ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Literacy Minnesota
Dear friends of Literacy Minnesota,

Literacy Minnesota’s evolution this past year has been one of continuous learning and growth, from establishing a new flagship center in North Minneapolis to uplifting digital literacy nationwide through Northstar Digital Literacy’s expansion. As we embark on a new chapter with Anton Jones as the organization’s president, we are excited to welcome what’s next.

Our search for a new leader was comprehensive, spanning the nation to find someone who embodied our values and vision. We sought a champion for literacy, someone with proven leadership, experience scaling impactful programs and a strategic mind to harness the strength of community. In Anton, we found all this and more, right here in Minnesota.

We are confident that Literacy Minnesota will reach even greater heights in the coming years. Anticipating the launch of our new strategic plan, we will have a solid roadmap to mobilize change. We envision a future where literacy brings individuals into community, fostering social and economic justice for all.

To our readers and supporters, we express our profound gratitude for your unwavering commitment. Together, we will continue to illuminate the path to a brighter tomorrow, one word at a time.

Harold Hegg
Chair, Board of Directors
To our Literacy Minnesota community,

I’m grateful for the steadfast support that defines the Literacy Minnesota community. Celebrating our 50-year anniversary in May 2023, I spoke as a newcomer, tasked with representing this organization in the midst of reaching this milestone.

At the 50th anniversary celebration, we highlighted Michelle and Danice Martinez who embody Literacy Minnesota’s core values. The Martinez sisters started as youth participants in our Summer Reads program, they came back in college as Summer Reads mentors, and now are licensed elementary school teachers. Their story underscores the enduring connections formed through our mission to strengthen communities and combat injustice through literacy.

This year we come to the end of Literacy Minnesota’s current strategic plan. You’ll read some of the highlights in this report. I am galvanized by the distance traveled between 2020 to today as the organization tackled a global pandemic, a racial awakening and a leadership change.

I have been inviting all to envision our future since arriving at Literacy Minnesota, and am energized by the passionate response from our volunteers, staff, national service members, participants and collaborators alike. This collective imagining kicked off our current strategic planning process, and we’ll be ready to share a new strategic plan very soon.

Let’s embrace the spirit of lifelong learning, self-determination, justice, equity and innovation that has defined us for over half a century. Together, we will continue to make a lasting impact on the lives of individuals and mobilize communities through the transformative power of literacy.

Thank you for being an indispensable part of Literacy Minnesota’s incredible journey.

Yours in collaboration,

Anton C. Jones
President, Literacy Minnesota

Strategic Plan 2020–2024 Highlights

The priorities set forth in Literacy Minnesota’s strategic plan for 2020–2024 were upended by COVID-19 and the uprising after the murder of George Floyd. These pivotal events shaped the organization’s response to participant and community needs. The highlights on the following pages represent a sample of key 2020–2024 strategic plan goals, challenges and accomplishments.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

1. A push for EQUITY
2. A place for CONNECTION
3. A culture of RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP
4. A movement GROWS
5. A commitment to REACH
A push for EQUITY

GOAL 1

Literacy Minnesota will be a leading partner in working with others to address challenges and advance opportunities for equitable communities.

Confronting systemic inequities

During this strategic plan period, Literacy Minnesota faced internal and external pressure to recognize and confront inequities within our organization and the broader community. We examined how bias and systemic racism influences our individual and collective perspectives, decisions and actions. We engaged in brave and challenging conversations where we identified areas for improvement.

To be solid in our foundational commitment to equity and justice we acknowledge that racism and other systemic inequities are real, persistent and pervasive. We earnestly commit ourselves to being a force for positive change within our organization and beyond. We do this because the work is important, necessary and overdue. At Literacy Minnesota we promise to continue to take actionable steps to address these issues and foster a more equitable environment for all.

Momentum in diversity, equity and inclusion

Literacy Minnesota welcomed Brianne Carmichael in 2022 as our first Cultural Literacy and Belonging Director. Brianne is helping reframe and influence equity practices across the organization.

