

IMPACT

A YEAR IN REVIEW.
A LOOK AHEAD.



LITERACY
PARTNERS

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



LITERACY

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LETTER FROM THE CEO



Dear Friends,

Last year, I used this space to thank you for all that you did to make the work of Literacy Partners possible. Your contributions fuel our work as we continue to fulfill the promise of our vision: to break the cycle of poverty for immigrants and low-income families by empowering parents with literacy and language skills.

A year has passed and our mission has taken on an urgency like no other as America deals with a humanitarian crisis impacting the very communities we are so committed to serve. While many are angry or in despair over the treatment of immigrant children at the border, I don't have to tell you that the crisis extends to our own communities here in New York as well. Families are living in fear.

Throughout our history, Literacy Partners has been a gateway for tens of thousands of students to realize their version of the American dream. At this critical moment in time, we stand with immigrant families and double down on our commitment to helping adults learn, grow, and succeed. Your support is more important than ever before.

Your generous contributions are having an enormous impact as 80% of our students last year graduated to the next academic level and, impressively, two-thirds advanced two or more levels. We provided home libraries to nearly 1,000 children and families increased the time they spent reading together by 70%, which is like money in the bank for children's school readiness.

This year, every single student we surveyed told us that they would recommend our program to a friend or family member. Thank you for helping us achieve this extraordinary level of service.

We had a good year at Literacy Partners and have much to do in the year ahead. We thank you for standing with us in support of immigrant families.

With sincerest appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Tassi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "A" and a long, sweeping tail.

Anthony Tassi, CEO

LITERACY PARTNERS strengthens families through a two generation approach to education. With our free classes, community workshops, and educational media, low-income and immigrant parents and caregivers develop the literacy and language skills they need to succeed in today’s world. Our research-based programs incorporate child development and parenting support to help parents and caregivers boost children’s early reading, social emotional growth, and school readiness.

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EMELY'S STORY: Mothers Thriving in the Classroom

Wednesday morning, 8:30 a.m. and a group of teenage girls spill into the classroom. It's just like so many other classrooms across America. **Except this one is different.** The room is filled with young mothers who are full of potential. They're ready to broaden their horizons for their children through education.

Last fall, Literacy Partners launched a new class called **Leadership for Education And Parenting (LEAP)** on the campus of Bronx Community College. Weekly seminars focus on providing teenage mothers parenting classes around children's healthy development, problem-solving, and self-reflection, while they work towards earning their high school equivalency degree and transitioning into college.

In just two semesters, LEAP has created a supportive community of learners who are achieving academic success and gaining confidence in their parenting skills. Over 40% of the students earned a High School Equivalency degree and transitioned into college—about **three times** the rate of other parents who were not part of the program.

Instrumental to the process is providing students with a home library of age-appropriate books for their children so that each mom can bond with her children through the daily habit

of family reading time. As a result, LEAP has quickly become a “safe haven” for many of our students—**students like Emely.**

“The dialogue makes me a better parent.”

Emely says. She’s learned how to engage her son, Adrian, and together, they reflect on their day, creating a routine that has deepened their connection. She credits LEAP for building her confidence and making her a stronger student and mother.

“You have to have that love for yourself—the confidence and motivation to do it for you. Your son benefits from it, your daughter benefits from it. But it starts with you.” **—EMELY**

“Now, I don’t feel so nervous to speak out in front of a classroom. It’s helped me open up and express myself. I’m not as hard on myself as I used to be. It also makes me a better mom.”

Emely attributes her confidence to the women around her—a community of mothers in the classroom who are going through the same triumphs and obstacles.

“I never knew how much I needed friends who are mothers. It’s really refreshing and such a relief to have people in this group that have children and have been through the same things as you.”

