



LINC

Literacy in  
Community

ANNUAL REPORT 2023





**OUR MISSION:** LINC works at the intersection of early education and community development. Our mission is to equip children with foundational literacy skills essential for academic achievement by empowering families and mobilizing the community.



# Literacy in Community

LINC's founder, Mimi Levin Lieber, was known for bringing people together: a staff retreat at her house; a convening to advocate for literacy rights; and a dinner to thank supporters. In a word, Mimi was all about community. In 1996, she established Literacy, INC. (LINC) with a profound belief: literacy should be every child's birthright, nurtured by the collective strength of their community. The L from literacy and the INC formed the acronym LINC, symbolizing our commitment to linking families with community resources to foster literacy.

Since our inception, "community" has been synonymous with "empowerment" at LINC. Our programs equip families, regardless of their background with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to champion their children's literacy journey. This empowerment extends beyond individual families; it fuels our Very Involved Parent (VIP) Academy, turning parents into literacy advocates who, in turn, uplift their neighborhoods. Our impact is not confined to families; it ripples through communities, creating long-lasting change.

"I have known all my life that building and strengthening communities is one of the best ways to help children, my own and everyone else's. The effect of community on children is now borne out by all kinds of current research." Mimi often reminded us to emphasize the importance of community in our work. A lifelong reader herself, Mimi understood that literacy is essential for children to thrive and that families and communities can play a critical role in building sustainable literacy-rich environments. And she knew that reading is so much more; a literate electorate is essential to the survival of democracy and the well-being of societies across the globe. With reading, she believed anything is possible.







# Dear LINC Community –

This year was marked with many milestones achieved! We wrapped up the year proud of what we accomplished with you by our side. Despite the COVID disruptions that still hinder our work, in 2023, we increased the number of families served by 72%, reaching 2767 families. We made literacy visible and valued across LINC neighborhoods, providing 577 programs in partnership with 123 community organizations. LINC helped to create literacy-rich communities and homes with more than 15,000 children's books distributed to empower families to build home libraries. These books, together with literacy kits and other educational resources, were shared at programs and our 34 Literacy Zones, or "micro libraries" placed in public spaces across all boroughs. The cumulative impact of this work is highlighted prominently in this Annual Report.

## Board of Directors

### Founder

Mimi Levin Lieber  
(In Memoriam)

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Victor Pichardo Jr.

Clare Premo Perez

Ron Rentel

Ann Short

Andrew Spring

Stephanie Young

### Executive Director

Shari Levine

We paid tribute to our founder Mimi Levin Lieber by embracing the word "community" in our name. LINC now stands for Literacy in Community. A decision emerged from our rebrand process and a dialogue with stakeholders—from staff to community members—unanimously agreeing that Literacy in Community and our new visual identity better reflect our values, essence, and mission. Our new brand speaks more directly to the communities we serve and centers their voices with more clarity.

Other achievements include major improvements in our infrastructure, programmatic offerings, and evaluation. In 2023, we increased resources to our general operations, brought in HR specialists, updated our hiring, onboarding and professional development processes. We reinvigorated our values! We also developed an app which will dramatically improve family registration, engagement, and data collection. The app, to be released in 2024, will create a tailored roadmap for families to move through LINC's literacy journey and encourage growth in learning.

Our families are truly eager to learn how they can support their children and grow a new generation of readers. We are immensely grateful that you, too, believe in the power of literacy. Thank you for your unwavering support in 2023, and over the years. If you are new, thank you for being a new supporter and welcome to the LINC community!

## With gratitude,



Shari Levine  
Executive Director



Carlos Rodriguez  
Chair, Board of Directors

\*Now serving on LINC's  
National Advisory Council (NAC).

