Dear Heroes,

Yes, heroes. Why? Because in these troubled times you have decided to stand up. By supporting Literacy Partners you are helping immigrant moms and dads, our students, achieve the “American Dream.” You show them that they are not alone. You show them that they are welcome here. And that is heroic.

Let me tell you a story. Two years ago, Iovanna came to the United States from Venezuela to escape persecution. She could not find this refuge now. Eager to learn English, she enrolled in Literacy Partners’ classes for parents. She has learned to communicate and taken a leadership role, representing her daughter’s school at community meetings.

Another student, Amira, fled Yemen with her two sons. Yemen has been embroiled in civil war since 2015. Amira fled to the United States for safety and to give her children a better future. Again, today she would be banned—along with her children. Yet she is here and has made enough progress in her studies with Literacy Partners that now she helps her children every day with their homework.

Literacy Partners’ students hail from Venezuela and Yemen, Mexico and Albania, Georgia, Ecuador, Haiti, Honduras, France, Senegal and more. 38 countries in the last year alone. Immigrants and their families—they are what America is made of. They make America great. Literacy Partners is proud to stand with them. I know you are, too.

Check inside to see what you are helping them to achieve. Our students excel in their classes and go on to achieve success for their families. Teaching parents also helps children excel in school, helping to break the cycle of illiteracy and poverty that plagues so many families. Read on for the powerful stories you make possible with every dollar of support you give to Literacy Partners.

My family came to this country two generations ago in search of a better life. Maybe yours did, too. I am proud to stand with our immigrant families. And I am proud that you stand with us.

Thanks,

Anthony Tassi, CEO
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**Literacy Partners** helps immigrant and low-income parents develop the literacy and language skills they need to solve problems and achieve goals for themselves and their family.
Like many immigrant parents, Maria de Jesus Perez struggled to navigate the school system and look out for her kids. When she came from Mexico in 2004, daily interactions were a struggle, but when her children entered school, Maria knew that she needed to learn English.

Determined to help her children with homework, she joined an ESOL class at Literacy Partners. “We’re learning the same words,” Maria says. “I like that because we understand and learn together. We say, ‘You try. I try.’”

Every night now, Maria and her sons spend two hours on their homework together, building a connection as they work on assignments for their respective classes.

But Maria didn’t stop with her sons’ homework—she’s now an active parent at their school. Inspired to help parents like her, she joined the PTA. “The President of the Parents,” acclaimed by the principal, Maria lives up to the name. She’s confident and secure, no longer nervous to reach out to others. Instead, she quickly steps into the role of leader and translator for those who need assistance.
MALA MOHAMMED: 
A Bright Future for Her Children, and Herself

Mala moved to New York City with her children 20 years ago, to give them a better future. As a single mom raising Tia, 24, and Nicholas, 23, she went to extraordinary lengths to ensure they had what they needed, did well in school, and went to college. Her children are now both enrolled in college, so Mala made up her mind—she wanted her high school diploma.

Mala had been forced to drop out of school at the age of 11 back in Trinidad and Tobago. But now she wants her high school diploma to have access to higher paying and more stable work—and so that when people asked her about it, she could tell them it was a credential she had. Mala enrolled in Literacy Partners High School Equivalency (HSE) classes to finally achieve her goal.

She says, “nothing is hard once I make my mind up. I push myself and I can do it.” She credits her teacher with having patience and kindness. Not everyone is able to be as focused as Mala, and she says one of the best things about Literacy Partners’ classes is that the teacher can make the class work for everyone.

Mala is hoping to pass her exams to obtain her high school diploma this year. After that, she would like to pursue office work. Mala achieved her dreams for her children, and now with Literacy Partners, she is achieving her own dream. She says, “If you know you want to achieve something in life for your future, get to school and focus.”

“If you know you want to achieve something in life for your future, get to school and focus.”
—MALA MOHAMMED
Marchette Hellams promised her father she would go to college, and three decades later, she has kept her promise. Marchette, who spoke at our 2017 Gala, is in college and is thriving.

Overcoming huge obstacles, she graduated from our High School Equivalency program in 2016. Her persistence and work ethic continues to serve her well. In Spring 2018, Marchette made the Dean’s List at her college—an honor awarded to students who earn a 3.3 GPA or higher.

She wrote us to share the news saying: “Literacy Partners is a very huge part of why I am where I am! This is a very big and important honor for me and I thank Literacy Partners for the encouragement and push I needed. I pray you all see me to the end of this chapter!”