The LEAP program has motivated Emely to view her future differently. She’s working towards a psychology degree so that she can help others. She wants to see Adrian’s reading skills continue to grow and to nurture their strong bond. LEAP has changed the trajectory of both Emely and Adrian’s lives, putting them on a path that will take them to new heights. ■



BUILDING MOMENTS OF CONNECTION THROUGH BOOKS

One of the best days in the semester – book distribution day. Stacks of books line the classroom, tagged with different ages, ripe for picking. A rumble of activity ensues as our students and their children excitedly browse books to choose for themselves. **For many of our students, these are the first books that they've ever owned.** Home libraries extend the classroom experience and allow students to make reading time a daily family ritual. With each new book, a child's world opens up to new ideas, information, and educational opportunities.

Books of Their Own provides each of our students with new, age-, and culturally-appropriate books thanks to the generous support of our publishers and donors like you. This year, we **distributed 7,100 books** to the nearly 1,000 participants in our programs.

Time spent reading with children is money in the bank: early access to books strengthens a child's cognitive, social, and emotional growth. Access to books and reading with parents from an early age is an important predictor of children's school readiness, reading proficiency, and future academic success.

Our approach works – the amount of time our English for Parents students read with their children increased by **more than 70% in one year.** ■



→ 7,100 books distributed to 648 kids and 311 parents

→ 72% increase in frequency of parents reading with their children

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Greenlight Bookstore
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Sleeping Bear Press

This program is underwritten by *The New York Times* in support of low-income and immigrant families.



“When I take books home, my sons get so happy to have their own books and read together — it’s our moment of connection.”

—JOANNA



GICELA: “I Root For Myself Now”

On a rainy May morning, hundreds of adult ESOL students gathered under umbrellas at Brooklyn Borough Hall to rally for adult literacy funding. They were a mighty force to behold, their signs held high in the air. At the forefront standing proudly was our student, Gicela. She spoke confidently and passionately in front of various literacy organizations and elected officials. *“Education is a right and we need to keep advocating for it,”* Gicela proclaimed amid loud applause.

Gicela’s journey at Literacy Partners started last year when she joined our English For Parents classes in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. As a single mother in Mexico, earning enough to provide basic needs and an education for her children was challenging. She had to work more than 15 hours a day to make ends meet. She decided to immigrate to the United States and focus on ensuring her children Reina, Isabel, Enrique, Jayden, and Emily will have the opportunities she did not.

Gicela realized that because of her language limitations, she was missing the opportunity of helping her children. *“If I want to keep improving, I need to practice and keep learning,”* she told us. Gicela’s improvements don’t go unnoticed. At her children’s school, teachers compliment her improved language skills and how she’s better able to advocate for her

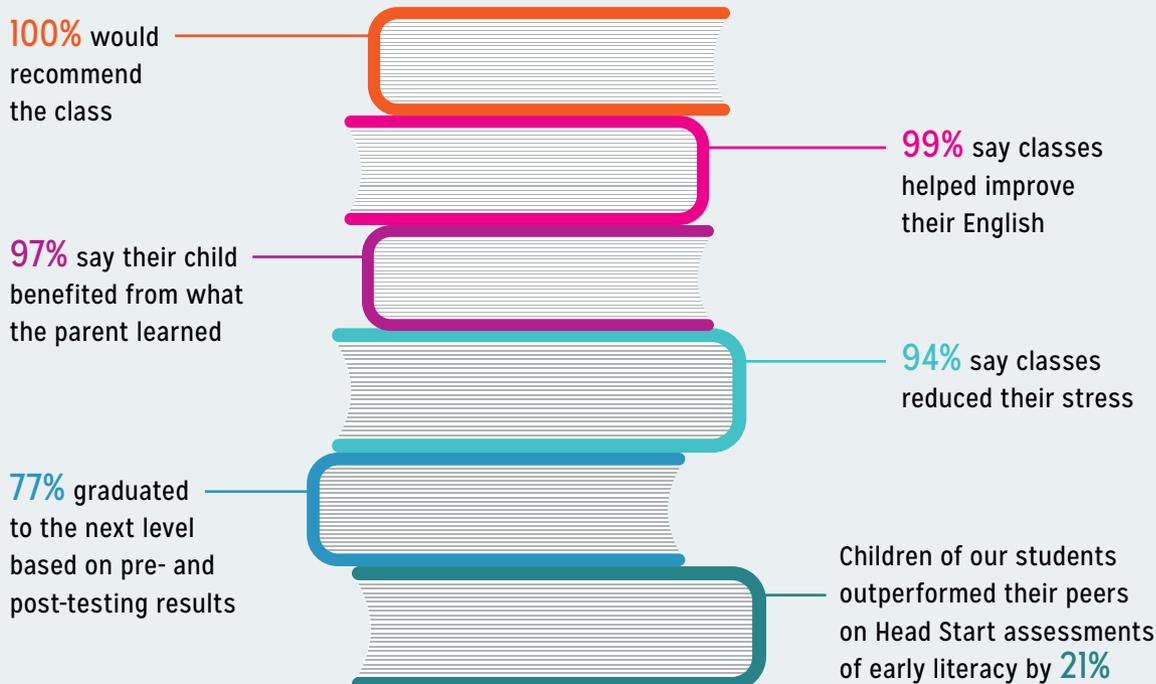
children as a result. *“It made me feel really happy to hear that. Those moments motivate me – I root for myself now,”* she said.

