



United Way of Pickens County

# 2017-2018 EDUCATION REPORT







## A HUGE HEARTFELT THANK YOU!

In 2017-2018, United Way of Pickens County invested thousands of charitable dollars in early and elementary education. We are so grateful to the hundreds of committed donors, like you, who believe education is the key that unlocks a child's future, and that education is the cornerstone of individual and community success.

Research demonstrates that third grade is where students make the shift from “learning to read” to “reading to learn”. It is the most important skill in determining student success. That is why we invest heavily in programs that develop strong readers and support their families.

It is with great pride that we present you with the impact YOU have made in education.

**LIVE UNITED**



United Way  
of Pickens County

## CAMP iROCK 2018

For children who struggle with reading, every day at school is a challenge. They often don't know the right answer or get to shine in school. They feel anxious because they lack the reading skills to keep up with their peers- or keep up at all. Sometimes, they just give up.

All children experience some learning loss during the summer, but low income students experience learning loss at a disproportionately higher rate. This literacy gap caused by summer learning loss is a concern for the 3,964 Pickens County elementary school students who are considered low income based on their free and reduced lunch status.

### The World Class Collaboration Continues

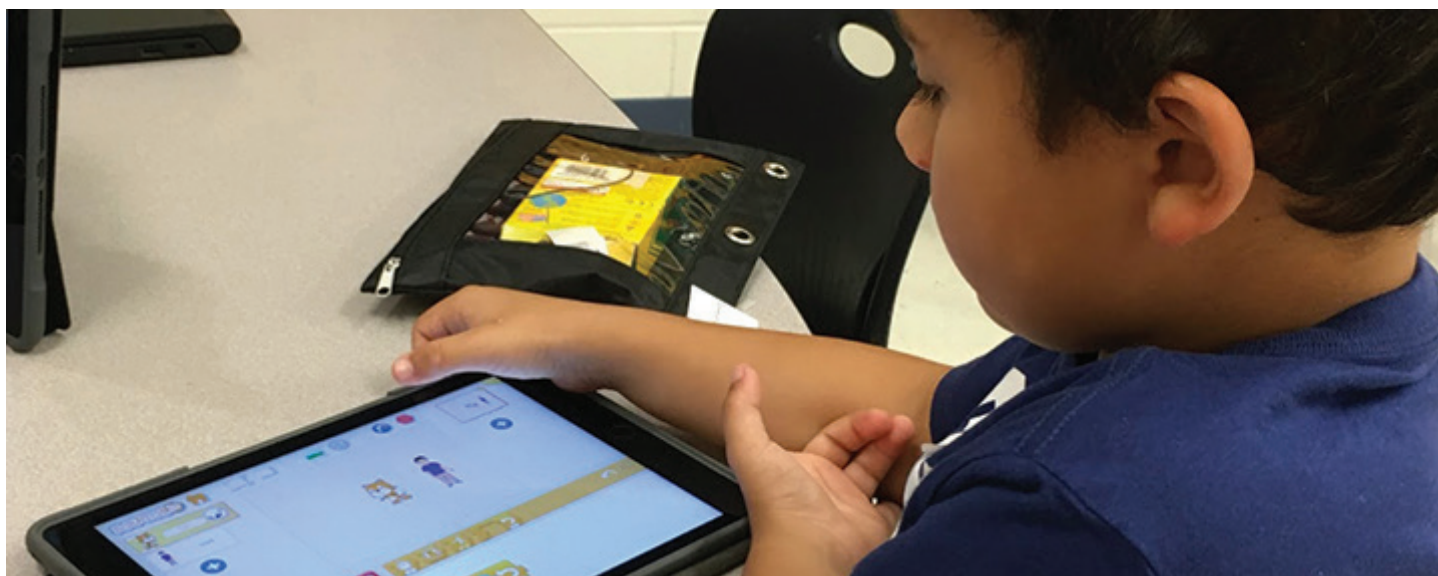
United Way of Pickens County formed a collaborative partnership in 2014 with the School District of Pickens County (SDPC) and the YMCA of Easley, Pickens and Powdersville to develop an outcome-based summer reading camp addressing the literacy achievement gap and summer learning loss. Each of the three partners has their own unique mission, but all are committed to the local community, the academic potential and success of children, and the development of each child's character, civic

responsibility, health and well-being.

