

# LINC

## LiteracyLINC

ANNUAL REPORT 2016



When a child reads, a community succeeds!

# LINC: A brief history

LINC operates at the intersection of early literacy and community development. Founder, Mimi Levin Lieber, understood how reading could be a catalyst for community change. As a member of the New York State Board of Regents for 15 years, she knew that children in high poverty neighborhoods often need extra support in learning to read because they lack the exposure to one-on-one reading that more affluent children experience. As a sociologist, she appreciated how communities work and what resources already exist in every neighborhood. As the President of a successful consumer attitude/public opinion firm, she understood how to engage people.

By increasing the occasions children read and are read to, by training parents to build relationships with their child around reading, and by raising the profile of reading in the community, LINC has created a model that is efficient, effective and economical. LINC accomplishes this by working with existing resources and building networks between them. What children in a LINC neighborhood experience is reading modeled by their peers, their parents and adults in their community. This communicates that literacy is a respected value. LINC programs reinforce positive attitudes and behaviors that ensure children have the opportunity to be successful.

**Mimi Levin Lieber's vision and energy defined LINC's mission and have continued to shape LINC through two decades.**



*"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."*

Mimi Levin Lieber, LINC Founder



# Welcome



## Dear Reader:

In the twenty years that Literacy, Inc. (LINC) has served New York City children, a lot has changed. Notably, technology has expanded so rapidly and become so common place – scrolling, clicking on hyper-links, and tweeting are viscerally different than the tactile sensations one experiences when opening a book or the left-to-right eye movement of reading across a page.

What has not changed is the need to acquire literacy as a pre-requisite to success, in school and in life. What has not changed is the effectiveness of LINC's community based approach to helping emerging readers in high poverty neighborhoods become proficient and enthusiastic readers. In 1996, when Mimi Levin Lieber started LINC, her experiences as a sociologist and long-serving member of the New York State Board of Regents shaped her conviction that the best, most lasting way to support youngsters learning to read was to create a literacy rich environment, at home, at school, and in the community. As Sterling Speirn, immediate Past President and CEO of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation puts it:

**"Now we all know it takes a village to raise a child – but in today's world, Mimi and the LINC staff and volunteers illustrate that the opposite is also true—that you can take a child and raise a village around them. LINC invigorates existing village connections and then adds many more. And once this network is developed, one that links in home activities with community activities and school activities, it can sweep many more children and families into its village of readers and book sharers."**

This focus on creating systemic change across a community is what distinguishes LINC. It is a long-term investment. It's challenging, but as our understanding of the necessity and critical importance of early exposure to words, spoken language, and reading increases, the validity of LINC's approach becomes more and more apparent.

This report is a celebration of all that we do and a sober assessment of what remains to be done. We are grateful for your commitment to our mission and we look forward to continuing our partnership.

On behalf of the children and families we serve, thank you.



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CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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# Early Literacy Achievement Matters

**Every year in New York City, more than 76,000 children are born into families living in poverty.**

The links between poverty and failing to acquire reading proficiency are profound: two out of three third grade New York City children living in poverty did not reach grade level standards on the state's 2016 English reading test.

But what if we could immunize young children against contracting a serious case of poverty later in life? What if we could inoculate every child with a love for reading that would equip and inspire them to be lifelong learners, with the resilience to overcome the obstacles ahead?

## LINC helps close the achievement gap and break the cycle of poverty.

LINC's innovative Comprehensive Literacy Model improves age-appropriate literacy success using four interlocking strategies:

- ▲ **LINC increases in and out-of-school time opportunities** for children and families to practice essential literacy skills and model positive reading behaviors,
- ▲ **LINC demonstrates to parents** how to create a literacy-rich home environment by providing simple tactics for support and accessible resources that engage families around their child's literacy development
- ▲ **LINC works with schools and educators** to increase collaboration and communication with parents around curricular goals and literacy objectives, and
- ▲ **LINC organizes the community**, through parent leadership training and collaborations with neighborhood-based organizations, to grow and sustain a culture that supports reading achievement for all children.



# Mission Driven Results

Literacy Inc.'s (LINC) mission is to engage families and community members to support young readers in high-need neighborhoods. For over 20 years, LINC has worked in partnership to harness the power that exists in every community to make literacy a value and right for all children.

LINC's Comprehensive Literacy Model supports both developmental and systemic factors that contribute to on-time early literacy success. Interlocking program components provide children, and their families, with the motivation, opportunities, knowledge, and skills to grow a love of reading and read well by third grade.