Recognizing the power of stories to inspire others, Marchette plans to write a book about her journey.
LORENA QUIROGA

Lorena Quiroga, an English for Parents student, spoke at our Gala in 2016 about her journey to learn English. Lorena moved from Argentina to New York City with her husband and their two sons, Facundo, 13, and Mateo, 4.

At the Gala, Lorena said, “Before my class, my son Mateo said ‘I love you’ in English, but I stayed quiet,” she said. “I didn’t know the right word to say until a few weeks ago…. In English, we say ‘too.’ Now I tell Mateo, ‘I love you, too. I love you, too.”

Her son Mateo was recently evaluated to see if he was ready to start first grade in September. Mateo’s teacher expected him to need extra help in reading, but his assessment revealed that he is already exceeding first-grade reading proficiency standards! We are so proud of Mateo for his growth as a reader, and of Lorena for being able to support her son’s academic growth.

“Before my class, my son Mateo said ‘I love you’ in English, but I stayed quiet. I didn’t know the right word to say until a few weeks ago… In English, we say ‘too.’ Now I tell Mateo, ‘I love you, too.”

—LORENA QUIROGA
Twelve talented students stood on stage on a wintry February night, proud to be earning their High School Equivalency diploma.

Camille McPherson was one of the year’s graduates. She credits the support of family and friends for helping her succeed, and says that the process has benefitted her family as well.

“When I went to school and [my son] saw me reading for science and social studies, he would go and do his homework and say, ‘Mommy, I’m going to read too!’ My daughter tells me, ‘Mommy, listen, we have to have time to read!’ and then we go to bed.”

“These talented men and women have inspired me and our staff year after year,” says Anthony Tassi. “We will miss them and I know that the perseverance they have shown will take them far.”

And this is only the beginning. Thanks to the generosity of our friend and supporter Jackie Weld Drake, each graduate received a $1,000 Rodman L. Drake Memorial Scholarship to help them pursue their education further.

Congratulations to our class of 2018!
**VOLUNTEER PROFILE: Going the Extra Mile**

Liz Zhang is running her first marathon in November. She is bringing Literacy Partners along in the process, raising money to support our work.

“The vision for improving literacy among low-income populations really resonates with me,” says Liz, who joined the Friends of Literacy Partners Associate Board in 2018. “It’s not just about parents—it’s about the next generation.”

When Liz learned that Literacy Partners is an official charity partner of the TCS NYC Marathon, she eagerly joined the team of eight runners, all of whom pledge to raise at least $2,500 each. Our “Run to Read” campaign has become an important way for people to support family literacy in New York City.

“Literacy Partners has been focused on New York, but is finding ways to support literacy nationally, too. I definitely think that is a great thing, and I want to support it.”

—LIZ ZHANG

**SUPPORT LIZ AND RUN TO READ**


For more information about joining next year’s marathon team or our Friends of Literacy Partners Associate Board, contact Emily at development@literacypartners.org.
Every year, professional actors read the writing of adult learners at the Upper West Side institution Symphony Space. This year, for the second time in a row, Literacy Partners’ HSE student Michel Regino’s work was among those to grace the stage.

After the first event, the pressure was on. “Second time around I knew a lot of people would come to the program,” Michel says. “I’m trying to read and write something funny. That was great. Amazing to . . . hear the people laughing and it was fun.”

Congratulations, Michel! We look forward to reading your work for a long time to come. ■
“I AM FROM MEXICO”
Michel Regino

I am from Mexico
From little village and big cities
I am from conservative family
I am from family that likes to eat junk Mexican food—tacos, tortas, tamales, tostados, burritos, enchiladas, coca-cola, Jarritos, and pepsi-cola.
I am from: the enchilada Verdes—a traditional dish
I am from a father’s sense of humor which showed me to be a good man, who passed away last month—gracias papa
I am from a mother who always says estudia or you will be a donkey—I love you mama, you are right
I am from 80s music—the best music of all time
I am from the futbol soccer—more important than anything else is being coach of the National team—harder than el president de Mexico.
I am from where the wheelbarrow is the principal tool in my house—la carretilla
I am from the house where we pray before eating and watch TV, after, like la familia Peluche y las Noticias con Jacobo.
I am from California where I have so many déjà vu moments because it’s so very similar to Mexico.
I am from the house with spirits and ghosts that always scare me
I am from the country that balances the dark with the good, joyful, and loving.
I am from New York City donde se disfruta los comunidades la multicultural de la gente where se puede realizar los sueños y tu vetas trabajando duro where te subes al tren y un café por la mañana sus luces por la noche and where the city that doesn’t sleep.
Emily Gallagher came to Literacy Partners through her relationship with Liz Smith and Joni Evans, her mentor, who won the Lizzie Award at our Gala in 2018.

