



أبو ابنا مفتوحة أمام الجميع  
 Qof Kasta Waa Lasoo Dhawaynaya  
 တၢ်တူၢ်လိာ်မုၢ်ပုၤကိးဂၤဒဲးလီၤ  
 ሁሉም ሰው ተጋብዟል  
 everyone is welcome  
 Selamat datang  
 Ласкаво просимо  
 Hoş geldiniz  
 همه خوش آمدید  
 HOAN NGHÊNH  
 WELKOM  
 歡迎

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Namni hunduu faara gaariin simatama  
 𑜁𑜂𑜃𑜂𑜆 𑜁𑜂𑜃𑜂𑜆 𑜁𑜂𑜃𑜂𑜆 𑜁𑜂𑜃𑜂𑜆  
 Zoo siab txais tos txhua leej  
 VELKOMMEN 환영합니다  
 هر چاته بنه راغلاست  
 Добро пожаловать!  
 Todos son bienvenidos  
 Willkommen  
 ਜੀ ਆਇਆ ਨੂੰ।  
 Bienvenue



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



**MISSION** To share the power of learning through education, community building and advocacy.

**VISION** We believe literacy has the power to advance equity and justice, and we envision a world where life-changing learning is within everyone's reach.

**VALUES** LIFELONG LEARNING • EQUITY & JUSTICE • INDIVIDUAL DIGNITY • LEADERSHIP & INNOVATION



# 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.

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.

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.

## 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.

# A place for **CONNECTION**

## **GOAL 2**

**Literacy Minnesota's programs and services will be increasingly visible, effective and efficient.**



### **A place for everyone**

2022-23 saw an increase in the number of Open Door program participants from Afghanistan and Ukraine.

### **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.

# A culture of **RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP**

## **GOAL 3**

**Literacy Minnesota will be a dynamic, diverse and trusted organization that inspires staff, board, volunteers, participants and partners.**

## **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

## **National award**

Literacy Minnesota was honored as a 2021 **Best Practice Literacy Award** recipient by the **Library of Congress**. This is a national award that recognizes outstanding literacy programming.



# A movement **GROWS**

## GOAL 4

Literacy Minnesota will ensure governmental leaders and others further understand, value and invest in literacy programs and services.

### 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.



a program of  
Literacy Minnesota

**26% increase**

in student contact hours from FY22.

**66**

different countries of origin

**48**

different languages spoken

**Open Door Preschool**

**100%** of children in attendance for 30+ hours made level gains

**548** remote students spent **11,649** hours learning online

### Outreach

**11,983**

hotline inquiries

**211**

volunteers placed

### Tutor Trainings

**105**

webinars held

**3,325**

participants

### Tech Services

**639**

tech staff participated in trainings

### Educator Resources

**6,236**

individual downloads from around the world



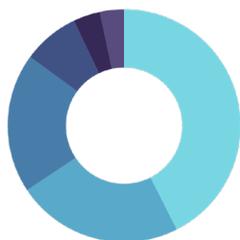
**49,712**

learner hours logged on state supported distance learning platforms

### 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

### Northstar Digital Literacy

**1,217,863**

assessments taken

**584,504**

passed assessments

**130**

total countries reached by people accessing the website

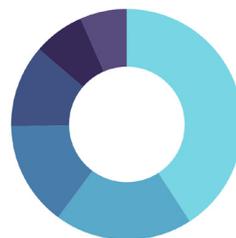
**3,043**

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.

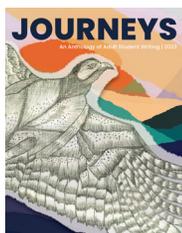
### Journeys: An Anthology of Adult Student Writing

**465**

featured authors

**29**

ABE programs represented



## 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 Minnesota volunteer hours donated

**403**

volunteers

**19,959**

hours

## Parenting Program

**33**

parents participated

**198**

number of children impacted

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

## Literacy Leadership - a year-long service program

**27**

local and national partnerships developed by VISTAs.

**United Strategies Inc. at Heritage Park**



USI | URBAN STRATEGIES, INC.  
Families at the Center of Results

### 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."**

**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.

## 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.



### 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 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.



Literacy Minnesota

# A year of CELEBRATION

YEARS • leading • learning • literacy

Literacy Minnesota concluded its historic 50th anniversary with a commemorative 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.



Scan the QR code to hear their story!



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!

PLATINUM SPONSOR



GOLD SPONSOR



SILVER SPONSORS



thrivent



BRONZE SPONSORS

Candlelight Florist, Comcast, Fire & Nice Alehouse, Kurt Johnson Auctioneering, NewPublica, Par31.T., Rudy Luther Toyota, Slalom, Strategic Consulting & Coaching, Sunrise Banks.