Gicela understands how far she’s come and it has motivated her to go even further. She is an active community member of a Parent Teacher Association and the Diversity Committee at PSI. When interviewed by NY1 Noticias, she told them that *“the opportunity to be the voice of all immigrants, not only Latinos, but the entire immigrant community [is exciting].”*

Gicela cites her experience as our 2019 Gala speaker as her highlight of the year. She shared her story on stage in front of more than 400 guests. *“It was an unforgettable experience, I felt like a whole different person,”* she said with tearful eyes. The evening proved to Gicela that she can achieve anything in life. Seeing her children beaming with pride as guests congratulated her was priceless, especially because of the example it set for them: *“Once you set a goal for yourself and work towards it, nothing can stop you.”* Literacy Partners is proud of Gicela’s achievements and the role model she’s become as she advocates for other immigrant families like her own. ■

“Education is a right and we need to keep advocating for it.”
– GICELA

Student Report Card: Participating Parents Say...



LA FUERZA DE CREER: Advancing Family Literacy Through Telenovelas

Literacy Partners has launched a major new parent education program for Spanish-speaking parents, caregivers, and childcare providers called *La Fuerza de Creer*. Our goal is to promote children's early learning, social-emotional growth, and school readiness.

The power of the telenovela series is the reliance on storytelling to help caregivers recognize the vital role they play as their child's first teacher and inspire them with actions to positively impact their children's brain development.

Literacy Partners amplifies the show's themes with a community outreach program that meets parents where they are: at home, Head Start, pre-K, daycare, and other early childhood education programs. We provide each site with a toolkit containing videos, learning materials, and a facilitator's guide along with training and technical assistance to implement a series of educational workshops.

The toolkit will also include a home library of age-appropriate bilingual children's books for each participant to take home that will prompt them to interact with their child in ways discussed in the workshops. The workshop encourages adults to expose their child to more and richer oral language, printed text, and narrative story in the context of bonding with their child.

Critical to the program's success is our use of a dual-generation intervention to literacy, empowerment of caregivers as experts on the needs of their children, and the view that bilingualism is a strength. Stay tuned as the program continues to grow. ■

"This has been a truly beautiful message – there is a wonderful flow in this masterpiece that resonates very clearly in OUR REALITY..." –ROSANGELA



Nearly
1,000,000
viewers

Turn-key
educational program
for Head Start, pre-K,
and community
programs

LITERACY PARTNERS WINS AN EMMY AWARD FOR EDUCATIONAL MEDIA!



