



**20
22**

**ANNUAL REPORT FOR
ACCESS BOOKS BAY AREA**



LETTER FROM OUR FOUNDER



As our school partners slowly began returning to normal operations this year, so too were we able to return to the most important and meaningful work we do – improving school libraries to foster a love of pleasure reading for children. Excited volunteers, many of whom have volunteered with us for years now, were able to join us in person at school libraries once again, painting murals, sorting and processing books, and sharing the love of books and reading.

I am always blown away by how many of our volunteers show up time after time, but I was similarly blown away this year by how many new volunteers, community partners, and corporate sponsors stepped up to support our work. Our developing relationship with the Sage Foundation, the charitable arm of Sage Intacct, a software company with a major office in San Jose, has been especially wonderful to see. Sage employees have volunteered for projects, both in their offices and at schools, they have provided thousands of dollars worth of brand new books for school libraries and book boxes, and they even sponsored an entire school project!

In San Francisco we worked closely this year with the SFUSD African American Parent Advisory Council and Little Free Libraries to launch Read in Color, a city-wide initiative to provide little library boxes in communities of color around the city, stocked with #ownstories books written by and about people of color for children, teens, and adults.

As a wave of book bans hit school libraries across the country this year, in which primarily books written by and about Black and LGBTQ+ youth were targeted, we were proud to be doing our part to ensure that ALL children are able to see themselves in the books they read, whether they are getting them from their new community book box or their school library. Our volunteers were also inspired by this work, collecting and donating many of the books we provided for the Read in Color boxes. Many, many amazing volunteers who have run book drives for us in 2022 – an incredible outpouring of support for our mission from the greater community, from school clubs to families, from scouts to office groups.

And we were joined in this effort not only by our new and returning volunteers, and wonderful community partners, but also by some amazing, talented, and diverse new board members and staff, helping us to realize our vision for a more equitable literacy landscape in the San Francisco Bay Area. I look forward to more exciting work in 2023!

Sincerely,
Amanda Collins, M.L.I.S.
Executive Director and Founder
Access Books Bay Area



WHO WE ARE

BOARD

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Web Content Administrator

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Social Media Manager

MISSION

OUR MISSION IS TO LEVEL THE LITERACY PLAYING FIELD FOR STUDENTS LIVING IN POVERTY BY PROVIDING HIGH QUALITY, HIGH-INTEREST, CULTURALLY RELEVANT BOOKS, AND A TRANSFORMED LIBRARY SPACE THAT INVITES STUDENTS TO SPEND TIME AND READ.

We believe a quality school library can change the life of a child living in poverty. Access Books Bay Area works to remediate the lack of funding for school libraries in California by providing books, furnishings, facility upgrades, and the coaching of a credentialed school librarian to schools where at least 80 percent of students live at or below the poverty line. We also partner with local service organizations to improve classroom libraries with donated books. And in the absence of access to school libraries, we work to get books into the hands of children who need them by any means possible.

WE BELIEVE #BOOKSCHANGE LIVES

OUR VALUES

LITERACY IS A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT

We believe that all children, regardless of race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, have the right to an educational environment that fosters a love of reading. Study after study has shown that students who read more do better. And not just academically, but in life. This benefit should not be reserved only for the children of the affluent and well-educated.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES MATTER

In schools with high quality, well-stocked school libraries, children do better. Yet California provides no dedicated funding for school libraries. This is a crisis in low-income communities especially. We believe that every child has the right to have access to a high quality school library space and collection that will help foster their love of reading.

