

RECAP

2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT

**LITERACY
PARTNERS**



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LITERACY PARTNERS
strengthens families
through a two-generation
approach to education.



LETTER FROM THE CEO



DEAR FRIENDS,

I'm pleased to share with you the Literacy Partners 2016–17 Annual Report, chock full of the triumphs and accomplishments of our amazing students. We are so proud to share these stories with you, our supporters.

This past year has been a challenging one for our country. A heated presidential campaign led to a surprising result that has fomented a political climate and culture that is more divided than it has been in 150 years. And, easily, the most divisive issues we face center on race, ethnicity, and immigration. Overheated rhetoric and ill-conceived policies have created a climate of fear among many families across America, including those of our students, the majority of whom are immigrants and almost all of whom are moms of young children.

In the face of difficult odds, and in spite of their fears, our students are not only surviving: they are thriving. I am so inspired by their commitment and fortitude. And we are so grateful for the support of our donors and friends, who have allowed us to undertake so many important initiatives. One big highlight from this year was providing more than 4,000 children's books to our students, building home libraries for their families. And we began developing an exciting new project — a video series called “Families Like Us” — to greatly extend our reach. We plan for this content to be available online and in app form to anyone, anywhere, who wants to learn English. The series is set to launch in the spring of 2018, so stay tuned!

Our students are the reason we're here and you'll read about their successes in the following pages. They have made excellent use of their time with Literacy Partners, and 98% say they would recommend our classes to a friend or a family member. Our goal is to be able to always welcome those friends and family members with open arms.

I'm extremely grateful to each of you, and to all our generous supporters and friends who stand up for Literacy Partners and help our students realize their dreams of a better future for themselves and their families.

I hope you'll enjoy catching up on our work. Please drop me a note at anthonyt@literacypartners.org if you would like to learn more or get more involved.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony Tassi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "T".

Anthony Tassi
Chief Executive Officer

OUR RESULTS: EDUCATIONAL GAINS

Our English for Parents classes help low-literate immigrant parents in dramatic ways. After completing our classes, **79%** of students made enough progress with their English skills to advance to the next academic level, while close to **60%** gained two or more levels (equivalent to skipping a grade or two in school).

Literacy Partners' dual-generation approach benefits not only parents but their children as well, who make significant gains in reading proficiency and school readiness. Indeed, **88%** of our students reported that their children benefited from what the adults were learning in our classes.

We see big increases in how often parents read to their children and how often children read on their own — critical predictors of success in school for children. As a result of our classes, nearly all of our students report reading to their children at least once a week, and **two-thirds** report reading three times a week or more. Children also read more on their own. Parents report that close to **90%** of their (older) children now independently read at least one book a week, and **54%** read three books a week or more!

"We're investing in parents," says Anthony Tassi, chief executive officer. "But we have an impact on both generations, trying to get ahead of the curve."

The positive impact on children is also measured by the Head Start preschool programs where we offer our classes. The children of our students typically show significantly greater improvement on their developmental assessments throughout the year than their classmates whose parents were not enrolled in our program.

With such a powerful and positive experience, it is no wonder that **98%** would recommend our classes to their family and friends. ■

"[I'm proud of] the progress that I've made. When we arrived here in this country nine months ago I didn't understand anything. Now I can help my child... There were things that I could not explain but now I can."

—CAROLYN

82%

of students
say class helped
improve English

88%

say child benefited
from what they
learned in class

98%

would recommend
class to a friend
or family member



OUR STUDENTS: READERS AND LEADERS



“ We live in a city where one in five New Yorkers is functionally illiterate. Offering the gift of reading to an adult who heretofore couldn’t read a subway map or write a letter, and especially to one who is ready to go to college, in honor of my late husband, Rodman L. Drake, gives me great pleasure. ” —JACKIE WELD DRAKE



Our Students Graduate!



Nine Literacy Partners students graduated this year with a high school equivalency degree, taking significant steps forward in changing their fortunes and securing brighter futures for their families.

