



SPRING NEWS



For the Love of Reading Newsletter

Reading Proficiency 2023

The 2023 NM Vistas School Report Cards were reported recently and the scores were shown in a Taos News insert. We all want all the children in our district to be reading at a proficient or higher level. Those of us who volunteer in the Taos Milagro for the Love of Reading Program look at these scores with great interest.

It is important to consider the following:

- Each of our volunteers reads 30 minutes one-on-one once a week with one 2nd grader and one 3rd grader. So, 38 students receive assistance at Ranchos Elementary and 36 students receive assistance at Arroyos del Norte. The previous year had similar amounts of children served.
- The program does four book distributions during the year in which all the students in the school can select a book of their choice four times a year.
- We are a small portion of the tremendous effort that goes in to teaching reading but feel that we are one of the reading activities that may help children want to read more and thus improve their reading skills.
- The most important part of our program is to foster a love of reading and mentoring with a community member who wants to share that love and appreciation of reading with the children.

When reporting the growth or loss, the state compared the 2022 scores to the 2023 scores. Both schools are still not at a level at which they would like to be. It was reported that Arroyos del Norte showed an 11% reading gain over the previous year and Ranchos Elementary showed a 2% reading loss.

These scores in no way should be taken to mean that the schools are not working hard to meet the needs of their students. The following factors need to be considered:

- Poverty plays an integral part in the achievement levels of students. In 2019, the state provided a chart – Are New Mexico’s Schools Teaching Children to Read? Economic Disadvantage vs. Third Grade Reading Proficiency in New Mexico Elementary Schools -2018 (https://education-consumers.org/birdshot/ME2017_AchPov/about.php).
- The chart clearly shows that schools with higher numbers of students on free or reduced lunch had lower reading scores. A comparison of schools in the Taos area show clearly that the same holds true in Taos and Taos County. Public Schools in Taos have 90%+ children on free and reduced lunch.
- Students living in poverty often have less books in the home and less opportunity to experience activities that will foster increased learning opportunities. Schools with higher numbers of English language learners also plays a part. These children are mastering a second language and testing in that second language will prove difficult
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It takes a village to educate our community’s children.

- Students who come to school ready to work and do their best.
- Parents working at home with their children, ensuring daily attendance, and working with the school to ensure their child’s learning.
- Staff providing quality lessons, showing care and concern, and making it fun to be in school.
- Community volunteers showing the children that they too are interested in them and their success.

In our work at the schools, we clearly see this happening. Though it may take a little longer, we all know that these students are capable and they will achieve the goal of becoming proficient readers and successful citizens.

Lucille Gallegos-Jaramillo, Ph.D.
For the Love of Reading, Co-coordinator

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A Brief History: How We Do It - One Child at A Time, One Hour At A Time, One Book at A Time

W. Bruce Mulligan (Past-President, Taos Milagro Rotary)

In 2018 as President of the Taos Milagro Rotary Club I proposed initiating a literacy program modeled after the decades old, successful SMART (Start Making A Reader Today) program in Oregon which I along with my wife **Janis Checchia** served as volunteers for several years before moving to Taos. Since its start in 1992 SMART has served more than 373,000 children and given away over 4 million books.

With the help of **Dr. Del Endres** and Past Presidents **Dr. Lucille Gallegos-Jaramillo** and **George Jaramillo** we started more modestly with a pilot program at the Pueblo Day school. Thanks to the volunteer efforts of Past President **Darryl Bouchard Esq.**, **Julie Bouchard**, **Sharon Flattery** and **Dr. Julie Turner** the program was exported to Ranchos and Arroyos del Norte elementary schools in the years before COVID hit. Thanks to the efforts of these leaders and numerous other volunteers we were able to continue the program on-line thru COVID until this last year when we were able to physically return to the schools and read in-person with students. With their efforts and the efforts of volunteers like **Janet Sands**, while COVID took its toll on student reading skills we are making progress for time missed while out of school one hour at a time, one student at a time, one book at a time - Improving literacy here in Taos is our collective mission.