# Literacy in Community Begins with Us



Anthony Albanese



Silvia Alemañy



John Andrews



Rocio Apolonio



Kate Armstrong



Josh Barocas



Mario Biancamano



Reishmi Brijimohan



Evelyn Cabreja



Alma Canete



Yocasta Capellán



Deon Daniels



Kathleen Dorman



Araceli Farciert



Katie Gardner-Boehm



Eliana Godoy



Jessica Goldfarb



Majida Gouriech



Valette Graham



Kiera Jerez-Alston



Albania Jimenez



Shari Levine



Elizabeth Manning



Inez Martinez



Elizabeth McGowan



Ari Mitchell



Sarah Morgridge



Debora Mulrain



Martin Muñoz



Jeanine Nadler



Emmanuel Novy



Nanci Pavlisko



Beverley Philips



Kevin Raymond



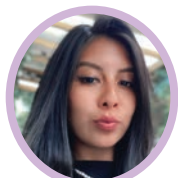
Karen Rogel



Jessica Rogel-Pohl



Christie Rosario



Melanie Sanchez



Kiara Santos



Corey Saxton



Dani Stompor



Virginia Taddoni



Arjana Topallaj



Michelle Vidals



Arisbel Villa



Laura Walsh



Demelza Wilson



Allie Zambito



Lisa Zammett



# Our Work is Enriched by Our Partners and Very Involved Parents (VIPs)!



LINC involves the entire community in nurturing a culture of reading. Through collaborations with trusted community partners, we ensure that literacy becomes a fundamental right for children across LINC neighborhoods. From hosting reading events in parks to offering workshops at health centers, from inviting community leaders to read at libraries to establishing Literacy Zones in local business and nonprofit lobbies, and from disseminating literacy tips at community events to elevating the visibility of reading as a community practice, our efforts are bolstered by the support of our community partners. This year, with 123 partners, their contributions remain pivotal to our success.

Likewise, our Very Involved Parents are invaluable to our impact. VIPs are our main allies and contribute in significant ways by recruiting other families, helping during programs, creating additional literacy events, and turning programs into multi-lingual efforts.

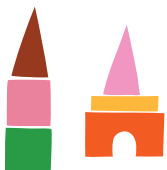
VIP, Edith Corona, beams with pride at her son Alexis's remarkable achievements, all thanks to their engagement with LINC. At age of five, Alexis is already surpassing his kindergarten peers in reading and eagerly volunteers to read aloud in class. Not only is he excelling in math, but he also relishes doing homework independently. With a vivid imagination, Alexis often immerses himself in the role of an author and illustrator, creating captivating children's books and pretending to read to large audiences. His latest masterpiece is a book about a little dog, although Edith's favorite story is the one about pizza!



Alexis at 9 months



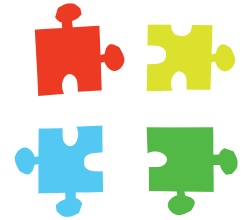
Edith recalls meeting LINC staff at an Early Head Start program, where she was invited to attend a bi-weekly event at the Washington Heights Library in 2019, when Alexis was just 9 months old. Since then, she and Alexis have eagerly participated in over 150 LINC programs, including Reading Everywheres, Workshop Series, and our VIP Academy. Through LINC's bilingual programs and robust partnerships, Edith gained invaluable knowledge and skills to support Alexis's development. Today, as Alexis thrives, Edith continues to give back by volunteering at his school and advocating for LINC, ensuring that more families in her neighborhood can experience the same transformative opportunities.



Alexis at 5-years-old



# Community Literacy Model



With LINC, families and communities joyfully read, learn, and grow together. LINC's programs, implemented in a variety of formats (in-person, virtual, and hybrid) connect families to each other and to resources that they can use to build reading routines at home, inspiring their children to become lifelong readers who are prepared to achieve in school and beyond.



## Engage children when it matters most

An amazing 90% of a child's brain development happens by age five. Surrounding little brains with a literacy-rich environment builds a foundation that lasts a lifetime.

## Empower families to unlock children's potential

Caregivers are a powerful force in shaping their children's future. LINC gives families knowledge and experience to become literacy advocates and changemakers in the community.

## Leverage the power of community

LINC's programs mobilize existing community resources, nurturing a neighborhood culture of literacy that surrounds families with support all year long.

# Family and Community Engagement

## Reading Everywhere

Read-aloud events held in playgrounds, clinics, laundromats, and other neighborhood spaces to make reading fun and visible across NYC.