Martin is looking for a quality Pre-K class for his daughter. Rafaela struggles with anxiety while preparing for her High School Equivalency Test. Shumi gets a part-time job to help her family pay the bills instead of focusing on school.

Their stories are ours and yours – together, we are New York.

Season two of **We Speak NYC** portrays immigrant-centered scenarios about how to improve English skills and access NYC resources (for instance, paid sick leave, translators for parent-teacher conferences, and free mental health services). The episode “**Rolando’s Rights**,” co-created by our CEO, Anthony Tassi, **won an Emmy Award** for excellence in Informational/Instruction Programming.



In partnership with the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, Literacy Partners is using the We Speak NYC series as the basis for English conversation practice groups, a ten-week course that enhances the economic, civic, and social integration of immigrant New Yorkers into the life of our city. This past year, our volunteers led 23 classes at 14 participating sites, and served 420 participants. Students work together to practice their English, develop critical problem-solving skills, and become fully-engaged members of the New York community. ■



Watch these inspiring stories on our **Youtube** page or at nyc.gov/LearnEnglish.

2019 GALA



“What better achievement for a human being to start something that teaches adults to read.”

—LESLEY STAHL

“The idea of being able to read and being educated and understanding the world around you is what makes you mobile in America. There is nothing more important that can be done in public service than what the folks at Literacy Partners are doing.”

—PREET BHARARA

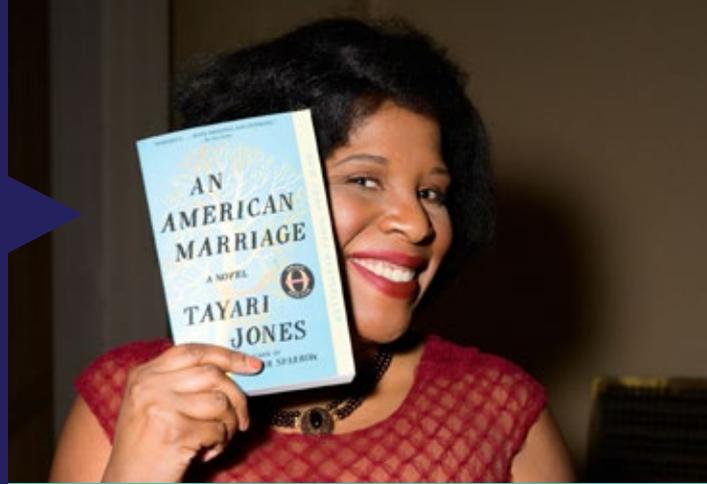
“I am so honored to be a patch in my family’s quilt of women who partner with words and books and reading.”

—ANDREA DAVIS PINKNEY



“My first job was teaching adult literacy. I realized just the amount of work, effort, intelligence, and ingenuity it takes an adult to navigate this world without basic literacy. You have to be brilliant.”

—TAYARI JONES



“Every true American success story starts with a person passionate enough to want a better life and courageous enough to seek it. Literacy Partners provides an important service to the brave families who have taken that leap. Your work will help ensure that America’s next generation will continue to add to the rich mosaic that is the United States of America.”

—ANDREW H. TISCH

“I want to thank the students of Literacy Partners who take more risk, who work harder, who put themselves out there in ways that most of us never will. They absolutely inspire me!”

—MIKE STEIB



MASSIMO: “What a journey! It all started with Literacy Partners.”

Massimo holds a BFA in music and a minor in secondary music education. This may come as a surprise to people who knew him just a few years ago. Back then, he was working three jobs as a musician, waiter, and dog walker *“because my English was not good and even applying for jobs was a hard task,”* he recalls.

When Massimo started taking Literacy Partners’ GED classes, he was surprised to see that there were other immigrants like him, striving to get an education and improve their lives. He clearly recalls the support and confidence his teacher continuously communicated to him: *“You are going to get your GED in no time!”* Massimo made this his daily mantra up until the day, five months later, when he walked across a stage to receive his GED diploma.

