

**Words
Alive!**

**Annual Report
2021-22**

A Letter From Our Leadership

Dear Friends,

At Words Alive, we envision a world where everyone is connected to the power of reading and the innumerable ways it enriches our lives. We know that when everyone reads, whole communities thrive. During the 2021-2022 school year we connected 5,000 children, teens, and families to the power of reading!

This year our themes were resilience and repair. Using an intentionally curated book list, our volunteers brought words alive as they helped young people connect texts featuring the struggles and successes of others with their own life experiences.

When we see ourselves in the stories of struggle and success of others, we realize what we are made of and what is possible. When we are resilient, we are braver, more curious, more adaptable, and more able to extend our reach into the world—we can reflect on our resilience and its role in repairing our communities. This is our hope for all we serve.

After participating in our programs, young people's habits around and attitudes towards reading became more positive. We are proud to be part of their journey to become life-long learners.

Words Alive has also become a more resilient and impactful organization, with over 800 volunteers and surpassing \$1 million invested in our mission this year alone.

We are so grateful for how our community came together to strengthen our resilience, embolden our efforts at repair, and joyously celebrate the power of reading.

Rachael Orose

Rachael Orose
Executive Director

Karen F. Silberman

Karen Silberman
Chair, Board of Directors

STAFF

Rachael Orose, MPA
Executive Director

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Robyn Grand
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Murphy Hernandez
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Family Literacy Program Manager

Kristi Stoza
Engagement Coordinator

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How Do We Connect People to the Power of Reading?