Several teams collaborated with NewPublica, a diverse public relations and strategic communications firm, to more fully incorporate inclusivity into our outreach strategies.

We’re embracing community-centric fundraising and communications practices.

Leading up to the 50th anniversary event, we developed Language, Land and Labor Acknowledgements as one step within our ongoing commitment to build a more equitable and just society.

We continue to share a Toolkit for Recruiting Diverse Volunteers; partners tell us they’ve used this toolkit to revamp their volunteer recruitment processes.

The Minneapolis YWCA’s racial justice team guided board and staff members through the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) assessment and a series of professional development workshops. Three staff members are now IDI Qualified Administrators.

Service gaps

Despite this internal momentum, gaps in literacy services for communities of color remain. Minnesota has one of the largest K–12 academic achievement gaps in the nation for Black and Indigenous children; adults from these communities are significantly underrepresented in our state’s adult education system. The challenges of lower literacy have a profoundly negative impact on opportunity, income, health and overall well-being. This can and must change.
Brand refresh
In 2020, Minnesota Literacy Council was renamed Literacy Minnesota. The Literacy Minnesota logo was designed to convey openness, vibrancy and dynamism.

Revamped website
The Educator Resources Library, a key feature of our website, organizes curriculum and teaching resources in an easily searchable format.

Vision for learning centers
In 2022, coming out of the pandemic, Literacy Minnesota initiated strategic planning for our Open Door Learning Centers. The goals were to:

- Improve the services offered to participants.
- Provide program consistency and continuity among Open Door locations.
- Ensure stronger financial viability.
- Integrate and innovate programs, services and products to share with the broader literacy field.

The planning team ultimately decided to centralize Open Door locations at two primary sites – one in Saint Paul and one in Minneapolis – while allowing for existing and new satellite programming.

Open Door’s Saint Paul campus continues at our Eastside location with daytime adult classes and a preschool for children of adult students.

The smaller Open Door Northeast, Northside and Southside locations moved into a new Open Door Minneapolis campus at the intersection of West Broadway and Lyndale avenues in North Minneapolis. This location met our priorities to be located in an area of high need, easily accessible for those who commute, in an ADA compliant space and scalable for future expansion.
Redefining literacy

Literacy is so much more than reading and writing. Literacy skills enable us to advocate for ourselves, contribute to our communities and traverse the world around us. With input from across the organization, we created a definition of literacy that encompasses this expansive and impactful meaning:

Literacy is the ability to navigate systems and symbols.

Innovations in literacy

- We introduced English Unlocked, a four-level, English-learning curriculum with five phonics workbooks. Created by educators for educators, the curriculum is College and Career Readiness Standards-aligned and designed to support adult English language learners and their instructors. Topics for lessons were informed by adult education participants and learner-contributed stories are included.

- Our national service team was approved to place AmeriCorps VISTA members in Minnesota and other states to work on digital literacy initiatives.

- Northstar Digital Literacy is continually evolving to fit the needs of its users. All 15 assessments are now available in Spanish and there is curriculum to help instructors integrate Northstar into adult education programming. Northstar’s exponential growth has advanced digital literacy in all 50 states and in 130 other countries. In fiscal year 2023 alone, 1.2 million assessments were taken, bringing the total number of assessments completed to 8.26 million since Northstar’s launch in 2012.

- The TEQuity program, funded by Comcast NBCUniversal, provides digital navigation support to Minnesota nonprofits seeking to expand their own services and assist low-income Minnesota residents in securing...
Legislative win

In 2021, thanks to the work of the adult education field, Minnesota’s legislature approved a one-time, $10 million allocation to bolster the state’s adult education system after the pandemic’s impact.

Collective action

Open Door Collective, a program of Literacy Minnesota, brings together researchers to plan and conduct research benefiting the adult education field.

In 2023, the Adult Literacy & Learning Impact Network (ALL IN) and the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy funded Open Door Collective to inform the design of a national study to measure adult education’s return on investment.