Massimo carried the welcome folder he received on his first day at Literacy Partners throughout college *“as a reminder of where I started. I could never have imagined this change in my life. Literacy Partners touched me beyond my academic preparation.”* Today, Massimo is one test away from receiving his New York State Teacher Certification. He plans to give back to the community he came from by teaching others like him.

Your generosity makes success stories like Massimo’s possible. He is a testament to Literacy Partners’ impact beyond our classrooms. A gift to Literacy Partners helps our students reach their goals and, like Massimo, use his newfound skills to “pay it forward” to other immigrants like him. ■



“Please keep supporting these amazing programs. There are many people like me that, despite financial burdens, want to succeed and give back to the community.”

—MASSIMO

ERIKA: What Literacy Partners Means To Me

As both a tutor in Literacy Partners' Adult Literacy Program and as an Associate Board Member, I've witnessed the impact that Literacy Partners has in transforming their students' lives.

I was drawn to the organization because I consider literacy, and all that comes with it – *education, access, and empowerment* – to be a fundamental human right. Immigrants and low-income adults in New York City often feel shut off from opportunities that literacy and education can afford them. Literacy Partners changes all that for these vulnerable members of our community. It cultivates a strong connection between students, teachers, and volunteers – and the magic of that connection is the community that grows out of it. The confidence students gain and the relationships they forge are apparent in each student's success. Most importantly, Literacy Partners empowers its students to access the very opportunities that have eluded them, and to share that empowerment with their children and future generations. To be even a small part of this kind of transformation has been a deeply rewarding experience as both a volunteer and a donor. ■



Erika Alter, Marketing Director, IHS Markit

“Since the start, this experience has always exceeded all my expectations about what volunteering and tutoring can be.”

–**LONNIE KANDEL, LP LITERACY TUTOR**
SINCE JANUARY 2019

To learn more about volunteering and how to get involved, email volunteer@literacypartners.org.

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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.

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“Truly one of a kind, brought her creative energy, and great Texan can-do spirit to make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate than her.” —**MICHAEL BLOOMBERG, ON LIZ SMITH**

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Anne McGuinness	Taylor White and Gillian Munson
Michael McHugh	Thomas S. Murphy
Ryan McInerney	Murray Haynes
Colin and Deirdre McKechnie	Shahael Myrthil
Juliann McKnight	Fritz Nauck
Linda McLaughlin	James L. Nederlander and Margo

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Laura Nelson	Mirtha Pena
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Sabastian V. Niles	Tina Petrigni
Yoko Ono Lennon	Courtney Pettit
Ayumi Otaki	Gloria C. Phares and Richard Dannay
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Ilana Ozernoy	Hope and Sumner Pingree
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Yanissa P	Anthony Plesner
Kirtna Pai	John Pollack and Allie Dorsky
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Miriam Parker	Malti Raisinghani
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Cassandra Pascarella Berger	Laura Schiller and David Ratner
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Amy Schewel

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Lucy Schmeidler

Frances Schnell

Ann Marie Schneeman

Carol E. Schneider

Ryan Schneider

Elba I. Schneidman

Julia Schonfeld

Nina Schroeren

Amy Schwartz

Debbie Schwartz

Fred Schwarz

Allison Sciplin

Jeanette and Ruben Selles

Gauri Shah

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Marva Silva	Lisa Super
Isabelle Silverman	Bruce E. Surry
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Sue Smelzer	Joseph Tejada Checo
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Jerome and Sheila Sorokoff	Barbara and Donald Tober
Nancy and Myron Sosnow	Susan Tobiason
Michael Speck	Elizabeth Tooter
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Ramesh Srinivasan	Mark Trippetti
Bridget St John	Anne Turner
Lesley R. Stahl and Aaron Latham	Christina Ulysse