The partners piloted Camp iRock in 2015 at one site (West End Elementary) with the goals of minimizing summer literacy loss, promoting student growth in literacy, and improving students' attitudes about learning. Camp focused on rising 2nd - 4th graders who had failed to master grade-level reading.

Following the success of the 2015 pilot program, we expanded Camp iRock to three sites, adding Chastain Road Elementary and Pickens Elementary. This ensured that all Pickens County children who struggled with reading would have access to this unique program.

We continued serving rising 2nd-4th graders at these three sites through 2018, offering a fun and enriching learning environment, promoting consistent attendance, and strengthening the whole child mentally, physically, socially and emotionally. Intentional enrichment activities such as swim lessons, field trips, creative arts, and physical fitness were provided at Camp each summer.



*Thanks to YOU, campers learn important skills like research!*



## CAMP iROCK 2018 CONTINUED

### Adding Kindergarten to Camp iRock

In 2017, kindergartners across the state were administered South Carolina's newest assessment of school readiness: the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, or KRA. The KRA provides a snapshot of students' abilities at the beginning of the school year in four domains: Social Foundations, Language and Literacy, Mathematics, and Physical Development and Well Being.

Frankly, we were shocked to learn that 74.6% of Pickens County kindergartners tested "not ready" for kindergarten. Worse yet, Pickens County kindergartners scored 10% lower than the state average.

To address this need, we included kindergarten students in Camp iRock as a pilot in 2018. Unsure of their ability to participate in a full summer experience due to their young age, we ran two sessions of kindergarten classes, 3 weeks per session.

The teachers reported that the kindergarten students handled Camp iRock very well. They urged us to expand K5 to the full 8 week program.



*Kindergartners loved when volunteers read to them.*

### A Thank You Note From A Camp iRock Mom

*"Just a quick note to thank you all for the fabulous experience our daughter, Abby, had attending Camp iRock this summer. Camp iRock is ingenious as a means of preventing summer slide and helping struggling readers reach their next level while still enjoying the summertime break.*

*Abby moved up a grade level!*

*At the closing celebration, Abby shared her biography on Dolly Parton while being part of Team Incredibles. As nervous as she can be in a large, overstimulating group, she made it through with the encouragement of her fellow campers.*

*Three cheers for all who contributed to this amazing program!"*  
– Nicole Starkey



# CAMP iROCK YEAR 4 RESULTS

## Academic Results

We used Fountas and Pinnell Benchmarks to assess a student's independent reading level. Elements included accuracy, fluency and comprehension.

**85% of the 364 students who attended Camp iRock in the summer of 2018 experienced no reading loss, and 61% showed moderate to exceptional growth.**

Students who attended at least 50% of the 8 week camp had an average of 1.33 levels of growth in reading, which equates to about 3 1/2 months of growth.

This was the first year that we included K5. They had the sunniest attitudes. They did not cry for mom or display the behavior issues that we sometimes see in the other grades. They "rocked" Camp iRock!

**These young students grew an average of 1.1 levels and had the highest attendance rate during camp with 91 of 104 attending 50% or more of the camp.**

## Attitude, Character and Soft Skill Development

As important as the academic growth is for the child and their family, children who are struggling with reading and school experience profound emotional distress, depression and self-esteem issues, as evidenced by the results of the YMCA administered survey at the beginning of Camp iRock.

