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**RAISING A READER MARKS 20-YEAR ANNIVERSARY AS LEADING
CHILDREN'S LITERACY NONPROFIT IN THE U.S.**

Organization has reached 1.7 million families across the country, providing literacy and family engagement programs at more than 3,000 locations including public schools, libraries and community agencies

REDWOOD CITY, CA, March 21, 2019 – Raising A Reader, a national nonprofit organization that provides resources and guidance for families to implement home-based literacy routines, is celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2019 and marking two decades of supplying and coordinating children's literacy programs to public schools, libraries, community agencies and other organizations across the country.

Approximately 63 percent of children in the United States fail to read proficiently by the time they start fourth grade due in part to lack of books in the home and family engagement. Research indicates if a child is not reading at grade level by the end of third grade it will likely result in long-term academic failure for the child. Third grade reading proficiency is one of the most significant predictors of high school graduation and children who do not read on grade-level by the end of third grade are less likely to graduate than their peers. Many of a child's literacy habits and abilities are formed before the age of 8.

Research also shows a direct and proven relationship between family engagement and the academic growth and development of children, including social competence and relationships, cognitive development, communication skills, literacy development, vocabulary growth, expressive language and comprehension skills.

“Raising A Reader has accomplished much during the past 20 years and has had a tremendous impact on the lives of almost 2 million children,” said Michelle Torgerson, president and CEO of Raising A Reader. “As proud as we are there is still much work to be done to improve the literacy of elementary-level children in this country and get them reading proficiently.”

As part of the Raising A Reader program, 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 to sustain the habit of borrowing and reading books after completion of the program.

The Raising A Reader program is evidence-based, with 39 independent evaluations showing that Raising A Reader significantly improves language and literacy skills, cognitive development, communication and comprehension skills, school readiness and social competence. The program is implemented through a network of community partners that comprise more than 3,000 locations across the country including public school systems, libraries, afterschool programs, community agencies, and other organizations both public and private.

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 1.7 million children nationwide. More information is available at www.RaisingAReader.org. Follow on Twitter @RARnational, Facebook at RaisingAReaderNational and Instagram at raising_a_reader.

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