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UNITED WAY KICKS OFF “STARTUP SANTA” BOOK DRIVE TO GIVE CHILDREN THE GIFT OF LITERACY

Salt Lake City — Because Utah’s low income families have only one book per 300 children, and 2 out of 3 of these children are not proficient in reading, United Ways across the state are partnering with Beehive Startups and Silicon Slopes this holiday season to hold a state-wide children’s book drive for those in need.

From now through Dec. 4, companies throughout the state will compete against each other to see who can donate the most books and funds to support literacy programs for those living in low-income families. During Dec. 5 – 15, United Way of Salt Lake will coordinate opportunities for participating companies and their leaders to read to children attending Utah Title I elementary schools.

“Students who are not reading are grade level are less likely to graduate from high school and go on to college,” said Bill Crim, president and CEO, United Way of Salt Lake. “This time of year presents us with so many opportunities to volunteer and donate--supporting literacy is the best gift we can give low-income students and our community.”

Last year, Startup Santa raised \$67,000, this year, we are hoping to double the number of books donated and double the number of dollars raised.

Although this effort is being championed by the startup and tech industries, any organization can get involved. Sign up at www.startupsanta.org. The book drive goes from now until December 4. The public can also sign up for volunteer reading events happening December 5-15.

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About United Way of Salt Lake

United Way of Salt Lake is pursuing lasting social change on the most difficult issues we face as a community: poverty, poor health, lagging educational achievement. Together with 150 partners and thousands of volunteers, UWSL works in 27 schools and neighborhood centers across seven communities to impact over 80,000 low-income students. To achieve its goals, UWSL unites powerful partnerships around a shared vision, identifies effective paths to success, and delivers programs across neighborhoods and in community schools.