

**LINC**  
LiteracyINC  
ANNUAL REPORT 2017



When a child reads,  
a community succeeds!



“Literacy is the basis for every kind of learning in the 21st century. Reading is the skill that makes everything else possible. Being sure every child becomes a good reader in time to become successful in school, and in life, has become an absolute necessity.”

Mimi Levin Lieber, LINC Founder



## An Abiding Vision

In 1996, Mimi Levin Lieber acted on her strong conviction that even the most high-need urban neighborhoods already have the resources to support young children in acquiring literacy. This conclusion was based on her fifteen years of service on the New York Board of Regents, the body that governs public education in New York State, combined with her professional expertise as the owner of a pioneering consumer attitude research firm, and her academic background in sociology. Mimi’s vision was to mobilize existing community resources to help children living in urban poverty overcome their challenging circumstances to acquire proficiency and find pleasure in reading.

Literacy, Inc.(LINC) was founded to realize her vision, one that has proven to be sustainable and effective. That core concept – a community-based effort to support children learning to read – has been LINC’s distinguishing feature and consistent strength for over two decades. We know that Mimi did not have a crystal ball to anticipate the cascade of academic research to support her contention that classmates, family, and neighbors in the community must surround young children with opportunities to read, that this process must start long before formal instruction begins, and that children learn best when they feel valued.

But it is crystal clear that when LINC builds literacy networks – integrating the efforts of schools, libraries, after-schools, families and community stakeholders to support emerging readers – children and families engage around reading. When a child reads, a community succeeds.

**Thank you to Mimi Levin Lieber for your insight, imagination and energy.**



## Dear Reader:

Literacy Inc. had a great year. Building on our successful leadership of City's First Readers and the Reads initiatives, we are proud to report that we are reaching more New York City families and helping them adopt strong literacy-building skills and habits.

Children living in poverty too often do not have the basic reading skills they need to succeed in school and in life. In our city, nearly two-thirds of public school children who live in poverty are unable to read at grade level. LINC provides a comprehensive solution to the crisis by working to prevent this achievement gap and instill a life-long love of reading that will serve as a foundation for success. In the past year, LINC has deepened our commitment to every community we serve.

Lasting change is created when parents work together with caregivers and teachers to support the success of the next generation. Our Reading Buddies programs are resulting in more children improving their reading comprehension, setting higher expectations, and finding motivation to read more. Parent participation has increased 31% over last year. Parents are reading more with their children and understand where to go for additional literacy support within their communities. LINC also continues to grow its cohort of parent literacy ambassadors. Our Very Involved Parent (VIP) Academy trained 79 new volunteers to help us to create authentic neighborhood connections around literacy.

We are also seeing growing success in our efforts to connect earlier with families. LINC engages with families year after year until their children are strong and confident readers. That is why we have expanded our programs for parents and their babies, toddlers and preschoolers. The earlier we can impact a family, the better the result.

Our two decades of grassroots work in New York City taught us a lot – to strengthen families, to build community, and to cultivate partnerships that create lasting impact. That is what it takes to create meaningful and lasting change, and to support generations of successful readers.

We are grateful for your support and very excited to share our innovative work. Thank you on behalf of our board, staff, and the children and families we serve.

Carl Folta  
CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Shari Levine  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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# Families on the pathway to reading success