2021-22 Year at a Glance

Bring People Together



5,040

Program participants



851

Active volunteers

Create Access



31,269

Books and learning kits added to participants' homes



5

Author events connecting readers to writers of the stories they love

Build Habits



130,805

Programmatic touchpoints



2,306

Reading program sessions

Practice What Works



4

Research-based program models

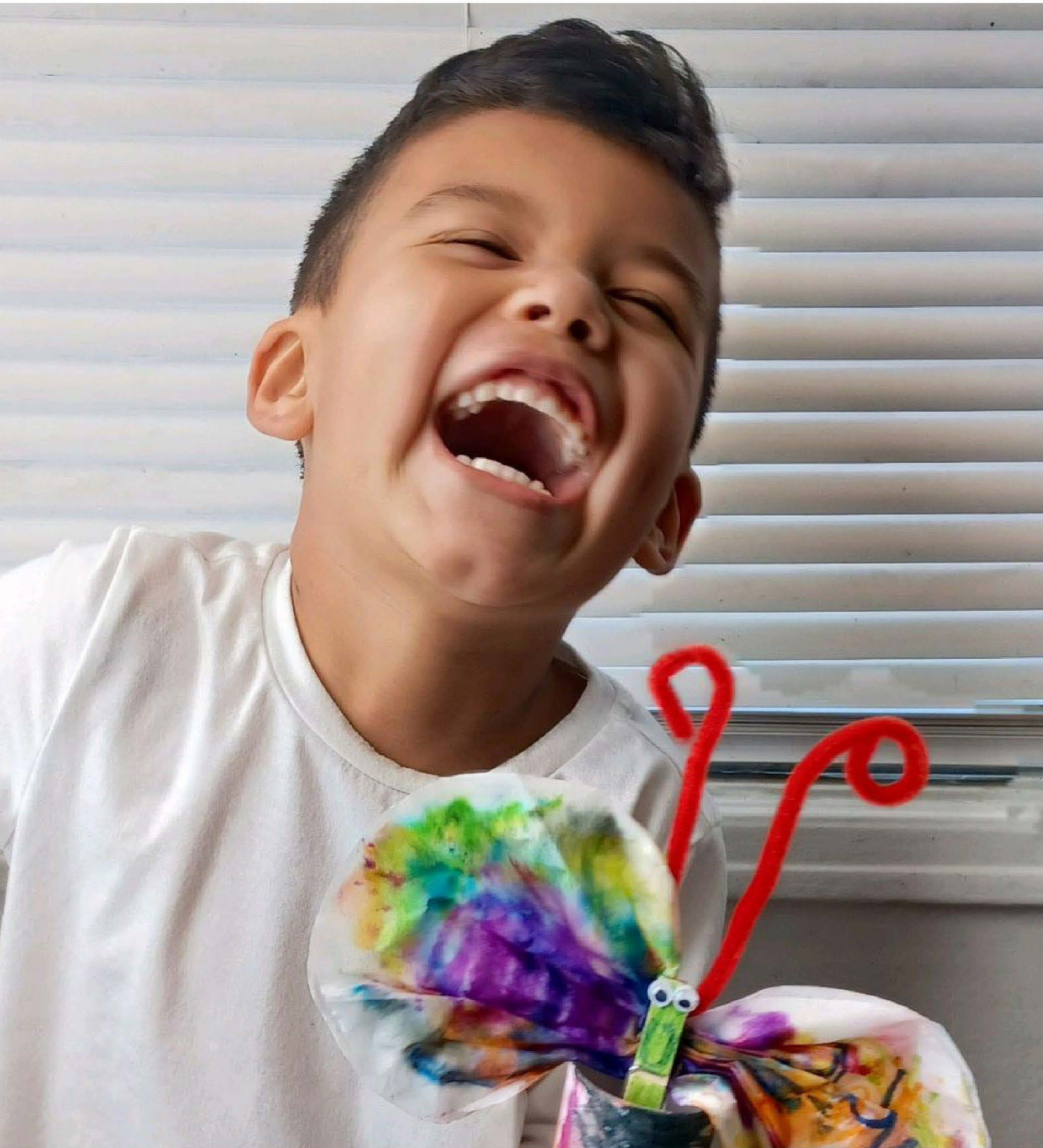


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Fresh and relevant titles read across our programs