Book Distributions

In late February we once again distributed books to students at Ranchos and Arroyos del Norte Elementary schools. Thanks again for the contributions of volunteers and Taos Ski Valley for making this possible!



What's New with Little Free Libraries?

Gail Westbrook who has served as the caretaker of the Little Free Libraries bin at St. James Episcopal Church for years is off on a nine-month adventure. She and her husband have decided to hit the road. They sure have done so. They are now in Germany. Yes, Germany! Gail said that they decided that they wanted to go and try new things and experience a new culture.

We are happy for them. Gail deserves this adventure since she has worked tirelessly on the books at the bin for years. It put us in a bit of a panic as we knew that she does a ton of work for us. Have fun and a great adventure Gail!

We would like to thank Ted Hume, a new Taos Milagro Rotarian, who has stepped up to the challenge. He is working to learn the ins and outs of the system and is coming along well. We appreciate his willingness to step up and help with this project and have no doubt that he will be zipping right along soon.

Many of the Little Free Library Stewards have been donating books and putting them in the main storage bin at St. James. We very much appreciate your generosity. However, please keep in mind that some books are not being taken from the Little Free Libraries and create more work for us to find homes for them. The most popular adult books are the more current books written by popular authors. We ask that the following types of books not be left since they are not being taken and we do not have sufficient storage to hold them:

- How to books
- Cookbooks
- Professional or course books
- Travel books

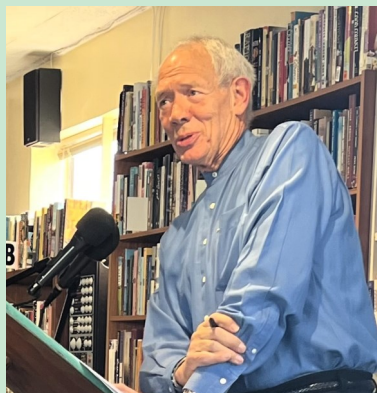
Our 18th Little Free Library has been installed by the Penasco Theatre at 15046 State Rd 75, Penasco, NM 87553. Thank you, Alessandra Ogren, for allowing us to place this Little Free Library and serving as its steward.

An installation ceremony is being planned for later in the month in April.

As always, we very much appreciate the service that the library stewards provide our communities. Thanks to you, our communities are more literate.

Lucille Gallegos-Jaramillo, Ph.D.

For the Love of Reading Co-Coordinator



Who's Reading

THANK YOU FOR THE LOVE OF READING VOLUNTEER READERS 2023-2024

We would like to thank our For the Love of Reading Volunteer Readers. Your commitment to our students has been much appreciated. Thank you for sharing your love of reading with our students.

Arroyos del Norte Volunteers

Laurel Adcock

Betty Backer

Cid Backer

Stacey Blish

Bruce Mulligan

Janis Checchia

Dru Philippou

DeEtte Spence

Jeff Graff

Gary Hillman

Judy Tipton-Katzman

Julie Turner

Vince Ann Wahlrab

Ranchos de Taos Volunteers

Cathy Boyle

Darryl Bouchard

Michelle Chacón

Cid Fee

John Flaherty

Veronica Harrold

Kathy Herman

Gordon Hirsch

George Jaramillo

Celinda Kaelin

Harold Kaelin

Betsy Martinez

Elizabeth Mitchell

Dr. Herbert Rachelson

Carol F. Rhinehart

Anne Riebli

Sandy Romero

Tamy Coyle

Substitutes

Julie Bouchard

John Flaherty

Sharron Flaherty

Lucille Gallegos-Jaramillo

George Jaramillo

Arroyos Coordinator

Janet Sands

Substitutes

Elizabeth Hicks

Kathy Laroe

Sharron Flaherty

Janet Sands

Ranchos de Taos Coordinator

Dr. Lucille Gallegos-Jaramillo