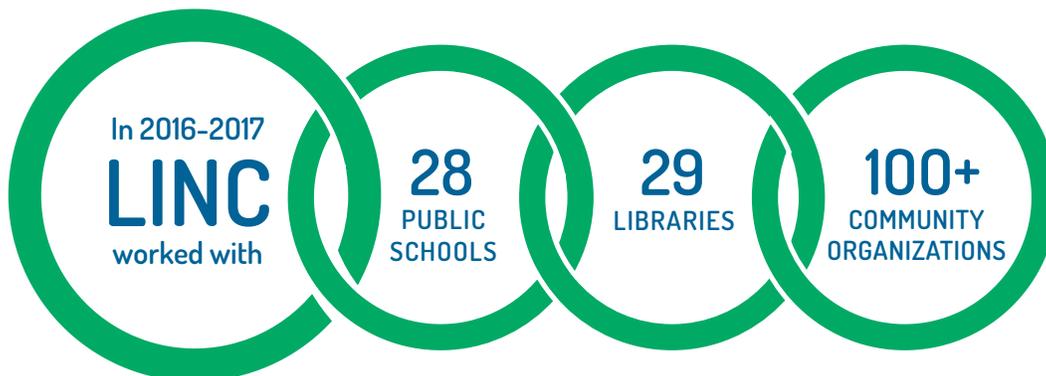


In 2016-17, LINC reached **9,427 children** and **5,389 parents** with **62% of program participants** receiving multiple, reinforcing program services.

Building a strong literacy foundation begins at birth. Growing up in a home that values reading and books, getting opportunities to explore and practice the fundamentals, and having joyful early literacy experiences all ensure that a child starts school ready to read, and can continue that success by developing into a confident reader.

New York City parents want the best for their children – no matter what borough they live in or what community they call home. They want to help their children get on the pathway to lifelong success. That is why LINC focuses our program both on children and parents, and surrounds families with strong community support.

We believe that parents can and must be their children’s “reading cheerleaders,” even if their primary language is not English or they have had low-quality educational experiences themselves. LINC shows families, caregivers, and communities how to use simple, proven strategies to boost early literacy achievement. And we are proud of our results.