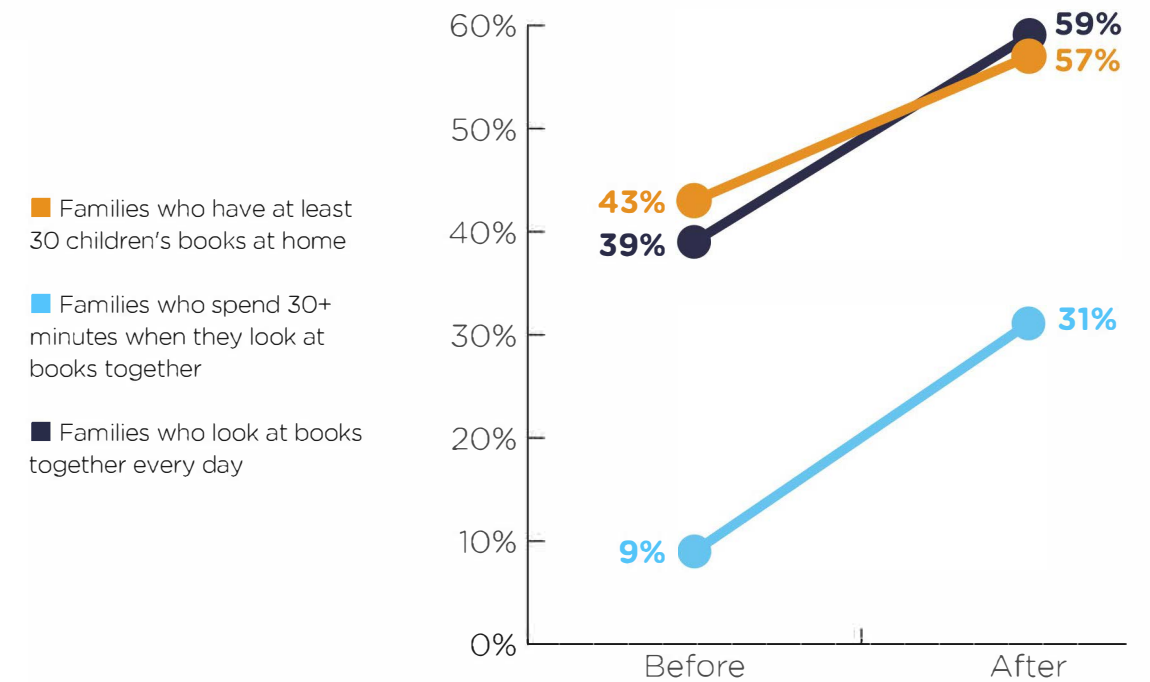
Family Literacy Program

Nurturing the Power of Reading through Play



Raising Resilient Readers

We ignite a love of reading and nurture book-sharing habits among families with young children by focusing on the power of play and ways to make reading more playful. In our workshop series of interactive read alouds, parents learn engagement strategies and exploratory activities they can use at home. This year, we expanded this program from preschool to reach second grade, serving 880 families. Afterward families reported reading more often, for longer periods of time, and practicing positive reading behaviors with their children.



**Please visit our website for the full Family Literacy Program outcomes report.*

Parent Perspectives

"Before, they only looked at the drawings and turned the pages, now they grab the book and sing, hug it, and point to each thing that happens."

- Marisela, Parent Participant

"I'll never forget when they brought out their puppet show from *The Little Red Fort* to the living room to put on a show for our entire family to see. They dressed up and got into character, acting out the story. They did it all themselves and are making more connections every time they read a book."

- Judith, Parent Participant



Read Aloud Program

Cultivating Curiosity to Support Reading Development



“Our reader is really good at stopping on each page and asking questions about the pictures. Kids are doing that on their own now.”

– Teacher, Porter Elementary

Reading Role Models

We bring reading alive by pairing trained volunteers to read aloud in elementary classrooms. Our volunteers inspire students to be curious, courageous, and compassionate by exploring diverse and relevant books together. In 2021-22, volunteers read aloud with 2,535 students in 81 classrooms each week. Gifting the books we read to teachers and learners amplified engagement with each title in the classroom and at home.

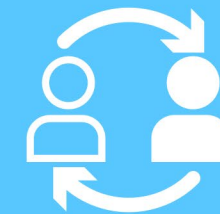


9 out of 10 teachers agreed that the Read Aloud Program positively impacted students and their:

Interest in reading



Exposure to diverse characters and perspectives



Basic and advanced reading comprehension skills



**Please visit our website for the full Read Aloud Program outcomes report.*



Teacher Perspectives

“They really made a great connection with Ms. Anna. They were engaged and responded so well. They’ve developed good listening skills and they are thinking about what is happening in the story.”

