



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

When a child reads, a community succeeds!





## THE POWER OF PARENTS. THE POWER OF COMMUNITY. ACHIEVING THE PROMISE OF LITERACY TOGETHER.



For 24 years, LINC has fought for a world where every child knows the power and joy of reading. Our work has shown that, with the right tools, parents and communities have the power to solve the literacy crisis. It is a pressing challenge, but we face it head on, partnering with our neighbors in the name of educational justice.

The literacy crisis is so urgent, particularly because it intersects with many other critical issues—economic, environmental, and social. The next generation will inherit a complex world; navigating it will require broad education, historical context, and the ability to discern valid information. The literacy skills our children gain in their early years will pay lifelong dividends, helping them become critical thinkers and engaged participants in their communities.

But we have only a short time to effectively impart these indispensable proficiencies: all children need to have language competency and language confidence before they start school. Structural poverty and all forms of racism threaten this foundational period. A major disruption like the pandemic can further exacerbate educational and social inequities, as it already has, shattering the future for children and the communities that depend on their potential and promise as adults.



LINC works with parents and communities to address the literacy crisis and the injustices that stem from it—all to build a more equitable society and livable future. Parents are passionate about helping their children succeed; we show them tried and true ways to make literacy visible and valued. We help them develop the confidence to raise readers who become leaders. We train parents to become advocates, leveraging their collective power and agency to help their children and communities succeed. We provide them with the tools and the space to drive change in their homes and neighborhoods. Our work transforms families; our families transform communities—this transforms the world.

LINC was started with a vision of universal literacy. The organization that you and I have built is more resilient and committed to this mission than I could have dreamed—this year's rapid response to the pandemic and the enormous effort put forth by our staff, families, board, and community of volunteers and donors are living—growing!—proof of that.



We remain committed to building a better tomorrow by building up our children, one reader at a time. Join us for another vital year, the first of LINC's next 25.

Mimi Levin Lieber  
Founder

# EQUITY BEGINS WITH EARLY LITERACY

The past year has been like no other in our lifetime. Even as we move into the early months of 2021, events continue to cascade in astonishing waves of despair and hope.

For LINC, as for so many, the pandemic required a complete re-envisioning of our programs. Our amazing “rapid-response” staff adjusted to the restrictions of the coronavirus by pivoting, almost overnight, to online platforms and social media for both community outreach and program delivery. Because LINC has always invested in empowering parents to foster an atmosphere of literacy at home, we were uniquely positioned to bridge the gap that school and library closures caused. Our families were equipped with home libraries, educational resources, and a network of community support.

Still, the pivot was not easy because our LINC neighborhoods are among those most affected by systemic poverty, the neighborhoods that felt the brunt of the health crisis in ways that were disruptive and brutal—measured in infection rates, economic hardship, hunger, and death.

Our families were hit hard, but starting in March 2020, the spread of the pandemic was met by LINC’s immediate mobilization to connect our families with resources across an array of services. Our Very Involved Parents, with their empathy and resourcefulness, continued to create a system of support for children in their community. They freely shared their personal stories, and helped LINC with outreach, information, and feedback. The impact pages of this report are a testament to that continuity.

Against the pandemic’s disruption and upheaval, LINC prepared and adopted a strategic plan to guide us through our 25th Anniversary Year and beyond. This year the LINC model was tested, and it proved to be both resilient and effective. Families connected with LINC have benefited from community strength to address immediate survival needs, while supporting their children in engaged reading. Childhood development timelines, and their long-term social impacts, do not pause for pandemics.

Our strategic plan draws on the lessons learned over the last quarter century, including the challenges of the past year. It ensures that, into the next quarter century, LINC continues to contribute to the resilience and self-reliance of our communities. Our children and our families need this from us—and we will all benefit from the future these children will be able to build.

If you are new to LINC, I hope reading about LINC, and realizing what is possible for all of our children, inspires you to join us to realize the promise of literacy. If you are a part of the LINC community, we thank you for your support. Our work rests on the power of our growing community of supporters.

with gratitude,



Carlos Rodriguez  
Chair, Board of Directors



Shari Levine  
Executive Director



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# OUR MISSION

**LINC works at the intersection of education and community development. Our mission is to engage families and community members to support young readers in high-need neighborhoods.**



“...I want to raise my children differently. I want to give them what I was never given. I feel it is wonderful what LINC is doing.”\*

## Community Literacy Model

Our innovative, two-generational, community-based model connects resources that already exist in the community, leveraging them to surround families with literacy-rich environments inside and outside of home. This is how LINC creates a culture of literacy at the neighborhood level and generates lasting change.