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Carolina Urena	Andrea Wiant
Patricia Urena	Mia Widmar
Amy Ursano	Kenneth Wiener and Christina Carlson
Valerie Valmont	Selma Wiener
Walt Vanderbush	The Honorable Ann Claire Williams
Jeanabel Vargas	Jennifer Williams and Charlie Dell
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Rita Verma	Lindsay Wills
Jennifer Villani	Antonia Wilson
Araceli Viruet	Anton Wimmer
Nicholas Vitucci	Teresa Wingate
Isabel von Fluegge	Kristen Wolf
Georgina Voros	Michael C. Wolf
Alice S. Walsh	Riley Wolfe
Paula M. Wardynski	Katharine B. Wolpe
Ann Webber	Kimba Wood and Frank Richardson
Shannon Webb-Tabak	Ashley Woods
Ben Weber	Ian Woods and Gigi Stone Woods
Diane and Howard Weinreich	Margaret Wronker
Jeffrey Weinrich	Jonathan Yaged
Emanuel Weintraub	Edward Yanisch
Judith Weintraub	Calvin Yee
Adriana Weisleder	Phoebe Yeh
Mary Wells Lawrence	Lynn Yellen
Annalise Welte	Jeffrey Yin
Wendy Wen	Laura Yorke
Talia Werber	Bryan Yoshimura
Marcia Werchol	Adam Young
Ellie S. Wertheim	Lisa Young
Roger Westerman	Hong Yu

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Emily Yueh

Fareed Zakaria

Amanda Zampelli

Wiquenia Zapata

Parin and Heather Zaveri

Strauss Zelnick

Nick Zervis

Devra L. Zetlan

Yi Zhou

Diane L. Zimmerman

Robert P. Zimmerman

THANK YOU
to everyone who
donated to
Literacy Partners
last year.



IN MEMORIAM

REMEMBERING ROBERT BRADFORD

Literacy Partners mourns the loss of our good friend, Bob Bradford. Bob was at the center of the Literacy Partners community for many years as a member of the board of directors and an honoree of our annual Evening of Readings. He was widely admired for his quick wit, gracious personality, and his legendary generosity in helping others less fortunate to discover the joy of reading. His devotion to his wife, business partner, and soulmate, Barbara Taylor Bradford, was an inspiration to all.



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and Child Center
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P.S. 019 The Curtis School
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P.S. 184 Shuang Wen School
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Sheltering Arms
Spanish Speaking Citizens Foundation,
Oakland
Too Small to Fail
Univision
Vroom



“All children deserve good books. Reading expands a child’s universe and imagined space. Encouraging family literacy – creates a new generation of readers and helps families feel more confident about their children’s education and ability to succeed in life. The gift of books is the contribution of a lifetime for immigrant families.”

—SUSAN STRAUB

With So Many Ways To Give, Find What's Best For You & Remember: *Every Dollar Counts!*



Join Team Literacy Partners By Running or Riding To Raise Money



Can't Remember If You've Given Recently? Set Up Recurring Donations Online



Having A Birthday Party? Why Not Make it a Fundraiser Instead?



Money Multipliers: Increase the Power of Your Donation with an Employer Match



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Celebrate the Holidays or Special Events with a Gift Honoring Friends & Family



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Volunteer!



THE LIZ SMITH ADULT LITERACY PROGRAM

Everyone has a story to tell – but **thousands** of adult New Yorkers cannot read or write, alienating them from doing so.

The epidemic of illiteracy caught the attention of our patron saint, Liz Smith, and it became her lifelong personal commitment to help New Yorkers through literacy education. In January, we launched a new program in her honor. The Liz Smith Adult Literacy Program reaches a new group of illiterate adult students and develops their basic reading skills and self-confidence as capable learners.

Our students are absolute beginning readers; we start from the very basics because our students missed out on them for a variety of reasons. Because of their varied life experiences, no two students need the same support.

