



**LINC**

Literacy INC

When a community reads,  
children succeed!

**Read to Me**

**2022  
ANNUAL  
REPORT**



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(In Memoriam)

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\*Joined the Board in 2023

## Dear Friend –

Mimi Levin Lieber intentionally named the nonprofit she started “Literacy Inc.” or “LINC” to emphasize the idea of connecting (“LINCing”) neighborhood literacy resources to support children in learning how to read. “LINC-ing” is exactly what we have been doing for over 26 years so that growing numbers of children in our poorest neighborhoods benefit from the joy and power of reading.

Our mission has naturally expanded into “Literacy In Community” as the success of the families we have reached has empowered them to work together more effectively to enhance access to literacy. This report describes passionate people doing the hard work of helping children be ready to read. Our people, whether staff or Very Involved Parents, ensure reading becomes valued and visible in some of the most unlikely places—a waiting room, a corner of the neighborhood pharmacy, or perhaps the local flower shop or laundromat. By doing so, they help to build a culture of literacy that extends beyond the classroom and into the community.

It's exciting to think about the potential that each child holds, and how LINC's programs can help them unlock that potential. Part of our mission has always been to make a high school and post-high school degree the rule and not the exception in the communities we serve. Our approach has always been to highlight the importance of avoiding and overcoming illiteracy and to provide relevant tools in this regard. Another part of our mission is to help families understand the very real connection between educational attainment and well-being. Simple exercises like a toddler who determinedly moves to “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes” with the love of a parent or having a preschooler look carefully at the sizes, shapes, and colors of an array of autumn leaves that were collected as part of LINC's read aloud in the local park, may be the first steps of a future head of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the scientist who develops a net-zero fuel source, or perhaps simply adults who love to read and pass this love on to the children in their life.

Our work is to bring these goals within reach for as many as possible in the communities we serve. We are so very proud of the people and communities that have grown up around reading thanks to LINC programs. We join the Board of Directors and the staff to thank you for your own role and commitment to literacy in community.

## In gratitude,



Shari Levine  
Executive Director



Carlos Rodriguez  
Chair, Board of Directors



# Literacy in Community

Mimi Levin Lieber had the determination and passion to address the literacy crisis with a vision that rests on the power of community. Many would have welcomed retirement after a successful professional career and fifteen years of public service but not Mimi. Driven by her love for children and commitment to education equity, at 68, in 1996, Mimi built Literacy in Community from the ground up. This is how LINC was started with the ultimate purpose to ensure all children become lifelong readers who succeed beyond school.

LINC's charter focused on the disproportionate impact of the literacy crisis on children living in poverty and the need to mobilize communities around reading. LINC's research-based programs go beyond child and family literacy to make reading visible and valued in communities. This approach recognizes the importance of creating a culture of reading and engaging all members of the community in promoting literacy.

Mimi was a visionary. She understood that communities have the existing resources to solve the literacy crisis: libraries, schools, local businesses and above all, passionate people, ready to act, a neighborhood's greatest treasure. She understood that to create systems-level change, those most affected by the literacy crisis need to lead the change; that diversity and richness of cultural experiences are assets to be leveraged; and that our families, with their resourcefulness and brilliance, can create sustainable systems to uplift each other.

Mimi remained modest about her many accomplishments but those of us privileged to carry on her work know that LINC creates intergenerational change. Literacy in Community has a multiplier effect. Mimi's approach to leading children to literacy has been recognized as an inoculation against poverty and empowerment for children, families and communities. At a time when books are banned and our democracy is vulnerable, we are reminded that literacy is essential to the functioning of our democracy.



# Literacy in Community Begins with Us

## 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.



Silvia Alemany



John Andrews



Rocío Apolonio



Reishmi Brijimohan



Evelyn Cabreja



Alma Canete



Yocasta Capellan



Carmen Correa



Deon Daniels



Kathleen Dorman



Araceli Farcieri



Katie Gardner-Boehm



Anastasia Gladden



Eliana Godoy



Jessica Goldfarb



Gladys Gomez



Majida Gouwieh



Valette Graham



Albania Jimenez



Emile Keller



Shari Levine



Inez Martinez



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Elizabeth McGowan



Sarah Morgridge



Debora Mulrain



Jeanine Nadler



Emmanuel Nory



Nanci Pavlisko



Beverley Philips



Karen Rogel



Jessica Rogel-Pohl



Christie Rosario



Kiara Santos



Corey Saxton



Daniel Stompor



Virginia Taddoni



Michelle Vidals



Arisbel Villa



Laura Walsh



Demelza Wilson



Wilkarlys Zaman



Allison Zambito



Lisa Zammatt

# And is Energized by the Commitment of Our Very Involved Parents (VIPs)!



Sandra (far left and shown with LINC staff and NYS Senator Robert Jackson) cherishes the opportunity to contribute to events such as the ones she hosts at The Cloisters or Celebrate Mexico Now held in Washington Heights and East Harlem: "To see my culture represented with books, music, and art was a unique experience that made me feel so proud. My family is getting closer and we are learning and growing together."

