



Imagine, if you can.

When Ibrahim Sawi came to Saskatoon in 2004, he had experienced a very difficult and traumatic life back in his home of Sierra Leone in West Africa.

In Ibrahim's words:

"We had a rebel war there that affected the whole population. During that time, my dad was killed. There was no place for our family to go, no food, not even drinking water.

My family and I were forced to separate, and nobody knew where each other was. I escaped to the neighbouring country, Guinea. I was there for seven years and applied to the United Nations refugee program, which is where I met my wife. We passed the interviews and came to Canada.

We felt so lucky.

I went to Kelsey (now Saskatchewan Polytechnic) to participate in their English as a Second Language program but couldn't continue as I needed to get a job so I could send money back to remaining family. Being in a new country was hard. I couldn't easily speak English, and I knew that without it, our lives would never get better."



Case for Support

Now imagine.

Ibrahim learned about READ Saskatoon's free adult literacy programming and his life was about to change.

READ Saskatoon introduced him to his literacy coach, Colleen. Every Wednesday, Ibrahim made it a priority to keep his appointment with Colleen. His English improved and together they studied for his forklift exam. He passed, enabling him to earn a higher income. Ibrahim continued to meet with Colleen and surpassed his prior achievement, earning his Class 1A driver's license. Now, he could better support his family. Ibrahim's dream is to write his citizenship exam so that he can officially become a Canadian. Ibrahim won the Lion's Adult Learner Achievement award, an honour given to one adult learner from READ Saskatoon each year.

Because of donors like you, Ibrahim and his family have a new future.



Literacy affects opportunities

Ibrahim is not alone. Last year, READ Saskatoon worked with 2,500 adults, children, and families in our community.

READ Saskatoon is a safe place to learn. A place where people are supported and welcomed. With the help of trained volunteers like Colleen, we empower people.

"I have finally learned enough so I don't need someone to go to the bank with me. I now have my independence." -Adult learner

Currently, one-third of Saskatchewan adults struggle with literacy daily and one-third of Saskatchewan children show up for kindergarten not ready to learn.

That's why the time is now.

With your assistance, we will support more people and families, achieve more learning goals, and create more opportunities in our community.

READ Saskatoon plans to raise \$2,000,000 this year. This is an ambitious target, but your support will help us reach the following goals over the next four years:

- Work with 20,000 people over four years.
- Double our trained volunteers from 165 to 330; and,
- Train 200 facilitators throughout Saskatchewan, supporting them to deliver READ Saskatoon's children's, family, and financial literacy programs in their communities.



Strong families create strong communities

READ Saskatoon recognizes that learning begins in the home. Family literacy programs support and strengthen the relationship between children and parents and set the foundation for lifelong learning. This is why READ Saskatoon's family literacy programs are invaluable. Not only do our programs improve children's language and literacy skills, readiness for school, and early school performance, they also help parents.

"The community song, activities, and journal time are my favourite parts of the program. I also enjoyed the parent session. I got a lot of useful information and learned from other parents. I am grateful for all your work. During the time, my kids had fun, made new friends, learned new vocabulary, and new songs. They became more confident. It has been a good experience for them to get prepared for kindergarten."

- Parent, Criss Cross Applesauce Program



But what if a family needs more?

Meet Brayden

When we first met Brayden, it was clear that he could benefit from one-to-one reading support. He lacked the confidence and strategies to be able to advance his reading skills. For Brayden, this meant that schoolwork, participation in class, and homework were stressful activities.

After eight weeks and sixteen sessions with Maureen, his volunteer reading guide, the positive changes in Brayden extended beyond the pages of the books he was reading. Brayden's confidence was soaring.

Preparing for the future

Literacy goes beyond the ability to read; it includes planning today for what is to come tomorrow.

Post-secondary is expensive and getting more expensive every year. Marlice wants her son to have the opportunities she didn't have.



Last year, Marlice registered for READ Saskatoon's Matched Savings program. This six-month program for low-income families aims to increase financial literacy skills and provides parents the tools to open an RESP for their child at a financial institution of their choice. Parents are encouraged to save every month during the program. At the end, their savings are matched three to one. This program changes the conversation in the home from 'if' their child attends post-secondary school to 'when' their child attends post-secondary school.

"It's absolutely amazing what I learned at this program," Marlice said. "The program helped set my mind at ease. After taking part, I had learned enough to make a decision I could feel good about – and had already started to save money for my son's future!"

With some of the tough financial planning out of the way, Marlice believes she can focus on what she does best: be a good, supportive mom to her son.

"I had a hard time in school," Marlice said. "My mom was an amazing advocate for me. With her help, I was able to get the learning supports I needed. Then I realized I could do anything! I want the same for my son."

**"It's absolutely amazing
what I learned at this program."**

Learn together. Grow together.

This year, our goal is to support more parents like Marlice to prepare their children for success, by preparing for their future.

We want to support more people like Ibrahim to set and achieve learning goals that will advance their careers and improve their financial standing.

Finally, we want to ensure more children in our community are ready to learn when they arrive for their first day of kindergarten, and to work with more students like Brayden to improve their reading skills, giving them the confidence they need to succeed at school.

While READ Saskatoon has accomplished so much, there is more work to be done. People in our community need the support of donors like you.

The need is now.

Every day at READ Saskatoon, we see the determination of children, adults, and families who want more.

With your support, we can match that determination and raise **\$2,000,000** so everyone receives the same opportunity to learn and grow together.

Now imagine what we can do together.



For more information, visit our website READsaskatoon.com or contact:

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