

2019

# Readers are Dreamers

## LINC's Summer Report

*"We are stories...We are resilience. We are hope. We are dreamers..." Yuyi Morales*



### SUMMER IMPACT



**1,212**  
parents  
empowered  
to read



**62**  
community  
partners  
mobilized



**2,316**  
children  
gained reading  
support



**200**  
community  
literacy  
events



**3,764**  
free  
books  
distributed



**7,808**  
opportunities  
for families to  
engage with  
literacy

This summer, LINC turned New York City into a literacy-rich zone, centered around a “Readers are Dreamers” theme, that **powered 1,212 parents and 2,316 children to read 3,764 books together**. From public housing gardens in East New York to the Cloisters in Inwood, in every corner of every borough in New York City, we created more than **200 literacy events** to foster a love of reading, providing **7,808 opportunities for families to engage with reading**.

Words became playgrounds. Stories fed imaginations. Our families connected through the power of literacy. Together we dream of a New York City where all children start school ready to succeed, where every child can use literacy to discover and achieve dreams.



## Why is LINC’s Summer Reading Everywhere Program so critical?

Summer vacations can cause children to fall behind academically. According to the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA), the summer learning loss disproportionately affects low-income children. This cumulative negative effect makes it nearly impossible for students to catch up. NSLA research also reveals that students who fall behind over the summer are less likely to graduate from high school and access college.<sup>1</sup>

**For LINC, summer is an opportunity to close the achievement gap.**

During the summer break, LINC ensures that “summer slides” are playground fun and not barriers for our children. This summer, “Readers are Dreamers” brought 200 literacy events to all boroughs of New York City to make reading a joyful community experience. Our author celebrations connected children with the creators of stories. Our family academies equipped parents with the tools, skills, and knowledge they need to make reading a daily routine. LINC’s Very Involved Parents (VIPs), our local literacy ambassadors who volunteer to lead reading events in their neighborhoods, significantly increased the reading time for their own children, and for the children in their community.



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.summerlearning.org/the-challenge/>

Together, we **mobilized over 62 community partners** in support of literacy. This is how we nurture a culture of reading. This is how we support a community of readers. We ensure children read above the recommended 4 to 5 books over the summer with our Reading Everywhere Program. We distributed more than **3,764 books** during the vacation to build the home libraries of 2,196 children. (Last summer, we distributed 1,663 books!) Our collective efforts significantly increased children's reading time and access to books.



*“Matilda has not only maintained her Reading Level but has improved and moved up 2 Levels during the Summer! She has also improved in her Writing by 1 level. I know that being part of the VIP trainings and participating in the Literacy Everywhere and Literacy INC at the Library programs this Summer had a huge influence in her success. Having visited the Bronx Botanical Gardens, Yankees Stadium, making new friends and visiting new neighborhoods are experiences that she associates with Reading and Volunteering and that to me is priceless. Not only is she growing academically she is also becoming an advocate for Literacy! - Gladys Gomez, Bronx VIP*

## Reading Everywhere Month

LINC kicked off “Readers are Dreamers” with Reading Everywhere Month. Held in July, we modeled healthy summer reading habits and raised literacy visibility throughout: **Washington Heights and Inwood (Manhattan), Marble Hill/Kingsbridge, Fordham, Hunts Point, and Morrisania (Bronx); South Jamaica (Queens); East New York/Cypress Hills (Brooklyn); and across the North Shore of Staten Island.**

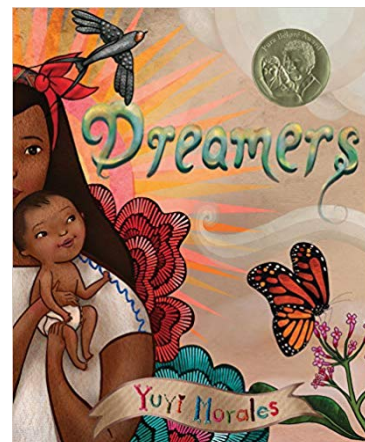
LINC communities have high poverty rates and large concentrations of immigrants, many of whom do not speak English at home. In this context, we build a community of readers by connecting children to the cultural diversity of our city through the power of authentic literature and a diverse bilingual staff who are representative of our communities. We also train parent leaders to deliver read aloud events in their native languages, leveraging their linguistic assets and those of the community to make literacy accessible in a multitude of languages. Our families see themselves represented in the books we read - their cultural legacies written and read aloud.



Parents gain knowledge about the impact of summer reading, learning simple ways to incorporate reading into their summer routines, and are encouraged to continue reading with their children every day for at least 20 minutes. Children are exposed to group-based reading celebrations, opportunities to meet diverse authors, and to literacy-based field trips to local cultural institutions. LINC inspires families to **read everywhere**, at the library, the park, on the subway, and everywhere they go.

## National Summer Learning Week

*"Books became our language. Books became our home. Books became our lives. We learned to read, to speak, to write, and to make our voices heard."* Yuyi Morales' words helped to enrich "Readers are Dreamers". Yuyi's award-winning book *Dreamers* was read aloud in English and Spanish, by our staff in seven different libraries during National Summer Learning Week (July 8th - July 13th). This is a national advocacy week aimed at elevating the importance of keeping kids learning, safe and healthy every summer. LINC participates in this national effort every year with carefully curated books that capture the resilience and imagination of the human spirit.