**In 2018, 32% of Camp iRock children answered negatively to 3 or more statements about how they felt about themselves and their life.**

The survey categories were: curiosity, problem solving, desire to read, ability to make friends, view of current life, feeling love for others and feeling loved themselves. The teachers, YMCA counselors and Call Me MiSTER interns identified these "at risk" children and developed an internal list of children who were struggling. They called it the "Love List." It was noted that these children were more insecure, clingy, and had more behavior issues. The Camp iRock staff members were intentional in paying extra attention to these children. Community volunteers called Reading Buddies were also paired with this group of children who needed extra support.



### Reading Buddies

are special Camp iRock volunteers who want to see children succeed. They spend extra time with children who need a little more support. Very close bonds are created between the Buddies and their campers. It is clear from our survey results that Reading Buddy volunteers want their strong and special relationship to continue after Camp iRock ends. The literacy mentoring program will add another level of engagement for volunteers who have literacy training and children who love them so much!





CAMP IROCK

## iRock Perfect Attendance

is hereby presented to

Andrew Naylor

Summer 2018

Michelle Nae  
YMCA Coordinator

District Director



## ANIMAL Research

Great White  
Shark

Flip Book

Name: Andrew

Habitat

Food  
Appearance

Interesting facts

## LITERACY MENTORING PROGRAM

We are so excited to be able to provide funds so that the YMCA could start a literacy mentoring program. Your donation to United Way of Pickens County helps children succeed in school, not just in the summer at Camp iRock, but on a year round basis.

This partnership with the School District of Pickens County targets children in 1st through 4th grade who need additional help with their reading. This is very exciting because it will provide year round support for our Camp iRock children, as well as other children who didn't attend Camp iRock.



*Children will receive year-round literacy support because of YOU.*

## BORN LEARNING

Born Learning is a national public engagement campaign that helps parents, grandparents and caregivers explore new ways to turn everyday moments into fun learning opportunities with their children.

Born Learning Trails are interactive, walkable trails with signs for caregivers and children which foster early learning opportunities. Each sign suggests fun outdoor games designed to boost

children's language and literacy skills while helping families get active together.

In Pickens County, there are 8 Born Learning Trails, one each in Central, Liberty, Pickens and Six Mile, and two each in Clemson and Easley. A list of Born Learning Trails can be found on our website, [www.uwpickens.org/born-learning](http://www.uwpickens.org/born-learning). We are truly grateful for all of our Born Learning sponsors and volunteers who have installed and refurbished trails.

Did You Know that learning is happening all the time? Everyday life is a learning experience for children. By playing and exploring on the Born Learning Trail, young children are getting ready for success in school and life.





## PRESCHOOL PAGES

The Women United Preschool Pages program is putting books into the hands of toddlers, and smiles on their faces. When the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) data came in last year, it showed that 74.6% of Pickens County kindergartners tested not ready for kindergarten. When children start their school journey already behind, it can be very difficult for them to catch up.

That is why Women United is so pleased to partner with McKissick Academy of Science and Technology, Central Academy of the Arts, and Chastain Road Elementary School to support their toddler reading programs.

Each school offers ongoing toddler reading programs which include a story time and related crafts and activities. These programs provide our youngest learners with reading opportunities that not only teach them how to interact with books, but also give them a chance to learn or develop fine motor skills such as crayon or scissor use. They also teach behavioral skills such as sharing, listening and following directions,

all while familiarizing them with the school and classroom setting.

### Women United's Role

Through funding and book donations, Women United provides books for each of the three Preschool Pages programs. Teachers create "wish lists" based on their individual curriculum, and the books can be purchased through the United Way of Pickens County Amazon Wish List or through Poor Richard's Booksellers in Easley. Preschool Pages has provided 400 books valued at \$3,000 that have benefitted 44 families in Pickens County.

Women United is a growing global force of 75,000 women dedicated to creating a world of opportunity for everyone. In Pickens County, Women United formed in 2015, and they have become an unstoppable network of powerful women committed to improving the lives of children in Pickens County by supporting initiatives that address early childhood literacy. Learn more at [www.uwpickens.org/women-united](http://www.uwpickens.org/women-united).