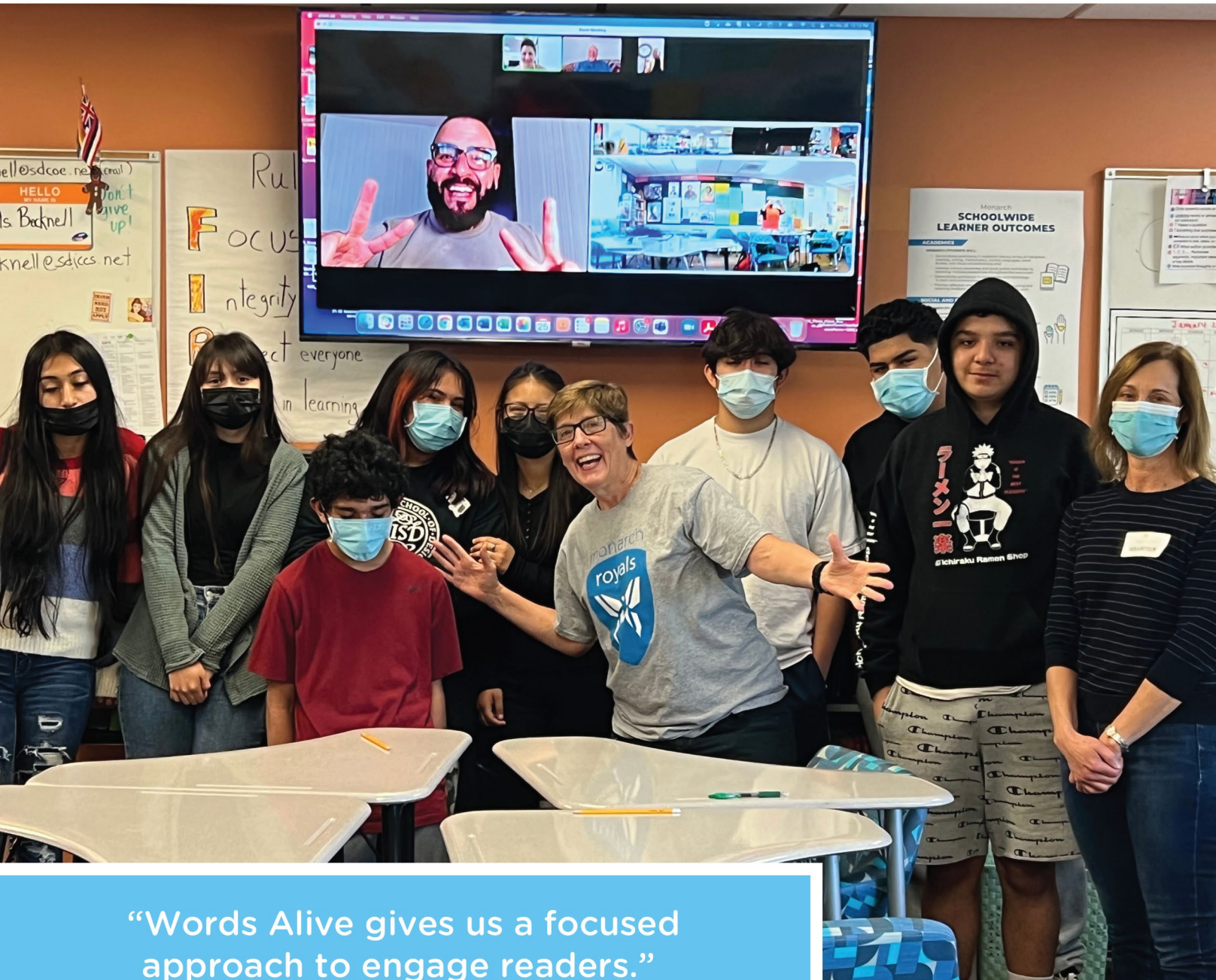
– Teacher, Edison Elementary

“I’m a new teacher and I didn’t have books in my class. Words Alive has added tons of quality books to my library and introduced me to new titles. I liked having the books accessible. Students got to read the story aloud, then read it at home, then saw it in class to read on their own.”

– Teacher, Porter Elementary

Adolescent Book Group

Cultivating Curiosity to Support Reading Development



“Words Alive gives us a focused approach to engage readers.”

- Summer, Pro Kids, First Tee - San Diego

Repairing Relationships with Reading

We bring reading alive for teenagers facing extraordinary circumstances by connecting them to diverse and relevant books and empowering them to change the story of their life. In 2021-22, 350 teens from six partner organizations participated in the program. Afterward, they reported that the program broadened their perspective and improved their ability to express themselves as readers, speakers, and writers.

↑ 47%

of teens improved their opinion of reading as a way to spend time

↑ 38%

of teens reported spending more of their free time reading

*Please visit our website for the full Adolescent Book Group outcomes report.

