



## **Nonprofit Reach Out and Read Announces Industry Leader, Artavia Berry as Founding Executive Director for the Bay Area**

San Francisco, CA (January 10, 2023) – Reach Out and Read (ROR), a nonprofit which integrates reading aloud to children into pediatric care, is proud to announce the hiring of Artavia Berry as its Founding Executive Director in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Berry brings an impressive background in nonprofit and community outreach. A native of Chicago, she served as an AmeriCorps National Service Leader under the direction of Michelle Obama at Public Allies Chicago. She also served alongside Rev. Dr. Addie Wyatt, Rev. Willie Barrow and Rev. Dr. Leon Finney to create faith-centered social change, focusing on youth empowerment. She is an ordained minister, holding a B.A. in Theology and a Master of Divinity from Grace Christian Seminary; and is an Alumna of Loyola University Chicago.

“The leadership Artavia brings to our organization is invaluable,” said Marty Martinez, chief executive officer at Reach Out and Read. “She has a proven track record of creating awareness and positive change in past initiatives. Her drive and dedication to our mission has me really excited for the future of our Bay Area community.”

“I couldn’t be more excited about joining such a phenomenal organization,” said Berry. “Reach Out and Read Bay Area has a rich history of working closely with our local medical community to ensure our children and parents are encouraged to develop a love of reading together, starting at the very first pediatrician visit. During the height of the pandemic, many of our families shared they were only able to get books at their child’s wellness visit. This is a powerful testimony of the deep impact of our work. I am looking forward to continuing our legacy of enriching the lives of children through reading.”

As the only national pediatric literacy model endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, ROR serves children in all 50 of the United States. Since 1996, the Bay Area program has grown to 161 site locations across all 12 counties with the help of 818 medical providers. Since its start, this region has served more than 191,000 children from birth to five years old via 300,000 well child visits each year

“Through the act of reading aloud to a child every day, science proves that cognitive development is increased, as well as emotional development which creates a more trusting, stronger society,” says Martinez. “We’re overjoyed to deepen this level of impact with Artavia at the helm launching our permanent affiliate site in the Bay Area

ROR is focusing on equitably strengthening and deepening its impact on the children, families, and communities they serve with books available in 28 languages. Through its Windows and Mirrors initiative, books selected for children are rich in diversity and represent diverse backgrounds.

Reach Out and Read has raised over \$800,000 from Bay Area supporters including the Overdeck Family Foundation, the Lisa and Douglas Goldman Fund, Kaiser Permanente Northern California, Elevance Health, and the Dean and Margaret Leshner Foundation, and other partners to launch a permanent affiliate site in the



Bay Area. This seed investment will support current programming and lay the foundation to scale to reach more children and families in the future.

**About Reach Out and Read:** Reach Out and Read is 501(c)3 nonprofit that gives young children a foundation for success by incorporating books into pediatric care and encouraging families to read aloud together. As the only national pediatric literacy model endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, ROR serves children in all 50 of the United States and has operated in the Bay Area (Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, and Sonoma counties) since 1996. Reach Out and Read has grown organically from longstanding relationships with medical residencies, in addition to the grassroots advocacy of individual providers at their clinics. Reach Out and Read is a part of more than 300,000 well-child visits annually at 161 clinical locations across the region. These sites range from small community clinics to large Health Systems and serve a diverse population, primarily targeted at serving children and families in high-need areas.

For more information visit [www.reachoutandread.org/bay-area](http://www.reachoutandread.org/bay-area)