In a surprise to our hard-working students, long-time Literacy Partners supporter and former board member Jackie Weld Drake presented the graduates with \$1,000 college scholarships! At the emotional ceremony, New York City Councilmember Carlos Menchaca, a leading voice for adult literacy, called the graduates *“a tremendous inspiration”* and noted that *“[they] worked tirelessly, and overcame significant barriers, to reach this day.”* ■



Our Students' Stories Performed

In May, Literacy Partners students saw their original writing performed by professional actors in front of a packed theater at the renowned Upper West Side cultural institution Symphony Space. More than 150 poems and short stories were submitted by adult learners from across the City to the annual **Selected Shorts: All Write!** program. Of the 39 pieces chosen to be performed on stage, eight were written by our students! ■

Our Students Share Their Cultural Heritage Through Cooking

"This dish is important for me because my mom was my first teacher in my life. I still follow her recipe." Cooking is one of the most important ways that families share their cultural heritage from generation to generation. It is also a great way for parents to engage children in basic math and literacy activities while telling stories and preparing a meal. This year, our students decided they would work together to create a cookbook in each of our English for Parents classes. It turns out, delicious food is a language all of our students speak, regardless of their home country or native language. To view some of the recipes, visit www.literacypartners.org/cookbook. ■

“Delicious food is a language all of our students speak, regardless of their home country or native language.”





“This motivates me to read with my children more,”

Students Share Their Love of Reading

“**I** feel proud because I learned new ways to read a book to my daughter.” While most of our students began their English for Parents classes as shy readers, they didn’t stay that way for long. As soon as they learned for themselves how to guide their children’s early literacy and language development and to use story time as a chance for parent-child bonding, they were ready to share their insights with other families. Ten students from our Bronx site volunteered at our partner Head Start agency to read to more than 70 children and to share helpful tips with the other parents. **“This motivates me to read with my children more,”** said one of the participants. From shy readers to community leaders! ■

OUR STUDENTS WRITE: SELECTIONS FROM OUR HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY CLASSES

Tanya Maldonado

Tanya came to Literacy Partners because, she says, “I was tired of working dead-end jobs that led me nowhere all the time. When I was at my unemployment appointment they were speaking about all these interesting jobs, and all of the jobs needed a high school diploma or GED, which I did not have.” Then Tanya attended High School Equivalency classes with Phil Cameron at our site in Staten Island. *“Phil to me [was] the best teacher I’ve had by far,”* Tanya says. *“My experience with Literacy Partners was a really good one...especially with Phil as my teacher...”*

Tanya Maldonado, 40, was born in Brooklyn into a big family originally from Puerto Rico. She is raising her son as a single mother, and says that they are very close and do everything together all the time. When asked to write about what matters most to her, she wrote about her son and her many feelings about him.



MY ANGEL

By Tanya Maldonado

The one thing that matters most in my life is having my son. Having him gave me meaning and purpose. He's the one thing I feel for sure I did right in my life, the one thing I'm so proud of. He's showed me how to be happy no matter what and love like no other. He's always smiling and always happy even if I'm having a bad day. Once I see his face it all goes away.

Watching him grow up was the hardest thing for me because I had to let him go into the world to learn and go to school. That's the scariest thing as a mother to feel because of the way the world is today and all the issues that are going on in the schools. When my son's with me I can protect him. If I'm not,

who will protect him? That's what makes it so difficult to let go and trust he will be fine, and everything I taught him so far I have to trust he knows.

When I did let go my son surprised me in every way. He grew up to be the most lovable, respectable, smart little man I could ever hope for. I'm so proud of who he's become and to be his mom. My son is what matters always in my life and I am what matters to him. The love we share is so beautiful and one of a kind. He tells me every day he's so lucky to have a mom like me. I tell him I'm the lucky one. So to me it matters to be all I can for him.

Nagla Alzandani

Nagla Alzandani was another student at the Literacy Partners High School Equivalency class in Staten Island led by Phil Cameron. Nagla, who arrived in the U.S. two years ago, came with her husband and four children from Sana'a, Yemen's capital, to escape the war. Nagla says she wrote this piece because, "This time, this war, is the most important thing in my heart and mind."

Of her Literacy Partners experience, Nagla says, "Phil was an amazing teacher." And she gives this advice to potential students:

"The most important thing is to study, study, study. Study hard. If you have the chance, don't miss it. Study hard."

We are so proud of Nagla and grateful for the chance to share her beautiful writing.



Photo by of Yemen by
Ibrahim Al-Qatabi

THE WAR IN YEMEN

By Nagla Alzandani

The most important thing that happened in my life is the war that destroyed our dreams and hopes. I moved with my small family to the USA to look for safety, just safety. I left my big family without safety, food, water and medicine.

The world shared in these cruel crimes without clear reasons. Every day I ask myself why. The world knows: for money, for petrol. Every second I pray to get the world to love each other, to live in peace, to respect other religions.

I live here just with my body, but my soul is with my country. Each day I worry, I check my phone to see if there is bad news about them.

I hope the war will stop.