Perspectives

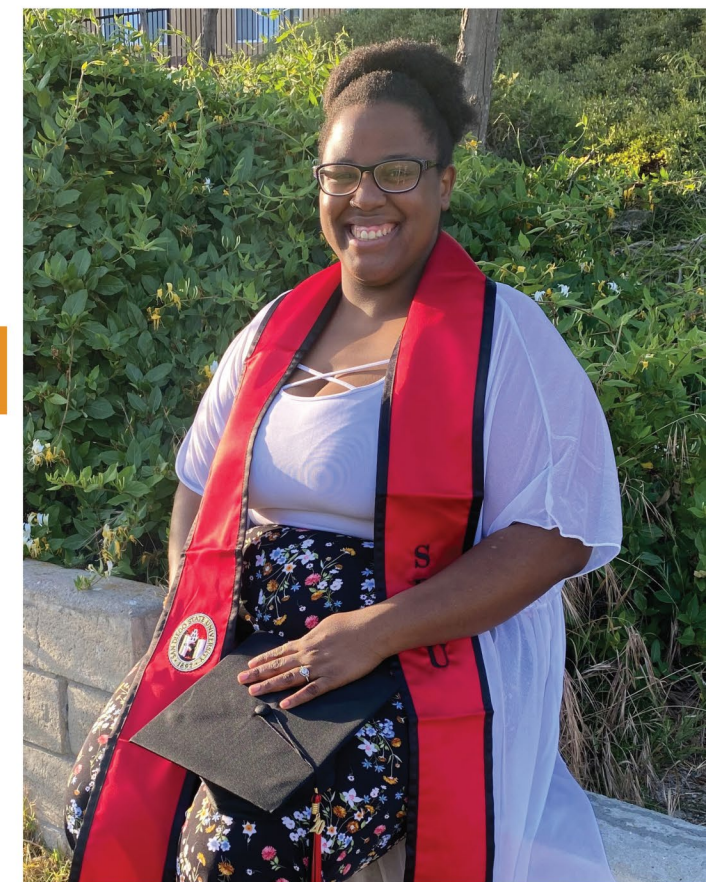
“They are reading books collectively and not alone. It helps the school, helps parents, and helps them.”
- Meredith, Boys & Girls Clubs of Oceanside

“I like the push and pull when they’re with Words Alive. They’re able to be heard, build, and grow from the experience because of the space you provide.”
- Sherrell, The Monarch School

Words Alive Westreich Scholarship Empowering Scholars through Mentorship

Reporting Out

We launch life-long learners into their post-secondary chapter by providing select teens with individualized support through monthly mentorship and a flexible financial award as they pursue their higher education and vocational goals. This year, scholars focused on progress toward their degrees while reacclimating to campus life after pandemic disruptions.



What It Takes

Communities Create Readers

Developing readers requires ongoing commitment from our community. Luckily, everyone has something to give and to gain in the movement to make reading matter.

In the 21-22 program year, people power, investment, supplies, and quality content moved our mission forward into brave spaces.



Books and Materials

Access to books and learning materials are critical to building literacy rich environments. The average learner in our programs own fewer than 15 books before participating. This year, Words Alive distributed 31,269 new books and learning kits, adding an average 4 books to each participant's home library.



Brave Space

Engagement blossoms when learners feel secure and lead the way. This year, we expanded programming beyond school campuses to new learning environments, including after-school programs, summer camps, and virtual sessions from participants' homes on weekends.



Quality Content

Curated, standards-aligned ideas to engage with what we read ignites and sustains learner interest. This year, curriculum development volunteers produced 55 new curriculum guides and learning kits in 10 languages for use in our diverse community.

Investment

Sustained funding drives innovation and deepens partnership. This year, transformational investment seeded expansion of our programs in new geographies and age ranges. In our Family Literacy Program alone, we served 133% more children over the previous year.



People Power

We learn through our relationships and experiences. This year, 850+ Words Alive volunteers invested their time in creating positive reading experiences for youth. Their service included leading sessions, developing curriculum, preparing materials, and guiding our work at the leadership level.



Community Partners

Greater Impact Together

Our greatest impact comes as part of coordinated efforts in the community. Informed by our commitment to creating access, collaborations with 82 schools and organizations in 2021-22 program year celebrated the power of reading in all the places we come together.



Building Capacity

To help infuse their own programming with reading supports, we trained 60 individuals from six partner organizations to implement our program models.

