

# Matching grants put \$1.5 million

SUMMARY: Library Foundation | The infusion will expand programs that benefit young and at-risk readers

Children's literacy programs at Multnomah County Library got a \$1.5 million infusion last week thanks to matching grants from the Portland Children's Investment Fund and Meyer Memorial Trust.

The matching \$750,000 grants to The Library Foundation will go toward expanding three services: Summer Reading, targeted at children at risk for low literacy; Books 2 U, a popular program in some Portland schools will add classrooms; and Raising a Reader, a take-home book program for children in childcare centers, Head Start classrooms and nonprofit community centers. The money also would create a new program, Every Family Reads, to encourage both children and their parents to read.

The library award is the latest allocation by the Children's Investment Fund's \$3 million Leverage Fund, which was created in December 2004 to match private funders with public investments.

"We're confident that our Leverage Fund investment in The Library Foundation and its unique approach to increasing literacy skills will help raise the reading level of some of Portland's neediest children," said Portland City Commissioner Dan Saltzman, chairman of the Children's Investment Fund Allocation Committee.

To date, nearly \$1.8 million has been allocated from the Leverage Fund and matched dollar for dollar with private gifts for a total investment of \$3.6 million. Plans are afoot to allocate the remaining \$1.2 million, with private funds to match, in the next six months, said Mary Gay Broderick, spokeswoman for the Investment Fund.

Recent matching gifts from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust and the Harold and Arlene Schnitzer CARE Foundation have supported schools that serve Portland's lowest-income neighborhoods, expanded services offered by local Boys & Girls Clubs, and focused on helping children in foster care succeed in school.

In November, the Portland Children's Investment Fund and Meyer Memorial Trust matched grants of \$325,000 to fund the Juvenile Rights Project's SchoolWorks Program. Modeled after a Seattle-based program, TeamChild, SchoolWorks provides educational advocacy for roughly 220 children ages 8 to 15 in foster care and in the juvenile justice system. The combined investment of \$650,000 will allow SchoolWorks to reach an additional 130 children each year, and broaden the age range to include children ages 5 to 18.

In December, the Children's Investment Fund matched the Gates Foundation grant of \$320,000 to fund Start Making A Reader Today for two years at 20 elementary schools in Portland's poorest communities. In August, the Schnitzer CARE Foundation's \$375,000 grant was leveraged to fund the facility construction and start-up programming costs at the new North Portland Boys & Girls Club and to underwrite NightScape, an evening and after-school program for teens at the Blazers Boys & Girls Club in Northeast and the Wattles Boys & Girls Club in Southeast Portland.

The Children's Investment Fund was created by a five-year levy passed by Portland voters in 2002. The levy provides \$8.5 million each year to support programs in early childhood development, after-school mentoring and child abuse prevention.

Current funding for the fund expires in 2008. The Portland City Council is set to decide at a Feb. 22 hearing when the fund will again be placed before voters, probably this fall.

Kimberly Wilson: 503-412-7017; [HYPERLINK "mailto:kimberlywilson@news.oregonian.com"](mailto:kimberlywilson@news.oregonian.com)  
[kimberlywilson@news.oregonian.com](mailto:kimberlywilson@news.oregonian.com)