“I felt the need to do something to honor Liz and continue her mission, so I became involved with Literacy Partners. I am especially passionate about the impact on immigrant families and the understanding that improving English language literacy for parents has a positive impact on children, too.”

At a time when immigrants feel increasingly exposed, Emily’s dedication is all the stronger; she says “I consistently get to ‘fight’ the current political climate by giving money to a cause I believe in.”

Her decision to give monthly is a matter of both impact and convenience:

“A recurring monthly donation for me means a source of steady income for Literacy Partners that they can count on each month to continue their work, but also that I don’t have to remember to donate—it just happens.”

Monthly donors provide reliable and consistent year-round support which keeps our classes free for our students. Literacy Partners thanks those special supporters, like Emily, who believe so deeply in our mission that they decide to become monthly donors. To find out more visit literacypartners.org and click Donate.
At this year’s gala, we celebrated the life of our dear friends Liz Smith, Arnold Scaasi and Parker Ladd. A video paid tribute to the trio and the lasting impact they’ve had on thousands of low-income adults.

Michael Bloomberg summed it up: “Arnold, Parker and Liz all came from overlapping worlds, but it was New York City that brought them together. And that’s because New York is the kind of place that attracts and inspires people as generous as they were. So it was no surprise that when they saw a problem like adult illiteracy, they came together to solve it and to help their fellow New Yorkers.”

A generous spirit whose tireless efforts brought so many of us together, for Liz, it truly was our story.

With Liz, Arnold and Parker, their friends became our friends. Together, we will carry their legacy forward and continue to give New Yorkers the education they need to succeed.

“She was the great communicator of New York. She didn’t think it was her story. She thought it was our story.”

—BILLY NORWICH
GALA NIGHT: March 14, 2018

LEFT PAGE: From top down, left to right
Lesley Stahl
Randy Falco and Enrique Acevedo
Sarah Paulson and Holland Taylor
Sarah Paulson, Cynthia McFadden, Billy Norwich, Holland Taylor
Moravet Espinoza and son

RIGHT PAGE: From top down, left to right
Mike Steib, Mark Jackson, Les Hinton
Joni Evans
Sheila Nevins
Jeffrey Sharp and Alina Cho
Monique and Mark Kang
Susan Magrino and Martha Stewart
Matt and Melissa Derella
Bo Han and Sebastian Niles
Kathy and Dennis Abboud
David Kleinberg and Nona Hendryx
Rolonda Watts
**READING IS A GIFT**

Children thrive in homes with lots of books, but books are expensive and often out of reach for many low-income families.

The city’s leading publishing houses have stepped in, and with your help, too, we are helping families build libraries for their young readers. This year, we expanded our **Books of Their Own** program, giving 15 free books to each of our students’ children.

On book days, parents shop through piles of brand new books, picking out favorites. This supports their reading as well: our students read to their children 50% more since the program began.

In 2018, the program has grown. The visionary support of the Staten Island Foundation and donors like you helped create a new reading promotion and home library program—**Learning Together: Reading Together**—serving hundreds of families on the North Shore of Staten Island.

“The class helps me learn to understand, to read with my kids.”

—LEOBA PORTILLO

**THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!**

THE BLUE SCHOOL  
HACHETTE BOOK GROUP  
HARCOURT PUBLISHERS  
MACMILLAN PUBLISHERS  
THE WILLIAM J. AND DOROTHY K. O’NEILL FOUNDATION  
PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE  
THE NORA ROBERTS FOUNDATION  
SCHOLASTIC  
SIMON & SCHUSTER  
THE STATEN ISLAND FOUNDATION
CHANGING LIVES THROUGH STORYTELLING

As the world’s second home, New York has always been a key destination for immigrants striving for a better life. At 37 percent of the city’s population, immigrants are essential to the health of the economy and the fabric of life. But, the City faces a vexing problem: many new immigrants haven’t had the opportunity to learn English and while demand for English classes is sky-high, funding is extremely limited.