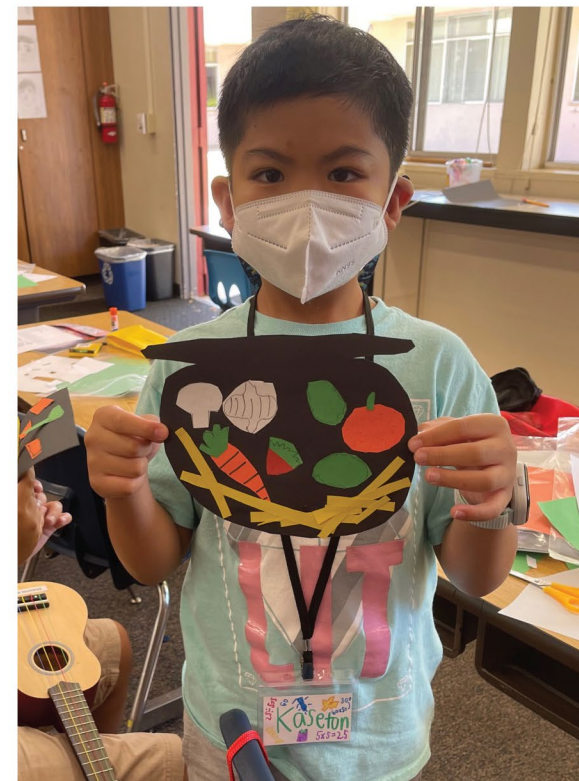
Meeting Authors

To drive student interest, four authors and illustrators shared their life stories with program participants throughout the year, including Caldecott Medal- and Newbery Medal-winning author Matt de la Peña who met with 350 elementary school learners as part of a series with The New Children's Museum connecting authors and art. Learners received books to keep, created artwork later exhibited in the museum, and drafted their own story in a creative writing workshop.



Leveling Up Learning

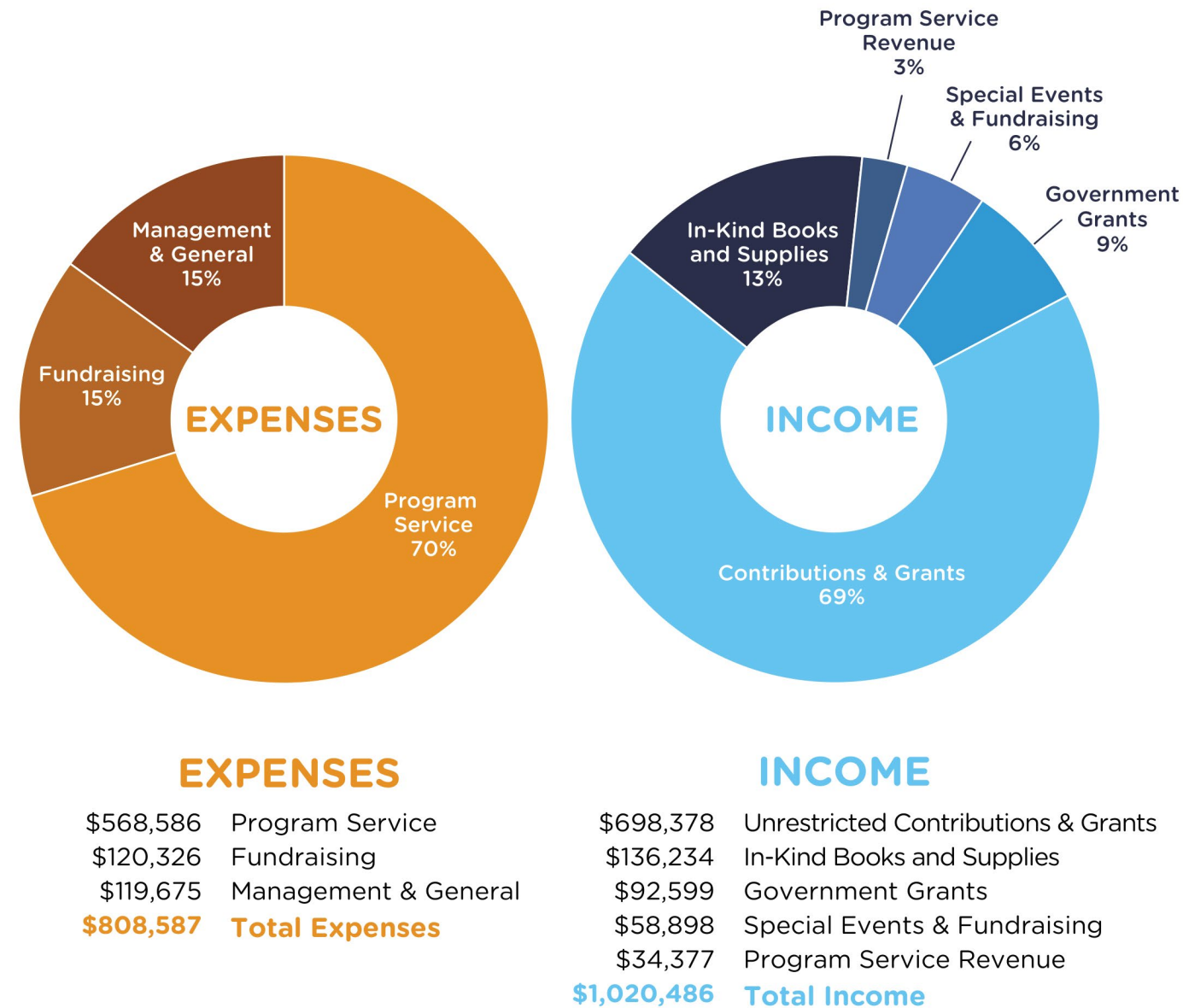
To bolster opportunities outside the school day, we teamed up with Diamond Educational Excellence Partnership, Guitars in the Classroom, and the Jackie Robinson YMCA to offer engaging reading experiences as part of San Diego Unified School District's Level Up programming to support learning over the summer.



