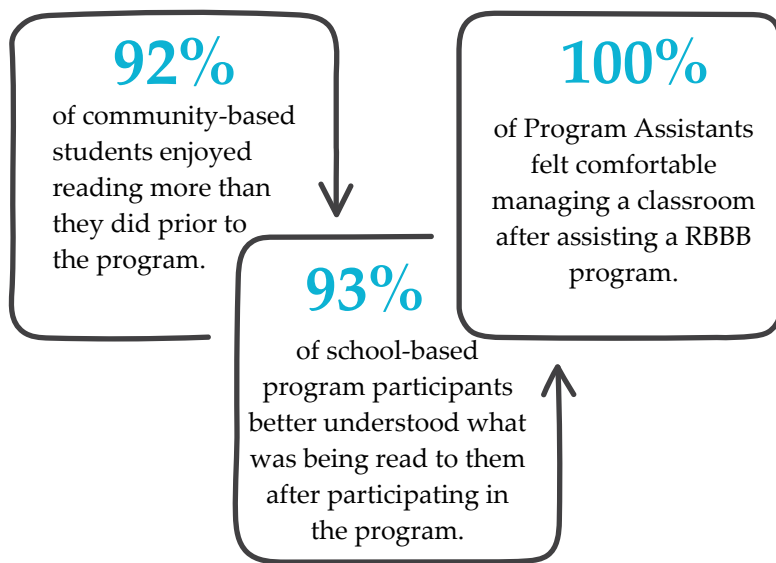
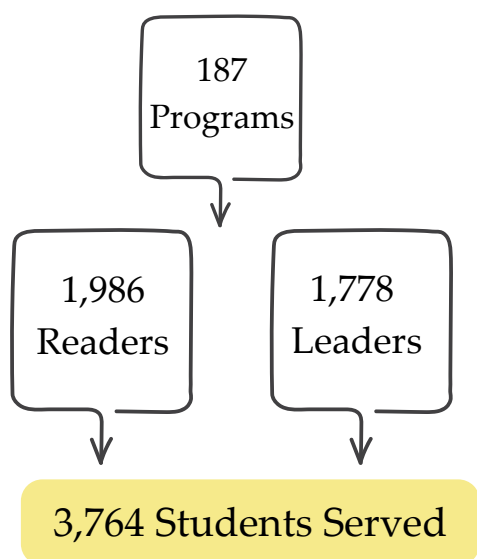
Shannon Brown
Program Director, K-8

Our Results

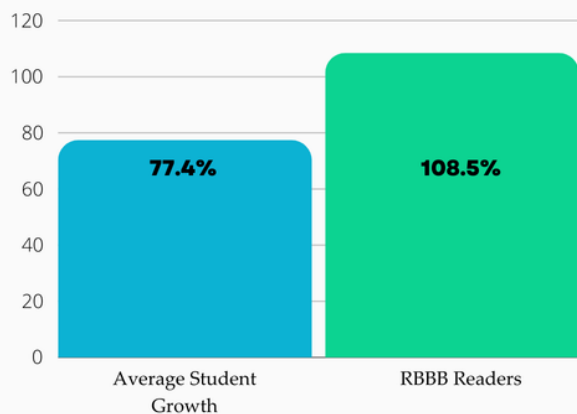
Read Better Be Better (RBBB) continues to show, year after year, across more programs, that student participants have larger reading gains than non-participant students. We are also proud of the strength of RBBB's impact on the confidence of readers, leaders and program assistants who participate in our programs.



2023-24



**MAZE: 3RD GRADE
AVERAGE GROWTH**



N= 101,707

"After the spring session, a mom approached me and thanked me for running the program. She shared that she had essentially given up on her child reading because of his developmental delay and felt like she had tried everything. Read Better Be Better completely changed her perspective on helping her child learn. Now, her son is reading at home and even taught her the RBBB curriculum so they can practice together. He's signed up for the fall session to keep building his reading skills."

– Meg, Apache Junction Library

Reasons to Celebrate

RBBB Launches Civic Leadership Program

RBBB's Pathway to Civic Leadership program launched in the spring of 2024 and has already been shown to be a transformative journey for students! The program equips high school students with the tools and resources to recognize their potential as changemakers and leaders, guided by the "Flinn Foundation's comprehensive guidebook Leadership, Civics and You: The Next-Gen Leader's Guide to Achieving Civic Leadership".

Throughout the program students can engage with real-life civic leaders and learn from their personal stories of challenges and triumphs. They also work together to identify significant issues within their schools—such as safety, resource accessibility, or peer engagement—and develop actionable student-led solutions. They then present these proposals to school decision-makers, gaining confidence in their ability to lead and influence systemic change.

These experiences not only amplify student voices but also demonstrate how structured leadership opportunities can create lasting community impact.



"I learned that anything I do, whether it be big or small, can really leave an impact on those around me in my community."

"I really loved this program because of all the leaders we got to speak to. They shared their personal challenges and trials and tribulations. It calms my heart to know that they weren't perfect people and to know that to be a civic leader you don't have to be perfect."

– Pathway to Civic Leadership Students, Spring 2024

RBBB Celebrates 10 Years!



On March 29, 2025, Read Better Be Better held a special celebration in honor of our 10th anniversary at Park Central in Phoenix. This event brought together hundreds of community members, including some of our Readers and Leaders and their families, to celebrate 10 years of literacy and leadership. Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego also proclaimed it to be Read Better Be Better Day. We're thankful to all the sponsors, donors and community members who helped us celebrate this milestone!

2023-2024 Financials

Income: \$3,519,642

Expenses: \$2,233,822

Our Donors



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