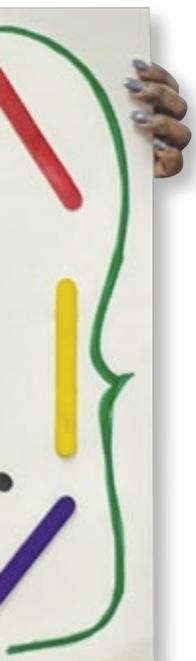
Our corps of dedicated and compassionate volunteer tutors work one-on-one with students to provide direct instruction in phonics and the other building blocks of reading. Complete with a story-telling curriculum, these new readers build their skills to have access to more opportunities, claim their voice, and tell their story. Learn more about how you can help change someone's life at literacypartners.org/get-involved/volunteer. ■

What Our Students Are Saying...

“English is very important. I need to make myself stronger so that I can have a good future – so that my kids can have a good future, too.” –**LUCY**

“I feel like I went from 0 to 100. Now I know how to read and write.” –**TANIA**

“The class gives me ideas on how to teach my children and read with them. Before, I didn't understand. I'm learning – I teach my son, and he teaches me. We teach each other, and we connect.” –**JOANNA**





Darnell Moore, Author of
No Ashes in the Fire

NEW YORK CITY READS AND RIDES

Every day an average of 5,437,587 people ride the subway in New York City, and they are usually paying attention to what their smartphones have to offer. Last summer, we partnered with the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) and Transit Wireless on #SubwayReads, an initiative to bring the joy of reading to New Yorkers' daily commute.

Featuring **350** excerpts from best-selling books, #SubwayReads shared content that reflects Literacy Partners' mission and our students. Topics included *New York Stories*, *Women's Leadership*, *Black Voices Matter*, *Immigrant Stories*, and stories about Literacy Partners' students themselves, among others. The campaign provided free access to content by award-winning authors like Tayari Jones, Tomi Adeyemi, and Roxane Gay.

Looking for a good recommendation? Our reading ambassadors – Taye Diggs, Darren Walker, and Michael Bloomberg – have curated their own reading lists just for you!

Get the scoop at subwayreads.org.

215,000 users

661,344 page views

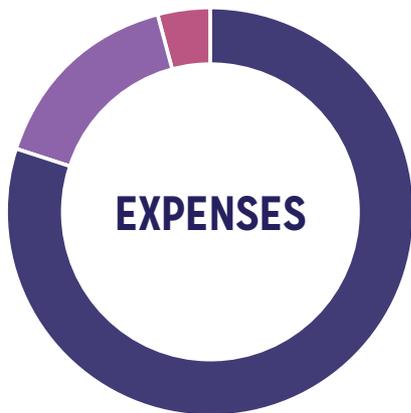
20 Publishing Partners

FINANCIALS 2019*



● In-kind Donations	\$3,372,425
● Events	\$1,081,888
● Investment Appropriation	\$500,000
● Foundations & Corporations	\$265,790
● Individuals	\$172,169
● Other Revenue	\$153,766
● Government	\$19,593

TOTAL REVENUE \$5,565,631



● Program	\$4,719,708 (80%)
● Fundraising	\$956,647 (16%)
● Administration & Management	\$250,019 (4%)

TOTAL EXPENSES \$5,926,374

*Unaudited (as of August 31, 2019)

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THANK YOU to the 86 interns and volunteers who help make our work possible.



THANK YOU!

Literacy Partners' expansion this past year is a reflection of the generous support and commitment of donors like you. The success stories of Emely, Gicela, and Massimo are representative of the over 800 students we serve. Their success is made possible thanks to your investment in adult literacy education. **Thank you** for believing in our students' potential and in our mission. We are grateful for your continued generosity.

“It’s always moving for me, year after year, to hear the readers who tell their stories of not being able to read and then, thanks to Literacy Partners, being able to acquire that skill, that tremendous skill.”

—JACKIE WELD DRAKE

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ANTHONY TASSI, CEO

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New York, NY 10038

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