



UPSTART

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kimberly Flores, Public Relations Manager

Phone: 951-310-2531

Email: kimberlyflores@waterford.org

Nonprofit Continues Helping New Mexico Children Avoid “COVID Slide” and Enter Kindergarten Prepared

Results from the Waterford Upstart pilot show the average New Mexico graduate entered kindergarten at a “Kindergarten Intermediate” level.

(Albuquerque, NM) October 20, 2020 — This year created unprecedented issues in education, especially for the state’s youngest learners. However, nearly 500 New Mexico children across 73 municipalities were given the opportunity to avoid the “COVID Slide” and prepare for kindergarten thanks to an at-home summer learning program by education nonprofit, Waterford.org.

The Waterford Upstart Summer Learning Path provided children personalized early literacy instruction and gave families the tools they needed to work with their children offline, including a program coach, push notifications, and social-emotional training. Thanks to philanthropic donations, more than 13,000 children in 9 states and the Navajo Nation were able to participate in the program at no cost. Research also shows Native American children outperformed Caucasian and Hispanic children.

“This spring was tough for families across New Mexico. With months away from school, we feared learning loss was inevitable. That’s why we were so excited to hear about the Waterford Upstart summer learning program. The results from the Native American population are also incredibly inspiring. This is exactly the type of program we should be thinking about as we work to provide a solid foundation for our state’s early learners,” said **State Senator Mimi Stewart**.

In New Mexico, nearly 65 percent of the participants were from low-income families (below 200 percent of the federal poverty level). As part of the program, a computer and internet access are provided to families that needed it. In New Mexico, 41 percent of families received a computer as part of the program. Waterford.org has detailed information on counties, cities, ethnicities, and socioeconomic statuses at a reporter’s request.

Because of the program’s success, Waterford.org is now working with the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department and tribal early education leaders to provide the Waterford Upstart program to 50-100 families with preschool-aged children who have been negatively impacted by COVID-19. Children entering kindergarten in fall 2021 are eligible.

###

About Waterford.org

Waterford.org is an education nonprofit with a mission to achieve universal literacy for children through equity, access, and parent empowerment. Waterford develops educational tools that guide students along adaptive, individualized learning paths toward fluent reading and lifelong learning. Waterford empowers parents as a child’s first teacher and supports teachers in taking the right actions at the right time for their students. Currently, Waterford.org serves over 300,000 children across 43 states every year.

Waterford.org is a BBB Accredited Charity with programs supported by a variety of governmental and philanthropic organizations, including support from a federal EIR grant, The Studio @ Blue Meridian, and TED’s Audacious Project.

About Waterford Upstart



Waterford Upstart helps four-year-old children prepare for school at home and at no cost. Children develop foundational reading and social-emotional skills, and parents are empowered to become their child's first and most influential teachers. The children use adaptive software just 15 minutes a day, five days a week in the year before they start school. Waterford Upstart also fuels family involvement in their child's early education through program coaches and fun educational activities parents can complete with their children offline. Waterford Upstart has been rigorously tested and proven, earning the program a [federal EIR grant](#) and the title of a [TED Audacious project](#). [Independent research shows](#) the average Waterford Upstart graduate enters kindergarten reading at nearly a first-grade level and maintains those gains through the fourth grade.