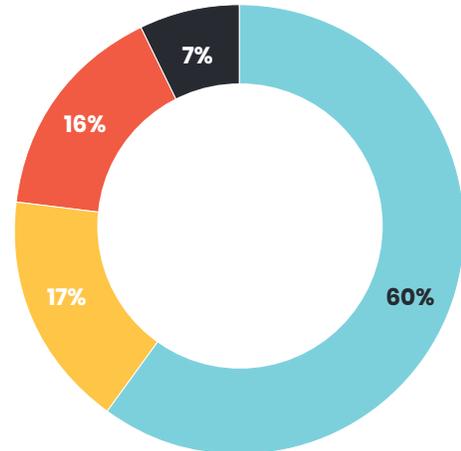
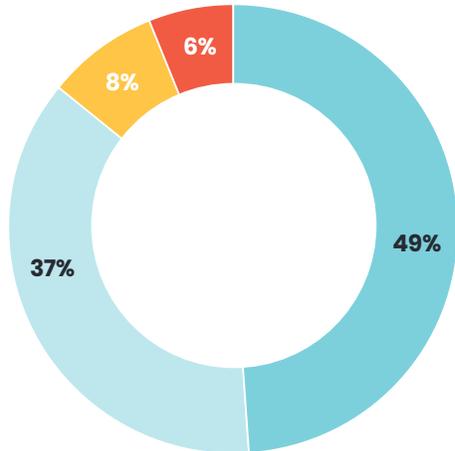
OTHER SPONSORS

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
<b>Total Support and Revenue</b>	<b>\$6,207,043</b>

### HOW DID WE SPEND OUR MONEY?

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

## CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

### ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	\$1,505,876
Endowment	\$861,974
Accounts/grants receivable	\$677,782
Board designated operating reserve	\$500,000
Board designated special purpose reserve	\$127,851
Other current assets	\$211,663
Long-term assets	\$140,027
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$4,025,173</b>

### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Board designated permanent endowment	\$790,912
Unrestricted net assets	\$742,334
Deferred revenue	\$824,545
Accrued expenses and other	\$426,385
Restricted net assets	\$518,610
Board designated operating reserve	\$500,000
Board designated special purpose reserve	\$127,851
Accounts payable	\$94,536
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$4,025,173</b>

## THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS!

You can find the full financials on our website at [literacymn.org/annual-reports-financials](https://literacymn.org/annual-reports-financials)

# Literacy Minnesota



700 Raymond Avenue, Suite 180 | Saint Paul, Minnesota 55114  
[literacymn.org](http://literacymn.org)

**FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023**

## OUR STAFF

Ebyan Abdulle  
Jill Ambrus  
Cai Anderson  
Frances Bates  
Elizabeth Bennett  
Meghan Boyle  
Jason Brazier  
Dani Brown  
Lloyd Brown  
Shelley Calvert  
Brianna Carmichael  
Nikki Carson  
Jesse Chang  
Kirsten Collins  
Heather Cook  
Debbie Cushman  
Annelisa Donlan  
Marian Eichinger  
Kiana Erickson  
Andy Francis  
Susan Godon  
Leah Hauge  
Ted Hewes  
Jessica Horning  
Nick Houlson  
Emily Jahn  
Caspian Jensen  
Anton Jones  
Jessica Jones  
Azul Kmiecik  
Stevie Lewis  
Rachel Lyness

Morgyn Martins  
Christian McCleary  
Mohamed Mohamed  
Barb Murphy  
Isaac Muscanto  
Eric Nesheim  
Tu Nguyen  
Laurie Patton  
Carmen Peota  
Sophie Phan  
Khalaua Phillips  
Rob Podlasek  
Christian Preston  
Ellie Purdy  
Kelly Rynda  
Mya Shaftel  
Theresa Sladek  
Patrick Smith  
Rachel Spurgers  
Janet Stewart  
Abrianna Thao  
Manee Thao  
Elizabeth Vargas  
Michelle Vidovic  
Susan Wetenkamp-Brandt  
Javier Whitaker-Castañeda  
Courtney Zaato

## OUR AMERICORPS MEMBERS

Kari Allen	Michael Kochevar	Matthew Pine
Mena Duarte	Teddy Larson	Maxwell Reynolds
Asia Hudson	Macy McClain	
Rachel Hsu	Aden Osman	

## OUR BOARD

**BOARD CHAIR** (as of January 2024)  
**Harold Hegg**  
Ameriprise Financial

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR**  
**Katie Schoeneck**  
Thrivent

**DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR**  
**Bruce Singer**  
Singer Group

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE CHAIR**  
**Andrea Brobbey**  
Target

**FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE CHAIR**  
**Ravi Krishnan**  
UnitedHealth Group

**HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE CHAIR**  
**Tim Wendt**  
Securian

**MARKETING COMMITTEE CHAIR**  
**Jessica Prody**  
Minneapolis College

**Jeff English**  
Comcast

**Nicole Fuerstenberg**  
Thrivent

**Jenny Holte**  
University of St. Thomas

**Andrew Peterson**  
Achieve Twin Cities

**Robert Rutscher**  
GED Testing Service

*Thank you for your service!*

**Jose Arrieta**  
Parce Media

**Caitlin Bayermann**  
Slalom

**Caroline Casey**  
Independent consultant

**Chelsea Ihle**  
Slalom

**Michael Opperman**  
Barn Owl



**Photo credits:** Thank you to Brady Willette and Heather Cook.