"LINC's systemic change approach to building literacy moves beyond the child as the sole unit of change, and attacks a much broader issue – family and community literacy. Evidence shows that the full LINC model is having a profound impact on literacy growth in communities where children and families have struggled for high-quality resources and opportunities." •

• See "Algorhythm, LLC: Literacy Inc. 2015-16 Evaluation Report – December 2016" for more details. Provided upon request.



There are **10 LINC communities** across New York City

## MANHATTAN

- Inwood
- Washington Heights
- Harlem

## BRONX

- Kingsbridge/Marble Hill
- South Fordham
- Hunts Point
- Morrisania

## BROOKLYN

- East New York/Cypress Hills

## QUEENS

- South Jamaica

## STATEN ISLAND

- North Shore



# Unique Focus on Community. Proven Impact.

Our partnerships with families and schools result in many, overlapping positive literacy-improving outcomes:

- ▲ Increased skills, knowledge and communication
- ▲ Improved motivation to seek assistance and resources
- ▲ Higher levels of understanding and support

“Students in [LINC] schools and neighborhoods outperformed their peers... Schools showed increases in the percent of students reading on grade-level by the end of the year.”

\* See “Algorhythm, LLC: Literacy Inc. 2015-16 Evaluation Report – December 2016” for more details. Provided upon request.

## PARENT ENGAGEMENT



LINC's **PARENT ENGAGEMENT** helps parents and caregivers connect with their children around reading growth - whether or not they speak English, whether or not they can read in their own language. Parents understand developmental expectations, learn simple supports and effective habits, and receive free books while being connected to neighborhood resources. Equally important, LINC works with schools, building the capacity of staff to communicate with parents about curricular goals and grade-level literacy expectations.

- ▲ Increase support of Common Core Curriculum Standards for English Language Arts
- ▲ Increase in teacher capacity to partner with parents to improve student learning

**95% of parents** were very satisfied with LINC's workshops.

**97%** stated that they will use LINC tactics at home.

“LINC's programs are always interesting and informative. As a working parent, I find that attending parent workshops are very useful when it comes to helping my children succeed.”

- PARENT, SOUTH JAMAICA QUEENS

“LINC's VIP program not only strengthens the relationship between LINC and the parents but it prepares the parents to be good readers and role models for their children and the children in their community.”

- ROSALIND DIAZ, LINC COMMUNITY MANAGER, STATEN ISLAND

Combining parent leadership development and deepening our reach within target communities, our **PARENT LINC** and **VERY INVOLVED PARENT (VIP) ACADEMY** train parent volunteers to support reading activities and serve as peer literacy advocates.

Last year, our **79 newly trained VIPs** provided parent-led reading events that reached over **600 families**.

- ▲ Rise in family library usage
- ▲ Increase in knowledge of where to go to receive help for child's learning

### ARACELI FARCIERT: LINC's Bronx Community Coordinator



Araceli Farciert started her journey with Literacy Inc. in 2013. Every month Araceli brought her nieces and nephew to LINC's Pajama Night at the Kingsbridge Library in the Bronx. One evening LINC's Bronx Community Manager, Chabely Ramos, made an announcement about LINC's upcoming Very Involved Parent (VIP) Academy.

“When I heard about the VIP program I thought it would be a great opportunity to help my nephew Jared, who was a struggling reader, develop stronger reading skills,” said Araceli.

After completing her training and conducting small group read-alouds in the PS 7 school yard and the garden of Church of the Mediator for two summers, Araceli was offered a position as LINC's Bronx Community Assistant.

After a year working as LINC's Bronx Community Assistant, Araceli was promoted to be the Bronx Community Coordinator where she hosts her own parent workshops, collaborates with school partners, and continues to build long-lasting relationships with those in her Bronx community. Coming full circle from attending LINC programs to running them, Araceli observed that, “Jared has really blossomed into a competent reader. LINC has given me the tools to help not only my family but also my community.”

# Community Engagement

## READING BUDDIES



Children build a strong early literacy foundation and experience reading success essential to lifetime achievement.

**READING BUDDIES** pairs young readers (1st - 2nd graders), with older students (5th+ graders) for weekly sessions of one on one reading throughout the school year. Students build positive relationships and reinforce skills while building a culture of reading across the school.

**During 2015-2016, 106 classrooms with 2,726 students participated in 12,200 hours of paired reading.**

"At the beginning of the school year my buddy was nervous but once we met and began reading together I can tell he was always excited to see me. I make sure to read with a lot of emotion and ask my buddy questions when we are reading the books. It's fun to make up voices for different characters and I think my buddy is starting to become a really good reader."