This research study will contribute to the National Action Plan for Adult Literacy, a multi-sector, multi-year initiative designed to drive inclusive, collective action to increase adult literacy nationwide.

Digital equity progress

The federal Digital Equity Act (DEA) provides $2.75 billion in funding to establish grant programs that promote digital equity and inclusion. In a first phase, all states formed their own digital equity plans.

We received a mini-grant from the state to form a Digital Connection Committee. This group met in the spring of 2023 and collected quantitative and qualitative digital inclusion data from our Open Door campus participants through the use of surveys, individual interviews and focus groups.

We recruited an advisory team of adult educators from all around the state (rural, suburban and urban) to contribute input to Minnesota’s draft of the Digital Opportunity Plan.

Literacy Minnesota’s Northstar platform has been incorporated in many states’ digital equity plans as a means to boost digital inclusion.

Local and national connections

Literacy Minnesota benefits from partnerships and relationships locally and nationally, such as Minnesota’s Literacy Action Network, Saint Paul Community Literacy Consortium, Ampact, ConnectedMN, National Digital Inclusion Alliance, ProLiteracy, COABE, National Coalition for Literacy and more.
A commitment to REACH

GOAL 5
More people are better off as a result of Literacy Minnesota’s work.

Open Door Preschool
- 100% of children in attendance for 30+ hours made level gains
- 548 remote students spent 11,649 hours learning online

26% increase in student contact hours from FY22.
- 66 different countries of origin
- 48 different languages spoken

Outreach
- 11,983 hotline inquiries
- 211 volunteers placed

Tutor Trainings
- 105 webinars held
- 3,325 participants

Tech Services
- 639 tech staff participated in trainings
- 49,712 learner hours logged on state supported distance learning platforms

Educator Resources
- 6,236 individual downloads from around the world

TOP RESOURCES
1. Pre-beginning ESL Curriculum
2. Beginning ESL Curriculum
3. Phonics and Phonemic Awareness ESL Instructional Support Kit

Who is using Educator Resources?
- Paid teacher
- Volunteer teacher/tutor
- Other
- Program staff
- Volunteer coordinator
- Administrator

Journeys: An Anthology of Adult Student Writing
- 465 featured authors
- 29 ABE programs represented

Northstar Digital Literacy
- 1,217,863 assessments taken
- 584,504 passed assessments
- 130 total countries reached by people accessing the website
- 3,043 total subscribing organizations

Top 3 most used modules
Essential Computer Skills, Internet Basics and Email.

Who is subscribing to Northstar?
- Libraries
- Nonprofits
- Adult education centers
- Other
- Workforce centers
- Higher education
- Other: K-12 education, business, healthcare, housing, correctional facilities and more.

More people are better off as a result of Literacy Minnesota’s work.

Assessments taken: 1,217,863
Passed assessments: 584,504
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- Other
- Workforce centers
- Higher education
- Other: K-12 education, business, healthcare, housing, correctional facilities and more.
Meet Choua, an Open Door graduate

Choua was a longtime student at Literacy Minnesota’s Open Door Saint Paul learning center. She attended English language classes and studied for the GED test.

Choua immigrated to the Twin Cities from Laos, by way of California. She owns and operates Hmong House Restaurant and Banquet LLC with her family.

Scan the QR code to hear her story!

Literacy Leadership - a year-long service program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local and national partnerships developed by VISTAs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

100% of VISTA service members:
- grew personally and professionally.
- developed their leadership skills.
- improved their ability to communicate across cultural differences.

100% of partnered programs:
- are more effective.
- increased their reach as a result of VISTA resources.

Literacy Minnesota

volunteer hours donated

<table>
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<tr>
<th>403 volunteers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19,959 hours</td>
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</table>

Parenting Program

<table>
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<tr>
<th>33 parents participated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>198 number of children impacted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

90% of parents showed an increase in knowledge of how to talk to teachers about their child.

Summer Reads

80% of children maintained or increased reading engagement.

Children from Mobile Hope take turns reading during story time.