DIVERSITY & REPRESENTATION MATTER

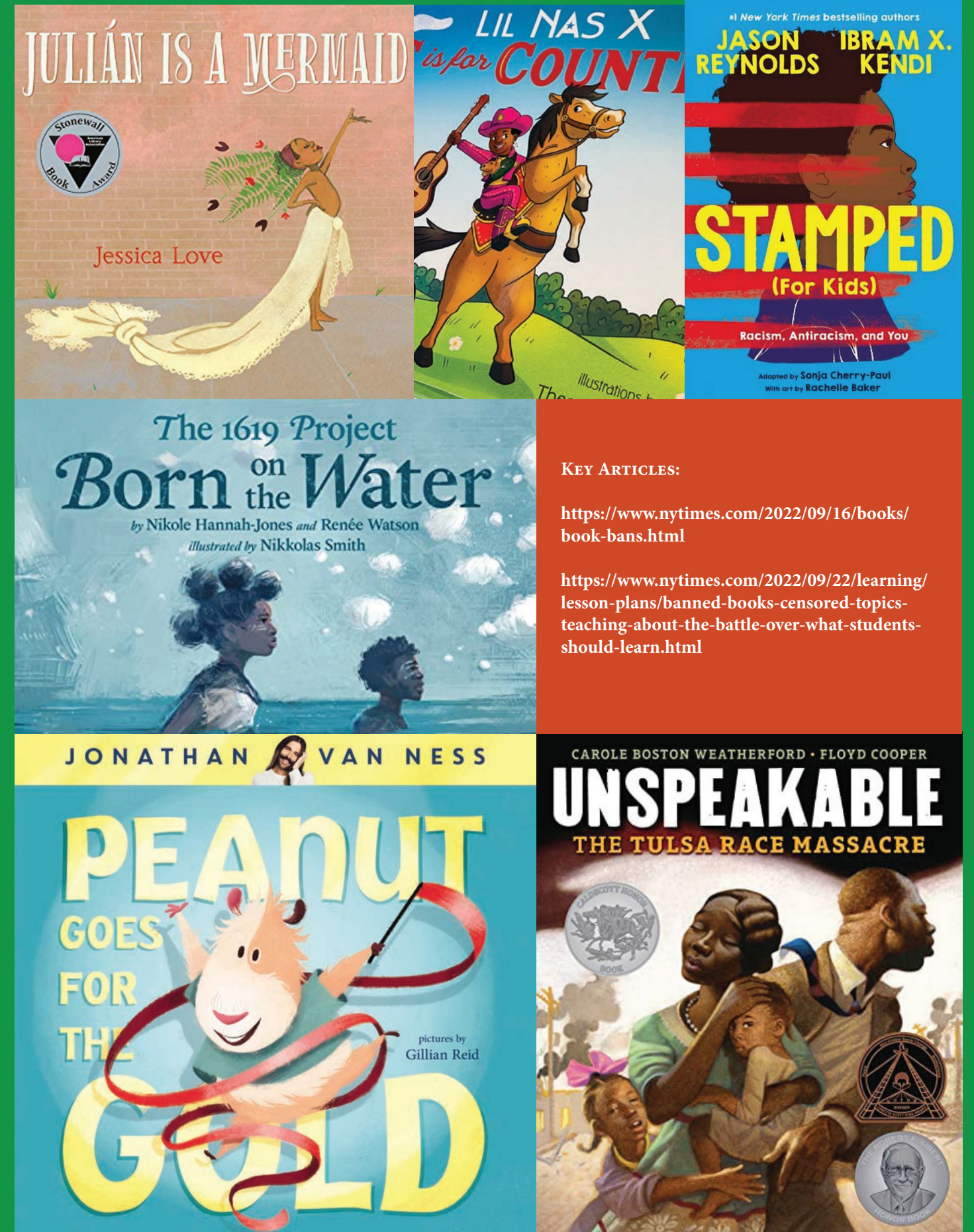
When the books in a school library do not reflect the lives and reality of the students at the school, or are full of outdated information and harmful stereotypes, children are not inspired to read. We believe that every child has the right to see themselves in the books they read, as well as to become inspired, and gain empathy by walking in the shoes of others.

DIVERSE BOOKS AND BOOK BANNING IN 2022

Access Books Bay Area believes that diversity and representation matter. In 2022, however, this belief was challenged in school and library board meetings, and by local policy makers backed by political action committees seeking to restrict access to books for children. Although the would be book banners' stated goal was often to protect children from pornography and over-sexualization, the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom, which tracks challenges and bans of materials in school and public libraries, found that most attempted bans targeted books featuring Black and LGBTQ+ characters.