On March 26, 2015, the war started in my country. Yesterday millions of people celebrated that for two years the Yemenis have been patient. They are saying to the world, "We are here, don't believe that the war is for religion. There is no food, no salary, no safety, no medicine. But the people are still strong. We will be strong forever."

One day, we will have victory because we have the earth, and we have faith. Maybe with money you can buy anything. But you can't buy values, old history and civilization. The rockets try to burn and destroy our civilizations. They made new civilizations full of sadness and challenges. I am sure tomorrow will come and the sun will rise.



MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As co-chairs of the Board of Directors for Literacy Partners, we thank **YOU** for making possible everything you are reading about here. Literacy Partners is supported nearly **100%** by private contributions from individuals like you and by foundations and corporations that share our goal of empowering parents to better provide for their families and to build their communities through education. **Thank you!**

In addition, we are pleased to introduce to you the new members of our Board who joined us from July 2016 to June 2017. We thank them, and the entire Board, for their service.



Katharine Raymond Hinton

Katharine Raymond Hinton
*Board Co-Chair, Board Secretary
Political Consultant and Writer*



A handwritten signature in black ink.

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

THE NEW MEMBERS OF OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Tracy Corrigan
*Chief Strategy Officer,
Dow Jones*



Sharon Rodriguez
*VP Global Strategy for Regional
Application Development,
MetLife*



Daniel Costello
*SVP of M&A and Strategy,
News Corp*



BOOKS OF THEIR OWN | TAKES OFF!

Research and experience show us that how often a child is read to, and how many books they have in their home, are two key predictors for success in school. *Books of Their Own* aims to not only create home libraries for our students and their children, but also to support our students in making reading together a daily habit. In the spring of 2016, we were able to provide our students with a total of 700 books. Over the past school year, Literacy Partners was able to provide **4,000** books to the low-income and immigrant families that make up our student body.

The program has grown substantially, thanks to the generous support of publishers **Hachette Book Group**, **HarperCollins**, **Macmillan Children's Publishing Group**, **Penguin Random House**, and **Simon & Schuster**; the underwriting of several foundations including the **Cleveland H. Dodge Foundation**, the **William J. and Dorothy K. O'Neill Foundation**, and the **Laura B. Vogler Foundation**; and more than 100 individuals.

“When I began to take the classes, my relationship with my kids got better since I was able to read with them both separately and together. A huge part as to why my children developed a love for reading is because of Literacy Partners and the fact that I was able to read with them.”

—**LOURDES DE LA CRUZ**, FORMER LITERACY PARTNERS STUDENT



*“Books open [my daughter]
to new worlds.”*



*“I chose this book because my
son likes stories with animals.”*

Each student received 10 books for every child in their household from a carefully curated selection, offering both “mirrors,” in which our students and their children see themselves, and “windows” into new worlds that inspire and foster imagination.

Literacy Partners knows that simply providing books is not enough. Our students need to be supported in their efforts to make reading with their children a daily habit. Experience tells us that reading together is a direct path to substantial parent-child bonding and helps children to develop not only intellectually, but spiritually and emotionally. As one student said: ***“With books, the family connection is very beautiful.”***

Thanks to this program, made possible by the support of the publishing industry, key foundations, and generous individuals, we saw a **38%** increase in how often parents are reading to their children. One parent said, ***“My daughter loves books. She always wants more, more, more!”*** With continued support, Literacy Partners will always be able to provide them. ■

THANK YOU!



Literacy Partners is grateful to **Sleeping Bear Press**
and to the families and staff of **Blue School**,
for their book donations.



Sleeping Bear Press

JOANNE LIPMAN

Joanne Lipman was honored at our 2017 Evening of Readings & Gala Dinner Dance. Prior to the gala, Joanne visited our English for Parents class in Corona, Queens, and got to know our students.



“ Literacy Partners and its students are what makes America great! ”

— **JOANNE LIPMAN**, CHIEF CONTENT OFFICER, GANNETT; EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, *USA TODAY* AND *USA TODAY NETWORK*



FAREED ZAKARIA

“ When I think of Literacy Partners, it seems to me that you represent Alexis de Tocqueville’s idea and ideal of America so wonderfully, because... [there] is an extraordinary need...and you didn’t ask yourself “who is going to solve this?”, you just set about solving it in a creative, effective away that has survived and thrived and prospered. ”



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2017

EVENING OF READINGS AND GALA DINNER DANCE

"Literacy Partners and its students are what makes America great!" declared powerhouse editor Joanne Lipman, who was honored at the Literacy Partners 2017 Evening of Readings and Gala Dinner Dance.

