

IMPACT

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



LITERACY
PARTNERS

LITERACY PARTNERS



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Parents come to **LITERACY PARTNERS** to transform their lives and create a brighter future for their families through the power of literacy.

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE



With our free classes, workshops, and educational media, parents develop the literacy and language skills they need to solve problems and achieve success in today's world. Some of these results include getting a better job, navigating the healthcare system to protect their family's health, and advancing to college.

Our research-based curriculum also emphasizes child development and parenting topics so that our students can better promote their children's early learning, social emotional growth, and school readiness.

ONE MISSION - TWO PROGRAM APPROACHES

The Liz Smith Center provides adult and family literacy classes to low-income and immigrant parents in New York City.

La Fuerza de Familias Latinas is our family literacy program for Spanish-speaking parents in New York City and around the country, developed in partnership with Univision.

LETTER FROM THE CEO

Dear Friends:

As we reflect on the past year, it's hard to ignore the immense challenges we faced as a community. But even in the face of unprecedented obstacles, we learned that our commitment to one another can help us grow and transform in remarkable ways. And that's exactly what we've seen at Literacy Partners.



Thanks to your unwavering support, we were able to welcome our students back into the classroom and continue our vital work in promoting literacy.

We've seen firsthand the life-changing impact of our work through students like Alma and Monica. Alma now has the confidence to advocate for her children at school, while Monica's success as a student inspired her to help other parents as a facilitator with our La Fuerza de Familias Latinas program. It's an incredible honor to play a part in nurturing the next generation of leaders through our partnerships with caregivers, parents, and supporters like you.

It was also a year of continued growth online, as our **Writers for Readers** programming reached 34,000 people. We gathered to celebrate the remarkable work of **Toni Morrison** and **Julia Alvarez** with inspiring luminaries like **Angela Davis, Nikole Hannah-Jones, Maria Hinojosa, Edwidge Danticat, Jesmyn Ward**, and others.

But, the most unforgettable literary moment of our year was a story of perseverance and transformation literally decades in the making as we celebrated our student Matthew Brown's book launch.

As you read through the stories in our annual report, we hope you'll feel as proud and inspired as we do. None of this would be possible without your incredible generosity, and we're so grateful for your continued support.

With heartfelt thanks,

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Anthony Tassi'.

Anthony Tassi

LIZ SMITH CENTER FOR ADULT & FAMILY LITERACY



The Liz Smith Center was formed in 2020 as a tribute to our patron saint and honorary founder. With the extraordinary support of a community of friends, we've reorganized our English, basic reading and writing, and college access classes into this new program division to continue her legacy of adult and family literacy education for low-income and immigrant parents in New York City.



The **Lizzie Award** is presented each year to an individual who has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to adult literacy.

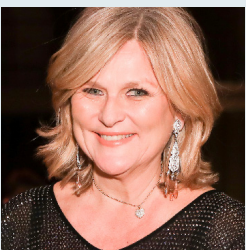
Previous Winners:

Marie Brenner	Lesley Stahl
Peter Brown	Barbara Taylor Bradford
Joni Evans	Jackie Weld Drake
Sheila Nevins	Mary Wells Lawrence
Perri Peltz	

THE LIZ SMITH CENTER CO-CHAIRS



Joni Evans



Cynthia McFadden



Lawrence Jacobs



Elizabeth Peabody

LA FUERZA DE FAMILIAS LATINAS

La Fuerza de Familias Latinas is our program to support and inspire Spanish-speaking parents in promoting their children's early learning, social emotional growth, and school readiness. We provide educational workshops that put parents and their children at the center of the learning process and support them to implement new early learning strategies at home. Since we launched La Fuerza in 2020, the program has grown beyond New York City to serve more than 3,000 parents in five other states. Key to the growth and success of the program have been the many strong partnerships we've created with organizations committed to family literacy, starting with our unique long-term collaboration with Univision.



