



Nonprofit “Reading to Kids” Delivers Children Reading Clubs on Zoom

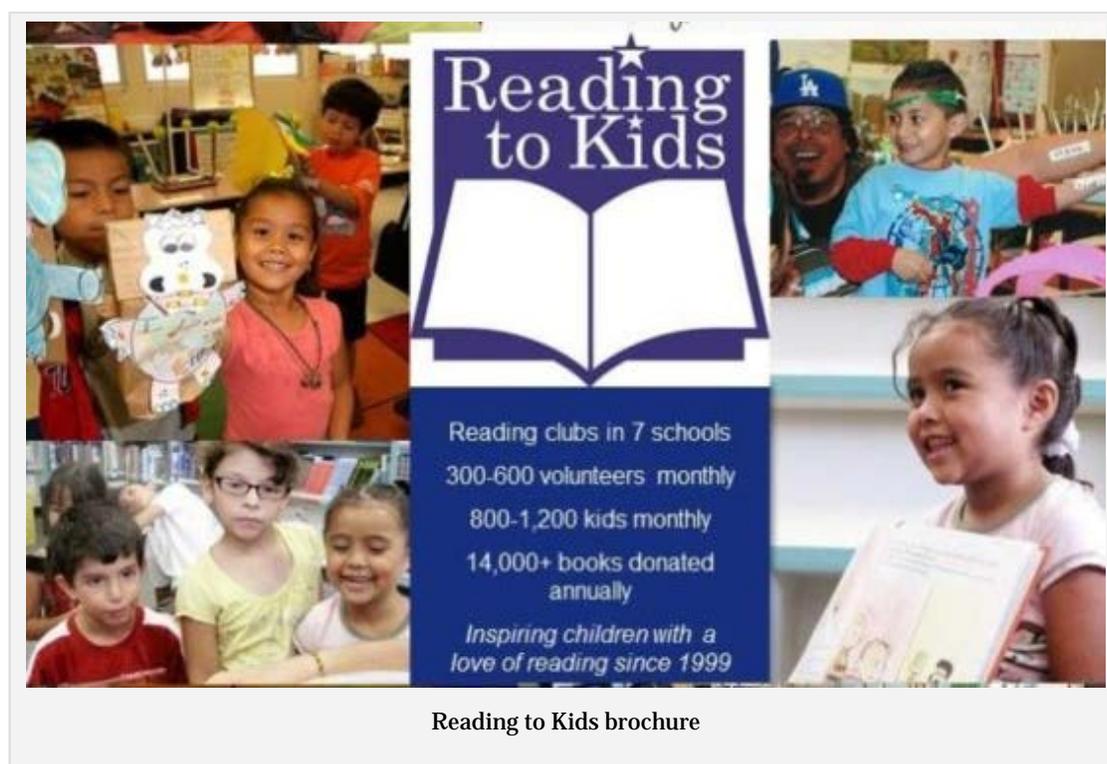
By Abdo AlRayyis | Jul 22, 2020 | Feature, General, News | 0 Comments



Los Angeles, CA. [Reading to Kids](#) is a grassroots organization based in Los Angeles that pairs underserved children with volunteers in monthly reading clubs to promote a love of reading and success for their futures. Reading in person like the photo above was common before the pandemic. Reading to Kids primarily serves children from Title 1 schools where up to 95% qualify for free lunches. Their mission to spread the love of reading to children was briefly interrupted by COVID-19, however, the organization has found it's online footing through Zoom.

Charlie Orchard, the managing director of Reading to Kids, is one of two employees serving eight schools and managing hundreds of volunteers. He believes that they overcame their initial challenge of delivering online reading clubs, the remaining challenge “is not unique to our nonprofit”, Orchard said. “The challenge we have now is maintaining enough funding so we can continue our reading clubs. Fundraisers may not have enough money because of the economy. In March and April, I wasn’t sure what I could tell my funders but now I have a story to tell my funders that Zoom reading clubs work!” he said.

That story is one of success as the number of students participating from July 2019 to July 2020 reading club has dropped by merely seven people from 235 to 228 students as reported by Orchard. The organization runs its fundraising projects from October to December every year. Orchard anticipates that fundraising may be harder this year due to the current COVID-19 induced economic recession. On the bright side he notes, “We might find new funders because they will look at who can still provide services to kids.”



Reading to Kids brochure

Since the non-profit’s shift to Zoom in May, they’ve limited the number of volunteers to people who’ve volunteered before. Because they wanted their volunteers to be screened personally and not have to train new volunteers in the time being. They’ve temporarily stopped parental training due to concerns over having enough devices in their homes. Orchard thinks that “20% to 30% of students” won’t be able to join Zoom reading clubs due to the lack of an internet connection.

When asked about the most important trait of his organization, Orchard replied “They should know that adaptability is important for everybody and Reading to Kids can adapt and we hope people will support us in how we adapt to share the love of reading with

children. We're still here."

Orchard believes that the shift to online learning has shown that the "technological divide is real". One positive that could emerge from this, is higher technological access to underserved children and children of color which may lead to more people of color in technological fields in the future, Orchard hopefully said.

From Reading to Kids:

This outstanding group of volunteers is a grassroots organization dedicated to inspiring underserved children with a love of reading, thereby enriching their lives and opportunities for success in the future.