LINC engages and trains parents, caregivers, and community members in early literacy, and just as importantly, networks them together into a mutually-reinforcing local system that reaches the same child multiple times with effective literacy support over the first five years of a child's life.

\* We incorporated the voices from LINC parents throughout this report. They provided valuable feedback during this past year's programmatic evaluation. To obtain a copy of LINC's 2020 Evaluation Report, please contact Shari Levine at: [slevine@lincnyc.org](mailto:slevine@lincnyc.org) or call 212-620-5462 ext. 102.





# OUR MODEL DRIVES IMPACT

## Engage Children When it Matters Most

A child's developmental trajectory is shaped during the early years, long before starting school. Little brains grow an amazing 90% and are nearly fully developed by age five. Early literacy and the bonds that are created matter!

“

“My son reads differently now. He can sound out the words better. It helps with his school reading: he can see the high frequency (“snap”) words. I praise him.”



## Empower Parents to Unlock Children's Potential

Parents are key players and our most valuable partners. By focusing on developing their skills, competencies, and leadership, parents become advocates for their own children and claim their place as changemakers in the community.

“I'm learning how to read aloud...my kids are learning too...they don't know it is learning...they think it is just playing.”

”

## Leverage the Power of Community

LINC fosters relationships among parents and builds a literacy-rich ecosystem within communities. This infrastructure is sustained by staff that is representative of our communities.

“

“Apart from literacy materials, I gained more friends and another family from being a LINC Very Involved Parent.”



# FAMILY PROGRAMS

**Parent Workshops** - focus on how to make reading a fun part of a family's daily routine. These early childhood workshops introduce parents and caregivers to the foundations of early literacy, and LINC staff share strategies on how to incorporate these practices and make them fun and engaging for child(ren). Parents learn to recognize age-appropriate reading material and get connected to community resources and public libraries. Our workshops cover a variety of topics related to early literacy and education. For example: foundations of early literacy, social and emotional learning topics, school expectations, and strengthening the parent/child bond.

"LINC's helped me to really feel like a part of this new community when I first moved here."

**Family Academies** - engage caregivers and young children at the same time, helping families to create reading routines and literacy-rich environments. Parents celebrate reading and practice new literacy strategies with their children, while children enjoy engaging read-alouds, movement activities, songs, and crafts. **The Read to Me Little Bee** (Virtual Bees during COVID) program is one example of our Family Academies. This is a six-part Family Academy designed specifically for parents with children aged 0-3. In each session, parents focus on one of the foundations of early literacy and learn how to adapt and use these practices with their children at home.

# COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

**Very Involved Parent (VIP) Academy** - trains parents to become literacy advocates in their community. Parents who have previously attended LINC programs are invited to participate in the VIP Academy. Graduates are equipped to deliver community reading programs, recruit new families, spread the word about LINC, and promote positive reading habits with other families. VIP Academies foster the growth of parents who, after realizing the significant influence they have on their child's academic achievement, are eager to do the same for other children in their neighborhood. This parent engagement strategy extends LINC's reach and amplifies the message: "Children need family support to become strong readers."

"If people see how you are reading to the kids, how they like it, they want to replicate that in other places. That's the amazing thing about LINC, is that it grows itself."

**Reading Everywhere** - brings reading to parks, playgrounds, clinics, laundromats, and virtually everywhere in a LINC neighborhood. From the Bronx to Staten Island, our reading celebrations build community and make reading irresistible and visible across all boroughs of NYC. Held throughout the year, these events create additional opportunities to read together. We incorporate activities, multi-lingual read-alouds, and often feature authentic literature and authors from the community.

**Literacy Zones** - make children's books available in pharmacies, stores, restaurants, and in other community spaces where families can pick up free books to start a home library. These dedicated Literacy Zones also feature additional educational materials to connect families with literacy programming and resources.