## Reading Celebrations

Monthly themed reading events featuring diverse local children's authors and special guests. Children engage in fun songs, stories, and activities.

## Literacy Zones

Mini-libraries in pharmacies, stores, laundromats, and other community spaces where families can pick up free books to start a home library or connect with LINC.

## Caregiver Workshops Series

Designed to enable families to strengthen parent-child bonds, prepare their child for school, and build age-specific literacy skills to support their child's development.

### **Baby Blocks (birth to 1 year-olds)**

- Baby Talk
- Serve and Return
- Little Babies, Big Feelings

### **Stepping Stones Academy (2 to 3 year-olds)**

- Why Our Toddler's Talk and How to Respond
- Print Concepts
- Building Vocabulary and Comprehension Through Social-Emotional Learning

### **Learn N' Play (4 to 5 year-olds)**

- Reading Starts with Hearing
- How to Build Phonemic Awareness
- ABC's of a Phonics-Rich Home

## Very Involved Parent (VIP) Academy

Trains parents to become literacy advocates in their neighborhoods. Graduates are equipped to deliver community reading programs, spread LINC's mission, and promote positive reading habits with other families.







# Community Mobilization and Collective Impact

LINC is the facilitator of larger collective impact initiatives that bring together a range of partners working to tackle the literacy crisis.

**City's First Readers (CFR)**, the New York City Council's Early Literacy Initiative coordinated by LINC, surrounds families with comprehensive programming and support from 17 partner organizations. Together, CFR works with more than one million families annually, increasing children's access to a strong literacy foundation to prepare them to start school and life ready to learn and succeed.

**NYC Reads Initiative** is a comprehensive neighborhood literacy effort created in 2014 with support from The Pinkerton Foundation to serve the literacy needs of children and families in South Jamaica and East New York. In 2021, with The Carmel Hill Fund's support, NYC Reads expanded into East Harlem.

NYC Reads Initiative fosters collaboration among 11 partner organizations to continuously improve service coordination and provide a year-round continuum of childhood literacy programming accessible at home, school, and community in South Jamaica, Queens, East New York, Brooklyn and East Harlem, Manhattan.

**Northern Manhattan Early Childhood Collaborative (NMECC)** is a collective impact effort started by the New York Presbyterian Hospital/Columbia University Medical Center with Citizens Committee for Children as the data partner and LINC as the lead co-facilitating partner. NMECC's current focus is on early intervention. NMECC empowers community members and stakeholders in Northern Manhattan to act as agents of change, building on the communities' strengths and resources to foster a co-learning environment through informed decision making.



# IMPACT



## Creating Change at Multiple Levels

### Literacy-Rich Communities

**577** literacy programs

**123** community partners activated with literacy programming

**34** Literacy Zones

**15,815** books distributed

### Empowered Families

**2,767** families served

**72%** increase in number of families served

**55** new VIP graduates

**122** VIP supported literacy programs

### Institutional Change

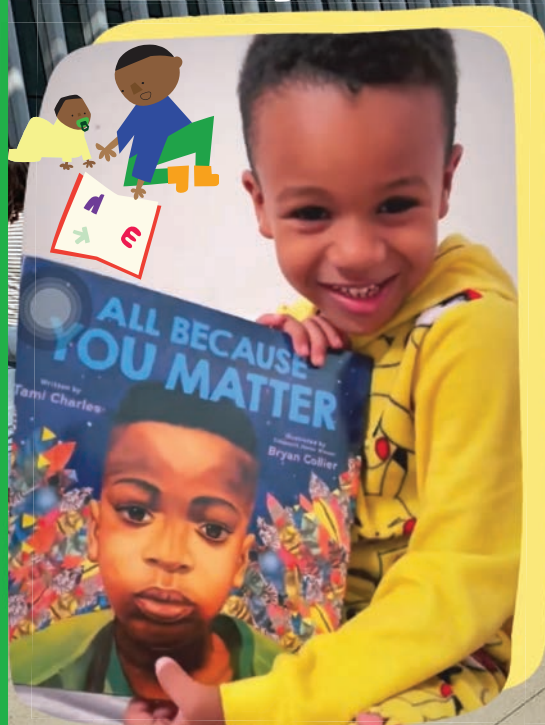
**CFR** engaged nearly **1 million** families last year through workshops, classes, home visits, and library programs