Children participating in the 2023 Summer Reads program increased their reading scores by an average of +7.39 words per minute.

Literacy Leaders Denise Camarillo Cruz and Yohan Montiel Espinosa spent a year of service working with MRNY’s adult education department and participants to help create and develop the organization’s digital literacy and navigation program. “I wanted to become a VISTA member to work with people from my community,” says Denise.

Make the Road New York

Make the Road New York (MRNY) is a grassroots organization that builds dignity and justice for working class communities in the New York City and tri-state area.

Literacy Leader Shirley Smith worked closely with 18 to 24 year-olds in the local Heritage Park neighborhood as a VISTA at Urban Strategies, Inc. (USI). Projects included helping connect members with employment, classes, trainings, volunteering and housing; anything they need to continue on their journey into adulthood. “That’s one thing that is extremely important to us at USI: letting our youth know that we see them, we respect them and we applaud them for everything that they do.”

United Strategies Inc. at Heritage Park

80% of children maintained or increased reading engagement.

90% of parents showed an increase in knowledge of how to talk to teachers about their child.

Children from Mobile Hope take turns reading during story time.
A year of CELEBRATION

Literacy Minnesota concluded its historic 50th anniversary with a commemoratory gathering attended by volunteers, donors, staff, program participants and other friends. The evening covered five decades of accomplishments in the literacy education field, touching on all of the notable programs that shaped our organization into what it is today.

Malcolm Mitchell, former NFL athlete and Super Bowl champion with the New England Patriots, joined us as our keynote speaker. Malcolm spoke about his struggles with literacy as an adult, becoming a published author and his journey as a literacy advocate. His organization, the Share the Magic Foundation, has placed books in the hands of more than 65,000 young readers.

We are grateful for Michelle and Danice Martinez who shared about their paths from Literacy Minnesota Summer Reads participants to Summer Reads VISTAs to professional school teachers, leading the next generation of literacy learners.

We sincerely appreciate everyone who has continued to partner with us and advocate for the expansion of essential literacy resources on a global level. Thank you for making this celebration special as it was!

Thank you to our event sponsors!

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OTHER SPONSORS
Creative Concepts, Greenhaven Printing, Hushcha Studio, the Society of Amateur Chefs, USI, Vibrant Portraits.
2022-2023 FINANCIALS

Financial report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

WHERE DID OUR SUPPORT COME FROM?

Government Grants $3,058,006
Program Service Fees/Other $2,284,707
Contributions/Special Events $489,752
Corporate and Foundation Grants $374,578
Total Support and Revenue $6,207,043

HOW DID WE SPEND OUR MONEY?

Minnesota Programs $3,725,231
National Programs $1,014,690
Administration $1,044,391
Fundraising $428,791
Total Expenses $6,213,103

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents</td>
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<td>Endowment</td>
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<td>Accounts/grants receivable</td>
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<td>Board designated operating reserve</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board designated special purpose reserve</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other current assets</td>
<td>$211,663</td>
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<td>Long-term assets</td>
<td>$140,027</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,025,173</strong></td>
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LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Board designated permanent endowment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unrestricted net assets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deferred revenue</td>
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<td>Accrued expenses and other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restricted net assets</td>
<td>$518,610</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board designated operating reserve</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board designated special purpose reserve</td>
<td>$127,851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts payable</td>
<td>$94,536</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,025,173</strong></td>
</tr>
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THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS!
You can find the full financials on our website at literacymn.org/annual-reports-financials
OUR STAFF

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OUR AMERICORPS MEMBERS

Kari Allen
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Asia Hudson
Rachel Hsu

Michael Kochevar
Teddy Larson
Macy McClain
Aden Osman

Matthew Pine
Maxwell Reynolds

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OUR BOARD

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Ameriprise Financial

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Thrive

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR
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Singer Group

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE CHAIR
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Thank you for your service!

Jose Arrieta
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Slalom

Caroline Casey
Independent consultant

Chelsea Ihle
Slalom

Michael Opperman
Barn Owl

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