**Meet Sandra and Carlos—two VIPs who, this year alone, led 11 Reading Everywhere events. Since joining LINC, they have participated in an impressive 256 programs! Over the past few years, out of 103 VIP-led programs, Sandra supported 63, often helping other communities outside her own!**

Sandra was introduced to LINC in 2013 when Albania Jimenez, Sr. Director of Family and Community Mobilization and herself a past parent participant, was recruiting parents at an Inwood school. As a devoted mother, Sandra was determined to find opportunities for her 4-year-old son Brandon. After discovering LINC's diverse programs and meeting our welcoming staff, Sandra enrolled in our workshops, despite her inherent shyness. Sandra vividly recalls the initial challenges she faced in stepping outside her comfort zone. Her shyness prevented her from opening up in front of others, and there were times when fear overwhelmed her, leading to tears at the thought of reading aloud. However, with the unwavering support of our dedicated team, Alma, Rocio, Araceli, Wilka, and Albania, Sandra gradually felt more comfortable. She gained confidence, made friends, and developed a deep love for reading. Our staff stood by her side, encouraging and supporting her with a toolbox of strategies. Over time, Sandra witnessed the positive impact of our programs on her son Brandon, which further fueled her engagement with LINC and his education and school. Eventually, she proudly graduated as a VIP, formally taking her place as a literacy advocate.

As her son outgrew LINC's programs, so did Sandra but during the pandemic, she sought solace in the LINC community and reconnected through our virtual Very Involved Parent refreshers. Sandra also encouraged her husband, Carlos, to join, and over time, she inspired him to

enroll in our VIP Workshops. Together, Sandra and Carlos became catalysts for building a close-knit community of readers, fostering family connections, and extending the joy of reading to other families. Their genuine enthusiasm for literacy ignited a flame that inspired other parents to recognize their own power in shaping their children's educational journeys. Sandra and Carlos actively engage with local partners and families, promoting literacy initiatives, assisting with recruitment, and supporting our team.

Carlos takes immense pride in the impact he generates for other fathers, acknowledging the value of his presence as a role model. Sandra reflects on their journey with awe, realizing how far she has come in her early literacy knowledge and preparation: *"I have learned so much. Coming from a small town in Mexico, I never imagined the accomplishments my family would achieve. We plant little seeds for other families and children to learn and grow with every book we read and every event we support. Education is a necessity, and I want my community to realize this and have access to it."*

Carlos highlighted that his most cherished LINC experience is to see how Sandra has been transformed: *"To witness her growth has been an honor. How she let go of fears and gained confidence in her own abilities. She came out of her shell and is now leading programs for other families."*

**Sandra and Carlos' passion for learning and dedication to empowering others has sparked a ripple effect of positive change, igniting a love for reading in the hearts of countless families throughout New York City. They are a true example of Literacy in the Community.**

# Community Literacy Model

Our multigenerational **Community Literacy Model** connects families with each other and with resources in the community to surround children with literacy-rich environments during their first five years. We create community, cultivate relationships, and reach the same child multiple times with effective literacy programs. Parents are our most valuable partners. By focusing on developing their own skills, competencies, and leadership, parents unlock their children's potential. They become advocates for their children and claim their place as changemakers in the community.

## FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Reading Everywhere brings reading to playgrounds, clinics, laundromats, and virtually everywhere in a LINC neighborhood. From the Bronx to Staten Island, LINC builds community and makes reading irresistible and visible across NYC. Held throughout the year, these events incorporate reading with multilingual and multicultural activities for the entire family to enjoy.

Reading Celebrations are monthly themed reading events featuring diverse local children's authors or other special guests. These engage children in fun songs, stories, games, and other educational activities.

Literacy Zones are mini-libraries that can be found in pharmacies, stores, laundromats, and other community spaces where families can pick up free books to start a home library and connect with LINC staff and programs.

## SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Family Engagement Workshops Series strengthen parent-child bonds, school readiness, and help caregivers build early literacy skills to support key age-specific learning benchmarks. Parents learn how to make reading a valued part of a family's daily routine and connect to other families, community resources, and public libraries. Each workshop series has **3 stages with 4 sequential sessions**:

### Baby Blocks (0-1 year old focus)

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

### Stepping Stones Academy (2-3-year-old focus)

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

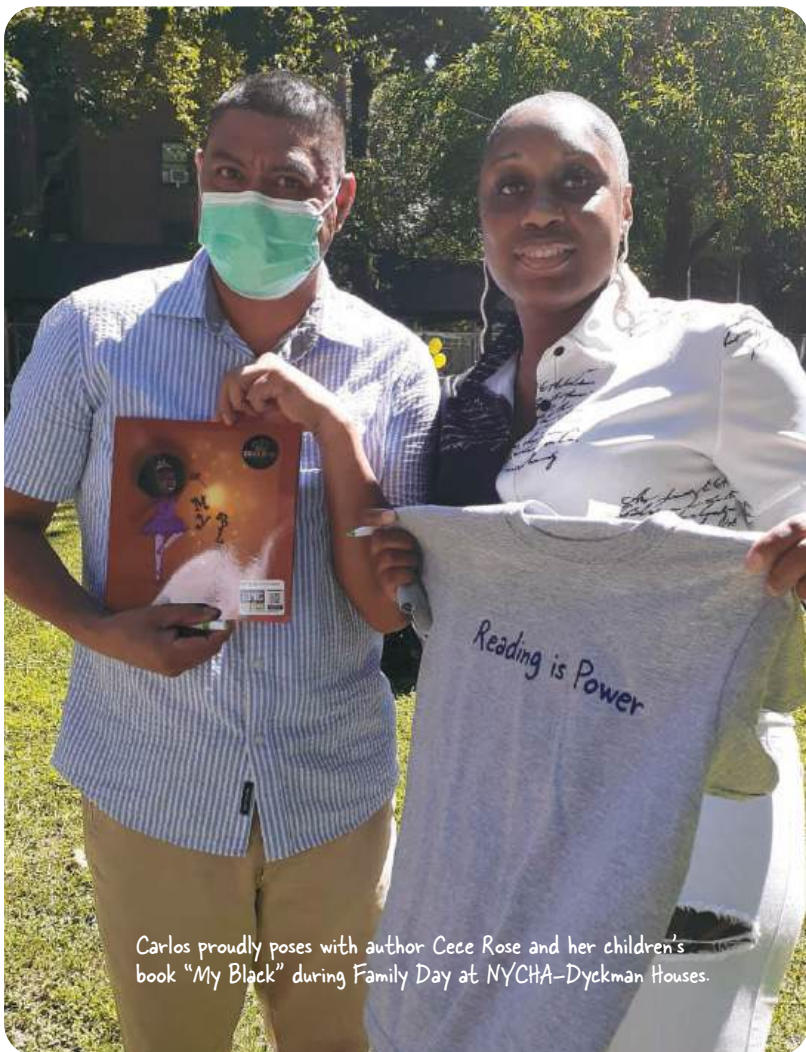
### Learn N' Play (4-5 year-old focus)

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





**Very Involved Parent (VIP) Workshop Series** trains parents to become literacy advocates in their community. Graduates are equipped to deliver community reading programs, recruit new families, spread LINC's mission, and promote positive reading habits with other families. VIP Workshops foster the growth of parents and caregivers who, after realizing the significant influence they have on their child's academic achievement, are eager to do the same for other children in their neighborhood. LINC's VIP programming validates Mimi Levin Lieber's vision to mobilize existing resources, especially people, on behalf of children and reading.



Carlos proudly poses with author Cece Rose and her children's book "My Black" during Family Day at NYCHA-Dyckman Houses.