# There are 10 LINC communities across New York City:

## MANHATTAN

- Inwood
- Washington Heights

## BRONX

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

## BROOKLYN

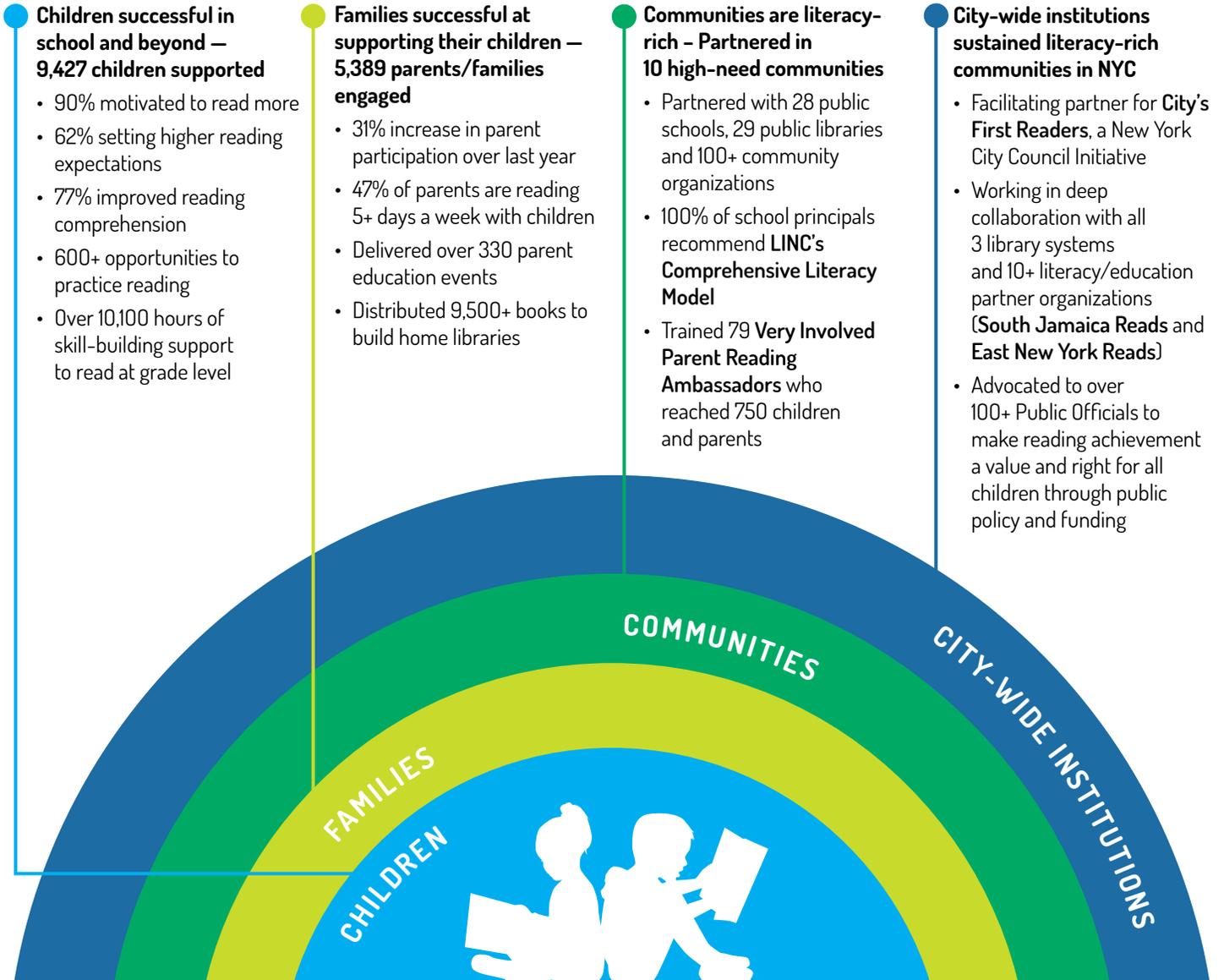
- East New York/Cypress Hills

## QUEENS

- South Jamaica

## STATEN ISLAND

- Elm Park
- Stapleton



# Support at every stage of development

“During the 2016-17 program year, LINC has increased children’s and families’ quality literacy opportunities, which has created increases in literacy energy [motivation], knowledge, and skills.”

“Parents use the library more, read to their children more days per week and minutes per day, and know where to go in the community to access literacy resources.”

“Students developed a positive attitude toward reading, boosted their confidence in reading independently, and increased their interest in reading.”

- See “Algorithm, LLC: Literacy Inc. 2016-17 Evaluation Report – December 2017” for more details. Provided upon request.

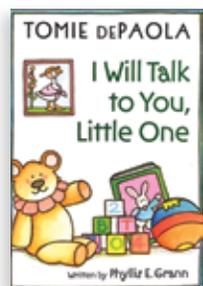
## Littlest Readers

Programs for Families with Babies and Toddlers



Research shows that a child’s successful literacy journey must not wait for school. Young children, babies and toddlers, need encouragement from the adults in their life to create many positive, reinforcing experiences with the building blocks of literacy. Over the past few years, LINC has developed a comprehensive response to the needs of families with very young children. Our program recognizes the strengths of parents, is culturally-responsive, and helps families with effective strategies that support on-time literacy development.

LINC extends beyond the home by providing professional development to childcare workers and Headstart programs that increase their capacity to support childhood literacy development.



In 2016-17, LINC developed an intensive, 8-session series of workshops provided to 72 families with toddlers that covered developmental benchmarks and how to build positive reading behaviors using games and activities.

LINC partnered with Reach Out and Read of Greater New York to distribute a board book, “I Will Talk to You Little One,” (Written by Phyllis

E. Grann and Illustrated by Tomie dePaola). The author donated 250,000 copies to be given to families across New York City when they leave the hospital with their newborn.

**Parents of young children increased:**

- ▲ Visitations to the library
- ▲ Knowledge of where to access local literacy resources

## Transitions to School

Programs for Families with Preschoolers



LINC leads the NYC Council’s City’s First Readers (CFR) initiative. We work together to serve families living in high-poverty communities with young children. Since 2014, LINC has worked with CFR partners to improve preschool reading readiness through parent and family educational events, and we are seeing positive results.

Under the auspices of City’s First Readers, LINC provided 42 workshops for families across the city to increase their knowledge and understanding of ways to support pre-readers, impacting 425 parents and 502 children.

**Parents of young children increased:**

- ▲ Amount of time spent reading with their children
- ▲ Understanding of at-home reading strategies support

- See “City’s First Readers: Year 3 End of Year Evaluation Report (2016-17)” for more details. Provided upon request.