Four hundred friends and supporters came out to pay tribute to our two exceptional honorees – Lipman, chief content officer at Gannett and editor-in-chief of USA Today, and global super-pundit and CNN host Fareed Zakaria. Fareed engaged the audience with his remembrances of growing up in India and life in America as a new immigrant, saying *"...the one thing that has given me hope and a sense of optimism is the thing I noticed about America when I first came... the extraordinary ability of people in communities... to rise up to the challenge of dealing with the problems that their community faces..."* Additionally, Sheila Nevins, president, HBO Documentary Films, was given the coveted LIZZIE Award, and guests enjoyed an engaging reading from her book. John Josephson, 20+ year board member and CEO of SESAC, was honored with the inaugural Champion of Literacy Award.

Among this year's highlights: Jill Kargman read from her book *Sprinkle Glitter on My Grave* and kept the audience in stitches with her incisive commentary on life in New York. Literacy Partners graduate Marchette Hellams read an essay detailing her journey from high school dropout to college student, and offered guests a heartfelt thanks for their support. Marchette brought the crowd to their feet with her very personal and powerful rendition of Patti LaBelle's *Winner in You*.

Peter Brown introduced Fareed Zakaria, praising him as one of the most respected and influential thought leaders in media. The evening closed with guests enjoying spirited music, dancing, and conversations with friends. Many described this year's event as one of the best. ■



Above: Marchette Hellams, Literacy Partners Graduate
Below: Jill Kargman, Author, Actress, Comedian, Singer





Page 16, top row: Arie Kopelman and Joanne Lipman; Peter Brown and Fareed Zakaria; Sheila Nevins and Nancy Abraham

Second row: Jonelle Procopie, Joanne Lipman, and Katie Couric; Will Kopelman and Vanessa Eastman; Liate Stehlik, Elisabeth Weed, and Madeline McIntosh

Third row: Susan and Herb Bard; Ian Woods and Gigi Stone Woods; Laurel Bertram and Howard Siegel

Page 17, top row: Dan Costello, Sharon Rodriguez, Mike Steib, Liz Perl, Tracy Corrigan, Katharine Raymond Hinton, Kate Schroeder O'Neill, Jesse Haines, Courtney Corleto, and Mark Gurevich

Second row: Kath Hinton and John Josephson; Maurice DuBois and Alina Cho; Coco Kopelman and Jill Kargman

Third row: Jeffrey Sharp, Doug Steinbrech, Kemp Steib, and Mike Steib

THANK YOU TO OUR PATRON SAINT: LIZ SMITH

For more than 30 years, **Liz Smith** has been our patron saint. Passionate about our mission, she has engaged her incredible network of celebrity friends and leaders in the publishing and fashion industries to raise \$37 million for Literacy Partners over the years. We are deeply grateful to Liz for without her steadfast dedication, Literacy Partners would not be where we are today.

Below are some of our favorite shots of Liz through the years...



Photos left to right. Top row: Liz Smith, Arnold Scaasi, Bette Midler, Parker Ladd, and Cathie Black; Peter Brown, Barbara Walters, Frank Langella, and Liz | Second row: Joel Klein, Nicole Seligman, Parker, Liz, Michael Bloomberg, Arnold; David and Sherry Westin; Elizabeth Peabody and Liz | Third row: Liz with Markus Dohle; Arnold, Liz, and Parker



PARKER LADD ESTABLISHES THE SCAASI-LADD BOOK FUND

No tribute to Liz Smith would be complete without recognizing the amazing contributions of her dear friends Parker Ladd and Arnold Scaasi. Through their friendship with Liz, Parker and Arnold became generous supporters of Literacy Partners for more than 30 years, helping nearly **25,000** New Yorkers become more literate.

After the passing of Arnold in 2015, Parker established the **Scaasi-Ladd Book Fund at Literacy Partners** with a \$10,000 gift to support *Books of Their Own* and allow us to provide “not just any books, but great works that will spark the imagination... that will change lives.” —Parker Ladd

You can support the **Scaasi-Ladd Book Fund** and the *Books of Their Own* home library project by contacting development@literacypartners.org.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

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Jacqueline Weld Drake

Fareed Zakaria

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.