# COLLECTIVE IMPACT

**City's First Readers (CFR)**, the New York City Council's Early Literacy Initiative coordinated by Literacy Inc., creates equity of opportunity by surrounding families with comprehensive community-driven programming from 15 active partner organizations. Together, CFR supports close to one million families annually, increasing the number of children exposed to critical pre-literacy activities. CFR ensures children's access to a strong literacy foundation so they are prepared to start school, ready to thrive academically, and succeed beyond their school years.

**The Reads Initiative in South Jamaica and East New York** enhances literacy culture and increases the number of children who have the literacy skills to sustain academic achievement and reach their highest aspirations. At the heart of Reads is the belief that literacy is the key to all future learning. With primary support from the Pinkerton Foundation and the shared commitment of 10 partners coordinated by Literacy Inc., the Reads Initiative has successfully increased access to and use of literacy resources, improved children's literacy skills, and deepened relationships between literacy partners to increase efficiency and effectiveness of programming in both target communities.

In the community and online, **City's First Readers** and the **Reads Initiative** are connecting families to critical learning activities and helping children access literacy programs that meet their individual needs.

# FINANCIALS

**LINC Fiscal Years: 2020, 2019.** All information is from our audited financial statements for fiscal years ending June 30th 2019 - June 30th, 2020. A copy of our full audited financial statements can be obtained by emailing [info@lincnyc.org](mailto:info@lincnyc.org) or at [www.lincnyc.org](http://www.lincnyc.org).

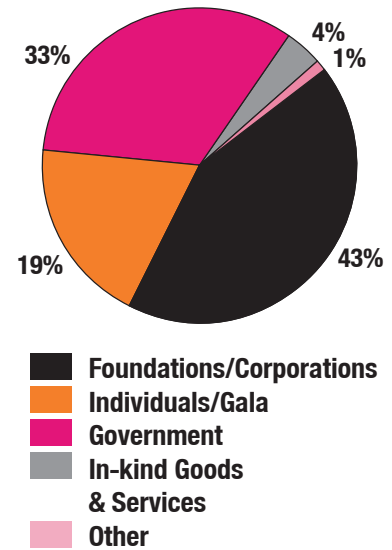
## Statement of Activities

REVENUE	2020	2019
Foundations/Corporations	\$ 1,764,524	\$ 1,342,930
Individuals/Gala	\$ 792,228	\$ 839,415
Government	\$ 1,350,101	\$ 1,575,926
In-kind Goods & Services	\$ 163,054	\$ 225,628
Other	\$ 52,812	\$ 70,773
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 4,122,719</b>	<b>\$ 4,054,672</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Program Services	\$ 2,892,554	\$ 2,819,910
Management & General	\$ 159,027	\$ 221,720
Fundraising	\$ 527,229	\$ 509,360
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,578,810</b>	<b>\$ 3,550,990</b>

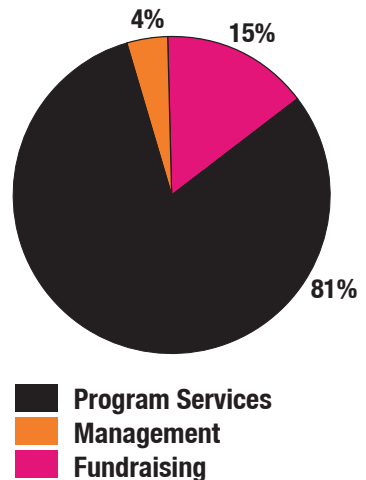
## Statement of Financial Position

ASSETS	2020	2019
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$ 3,073,848	\$ 1,787,330
Contributions, Grants & Accounts Receivable	\$ 1,155,841	\$ 1,309,919
Other Assets	\$ 43,708	\$ 61,239
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 4,273,397</b>	<b>\$ 3,158,488</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses	\$ 144,453	\$ 159,907
Agency funds	\$ 176,847	\$ 81,500
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 321,300</b>	<b>\$ 241,407</b>
PPP Loan Payable	\$ 491,107	-
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 812,407</b>	<b>\$ 241,407</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Without donor restrictions	\$ 1,893,694	\$ 1,608,519
With donor restrictions	\$ 1,567,296	\$ 1,308,562
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 3,460,990</b>	<b>\$ 2,917,081</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 4,273,397</b>	<b>\$ 3,158,488</b>