### The Cougar Book Club-A Grandmother's Perspective

*"My grandson, Ollie loves coming to the book club. He just loves interacting with the other children. He gets so excited that it's hard to keep him from running down the hall. When we take the books home, we read them over and over again. He especially loves "Pete the Cat". He knows it by heart. When we read "The Little Blue Truck" he got to stand in a little blue truck and got a picture to take home where we put it on the refrigerator. He remembers and talks about it all of the time."*



## RAZOR READERS

United Way of Pickens County funded a pilot literacy collaboration between Pickens County First Steps and Clemson University's Call Me MiSTER program.

**Called Razor Readers, this collaboration is a literacy program which creates child-friendly reading spaces in local barber shops that primarily serve the African American community.**

The MiSTERS visit the barber shops on Saturdays to engage with the children and promote two innovative early literacy programs, "The Palmetto Basics" and "Ready Rosie". The MiSTERS stress the importance of reading to children early and often.

Razor Readers has been very impactful for both the children and MiSTERS. Last year, over 80 children participated at one of the three participating barber shops serving our local African American Community.



### Everyone LOVES Razor Readers.

All the barbers report an increase in reading, especially with the younger children. It brightens their day to see the children so excited about reading. Future elementary teacher Donovan Waddell has learned valuable skills he will take to his classroom after graduation. "I've always known that I can be impatient at times with the adults and some of the things we do. However, I learned through this experience that not only do I have surprisingly good patience when it comes to reading with kids, also it is something I really enjoy and can't wait to practice in my classroom."



*Call Me MiSTERS are an integral part of both Razor Readers and Camp iRock.*

## PUBLIX DONATES LITTLE FREE LIBRARY

At their annual Retail Operation Conference this year, Publix leaders built 128 Little Free Libraries to donate to local communities in the seven states they serve. We are happy that Publix chose United Way of Pickens County to be one of them!

Little Free Libraries increase easy access to books, especially where books are scarce. Along with the Little Free Library, Publix donated over \$100 worth of books to stock the Little Free Library that will be installed at the historic West End Hall. Look for it the next time you visit us.



*Thank you, Publix, for donating this Little Free Library!*

## A FINAL THANK YOU FROM A GRATEFUL FAMILY

“Before Camp iRock it was kind of hard to read. The words would move around.”

Dottie’s dad, Joe, confirms. “She used to struggle with reading. She would get some of the little words right, but she would skip over the bigger words. She was a struggling C student.”

Expert intervention was needed. This is where YOU came in!

Your support of Camp iRock gave Dottie the expert reading intervention she needed, while also providing a fun summer camp experience.

Because of Camp iRock, Dottie really blossomed. She is an A/B student and is keeping up in her classes. Dottie loves to read now. She reads to learn more about things that interest her, like crafts, animals and Star Wars. She can even be found hiding under the covers with a book when she is supposed to be asleep- a “broken rule” that her parents can live with!

Dottie’s dad said it best: “If your child is struggling with reading, Camp iRock is worth ten times

whatever it costs to put it on. Camp iRock is the best thing for a struggling kid.”



*Dottie loves to read now, thanks to you and Camp iRock!*









*Get Connected. Get Answers.*

**2-1-1 is a free service available 24/7 which provides referral information for:**

- Basic human resources.
- Physical and mental health resources.
- Employment support.
- Support for seniors and persons with disabilities.
- Support for children, youth and families.
- Volunteer opportunities and donations.

**ALTERNATE NUMBER: 1-866-892-9211**

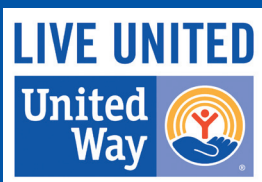


## GET CONNECTED

**GET CONNECTED** is Pickens County's online volunteer database designed to connect you with local programs, projects and agencies that need your help.



Visit [www.uwpickens.org](http://www.uwpickens.org) and click on Volunteer to Get Connected today!



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### A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO:

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