

Enewsletter  
May 2025

Numbers  
All Around

Nebraska  
Growing  
Readers



## Local and Statewide Impact

Since we began, Nebraska Growing Readers has aimed at creating both a statewide infrastructure to increase access to books in all communities, but also to identify specific areas where books are less available and to make sure families from those areas can receive books, build home libraries, and read together.

In our first year, NGR has, between the provider registration program, the kindergarten mailing program, and the Community Book Gardens program, reached 90 of the state's 93 counties. We are thus laying the groundwork for that crucial literacy infrastructure, and you have been a big part of making that happen.

We have also seen some of the very specific impacts in communities, from a young boy who had never spoken his name before saying it for the first time when he saw himself in an NGR book to a local mother daughter duo who connected to the local civil service community through the NGR books they authored.

Although NGR is still in the early stages of development, what we are seeing is a budding literacy network that has a real and positive impact on the children of Nebraska. With your support we can continue to create literacy communities on the local level and as a state.

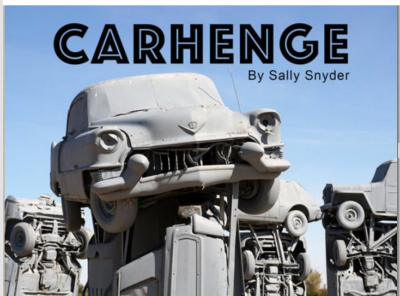
This month we focus on both the larger and smaller impacts of NGR in Nebraska.

## Stories Bigger than a Book: NGR's First Year of Success

Josh Cramer returned to his home state of Nebraska where he took on his position at Nebraska Children and where he said to Mike McGuffee of Unite for Literacy, "I would like to see Nebraska lead the nation in family literacy programs." The two then began discussing a way to make Nebraska Unite's first statewide literacy effort.

To learn how their effort grew into Nebraska Growing Readers (NGR) and how NGR planted the first seeds of a largescale literacy effort in the state, read the full article.

[Read the Article](#)



### Local Impact

*Carhenge* is the local book with international echoes. Learn about the Alliance, NE, attraction and stone circles all at the same time.

[Read Carhenge](#)

-Why do you think Mr. Reinders painted most of the cars gray?  
-Learn about other tall stone structures around the world, like Easter Island.

## NGR News

### A Safe Space Built of Books



“She would look at the pictures and tear the books up!” Rosa Alvarado describes an unusual beginning to a success story for Sixpence and Nebraska Growing Readers, both of which are Nebraska Children and Families Foundation initiatives. Rosa is a home visitor for Sixpence in Grand Island, where she works with families to help stabilize them in the community and get them connected to local resources, such as the public library, the school system, and area churches.

It was in this role that Rosa met Darla (known as Darlita) and her parents. Darlita is a 3-year-old born to teenage parents from Guatemala and El Salvador, and when Rosa began home visits with the family, it quickly became apparent something wasn’t working. Rosa would bring Nebraska Growing Readers books to her first visit of the month with Darlita and, as Rosa describes it, “we would try to say simple words; she (Darlita) wasn’t able to articulate them. She couldn’t say ‘mom’ or ‘dad’ in either English or Spanish, and she would go into rages.” Rosa could see that Darlita was struggling with language development.

Rosa made reading part of Darlita’s routine. At each home visit, she would dedicate story time where Darlita’s mother or father would sit with her and read. She says of the routine she has established, “what we are trying to do here with our Sixpence is to create a culture of literacy.”

[Read the Full Article](#)





## Statewide Impact

Kids across the state will recognize farms and some will have grown up on one.

Read *My Farm*

-What other animals might live on a farm?  
-What job would you like to do on a farm?

## Nebraska Book Spotlight

### All Things State and Local

Nebraska Growing Readers strives to create locally-tailored content designed to engage children in the environments they grow up in. In our digital library, you'll find very specific local content and content that speaks to a wider state audience.



Children across the state spend time in childcare working with early childhood educators. *At Childcare* gives a glimpse into a world they will be familiar with and where they can share their expertise.

-Where do you go to childcare?  
-Who are your favorite friends to play with there?

Read the Book



*Fisher Fountain* may be about a local Hastings attraction, but children can identify with the special places in their own communities and the things they do with family.

-Are there other fountains in Hastings?  
-Are there fountains in your hometown?

Read the Book

## NGR Impacts the State

Just a reminder that the recent joint evaluation conducted by Nebraska Children and Families Foundation and the Munroe-Meyer Institute suggests the significant impact NGR books have had on the state's children, families, and communities. Be sure to check out the evaluation.

[See the NGR Evaluation](#)

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## Did you enjoy reading these books? Want to read other books available in the NGR library?

[Visit the NGR Library](#)

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## Join Our Facebook Group

Nebraska Growing Readers has a Facebook Group where you can get up-to-date information about the program; engage with this program and the other NGR provider sites; and share ideas, resources, and tips for getting kids excited about reading.

[Follow Us on Facebook](#)

This private group, will require you to answer a question to get in. There are no wrong answers. We just want to assure a safe space specifically for providers.

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## Learn More about Nebraska

[See Nebraska-Related Books](#)

Nebraska Growing Readers continues to build the library of content written by Nebraskans and about the various cultural experiences you can find in the state. Want to know more about Nebraska books? Visit our Spotlight on Books page to see what's happening in your state.

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Nebraska Growing Readers is a collaboration between Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, the Nebraska Department of Education, the Statewide Family Engagement Center, and Unite for Literacy.

If you have questions of comments concerning the program, please contact [Greta Carlson](#) ([gcarlson@nebraskachildren.org](mailto:gcarlson@nebraskachildren.org)).



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