-STUDENT, PS 333 IN EAST NEW YORK, BROOKLYN

**85% of students improved in listening to text,  
71% improved in reading aloud fluently,  
75% improved in responding to text with evidence, and  
75% improved in reading comprehension.**

**96% of teachers** would overwhelmingly recommend the program to peers, reporting:

- ▲ Improvement of attitudes towards reading
- ▲ Increase in confidence in reading independently

"My students loved to support and teach their younger reading buddies, and in return they became more responsible in class. Their sense of responsibility, support, compromise and mentorship grew to extraordinary proportions and it was wonderful to witness each week during LINC's Reading Buddies Program"

-TEACHER, PS 18R IN STATEN ISLAND

## READING EVERYWHERE

LINC's **READING EVERYWHERE** programs promote reading as a shared community value and engage community members to cultivate a culture of reading throughout a neighborhood. Activities range from small, VIP-led summertime reading corners in the park to city-wide literacy festivals.

**LINC provided 806 Reading Everywhere celebrations across the city in 2015-2016 by partnering with 28 libraries and 57 community partners.**

"Literacy Inc. has been an exceptional organization that has helped the South Jamaica Library strive to meet its mission every day."

- JASMIN AMELY, COMMUNITY LIBRARY MANGER, SOUTH JAMAICA

### Cristian: Second Grader, LINC Reading Celebration



"I don't want a library card." These were the words spoken by Cristian, a second grade boy attending LINC's hour-long Dr. Seuss Reading Celebration at the Hunts Point branch of the New York Public Library. At the start of each Reading Everywhere program, LINC community managers encourage the children and parents to visit the library's front desk and sign up for a free library card.

All it took was an hour of listening to LINC's community manager read two Dr. Seuss books and engaging conversation about the stories to change Cristian's mind. After the first book was read, Cristian quietly moved from the back of the room to the front row, started raising his hand, and began enthusiastically participating in the questions asked throughout the second book.

By the end of the program, Cristian was wearing the "Thing 2" necklace he had made, flipping through the pages of the books that had been read, and eagerly asking how he could get a library card of his own.

# LINC Leads City Initiatives

## LITERACY COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES

Because partnership is at the core of how we achieve our mission, LINC not only provides direct services through its Comprehensive Literacy Model, but also facilitates and manages three early literacy initiatives.

### READS PARTNERS

**EAST NEW YORK READS** and **SOUTH JAMAICA READS** are neighborhood-focused, collaborative impact initiatives of the New York Literacy Network, a consortium of 12 literacy and educational organizations. Originated by The Pinkerton Foundation in 2013, partners share the goal of ensuring children are proficient readers by third grade, and maintaining that success. Working deeply with select schools and reinforcing those efforts throughout the community, the Reads initiatives are generating new strategies and showing promising results.

"South Jamaica Reads is a living testament to the power of collaboration. To improve reading proficiency and close the achievement gap, we need all the horses pulling in the same direction and in South Jamaica Reads we have just that: a host of superb literacy organizations coordinating services, connecting families to multiple supports, sharing best practices, and enlisting and inspiring community involvement. Is it ambitious? Of course – but also exciting and we think very promising."

-RICK SMITH, PRESIDENT, THE PINKERTON FOUNDATION

- ▲ Improved 3rd Grade English Language Arts scores
- ▲ Increased outside-of-classroom literacy opportunities
- ▲ Surging awareness of the importance of literacy\*

"This effort is so inclusive and impressive as a community-wide wrap-around for children and families."

- SJR PARTNER

**100% of Reads Partners** reported that LINC's management role was extremely valuable and key to the success of the initiative.

\* See "Reads Initiative End of Year Evaluation Report (2015-2016)" for more details. Provided upon request.



### CITY'S FIRST READERS

**CITY'S FIRST READERS (CFR)** is a New York City Council supported early literacy initiative targeting high poverty families (with children age birth to five) with the shared goal of boosting preschool reading readiness. Since 2014, LINC has worked with CFR's 10 partners, including New York City's three public library systems, to deliver programs across the city that promote the importance of emerging literacy skills.

**87% of parents** attended additional literacy workshops in their community after CFR activities

**84% of parents** used the information they received in the workshops at home

- ▲ Growth in number of families with library cards
- ▲ Increase in time spent reading (at least 20 minutes per day) with their child\*

"City's First Readers is being used by [partners] to demonstrate how partners can collaborate together to reach families, children and impact communities. This is a collaboration that should be recognized nationally and it provided a positive model of literacy collaboration."

- CFR PARTNER

\* See "City's First Readers: Year 2 End Of Year Evaluation Report (2015-2016)" for more details. Provided upon request.