- Families reading 3+ days a week increased by **28%** between 2021-2023
- 27%** of families have more than 10 books at home

**NMECC** created a CBO & Parent Advisory Group comprised of **122** caregivers & early intervention/learning professionals

- 60** families consistently attended early intervention workshops

**Reads** served **9** schools with robust programming for children



### After participating in LINC VIP Workshops, LINC parents are:

**97%**

more active in their children's learning at home

**90%**

more knowledgeable about child development

**98%**

more prepared to promote literacy programs in their child's school

**95%**

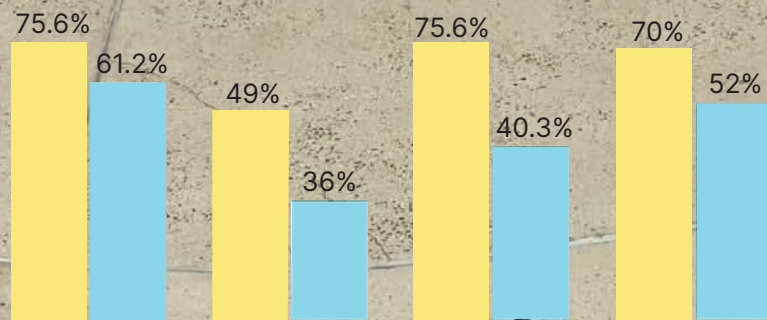
more confident reading out loud



"For me, reading from an early age is important because it forges more learning, a more open vocabulary, because they begin to discover the world." —Gloria Vallejo, VIP



**LINC Families**  
**Non-LINC Families**



Read to their children 3+ times a week

Teach their children about heritage and other cultural stories

Have 10+ books at home that they read to children

Practice early literacy behaviors in the grocery store

**Caregivers found our workshops engaging, helpful, and welcoming:**

- 100%** of our families reported program activities supported their learning
- 96%** found program facilitators welcoming;
- 96%** found program content relevant; and,
- 90%** planned to use what they learned at home.



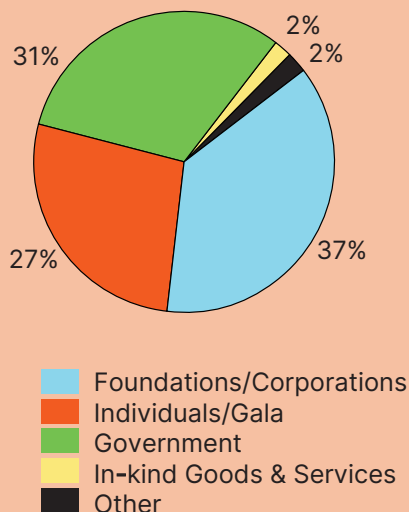


# Financials

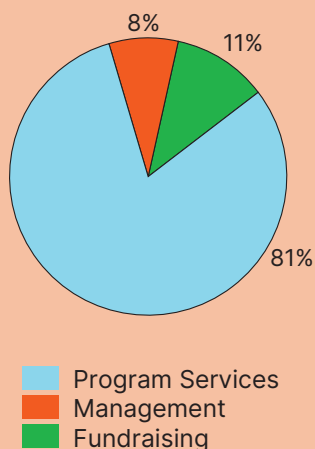
LINC Fiscal Years: 2023, 2022. All information is from our audited financial statements for fiscal years ending June 30th, 2023 and June 30th, 2022. A copy of our full audited financial statements can be obtained by emailing [info@lincnyc.org](mailto:info@lincnyc.org) or at [www.lincnyc.org](http://www.lincnyc.org).