In 2017, the NYC Mayor’s Office came to Literacy Partners to ask our help on an innovative solution: a television show to help new immigrants improve their English and learn more about life in NYC. Thus was born We Speak NYC, a seven-episode dramatic comedy produced by Literacy Partners. The series portrays immigrant New Yorkers in a positive and realistic way, while the characters model the kind of language viewers need to get things done in the city.

In addition to a broadcast run on the City’s TV station, We Speak NYC is the basis of a highly successful English conversation practice group run by Literacy Partners and dozens of other non-profits. Together, we helped over 3,500 adults to improve their English using this series over the past year.

For more information, visit nyc.gov/LearnEnglish.
**ENSURING LITERACY PARTNERS’ FUTURE:** Lynn Lawrence

Lynn Lawrence is an avid reader, lifetime New Yorker and long-time supporter. Her commitment to making sure that Literacy Partners thrives into the future means that she has chosen to honor us with a bequest so that our work to empower parents and children will continue after she is gone.

Lynn said:

“Ten years ago I had a friend—a teacher and a voracious reader—who believed in the power of words to change lives. He did everything he could to encourage his students to read. When he died I wanted to honor him. I spoke to a person at Literacy Partners and she asked about my friend—she really listened. After I made the donation, she sent me a copy of the letter she sent to the family. I was astonished. I became a lifelong donor.

“The care that went into that letter is the same care and thoughtfulness Literacy Partners gives to teaching parents to read, and to share this gift with their children. It is a gift that improves the lives of both.

“The Books of Their Own program is brilliant. Being read to, the ritual of the bedtime story, being soothed by a favorite story sitting in your mom’s lap when you’re sick, increases the closeness between parents and children. As a small child, I remember the magic that ignited when I heard the words ‘Once upon a time’ and I want everyone to experience that! As I got older and read on my own, it was a thrill to recognize myself in a character or realize that someone else had coped with what I was experiencing. Literacy Partners appreciates this and has chosen books for their library program that does this for their students—the stories of immigrants, their journeys, their lives. It is an inspired list.

“Literacy Partners is in my Will because I want everyone to know how to read and to derive the same intense pleasure I get from reading.”

—LYNN LAWRENCE
## THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!

### $100,000 & Over

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DOROTHY STRELSIN FOUNDATION

Literacy Partners is grateful to the Dorothy Strelsin Foundation for its generous gift to establish the Dorothy Strelsin Foundation Endowment at Literacy Partners. The Endowment will bring the joy of reading to families for years to come.

Liz Smith (left) with her dear friends Dorothy Strelsin and Richard Gere.
$1,000 to $2,499

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LITERACY’S CHAMPION: A TRIBUTE TO CLARE GREGORIAN

Literacy Partners was saddened by the loss of one of our leading lights in April 2018, with the passing of Clare Russell Gregorian. From volunteer tutor to tireless fundraiser to transformational board president, Clare spent nearly four decades supporting our mission and making us stronger, benefitting thousands of New Yorkers over the years.

Clare came to us in 1981, volunteering as a literacy tutor and working with countless adults to help them learn to read. In recognition of her service to our students and her commitment to our mission, Literacy Partners created the Clare R. Gregorian Volunteer of the Year award in 2002.

“Clare’s vision for the organization helped us build on our strengths and expand our services at a critical time,” said Anthony Tassi. “The organization I lead today is in many ways her legacy, and she is a lasting inspiration. We will continue our work and hers, striving to ensure that every New Yorker can read.”
$500 to $999

Judith and Alan Appelbaum
David Bausch
Robyn and Nick Bellamy
Skye Book
Linda and Jerry Bruckheimer
Jonathan L. Buchman
John R. Campbell
Arthur Carter and Marya Howell
Joseph Cheuvront
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Greenlight Bookstore
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Bo Han
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Rachel Wender
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Weijia Zhang
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<td>Elizabeth Collins</td>
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“I believe strongly in Literacy Partners’ mission of teaching illiterate adults to read, and am moved by the examples of determination and success that you publish.”

—MICHAEL WOLF, LITERACY PARTNERS SUPPORTER SINCE 2010

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Frank Mount
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Lionel Ouellette
Sambath Oum
Desirée Pagán
Grover Pagano

“I met Liz Smith at Doubles Club at a different charity event, and she asked me to come to her Literacy Partners’ event which was coming up. So, when the invite came. I went! I was so impressed with Liz and her passion to help adult New Yorkers needing help with reading that I have gone to every event since.”