Thank You to Our Key Partners



Center on the Developing Child
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REIMAGINING POSSIBILITIES THROUGH LITERACY EDUCATION

Alma Acosta is no stranger to hard work. The untimely death of her parents at the tender age of 14 forced her to put her education on hold and begin working to support herself and her grandmother. When she moved from her native Honduras to Queens, she continued to work hard, this time to support her two daughters. All the while, she knew that learning English would be key to making her way in New York.

Despite her busy schedule, Alma never gave up on her dream of continuing her education. When a teacher at her daughters' preschool suggested she enroll with Literacy Partners, Alma saw a golden opportunity that she was determined not to let pass by.

As a committed parent, Alma devoted herself to her new English for Parents class, but her initial shyness and nervousness made her hesitant to speak beyond "hello" to her teachers. However, with the support of dedicated volunteers and the opportunity to practice her English skills, Alma's confidence slowly grew. Today, she speaks English confidently, striking up conversations with ease, which enables her to interact with her children's teachers, navigate visits to the doctor and pharmacy, and advocate for her family in other ways.

ENGLISH FOR PARENTS:

Parents achieved meaningful success in our English classes, including outcomes affecting their lives outside of the classroom.

- ✓ 76% graduated to the next level of English proficiency
- ✓ 78% reported increased confidence in their ability to read with their children
- ✓ 67% of our students' children met or exceeded standards for English proficiency

Alma's success with Literacy Partners goes beyond her own language proficiency. One of her greatest achievements has been the dedicated time she spends reading with her two daughters each week. Through the Books of Their Own program, Alma's daughters have access to a wide range of English and Spanish books. Alma even uses puppets - an angel, a mermaid, and a princess - to bring their reading sessions to life. Together, they laugh, learn, and connect through the magic of storytelling.

With this transformation, Alma has a new set of ambitious goals for herself, including completing her GED and studying psychology with the hopes of one day working with children in foster care. Having experienced firsthand the challenges that young people face when they lose their parents, Alma knows that the support and guidance of caring adults can make all the difference. With her newfound confidence and skills, Alma is determined to help children in need find their own path to success.

As a donor, you have played a crucial role in making Alma's success story possible. Your generosity has supported our programs and allowed us to reach hundreds of students like Alma, who are committed to transforming their lives through education and creating a brighter future for their children.

“ I learned
that I can do
anything! ”

-ALMA



FROM STUDENT TO COMMUNITY LEADER

Meet Monica Bunay, a parent leader at Literacy Partners and a true inspiration. Her journey with us began when she enrolled in a La Fuerza de Familias Latinas parenting workshop at the Corona Library in Queens. Monica's dedication to learning led her to apply for our English for Parents program to improve her English language skills. She started classes on Zoom, and recalls that despite the stresses of the pandemic, she felt uniquely supported by her teacher, Michael Kengmana.



As she learned more English, grew as a student, and interacted more with her teacher and the program volunteers, Monica's capacity for leadership did not go unnoticed. Senior Manager of Training and Development, Sandra Cespedes, saw her potential and encouraged her to become a facilitator for La Fuerza to lead family literacy workshops.

As a facilitator for La Fuerza, Monica began to connect with other student-parents and support their growth, just as Sandra did for her. She inspires and motivates them to

relate to their young children in ways that support their early learning, drawing upon her own experience and the joy she felt in reading with her child. Monica has grown into a highly successful facilitator, but her journey did not stop there.

“ I consider Sandra to be my angel. She has been so supportive and patient with me. ”

-MONICA

When Monica graduated in June of 2022, she took on a new role with Literacy Partners as a Student Ambassador helping immigrant parents who sign up to learn English to get acclimated, access resources, and begin to transform their own lives.

Monica proudly reads to her children regularly and reports that they are doing well in school. She even participated in the Literacy Partners online celebrity poetry reading, “I Love This Poem,” sharing a poem by Pablo Neruda that she dedicated to her children.