## Prepared for Achievement

### Programs for Students and Parents (Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd Grade)

Our Reading Buddies Program pairs 1st and 2nd grade students with older reading partners (4th grade+) for one-on-one read aloud practice and skills-based support. Students in the program reinforce classroom curricular goals and grow a positive relationship around reading.

LINC worked with 1,050 buddies and 1,000 reading partners in the Reading Buddies Program in 20 schools. Students received over 10,100 hours of one-on-one reading support and completed reading portfolios that complemented teacher-directed lessons.

**Teachers report improvements in standards-aligned skills for students:**

- ▲ Motivated to read more
- ▲ Setting higher reading expectations
- ▲ Improving reading comprehension

“The children enjoy reading. I see the smiles on their faces when they are asked to take out a book. It shows me they are proud of themselves.”

“My students have become more confident in their reading abilities. They are excited to interact with their Partners and share what they have read throughout the week.”

- Teachers, Reading Buddies Program

“The partnership that it has created with the students from upper grades to lower grades has been significant. Students feel empowered when they are responsible for reading to another student.”

- Principal, Reading Buddies Program



LINC works with parents of school-age children to help them understand classroom literacy expectations and develop at-home strategies that help their children stay on track for success. We provided 330 family and parent engagement workshops and events at our partner schools in 2016-17. This helps schools achieve their own parent engagement goals and aligns parents' support with curricular targets.

**Parents of school-age children increase:**

- ▲ Knowledge of child's reading goals at school
- ▲ Time spent reading with their child

The Very Involved Parent (VIP) Academy trains parents and caregivers to become “literacy ambassadors” and deliver simple reading programs to their friends and neighbors. Peer outreach is one of the most effective ways for LINC to extend its reach into a community, and our volunteer VIPs help us to recruit and retain a growing cohort of families into our programs.

In 2016-17, LINC trained 79 VIPs who delivered 114 reading programs to 750 children and parents.

**VIP volunteers:**

- ▲ Shared information about reading practices with peer parents
- ▲ Increased time spent reading with their own children



## CHRISTIAN'S STORY

Two brothers show how LINC impacts families through multiple program components. The younger boy, Christian, first encountered LINC at his day care center, Bumble Bees R Us, where LINC's Community Manager, Rosalind Diaz, hosted a monthly story hour.

It was clear that he was enthralled by story time. Meanwhile his older brother began attending the

community reading events at Stapleton Houses led by a LINC VIP (Very Involved Parent).

Now both boys attend PS 57R where, at the suggestion of New York City School's Chancellor Carmen Fariña, LINC began offering programs in the fall of 2016.

Both boys boast about their shared home library filled with LINC books.

“I love getting new books to read with my brother!”

- Christian

# Surrounding families with support from the community

Programs that inspire a culture of literacy achievement for all



High-need communities often lack the reinforcing cultural environment that encourages early literacy achievement. Through our Reading Everywhere programs, LINC promotes reading as a shared community value. Activities range from small, VIP-led summertime reading in the park to city-wide literacy festivals.

LINC provided 628 Reading Everywhere celebrations across the city in 2016-17 by partnering with 29 libraries and over 100 community partners.

**East New York Reads** and **South Jamaica Reads** are deep community collaborations that LINC facilitates as part of the New York Literacy Network, a consortium of 10 literacy and educational organizations and 6 public schools. Originated by The Pinkerton Foundation in 2013, partners share the goal of ensuring children are proficient readers by third grade, and maintain that success throughout school. This partnership allows LINC to enhance its impact and extend our mission. Together, we served over 6,000 children and families in South Jamaica (2,900) and in East New York (3,100), providing them with workshops, trainings and home visits. Partners distributed over 33,100 free books and 1,500 literacy kits to build at-home resources.

Shared results for the Reads Initiative:

- ▲ Increased average New York State English Language Arts Standardized test scores
- ▲ Increased capacity of organizations to deliver high-quality programs
- ▲ Reaching 5X more parents in target neighborhoods over previous years

“On average, most students are making literacy gains – up one reading and/or grade level – as a result of the high-quality programming and opportunities provided by the **Reads Initiative**.”