\$2,500 to \$9,999

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Andrew Bailey
Deanna Bosselman
Lindsey Boylan
Barbara Taylor Bradford and Robert Bradford
Gina Centrello and Richard Constantine
Rachel Klauber-Speiden and Josh Empson
Joni Evans and Bob Perkins
Fidelity Charitable Trust
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OUR VOLUNTEERS

VERA KONIG: Volunteering is Precious Work

The work of Literacy Partners would not be possible without the help of our dedicated volunteers. Vera Konig has been volunteering for seven years



now. She says, *"When I talk to people about volunteering, the first thing that I say is that it's a unique, satisfying experience and rewarding. For me, working closely with a student, one-on-one and creatively, brings out the best in me. My work with Matthew is a match made in heaven. Literacy Partners offers an amazing opportunity for the student and volunteer."*

If you're interested in volunteering, send an email to volunteer@literacypartners.org.

\$999 & Under

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OUR VOLUNTEERS



RUBY BOLA A Passion for Reading

Volunteering ignites Ruby's passion for reading, education, and teaching. Her work as a Literacy Partners volunteer reinforces her personal and career goals. Her experience as a marketing professional comes into play whenever she's in the classroom. One of Ruby's true strengths is her ability to pass along her passion and curiosity for literature while encouraging each student to engage deeply in their own learning journey by thinking critically and outside the box.

"Volunteering with Literacy Partners has been a fantastic experience. I've learned so much working with students one-on-one and in the classroom."

Ruby Bola is a sales and marketing pro who has been volunteering for the past three years as a math, reading, and writing tutor. She is also serving as a pro bono consultant with our development team.

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THANK YOU TO THE PARTNERSHIP

For the past three years, The&Partnership has generously offered us their extraordinary talent and expertise in developing a new visual identity that communicates confidence and optimism in keeping with Literacy Partners' mission. We are enjoying a new and colorful visual identity and are grateful to our creative partners.

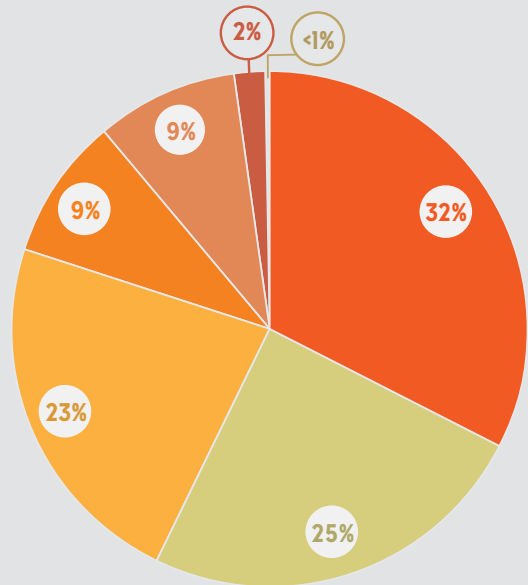
FINANCIALS 2017*

REVENUE FISCAL YEAR 2017**

Gala and Other Special Events	\$853,142	32%
Government Contracts	\$654,850	25%
Investment Return	\$600,000	23%
Foundations & Corporations	\$241,875	9%
Individuals	\$240,755	9%
Rental Income	\$43,100	2%
Other Revenue	\$4,417	<1%

Total: \$2,638,139

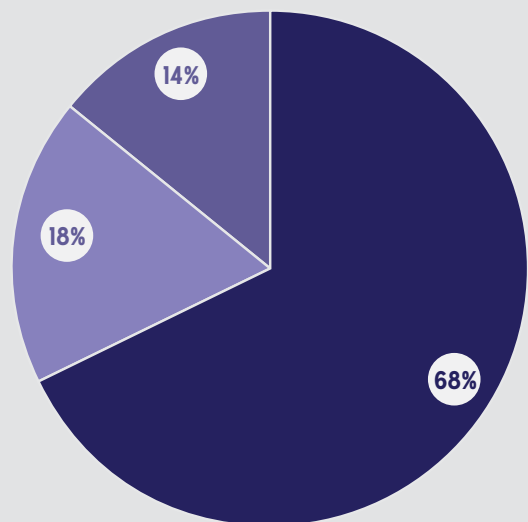
** Percentages add up to more than 100% due to rounding.



EXPENSES FISCAL YEAR 2017

Program	\$1,836,188	68%
Fundraising	\$495,447	18%
Administration & Management	\$382,745	14%

Total: \$2,714,380



* Unaudited Financial Statement (as of September 21, 2017)

THANK YOU FOR AN AMAZING YEAR!



Design: Renée Skuba Design

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LITERACY PARTNERS

ANTHONY TASSI

Chief Executive Officer

anthonyt@literacypartners.org

75 Maiden Lane

Suite 1102

New York, NY 10038

646.237.0111

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