—BOO GRACE, LITERACY PARTNERS SUPPORTER SINCE 1989
## FINANCIALS 2018*

### Revenue

- **Government Contracts**: $1,236,112
- **Gala**: $886,485
- **Individuals**: $698,845
- **Investment Appropriation**: $500,000
- **In-kind Contributions**: $249,684
- ** Foundations & Corporations**: $180,000
- **Rental Income**: $53,164

**Total Revenue**: $3,804,290

### Expenses

- **Programs**: $2,185,202
- **Fundraising & Communications**: $695,564
- **Administration & Management**: $346,501

**Total Expenses**: $3,227,267

* Unaudited Financial Statements (as of June 30, 2018)
MEET OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Ianthe Jeanne Dugan  
Journalist

W. Ross Honey  
President & CEO, TouchTunes

Cynthia McFadden  
Senior Legal and Investigative Correspondent, NBC News

Sara Nelson  
VP, Executive Editor, and Special Advisor to the Publisher, HarperCollins

Sebastian V. Niles  
Partner, Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz

Paul Parikh  
Vice President of Finance, L’Oreal

Hope Pingree  
President, Cover New York

Mark Subias  
Talent and Literary Agent, United Talent Agency

LITERACY PARTNERS IS PLEASED TO INTRODUCE YOU TO THESE NEW MEMBERS OF OUR BOARD WHO JOINED BETWEEN JULY 1, 2017 AND JUNE 30, 2018. WE THANK THEM, AND OUR ENTIRE BOARD, FOR THEIR SERVICE.
BOARDS OF DIRECTORS

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Freelance Journalist & Political Consultant

Mike Steib, Co-Chair
President & CEO, XO Group Inc.

Alina Cho
Contributor, CBS Sunday Morning & Editor at Large, Ballantine Bantam Dell

Tracy Corrigan
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Global VP, Revenue & Content Partnerships, Twitter

Ianthe Jeanne Dugan
Journalist

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President & CEO, TouchTunes

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Senior Legal & Investigative Correspondent, NBC News

Sara Nelson
VP, Executive Editor & Special Advisor to the Publisher, HarperCollins Publishers

Sabastian V. Niles
Partner, Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz

Paul Parikh
VP of Finance/CFO, L’Oréal | IT Cosmetics

Liz Perl
EVP & Chief Marketing Officer, Simon & Schuster

Hope Pingree
President, Cover NYC

Sharon Rodriguez
Chief Customer Officer, Unqork

Jeffrey Sharp
President & CEO, Sharp Independent Pictures

Mark Subias
Head of Talent, United Talent Agency

Peter Brown, Chair Emeritus
Chairman & CEO, BLJ Worldwide

STAFF

Anthony Tassi
Chief Executive Officer

Mohamed Abouseria
CUNY Service Corp Fellow

Arifa Ali
Communications Intern

Abena Baah-Fordjour
CUNY Service Corp Fellow

Sung E Bai
Chief Operating Officer

Sari Barocas
ESOL Teacher and Site Coordinator

Aarushi Bhardwaj
Development Intern

Gina Bravo
CUNY Service Corp Fellow

Sandra Cespedes
ESOL Teacher and Site Coordinator

Gohar Chichian
Senior Manager for Development and Communications

Hilary Downes
Educational Counselor

Fior de Maria Eilets
Social Worker

Marta Garcia
CUNY Service Corps Fellow

Luan Gashi
Programs and Communications Intern

Yevgeniya Gershkovich
Senior Bookkeeper

Emily Harting
Director of Development and Communications

Ravenn Haynes
CUNY Service Corps Fellow

Adriane Lee
Senior Program Manager, We Speak NYC

Vulcanus Levi
Assistant Manager of Programs

Kate Maloy
High School Equivalency Teacher

Omwattie Motee
CUNY Service Corps Fellow

Sang Ngo
Media Project Intern

Lionel Ouellette
Director of HSE and Staten Island Programs

Brian Potash
Volunteer Math Instructor

David Rothenberg
Assistant Director of Programs

Timothy Ruffin
HSE Curriculum Developer and Lead Teacher

Hawley Sealey
Volunteer Math Instructor

Allison Sciplin
Deputy Director of Development

Lorna Torres
Executive Assistant

Nityanand Wachche
Analytics Intern

Shellyn Willis
Administration Intern
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!
In the past year, our students have achieved many milestones, and Literacy Partners, too, has grown. Thanks to your generosity, we continue to reach out to attract new students and recruit teachers, staff, and board members who make this organization great. We are grateful for your support, and are proud to share these accomplishments with you.