Monica’s story is a reminder that when we support individual parents, we create a ripple effect that benefits not only their immediate families but also the parents and families around them. By investing in literacy programs like Literacy Partners, you have helped parents like Monica overcome the challenges they face and become leaders in their communities.

“

From the moment I met Monica at our Queens Library workshop, I noticed her interest in applying what she learned with her children and sharing her knowledge with the people in her community. This is what motivated us to nominate her as a candidate for facilitation at La Fuerza. She’s been an amazing influence in our workshops nationwide and currently co-leads our monthly Leyendo en Casa events.

”

-SANDRA CÉSPEDES, Senior Manager of Training & Development



MACKIE'S BOOK LAUNCH

One of the biggest highlights of the year for the Literacy Partners community was celebrating a literacy achievement of a lifetime: the publication of Matthew Brown's memoir with a luncheon in June 2022.

When Mackie (as he is known to family and friends) came to our program more than a decade ago at the age of 72, he was determined to read and write to tell his own story after a lifetime of missing out. From childhood, Mackie was smart but fell through the cracks. He graduated high school, worked hard, and raised a family, but missed opportunities because he did not know how to read.

The Literacy Partners Reading for Adults classes gave Mackie a new experience of life, and a new vision of himself. After many years of hard work alongside his tutor, Vera Konig, Mackie achieved his goal and published a memoir.

Dennis Walcott, President of the Queens Public Library, participated in our book launch event. After reading excerpts from Mackie's book to a glowing audience, Dennis announced that Mackie's memoir, *My Way*, can now be found on the shelves of the library, available for all New Yorkers to read.



Photo credit: Daviichi Creativi



Dennis M. Walcott and Matthew Brown



Tinika Brown Davis

“

We all have our own struggles. It's inspiring to read about a man who kept going, who kept trying to reach his goals.

”

-TINIKA BROWN DAVIS
Board Member

2022 GALA



“We all know what it feels like to be completely moved by a book, to have it change our world, change our worldview, expose us to new things and make us think and feel in a new way.”

- ZIBBY OWENS



“Books make us think, feel, and spur us to change. They help us make better decisions at the ballot box and help us express ourselves and how we feel to our loved ones. That is why the work of Literacy Partners is so invaluable.”

- DANA CANNEDY

“Learning to comprehend, and understand, and engage with these great works - is not something that we merely do as a hobby. It's not something that we merely do because we find reading and writing pleasurable. We do it because we understand that it is essentially tied to our liberation.”

- TA-NEHISI COATES





“Before I started at Literacy Partners, I worked a job in retail that I was unhappy with. I was working overnight and felt stuck. When the pandemic happened, I became more motivated than ever to look at reading programs. I had the time, but more importantly, I have a daughter. And I knew she was going to start needing help with her homework, and starting to ask for bedtime stories.

I searched and searched and then I gave Literacy Partners a call. Because of my classes I am taking at Literacy Partners. When my daughter asks me for help with her homework, I help her. And when she asks me for a bedtime story, we read one together. Right now, our favorite book is *Caps for Sale*.

A new job and helping Bliss with homework is not the end. It is just the beginning. Some people think that if you read at a lower level, you're not as intelligent as other people. But that is simply just untrue. This program has given me the space to share my story and let others know they are not alone. And it's never too late to improve yourself. My next goal is getting my GED and I am excited to continue with this journey I'm on.”

WRITERS FOR

More than 34,000 people registered for our virtual readings in 2022 to celebrate iconic writers in a community of friends and readers.