## FY 2023 REVENUE



## FY 2023 EXPENSES



## Statement of Activities

REVENUE	2023	2022
Foundations/Corporations*	\$ 1,928,746	\$ 2,433,204
Individuals/Gala*	\$ 1,430,329	\$ 2,092,130
Government**	\$ 1,639,888	\$ 2,143,882
In-kind Goods & Services	\$ 116,450	\$ 201,416
Other	\$ 95,640	\$ (1,614)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 5,211,053</b>	<b>\$ 6,869,018</b>

## EXPENSES

Program Services	\$ 4,244,973	\$ 3,827,145
Management & General	\$ 430,171	\$ 339,775
Fundraising	\$ 573,552	\$ 495,017
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 5,248,696</b>	<b>\$ 4,661,937</b>

## Statement of Financial Position

ASSETS	2023	2022
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$ 3,039,565	\$ 5,752,655
Contributions, Grants & Accounts Receivable	\$ 3,433,390	\$ 2,298,922
Other Assets	\$ 63,617	\$ 54,693
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 6,536,572</b>	<b>\$ 8,106,270</b>

## CURRENT LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses	\$ 347,698	\$ 301,716
Agency Funds	\$ 208,947	\$ 1,786,984
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 556,645</b>	<b>\$ 2,088,700</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 556,645</b>	<b>\$ 2,088,700</b>

## Net Assets

Without donor restrictions	\$ 3,423,181	\$ 3,223,697
With donor restrictions	\$ 2,556,746	\$ 2,793,873
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 5,979,927</b>	<b>\$ 6,017,570</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 6,536,572</b>	<b>\$ 8,106,270</b>

\* FY23 revenue includes multi-year gifts

\*\* FY23 revenue includes Employee Retention Credit (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act)



# Unlock Potential, Transform Futures

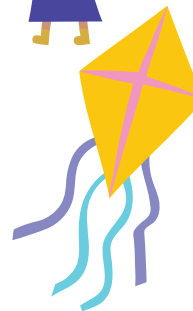


Children who access quality early learning programming enjoy better health, economic, educational, and social outcomes. Research shows that they are 25% more likely to graduate high school, four times more likely to complete a bachelor's degree or higher, and can earn up to 25% more wages in adulthood. These crucial formative years, during which the brain develops by 90%, are a pivotal predictor of long-term well-being.

Early literacy serves as a powerful preventive measure, countering the negative impacts of structural inequities on our children. Economist James Heckman's findings indicate that early education breaks multi-generational poverty cycles. For every dollar invested in comprehensive early childhood programs, society yields a \$6.30 return, leading to improved employment, education, and health outcomes, while also saving on remediation costs.

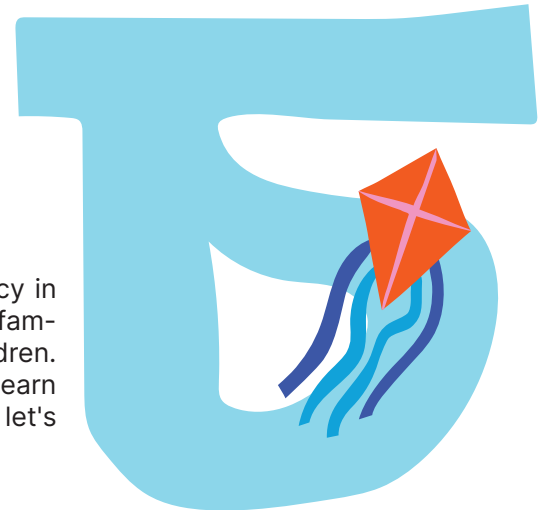


## Join Us in Making a Difference



**Interested in connecting with LINC staff or experiencing Literacy in Community firsthand?**

We welcome the opportunity to meet with you! By becoming a Literacy in Community supporter, you play a vital role in empowering children and families, transforming futures, and building a brighter tomorrow for our children. Reach out to Shari Levine, Executive Director, at [slevine@lincnyc.org](mailto:slevine@lincnyc.org) to learn more about how you can make a meaningful impact today. Together, let's write the next chapter in the story of Literacy in Community.







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Literacy Inc.



Platinum  
Transparency  
2024

Candid.

2019  
NONPROFIT  
NEW YORK  
FINALIST

Charity  
Navigator  
FOUR-STAR



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