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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Municipal Affairs

### **Government helps raise readers with investment in literacy**

VICTORIA – Nearly 55,000 kids, parents and caregivers in B.C., including in rural, remote and Indigenous communities, can access family literacy programs to improve their reading skills through the annual Raise-a-Reader campaign Sept. 22-29, 2022.

“Literacy is an essential skill that opens so many doors for children and their families throughout British Columbia, and that’s why I love being able to promote Raise-a-Reader Week,” said Nathan Cullen, Minister of Municipal Affairs. “Contributions to this campaign help support year-round programming for children and their families to engage in reading, playing and other activities that help develop these important skills.”

This year, the B.C. government is donating \$500,000 to the yearly Raise-a-Reader campaign to support literacy programs offered through community organizations, public libraries and schools. Postmedia raises money through donations to fund virtual and in-person family literacy programs across B.C. annually.

The Province supports literacy in partnership with Decoda Literacy Solutions, which manages the donations and provides resources such as reading materials, training and funds to help with community-based literacy and learning programs throughout B.C. communities.

“Many individuals support Raise-a-Reader through their work and community groups. We are very appreciative of their commitment to this important program,” said Sandra Lee, executive director, Decoda Literacy Solutions. “The program provides children and families across B.C. with literacy and learning resources.”

Money raised through the campaign reaches children and families through programs, such as one-to-one reading and tutoring programs, story walks, English-language learning and Parent-Child Mother Goose.

During Raise-a-Reader Week, the Vancouver Sun’s print and online editions will feature daily stories that highlight community literacy programs.

“Postmedia's Raise-a-Reader program remains committed to helping children and families obtain the literacy skills they need to improve their lives,” said Harold Munro, editor-in-chief, Vancouver Sun and The Province. “We thank the provincial government for again supporting the annual campaign with a generous donation that will assist thousands of B.C. residents. We are also extremely grateful for the many contributions from other institutions and our loyal readers.”

Members of the public are invited to visit the Canada Helps website to make a donation to the community of their choice: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/42475>

**Quick Facts:**

- More than 700,000 British Columbians have significant challenges with literacy.
- Nearly one-half of people aged 16 to 65 have difficulty following instruction manuals, reading health information, understanding newspapers and more.
- Since 2017, the Province has invested \$3 million in support of Raise-a-Reader literacy programs.
- Since 1997, the campaign has generated more than \$21 million to support literacy initiatives in the province.
- In 2021, 54,566 children, parents and caregivers attended 4,293 family literacy sessions made possible with support from Raise-a-Reader.

**Learn More:**

To donate to the 2022 Raise-a-Reader campaign, visit: <https://vancouver.sun.com/raiseareader>

Decoda Literacy Solutions and Foundation: <https://decoda.ca/get-involved/raise-a-reader/>

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