Celebrating Toni Morrison Marathon Reading of *The Bluest Eye*



Angela Davis



Nikole Hannah-Jones



Honorée Fanonne Jeffers



Kimberlé Crenshaw



Jacqueline Woodson



Leila Mottley



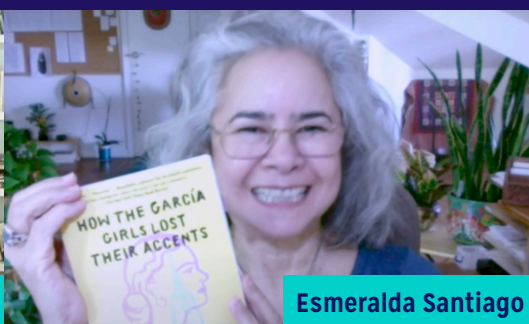
Jesmyn Ward



Tayari Jones

READERS

Celebrating Julia Alvarez Marathon Reading of *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*



CORPORATE, FOUNDATION AND GOVERNMENT FUNDERS

LUMINARIES

The Dorothy Strelsin Foundation
 Marshall Wace
 National Science Foundation
 The Staten Island Foundation
 The William J. and Dorothy K. O'Neill Foundation
 William Penn Foundation

UNDERWRITERS

Bloomberg Philanthropies
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 Travelers Foundation
 United Hospital Fund
 Vanguard Charitable
 Wiley Publishing
 Women's Health Coalition of Arizona

OUR PROGRAM PARTNERS



With the support of partners and donors like you, our Books of Their Own program distributed **6,859** age-appropriate books in English and several other languages to our **1,000+** program participants this year. For many, these were the first books that they've ever owned.

Special thanks to publishers and the 100+ partners who made our work in 2022 possible, including:



Abriendo Puertas | Opening Doors
Bronx Community College
Center for Fiction
Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University
Children's Aid Society
Dallas Independent School District
Houston Public Library
Literacy INC
Miami-Dade County Public Schools
National Center for Families Learning
New York City Council
New York State Department of Education

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Read by 4th
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture
Sesame Workshop
Toni Morrison Society
Too Small to Fail
Unidos US

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.

THANK YOU TO OUR INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS

LUMINARIES

UNDERWRITERS

Joan Ganz Cooney	Marie Brenner	Deirdre McKechnie	Lesley Stahl
Katharine Raymond Hinton	Michael Connelly	Sabastian Niles	Michael Steib
W. Ross Honey	Ianthe Dugan	Jordan Pavlin	Barbara Taylor Bradford
Lawrence Jacobs	Danielle Ganek	Leonard Riggio	Merryl Tisch
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David Yudain
Jeffrey Zalesin
Elizabeth Zaretsky
David Zavoluk
(July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022)

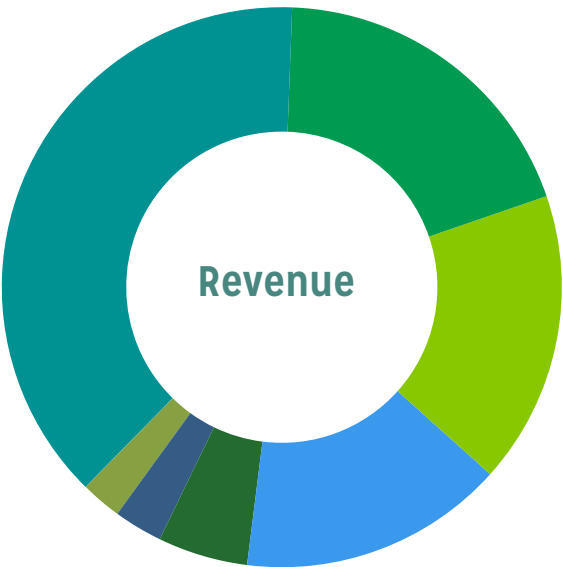
Thanks to our **4,000+ donors** and **86 volunteers** for their invaluable support and commitment to our students and the organization's mission in 2022.

2022 FINANCIALS

Revenue

In-kind Contributions	\$3,277,789
Special Events	\$1,640,591
Foundations & Corporations	\$1,449,931
Investment Appropriation	\$1,315,734
Individuals	\$445,472
Government Grants	\$202,827
Other Revenue	\$241,562

TOTAL REVENUE	\$8,573,906
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Expenses

Programs	\$5,403,631
Fundraising	\$1,076,209
Administration & Management	\$423,869

TOTAL EXPENSES	\$6,903,709
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