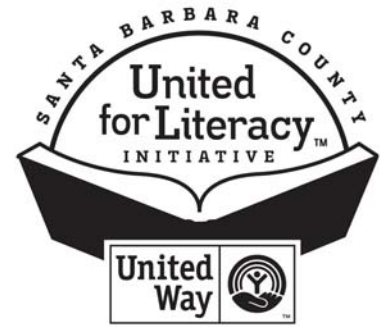


**United Ways  
of Santa Barbara County**

320 East Gutierrez Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
tel 805-965-8591  
fax 805-962-3461  
[www.unitedwaysb.org](http://www.unitedwaysb.org)  
[www.volunteersbc.org](http://www.volunteersbc.org)  
[www.partnershipsb.org](http://www.partnershipsb.org)



## **Executive Summary**

**History:** In an effort to bring the south Santa Barbara County community to a consensus on what it saw as its long-term vision, goals, and measurable outcomes, a strategic planning process, which began in February 2006, called the Power of Partnership Initiative (POPI) was launched by United Way of Santa Barbara County (UWSBC). POPI is the largest community engagement effort in the tri-county area involving over 250 organizations and more than 5,300 local individuals. POPI's success in generating community-driven, expert-assisted prioritization of the south Santa Barbara County community's 10-year goals for children, families and seniors has resulted in the United For Literacy Initiative (UFL). UFL is one of several projects that will help achieve the community's goals for children and families.

**Need:**

In California:

- 33% of students are non-high school graduates (dropouts, non-graduates, and unknowns) and continues to increase over the years.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> grade literacy performance is a top indicator for graduation success, however, over the last several years and hundreds of reading and literacy programs, the achievement gap, for underserved and at-risk children, continues to widen.

In Santa Barbara:

- 68% of low-income families do not have a single age-appropriate book in their home.
- Nearly 40% of third graders read below grade level.

Proper integration into society and the community is difficult for high school dropouts. Many will live poverty-level lives, which will consequently result in issues such as drugs, alcohol, violence, domestic violence, homelessness, etc., eventually leading to prison or death. The California Department of Corrections uses 3<sup>rd</sup> grade literacy performance data to plan the number of future prisons the State will need to build. Comprehensive and long-term literacy programs with an incentives component that engage the community and family to address literacy issues do not exist in Santa Barbara County.

**Initiative Description:** UFL is a multi-pronged approach to solving the Santa Barbara County's literacy crisis over a 10 year period by increasing the number of high school graduates and the number of students reading proficiently.

To accomplish the graduation and reading proficiency goals for the Santa Barbara County community, UFL will create an uninterrupted pipeline of literacy and family and community engagement services through the following year-round and summer partnerships:

- Born Learning (ages 0-5)
- Dolly Parton Imagination Library (ages 0-5)
- Reading Plus (ages 8-senior).

Each partnership will offer educational programming that is age-appropriate, and aligned with school standards, but unique from other literacy programs because each program will require family and community engagement, volunteers/mentors, and each program will provide incentives that will motivate and encourage participants to work harder (gift certificates to Borders/Barnes and Noble, tickets to science and history museums, etc.).

UWSBC will recruit residents, local leaders, stakeholders, public and private businesses and non-profit organizations to volunteer and conduct follow ups, provide support, interact, and encourage/motivate participants throughout the 10-year UFL process.

Underserved and at-risk children and youth (ages 0-18) of Santa Barbara County, selected by caregivers, pediatricians, teachers, family advocates, and counselors will be the initial target population of UFL. With sufficient funding, UFL will become an all-inclusive, county-wide initiative (birth to seniors).

**Direct Benefits:** UFL, over a 10-year period, will:

- Increase Santa Barbara County students reading at or above grade level in every grade by 50%.
- Increase the number of on-time high school graduates by 50%.

Students will gain in confidence and self-esteem, earlier detection of students with special learning disabilities will allow for early intervention, schools will see a rise in their English and Language Arts assessment scores, neighborhood and community pride will increase, and volunteerism will increase.

**Indirect Benefits:** schools will see a decrease in suspensions and trancies, community pride will be nurtured and strengthened, decrease of service/emergency calls, and increase in community leaders and philanthropists.

**Partners:** please see attached list for schools, agencies, districts, and others who are a pilot project or implementation site.