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**DETROIT FACES EARLY CHILDHOOD LITERACY CRISIS
WITH ONLY 14 PERCENT OF CITY'S CHILDREN READING
AT GRADE LEVEL BY THIRD GRADE**

**National literacy organization Raising A Reader partners with local nonprofit
Brilliant Detroit to implement reading programs throughout Detroit**

DETROIT, Nov. 13, 2017 – Raising A Reader, a national nonprofit organization that provides resources and guidance for families to implement home-based literacy routines, announces a new partnership with Brilliant Detroit, a local nonprofit that provides academic readiness programs to underserved children in the Detroit area. The partnership is aimed at improving the city's literacy rate among elementary school children which is among the lowest in the country.

There are currently more than 80,000 children under the age of eight living in Detroit, with more than 60 percent of Detroit's children under the age of five living in poverty. Approximately 86 percent of Detroit's third-graders are not reading at grade level, which makes it more likely these children will struggle academically and throughout their lives without intervention.

The Raising A Reader program is evidence-based, with more than 32 independent evaluations showing that Raising A Reader significantly improves language and literacy skills, cognitive development, communication and comprehension skills, school readiness and social competence. Each week children bring home a book bag filled with award-winning books; the books are exchanged the following week for new ones with more than 100 books rotated through the home during the year. The program also trains parents on engaging their children in reading, and connects families to local libraries or community resource centers to sustain the habit of borrowing and reading books after completion of the program.

"We can and must do better for our children," said Cindy Eggleton, CEO of Brilliant Detroit. "Our efforts at Brilliant Detroit are to use what we know works to help kids and families be school and life ready. We are thrilled to bring Raising a Reader to Detroit to help do just that.

Initially Raising A Reader will be rolled out to approximately 100 families with children 0-3 as part of a pilot program, and then expanded to a greater number of families throughout metropolitan Detroit through Brilliant Detroit locations working in partnership with local schools. The effort is made possible from the generous support of Amy and Paul Blavin.

“This partnership will mark Raising A Reader’s first entry into Detroit and we are extremely optimistic about the impact we can have through Brilliant Detroit,” said Erica Wood, interim president and CEO of Raising A Reader. “The city’s children are in dire need of a literacy program to break the cycle of poverty and academic underperformance and we are committed to playing a role in that process.”

Raising A Reader recently announced one of the most aggressive literacy campaigns in recent U.S. history. The nonprofit has committed to reaching 3 million children across the country with its literacy program by 2020.

Brilliant Detroit was founded in 2015 to provide a radically new approach to kindergarten readiness in neighborhoods and create a unique delivery model for early childhood development by using underutilized housing stock to create early child and family centers in neighborhoods. Brilliant Detroit homes provide holistic services for children ages 0-8 predicated on evidence-based programs around health, family support and education. Brilliant Detroit was born to create kid success neighborhoods. In each location, neighbors come together for fellowship, activities and learning to assure school readiness and provide needed support for families. More information is available at BrilliantDetroit.org.

Raising A Reader is a 501c3 charitable organization dedicated to helping families develop, practice and maintain literacy habits for children ages 0-8 that are critical for a child’s success in school and in life. Headquartered in Redwood City, California, Raising A Reader was founded in 1999 and has served more than 1.5 million children nationwide. More information is available at RaisingAReader.org, [@RARNational](https://twitter.com/RARNational) (Twitter) and [RaisingAReaderNational](https://www.facebook.com/RaisingAReaderNational) (Facebook).

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