## FY 2020 REVENUE

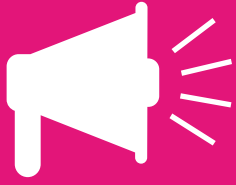


## FY 2020 EXPENSES



LINC is a proud recipient of  
 Nonprofit New York's Excellence Awards  
 2018 Excellence in Financial Management  
 2019 Excellence in Fundraising  
 and Resource Development  
 2019 FINALIST FOR OVERALL EXCELLENCE

# OUR IMPACT



## From parents to **Literacy Advocates:**

97%

are more active  
in their children's  
learning at home



90%

read out loud  
more often with  
their children

95%

feel more confident  
reading out loud

"I've always loved reading...so it got me more in touch with that and being able to even share that with my kids and with other kids. I gained a lot from being a part of the program."



90%

talk, play, and sing  
more often with  
their children



90%

read to themselves  
for pleasure more  
often

"I was happy to be part of it. I met strangers and we bonded. It was a new experience for me, as I generally don't go out as a stay-at-home mom since I came to this country. It was nice."



90%

feel more  
knowledgeable  
about child  
development



97%

are more active  
in their children's  
education at  
school



100%

understand how  
to choose the right  
book for children  
at different ages

"I read more to my youngest daughter. My older daughter joins in too...she misses when I don't read to her. My girls read a book before going to bed. It's a fun way to bond with the kids."





100%

Children get more excited to read



"I have gained friendships, more familiarity with people in my community, relationships with library staff, and more involvement and service within my community generally."

100%

Parents know about more resources and support for their families

"The group I was in was so connected, we now have this WhatsApp chat...we remain connected."

100%

Parents get to meet other parents in the community



100%

Families learn about the importance of reading

"I'm an avid book lover. I used to read in private where it's quiet, but now I read where my son can see me, and he'll pick up a book as well. We designate a reading time."

97%

Adults get more excited to read

95%

Parents feel more confident talking to neighbors about the importance of reading to children



## LINC Provides Comfort in the Face of Insecurity

The pandemic reminded us that sudden crises require preparation, and that quality education is at the very core of our preparation. We cannot allow today's educational disruptions to affect tomorrow's need for solutions.

Children who read become scientists and doctors who cure tomorrow's virus, who solve the environmental challenges facing our world, become engineers who address infrastructure shortfalls and design more efficient buildings, become leaders addressing novel challenges we have not yet foreseen.

"LINC has done much for me during COVID. I am a COVID survivor, and LINC was there calling me, asking me what I needed. They found whatever I needed...They brought things to my home. They brought me gift cards so I could buy things I needed. LINC never abandoned me. They were always with me when I was going through COVID—before, during, and after."





# INVESTING IN LITERACY IS BOTH THE SMART AND RIGHT THING TO DO!

The United States lags behind the rest of the world in its focus on and investment in education. Only 34% of four-year-olds attended preschool in 2019 in the U.S., compared with 60% in Canada and 90% in the E.U. The lack of funding in early education disproportionately affects children of color.

In NYC, 57% of Black and Latino children do not read on grade level by the 3rd grade, compared with 30% of white children...

**25 Million children are affected by illiteracy in the U.S.**

**\$225 Billion drained annually because of illiteracy**

Social justice is built on educational justice; Educational justice is founded on literacy. Prevention beats intervention.

LINC's work with parents and children, caregivers, and community leaders helps to safeguard our children's well-being and their equitable access to opportunities. Join us in creating a more equitable New York City.

## DONATE

Visit [www.lincnyc.org/donate](http://www.lincnyc.org/donate).

Text ChildrenDeserveExcellence to 44-321.

Or send a check to:

Literacy Inc.\*  
P.O. Box 822  
Kantonah, NY 10536

*\* Temporary mailing address*



SCAN TO DONATE



## OUR VISION

Together, we are creating a world worthy of our children. Our children's well-being and academic achievement depends so much on their ability to trust the adults around them, feel safe in their environments, and benefit from the comfort of a loving parent who reads, talks, sings, and plays with them.

LINC harnesses the power that exists in every community to make literacy a value and right of all children.



[www.lincnyc.org](http://www.lincnyc.org)

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Literacy Inc.

