**Colorado Reading Corps**
**Final Report 2017-2018**

**PROGRESS AND RESULTS**

Through the Colorado Youth for a Change (CYC) Colorado Reading Corps program, 881 children in kindergarten through third grade were served during the 2017-2018 school year. CYC provided these services in five school districts (Jeffco, Adams 12, 27J Brighton, Aurora, Englewood) and 38 schools, and services were carried out by 49 AmeriCorps tutors. Sixty-six percent (66%) of these students achieved more than one year of growth during the school year, therefore making progress toward reaching their grade-level peers and closing the opportunity gap as they move forward on their educational paths. Assessments were implemented with 99% fidelity to the model and intervention with 95%, showing that the evidence-based program is being implemented as intended.

**SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES**

CYC expanded the program into five school districts during the 2017-2018 school year. Tutors continued to build positive relationships with schools, teachers, and school staff members. Reporting states that students value the one-on-one relationships with tutors, and they display more confidence in their reading as seen through classroom engagement.

More students are starting the Reading Corps program further below grade target than in previous years, which can make reading gains more challenging. Many of CYC's districts in the Denver metro region have specific criteria for being part of the Reading Corps program, where students must have a READ plan to receive services. Those students are typically further behind on literacy skills and will take longer to reach target growth goals.

Additionally, first graders had a lower amount of growth than other grades. CYC attributes this to the fact that the amount of growth that a first grader needs to make is very significant. They are going from decoding skills in early grades to learning more skills so they can fluently read. This often takes more than one year for students to make this transition. As a result, CYC is looking to make changes to the exit criteria to ensure that first graders are making the growth required to be successful once they exit.  The Northern Colorado Reading Corps is also being incorporated into the structure of CYC, creating consistency across the state and ensuring that the fidelity of the program is maintained.

AmeriCorps member recruitment continues to be a consistent challenge, likely related to the high cost of living in Denver. CYC hired a part-time recruiter last spring who is helping to build relationships in the community and screen applicants for the program. A reduced hour member opportunity is also being offered in 2018-2019, which members can still receive an education award while serving less hours during the school year.

**SUCCESS STORY**

My year began by observing two first grade classrooms, and it was obvious which children did not know all their letter sounds or the basic sight words. I remember one day that everyone was completing "all about me" worksheets and for those that did not understand the worksheet, misbehavior and acting out quickly followed. These behaviors disrupted the entire class.

One girl really stands out from my year of service. She struggled with letter sounds and blends and flourished with the one-on-one support I was able to provide through Colorado Reading Corps. By March, she exited the program and was one of the best readers in her class. The ripple effect of literacy continued as she became a more confident contributor in her class and her grades in other subjects improved too. I actually ran into her mother at the end of the school year, and she gave me a huge hug, thanking me for all I did to support her daughter.

I learned so many new things last year as a member. Going into the service year I knew I was interested in working with youth in a school setting, and now I cannot imagine working anywhere but a school. I plan to do a second year of AmeriCorps service and then continue on my journey in education.

Jill, Colorado Reading Corps member