## 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.

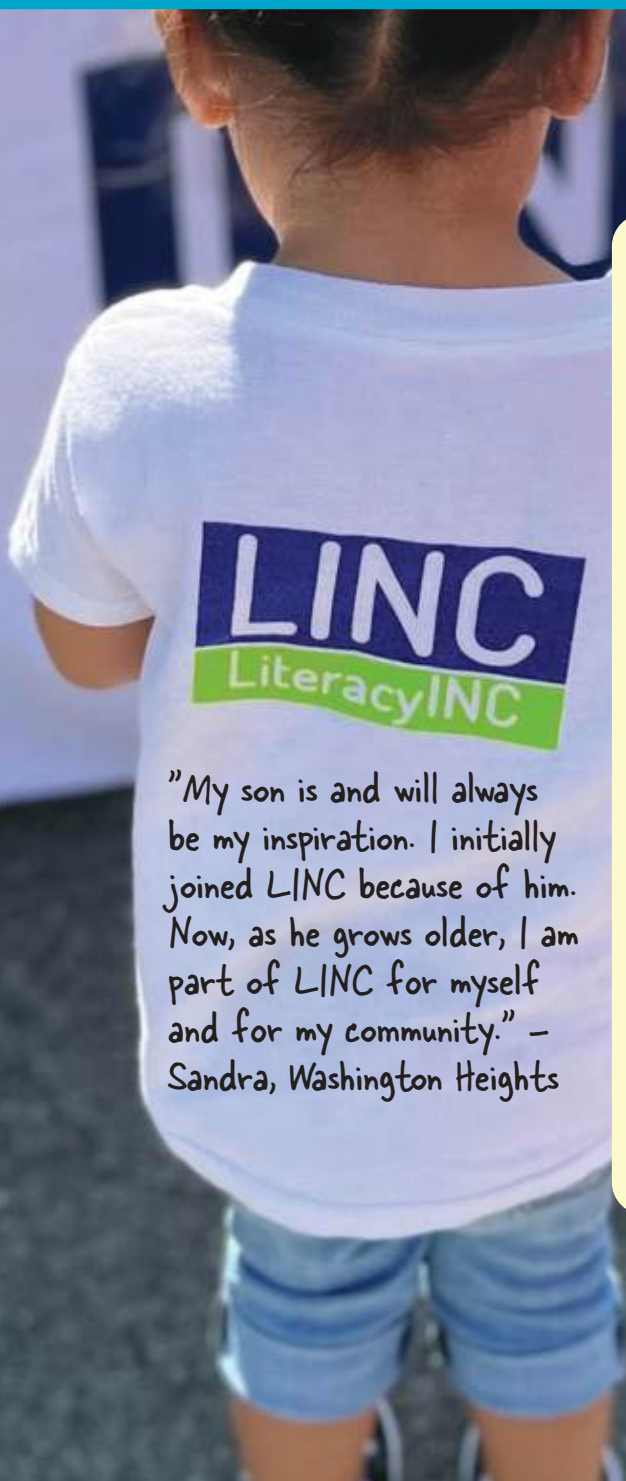
City's First Readers (CFR), the New York City Council's Early Literacy Initiative coordinated by Literacy Inc., surrounds families with comprehensive programming and support from 17 partner organizations. Together, CFR works with more than one million families annually, increasing children's access to 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 Carmel Hill Fund's support, NYC Reads expanded into East Harlem. NYC Reads Initiative fosters collaboration among eleven 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



"My son is and will always be my inspiration. I initially joined LINC because of him. Now, as he grows older, I am part of LINC for myself and for my community." – Sandra, Washington Heights

## Before

**61%** →

**40%** →

**52%**

**36%**

## After LINC Programs

**76%** of families read 3+ days/week

**76%** had 10 or more books in the home

→ **70%** practice early literacy behaviors in the grocery store (pointing and naming items)

→ **49%** of caregivers told stories to their children



## Our VIPs demonstrate the greatest impact:

### AFTER GRADUATING FROM THE VIP WORKSHOPS

**95% of caregivers feel more confident talking to neighbors about the importance of reading to children.**

**90% read out loud more often with their children.**

**95% feel more confident reading out loud.**

### WHEN ASKED ABOUT LINC'S IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

**100% of the VIP survey respondents believe children get more excited to read.**

**100% of the VIP survey respondents believe parents know more about resources and support for their families.**

**100% of the VIP survey respondents believe parents get to meet other parents in the community.**

"Thanks to LINC reading has always been fun, a learning passport in my family. It's a time where my family can come together to spend quality time and also learn and teach each other. I am beyond grateful to be part of the LINC family, as they have taught me a lot over the past year, from learning to connect with my little ones to having patience and noticing behavioral changes. They have encouraged me to make reading playful and knowledgeable."

- Aneesa,  
South Jamaica

# Financials

LINC Fiscal Years: 2022, 2021. All information is from our audited financial statements for fiscal years ending June 30th, 2022 and June 30th, 2021. 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).