LINC was described as, ‘a great example of the level of management and facilitation needed to ensure a successful collaborative initiative.’ All partners were satisfied with LINC’s management of both **South Jamaica** and **East New York Reads** in 2016-2017, and reported that LINC’s management role was extremely valuable and key to the success of the Reads Initiative.

– See “Reads Initiative End of Year Evaluation Report (2016-17)” for more details. Provided upon request.



## ALMA'S STORY

“When I emigrated from Mexico, I was an elementary school science teacher specializing in geology. All of my life, I have loved to read and read everything I could get my hands on. But coming to New York City and facing so many adjustments all at once made me withdraw.

An acquaintance mentioned a children’s event, “PJ Night” at the local library, so I decided to bring my daughters. That’s how I met Araceli and Chabely from Literacy Inc. and fell in love with reading all over again. Children

and families arrive for PJ night dressed in their pajamas to hear a special story. Araceli and Chabely are fantastic readers. They inspired me to begin reading to my daughters.

LINC really changed my attitude and I am blessed to be part of this program. I took LINC’s training and became a VIP (Very Involved Parent). I love doing these read-alouds with my fellow VIPs.

Being part of the LINC family has changed my own family too. Reading at bedtime has become

part of our everyday routine. My older daughter reads to her little sister all the time – night and day. The little one lines up her stuffed animals and toys and “reads” to them. Most amazing, their father who never, ever read books, now reads to both of the girls and for his own pleasure.

With LINC, I now realize that I am part of a real community and that by doing something I love, I can help my neighbors better their own lives and their children’s lives.”

# Thank you to our generous supporters

The following donor's contributions of \$1,000 and more were received July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017.

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502 Donations  
totalling \$78,042

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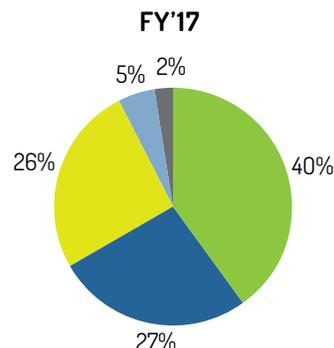
## \* MULTI-YEAR SUPPORTER

# Financials LINC Fiscal Years: 2017, 2016

All information is from our audited financial statements for fiscal years ending June 30, 2012 - June 30, 2017. 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)

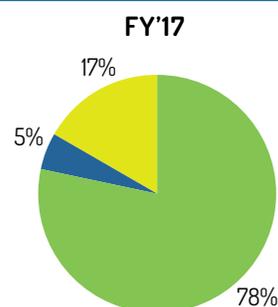
## Statement of Activities

|                            | 2017               | 2016               |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>REVENUE</b>             |                    |                    |
| Foundation & Corporations  | \$994,535          | \$1,420,188        |
| Individuals/Gala           | 665,269            | 530,719            |
| Government                 | 637,233            | 301,799            |
| In-Kind goods and services | 123,465            | 90,101             |
| Other                      | 60,968             | 20,284             |
| <b>TOTAL:</b>              | <b>\$2,481,470</b> | <b>\$2,363,091</b> |



## EXPENSES

|  |                    |                    |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Program Services                       | \$2,085,456        | \$1,829,695        |
| Management & general                   | 133,986            | 134,801            |
| Fundraising                            | 440,175            | 337,761            |
| <b>TOTAL:</b>                          | <b>\$2,659,617</b> | <b>\$2,302,257</b> |
| <b>Change in Net Assets</b>            | <b>(\$178,147)</b> | <b>\$60,834</b>    |
| <b>Net Assets at beginning of Year</b> | <b>2,012,672</b>   | <b>1,951,838</b>   |
| <b>Net Assets at end of Year</b>       | <b>1,834,525</b>   | <b>2,012,672</b>   |



