

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Media Contacts:

Kyle Frick, VP Marketing and Community Relations | 541.585.1802 • kyle@midoregon.com

Rachel Shultz, Marketing Coordinator | 541.585.1822 • rachel.shultz@midoregon.com

Mid Oregon Credit Union Fundraiser to Benefit SMART Reading

Funds raised stay local and support in-school reading engagement programs for kids.

(Bend, OR) – Mid Oregon Credit Union launches a new community impact partnership and Spring 2024 fundraiser on Monday, April 8 to benefit SMART Reading™. Mid Oregon members and the community are invited to donate cash or make account transfers at any one of Mid Oregon’s branches. One hundred percent of funds will stay in the community where they were collected and be used to support the SMART Reading programs in those local schools.

“For the past 20 years, Mid Oregon has championed Healthy Beginnings through our Adopt-A-Bear fundraiser,” said, Kyle Frick; VP Marketing and Community Relations. “As Healthy Beginnings becomes a part of the High Desert ESD, we have discovered a new opportunity to direct our efforts toward a local nonprofit that supports another important predictor of success for early learners. We look forward to a new long-term partnership with SMART Reading.”

SMART's role is to provide children with two proven ingredients for literacy success: one-on-one reading time and access to books. In their **One-to-One SMART** program, volunteers model the joy of reading and/or support the child’s efforts to read independently during shared reading experiences. Students also choose two books per month to keep and read with their families to help continue their learning.

“Reading is a critical skill for kids, enabling them to succeed in school and beyond. Right now, over 60% of Oregon third graders are not reading on grade level.” said Jennifer Zardinejad, Central and Northeast Area Director of SMART Reading. “This is a huge concern for our whole community because third grade is the pivotal year when kids are expected to transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn.”

Mid Oregon Credit Union is a full-service, member-owned financial cooperative headquartered in and serving Central Oregonians since 1957. With over 47,000 members in Deschutes, Jefferson, Crook, Wheeler, Lake, and North Klamath Counties and over \$706 million in assets, Mid Oregon partners with members to meet their financial needs and to help them achieve their dreams. Mid Oregon was named a Top Workplace in Oregon and Southwest Washington for 2022 and 2023. It was also ranked the #1 credit union in Oregon by Forbes and the Best of Bend Community Choice Award in the credit union category. For more information about its [services](#) and branch locations in Bend, La Pine, Madras, Prineville, Redmond, and Sisters, please visit midoregon.com.



SMART READING SMART Reading is a children's literacy nonprofit that serves kids in Oregon's highest need schools with two ingredients critical for literacy and learning success: one-on-one reading time and access to books. SMART Reading mobilizes volunteers to read with PreK through third-grade children, building confidence, literacy skills and a love of reading. SMART Reading provides a meaningful way for Oregonians to make a direct impact in their communities. Since 1992, SMART Reading has steadily grown to become Oregon's largest volunteer literacy program. Kids in the program receive 14 new books throughout the school year to keep and read with their families. To learn more, donate, or volunteer, visit smartreading.org or call 877-598-4633

Photos: Mid Oregon Branch Manager, Lara Eckstine, volunteers as a reading buddy with the One-to-One SMART program in Sisters, OR.

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