Fiscal Integrity

Words Alive Audited Financials July 2020-June 2021

Words Alive volunteers donated 9,210 hours of service during the program year, a value of \$327,508.



**Please visit our website for our most recent audited financial statements as they become available.*

Champions for Youth

Thank you to our partners at the Century Club of San Diego and Farmers Insurance, fundraising champions, and donors who supported the 2021 Champions for Youth peer-to-peer fundraising campaign. Through your generosity and partnership, we received more than \$130,000 to support our mission.

Donor Perspective

“We believe having access to books and literacy education is a fundamental lever for improving outcomes and that books provide young people the opportunity to think creatively and curiously about the world around them. We are honored to support Words Alive in their continued work to make reading matter.”

- Bentivoglio Family Fund

Our Supporters

We are grateful to the supporters who make our work possible, including the following who contributed \$5,000+ during the 2021-22 fiscal year.

Literacy Legends \$100,000+

Bentivoglio Family Fund
William Gumpert Foundation

Transformational Leaders \$50,000 - \$99,999

Century Club of San Diego
Dr. Seuss Foundation
Farmers Insurance
The Conrad Prebys Foundation
San Diego Foundation

Impact Investors \$25,000 - \$49,999

City of San Marcos via the San Marcos COVID-19 Community Grants Program
Hologic
Qualcomm Incorporated
S. Mark Taper Foundation
The Westreich Foundation

Learning Advocates \$10,000 - \$24,999

Bravo Foundation
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S. Bernstein Fund*
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Samuel H. French & Katherine Weaver French Fund
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Rick Seidenwurm
Karen & Jeffrey Silberman Family Fund*
Dana Vandersip
Christopher Weil & Company, Inc.

**Gift from the Jewish Community Foundation of San Diego*

When everyone can read,
whole communities thrive.

Join our movement to
make reading matter.

The logo for Words Alive features the words "Words" and "Alive" stacked vertically in a bold, dark blue sans-serif font. An exclamation point is positioned at the end of "Alive". The text is enclosed within a white oval shape that has a blue swoosh at the bottom. The entire logo is set against a solid orange horizontal bar.

**Words
Alive!**

Invest. Volunteer. Champion.

www.WordsAlive.org

Connect with us on social media @WordsAliveSD

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