*Dreamers* helped us to reflect on migration. How families cross borders, carrying strength, and dreams to create a new life. The protagonists in this book, a mother and a child, find refuge at the library and a home in books. In addition to reading the book, families designed their countries of origin as part of a community world map and created suitcases with decorated images of belongings they would bring to a new home: a drawing of a family member, a toy, a symbol of their cultural heritage, a favorite book. Children had an opportunity to connect with the book from a multisensory perspective, thinking critically and creatively, while also connecting with their parents and other families in their community. Participating families received new copies of *Dreamers* to add to their home library.

**LINC's programs highlight the importance of reading together in community, while showing families how rewarding it truly is to read at home.**

## Literacy Fairs & Celebrations

Furthering our commitment to creating inclusive spaces, LINC led community-wide literacy fairs and events in all five boroughs. Our literacy fairs featured authors who are reflective of our communities. Local authors read their books and spent time interacting with our families, sharing stories and talking about their process of writing a book. They also signed personalized messages for each child to bring a signed book home. For kids, this is a summer memory that will last a lifetime!

This year, our summer literacy fairs featured a diverse group of local authors, covering a broad range of themes. Terence Wong, author of “A Step Back: A Journey Through Art and the Imagination,” visited the Kingsbridge Library in the Bronx. His interactive book invites the reader to look closely at the shapes in the artwork in order to see something new. Born in Hong Kong, Terrance urged parents to encourage their children to ask questions, to tap into their imaginations, and to explore the endless possibilities that exist in art and books. Other authors that visited our communities include, Pat Cummings, Javaka Steptoe, Raquel Ortiz, Jerry Craft, Edie Colon, and illustrator Raul Colon.

## Community Read Aloud Programs

LINC’s community read-aloud programs begin in July and continue through the end of summer. These are led by our staff and our Very Involved Parents (VIPs), graduates from our VIP Academy. Our VIP’s are passionate about connecting families with community resources. They take pride in selecting the books they read and the venues they transform into literacy zones. Rain or shine, this past summer, our VIPs, with the support of our staff, organized memorable reading experiences for families. Victor held his readings at St. James Park in the Fordham section of the Bronx. His readings were consistently well-attended. He refused to cancel in the rain, out of fear families would still show up. And he was right. Families came to his readings despite the rain. He read to a small group of umbrella holding families, happy to be present to read in community. Together with his wife, they read books in Spanish, while their daughter read the books in English.



In Washington Heights, VIP's Silvia De Sousa, Linda Duge, and Elexis Loubriel-Pujols and their daughters learned to embrace the art of reading aloud. Nervous at first, they worked together to read for children at Word Up Community Bookstore. On their own, they learned toddler songs and used the power of music and movement to soothe and help children between the ages of two to four. They created positive experiences for other families from two local daycares. Through this process, they became highly invested, committed, and supportive of the work LINC leads. Thanks to their efforts, LINC is

now formally partnering with Rena Day Care Center and will facilitate parent engagement workshops throughout the year.

LINC's summer programs provide high-impact literacy engagement opportunities for our children, offering opportunities to improve listening, critical thinking, and comprehension skills. Read alouds are opportunities to model interactive techniques that parents can use in their own homes to create literacy-rich experiences with their children.

## Reading on the Rails

Reading on the Rails takes reading everywhere to a whole nother level. Traditionally our summer program kick-off, this year we leveraged Reading on the Rails as an opportunity to recognize families for the reading accomplishments they achieved during the summer. Families traveled with LINC staff, from all our communities, for a literacy-based field trip to Yankee Stadium. We started the day by literally reading everywhere- on the train, on the bus, and even on the Staten Island Ferry. Reading on the Rails models reading while traveling, while also demonstrating how to incorporate books into every place we visit.



At Yankee Stadium, LINC hosted a reading celebration with a book about the great Effa Manley, the first and only woman to be inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Effa Manley, who loved baseball, was a civil rights leader and an entrepreneur in a male-dominated sector. She used her voice to demand fair pay for Negro League teams and fought for equity in the sport. Her story inspired our families to share stories about their families' unsung heroes.

After the celebration, the New York Yankees made dreams come true by recognizing LINC and our families on the field. Children who attended the most LINC programs over the summer stood proudly behind home plate during the pre-game ceremony. Our families watched the game; for many, this was their first time visiting Yankee Stadium and seeing their favorite baseball stars play live in the House that Ruth Built. Our families also had the opportunity to visit the Yankee Museum, and received a "First Game Certificate" to mark this momentous occasion. They went home with brand new baseball-themed books and stories to write about in their summer journals. They read on the rails and celebrated a Yankee victory. It was a perfect day. Go Yankees! Go LINC!

## Thanks to you, New York City Reads!

LINC's generous supporters make it possible for LINC to raise generations of readers with big dreams in New York City. With you on our team, with our committed staff, and with the dedication of parents, this past summer, our kids learned about wild creatures, baseball, and internal peace. They had a chance to talk about grief, history, and bullying. They developed coping skills. They grew in audacity and imagination. They danced. They created. They read. Our children accomplished all of this by reading new and old stories found in books they fell in love with.

LINC provides a menu of possibilities to interact with books, linking the many stories that we read together with activities that enrich learning and the joy of reading. We honor the diversity of languages, cultures, and histories. **We create experiences for our families to share their own stories, write their own books, and lead their own change.**

Thank you to the Big Ten Conference, the New York Yankees, and the children of the late Beverley Gasner, who honored their mother's memory with a gift to LINC. This support helped LINC to foster a community of readers throughout New York City.

Thank you for helping us to make New York City a place where all children love to read!

If you would like to visit or sponsor our programs, please contact Eliana Godoy, LINC's Director of Advancement: 212-620-5462 ext.103, [egodoy@lincnyc.org](mailto:egodoy@lincnyc.org)