# Thank you to our generous supporters

## \$500,000 or more

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# Financials

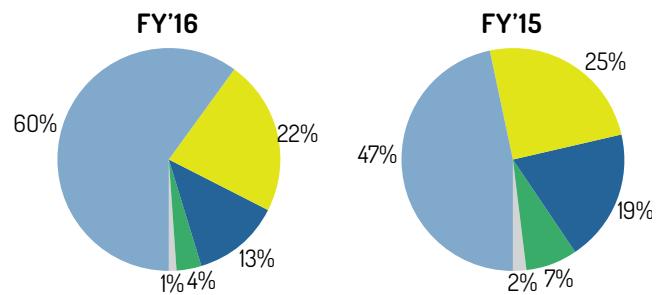
All information is from our audited financial statements for fiscal year ending June 30, 2016.

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)

## LINC Fiscal Years: 2016, 2015

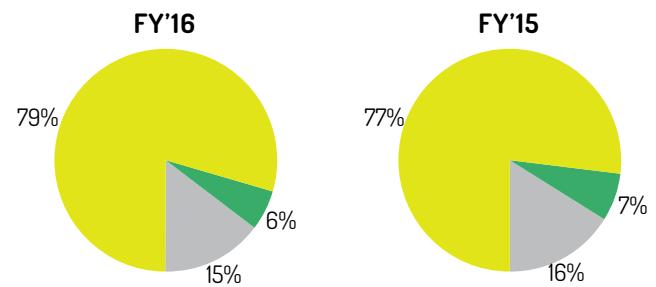
### Statement of Activities

	2016	2015
<b>REVENUE</b> in thousands		
Foundation and Corporations	\$1,420.2	\$773.0
Individuals/Gala	530.7	412.8
Government	301.8	314.5
In-Kind goods and services	90.1	126.4
Other revenue	20.3	28.8
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$2,363.1</b>	<b>\$1,655.5</b>



### EXPENSES in thousands

Program Services	\$1,829.7	\$1,482.6
Management & general	134.8	133.0
Fundraising	337.8	307.5
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$2,302.3</b>	<b>\$1,923.1</b>



Change in net assets	\$60.8	[\$267.6]
<b>Net Assets at beginning of Year</b>	<b>1,951.9</b>	<b>2,219.5</b>
<b>Net Assets at end of Year:</b>	<b>\$2,012.7</b>	<b>\$1,951.9</b>



### Statement of Financial Position

	2016	2015
<b>ASSETS</b> in thousands		
Cash & Cash equivalents	\$1,439.0	\$1,293.2
Contributions & grants receivable, net	638.1	697.1
Prepaid expenses	27.8	15.4
Property and equipment, at cost, net	12.1	15.7
Security deposit	10.2	8.2
<b>TOTAL ASSETS:</b>	<b>\$2,127.2</b>	<b>\$2,029.6</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b> in thousands		
Accounts payable & accrued expenses	\$114.5	\$77.7
<b>NET ASSETS</b> in thousands		
Unrestricted	854.2	802.9
Temporarily restricted	1,158.5	1,149.0
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS:</b>	<b>\$2,012.7</b>	<b>\$1,951.9</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$2,127.2</b>	<b>\$2,029.6</b>



## Do you believe in the power of reading to change lives?

LINC has created a model that is transformative, boosting achievement for emerging readers in high-need neighborhoods by surrounding them with literacy support.

Our success drives our desire to continually improve and grow in order to affect more children and families in New York City. The LINC Board of Directors recently adopted an ambitious strategic plan that calls for a dramatic increase in the organization's operating budget by 2020. The plan guides LINC towards investing more deeply in the communities we currently serve: raising our profile and reaching new families, while increasing high-quality program services. When opportunity and funding converge, LINC will pursue expansion into additional neighborhoods.

To secure LINC's future success for decades to come, the Board of Directors is pleased to announce **The Mimi Levin Lieber Literacy Society**. This endowment will provide financial security as LINC continues to grow and meet the challenges of creating systemic change. Your gift to LINC's endowment helps children today, and in the future, as well as providing tax advantages to you or your estate.

For additional information please contact  
LINC Executive Director Shari Levine,  
[slevine@lincnyc.org](mailto:slevine@lincnyc.org) or 212-620-5462 ext. 102.

"Literacy is the basis for every child in this century. There are no jobs that don't require workers to be really confident readers. It's the skill that makes everything else possible and without it almost everything else becomes impossible. And being sure every child becomes a good reader in time to become successful in school has become an absolute necessity."

-Mimi Levin Lieber, LINC Founder

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“As John Dewey said in 1907, ‘What the best and wisest parent wants for his child, that must we want for all the children of the community,’ – a brilliant insight and a radical mission for LINC, and for you, our partners.”

– Mimi Levin Lieber addressing guests at LINC’s 20th Anniversary Gala