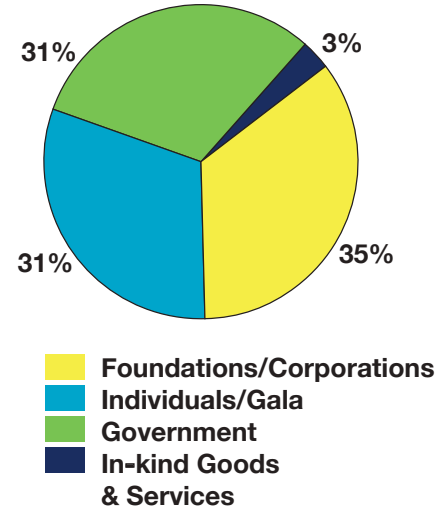
## Statement of Activities

REVENUE	2022	2021
Foundations/Corporations	\$ 2,433,204	\$ 1,231,641
Individuals/Gala	\$ 2,092,130	\$ 940,586
Government	\$ 2,143,882	\$ 1,616,318
In-kind Goods & Services	\$ 201,416	\$ 104,593
Other	\$ (1,614)	\$ 20,313
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 6,869,018</b>	<b>\$ 3,913,451</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Program Services	\$ 3,827,145	\$ 2,841,415
Management & General	\$ 339,775	\$ 297,892
Fundraising	\$ 495,017	\$ 424,645
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 4,661,937</b>	<b>\$ 3,563,952</b>

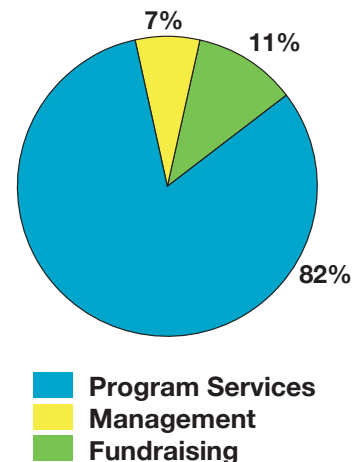
## Statement of Financial Position

ASSETS	2022	2021
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$ 5,752,655	\$ 3,672,704
Contributions, Grants & Accounts Receivable	\$ 2,298,922	\$ 878,382
Other Assets	\$ 54,693	\$ 44,244
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 8,106,270</b>	<b>\$ 4,595,330</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses	\$ 301,716	\$ 211,625
Agency Funds	\$ 1,786,984	\$ 73,216
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 2,088,700</b>	<b>\$ 284,841</b>
PPP Loan Payable	\$ -	\$ 500,000
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 2,088,700</b>	<b>\$ 784,841</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Without donor restrictions	\$ 3,223,697	\$ 2,357,778
With donor restrictions	\$ 2,793,873	\$ 1,452,711
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 6,017,570</b>	<b>\$ 3,810,489</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 8,106,270</b>	<b>\$ 4,595,330</b>

## FY 2022 REVENUE



## FY 2022 EXPENSES



**LINC is the proud recipient of**  
**Nonprofit New York's Excellence Awards:**  
**2018 Excellence in Financial Management**  
**2019 Excellence in Fundraising**  
**and Resource Development**  
**2019 FINALIST FOR OVERALL EXCELLENCE**



# Literacy in Community is Fueled by Our Donors

We believe in the ethos of philanthropy—a profound love for humankind—and it is through the dedication and generosity of our board and donors that LINC continues equipping parents and community partners with the right tools to disrupt the patterns of illiteracy and foster a love for reading.

Our donors help us to build a future where every child has access to the transformative power of literacy. LINC's approach goes beyond literacy development. We encourage the active engagement of both parents and children. Daily reading nurtures strong social-emotional bonds, providing comfort and cherished moments of togetherness. As families grow and thrive, they become catalysts for positive change within their communities. The impact ripples outward, creating a generation of lifelong readers and contributing to the collective well-being of our society.

Access to quality education is the cornerstone of a just society. Together, we address the literacy crisis and create a brighter future for our communities. We could not do this work without you. Thank you.

Interested in connecting with LINC staff or experiencing Literacy in Community firsthand? We welcome the chance to meet with you! Please contact Katie Gardner-Boehm, Director of Development, at [kgboehm@lincnyc.org](mailto:kgboehm@lincnyc.org) or 212-620-5462 ext. 163.



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