## Statement of Financial Position

### ASSETS

|  |                    |                    |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Cash & Cash equivalents                | \$1,703,583        | \$1,438,974        |
| Contributions & grants receivable, net | 337,283            | 638,076            |
| Other assets                           | 55,376             | 50,118             |
| <b>TOTAL ASSETS:</b>                   | <b>\$2,096,242</b> | <b>\$2,127,168</b> |

### LIABILITIES

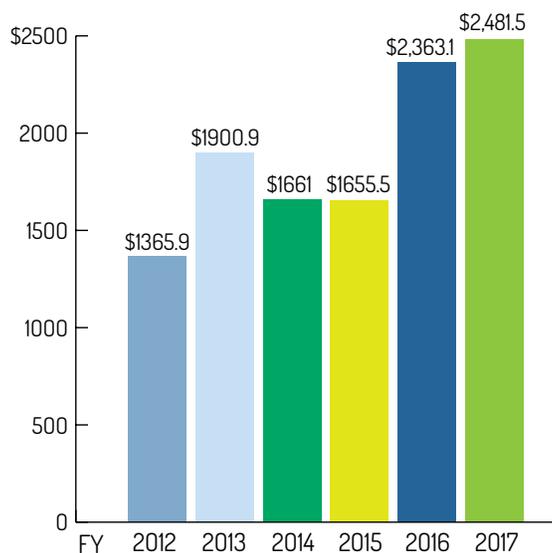
|                                     |                  |                  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Accounts payable & accrued expenses | \$80,467         | \$114,496        |
| Agency funds                        | \$181,250        | —                |
| <b>TOTAL LIABILITIES:</b>           | <b>\$261,717</b> | <b>\$114,496</b> |

### NET ASSETS

|                          |                    |                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Unrestricted net assets  | \$858,929          | \$854,226          |
| Temporarily restricted   | 975,596            | 1,158,446          |
| <b>TOTAL NET ASSETS:</b> | <b>\$1,834,525</b> | <b>\$2,012,672</b> |

|   |                    |                    |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b> | <b>\$2,096,242</b> | <b>\$2,127,168</b> |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|

## GROWTH IN REVENUE FY2012 - FY2017 in thousands



## 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.

"My name is Janneth, I am a mother of 3 kids (Ethan 5, Nataly 3, Camila 2) who for the past two years have thoroughly enjoyed attending LINC programs at our neighborhood library in Kingsbridge, Bronx. Every month my children look forward to the one-hour PJ Night program where they are able to interpret the lessons they learn through the LINC-led read-a-loud in a creative way. LINC programs are excellent for all ages. They instill great messages for kids and tips for parents to incorporate into their daily lives. This allows for important discussion such as learning how to talk to kids about bullying, sharing with others, and the importance of reading. "Our most prized possession" as my son Ethan refers to it, is the simplicity of getting a book to take home at the end of each program. All three of my children are eager and excited to begin flipping through the pages and read before bedtime. Seeing my children's faces full of joy as they receive a new book is priceless! I greatly appreciate what your organization does for the community. To everyone who makes these events possible and worth coming back to every time, thank you! I firmly believe the importance of reading is imperative for the success of my children and LINC has become an essential part of their learning experience."

– Janneth Mejia-Figueroa



Janneth participates in an activity with her daughter Nataly, after an interactive read-a-loud during Pajama Night at the Kingsbridge Library.

"I am so happy that my mom takes me to all of the LINC programs. I am only five but I read on a 2nd grade level! I really love LINC and I wish they had programs in my neighborhood every day!"

– Ethan Mejia-Figueroa



Ethan gives LINC founder Mimi Levin Lieber flowers for being a special guest at PJ night, along with a sweet message:

"Thank you Mimi for creating LINC. Because of you I get to come to PJ night and read any book I want."



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“LINC’s continued growth rests on the strengths of its community-based approach to developing early literacy. LINC will continue to build on that strong foundation. Because of our increased understanding of the way children learn, we will reach children earlier, involving their parents and caregivers at every step - the role parents play is so important. Advocating for public policies and the resources to support children on the path to becoming proficient and successful readers, LINC will increase its leadership role and visibility.”

- Mimi Levin Lieber, LINC Founder