But these very students, whose voices are most often missing from the canon of children's literature, and who are already suffering from rampant discrimination, are the students who most need to see children like them in the pages of books. They need to know that they have a place in our stories, our history, and our society. At this time of increased pressure to take books from children that talk about race, religion, gender, and sexuality in age appropriate and affirming ways, Access Books Bay Area was proud to partner with Little Free Library and the African American Parent Advisory Council of SFUSD to bring the Read in Color program to San Francisco. Together we are providing thousands of diverse books to children of color across some of the neighborhoods with the least access to books (see our Programs section on Read in Color for more information).

We are also proud of the work that we continue to do in school libraries to increase access to diverse books. Many of the schools we work with have not updated their school library collections in decades due to lack of funding, and our school library improvement projects bring thousands of culturally diverse and representative books to the students we serve. You can find out more about our school library projects in the upcoming Programs section.



KEY ARTICLES:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/16/books/book-bans.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/22/learning/lesson-plans/banned-books-censored-topics-teaching-about-the-battle-over-what-students-should-learn.html>



2022 PROGRAMS

As the world returned to some semblance of normalcy in 2022, Access Books Bay Area was able to turn our focus once again on what we believe is the most important access point to literacy for children living in poverty – school libraries – while still working with other partners to increase access to high quality books through other avenues as well.

As inflation rises and along with it the price of books, the average family living in poverty in the Bay Area will have few to no books in their home. This limited access to books at home is compounded by limited access to transportation to public libraries, continued limited public library hours due to the pandemic, and few other ways to acquire books, except for at the school library. For most children living in poverty, the school library is their main, if not sole, source of pleasure reading material. School libraries matter.

And although increased funding for COVID retrofitting, school lunches, and other essential programs to help children and families weather these hard times flowed into schools this year, funding for school libraries did not. Area school libraries remained woefully underfunded, especially in schools serving a majority of children living in poverty. This is why we were so pleased this year to be able to return to schools, completing library projects in three schools.

We also know, however, that school libraries cannot stand alone, especially when schools are still being shut down by COVID, and students are having to quarantine at home. This is why we continued our work to bring books more directly to students through our little free library box program. It is why we partnered with Amigos de Guadalupe to give books directly to unhoused students whose schooling is often interrupted, and why we partnered with AAPAC and Little Free Library to bring little libraries to areas of San Francisco without any, filled with diverse books. Reading for pleasure, being able to choose your own books and immerse yourself in reading, creates readers. And readers have better outcomes across their lives, from academics onward. This is why we do the work we do, and why so many community members were inspired to work with us this year.



LIBRARY REFURBISHMENTS: WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY

Washington Elementary is located in an area of San Jose with high gang activity and very high levels of poverty. The principal was eager to be selected for an Access Books Bay Area grant. Her leadership team had already identified improving the school library as a vital way to engage her students authentically in pleasure reading. They were excited and committed to transforming the library, but they were restricted in what they could spend on it due to Title I funding restrictions. The families of this school, like all that we serve, have limited financial resources and therefore do not have access to enrichment programs or reading materials beyond the school's offerings, so this too made improving the library a high priority.

When we first visited we found an extremely crowded space with water damaged books from a flood a few years earlier that had never been remediated. Working under our direction, the school staff conducted a year-long effort to weed the collection and reorganize the space. Access Books Bay Area purchased 1400 brand-new books for the library, but with pandemic restrictions still in place for that particular school, we had to do all the processing outside in cold weather with small groups of volunteers. Our volunteers persevered so that we could deliver the books in time for Washington Elementary students to start their year off with a selection of high quality, relevant and diverse reading materials. They now have a very popular new graphic novel section which our large donation of graphic novels helped establish, as well as a new biographies section established with the large selection of biographies of current and culturally relevant people we provided. In line with the leadership team's vision, we transformed the library into a space where all of the students feel invited and eager to dive into a book.

"We are so impressed with Access Books Bay Area! Not only did they help us weed out very outdated books from our library collection, they donated thousands of books in both English and Spanish to support our bilingual program. Access Books helped us transform our library experience, but most importantly, they helped us promote "Love of Reading" by providing our students with titles students identified as preferred reading options. In addition, Access Books installed and provides books on an on-going basis for a beautiful book box in front of our school. This project gives our students and community easy access to reading material after-school and weekends. Just want to stress that all of this work happened under very difficult Covid restrictions."

-Maricela Alcala Franco, School Principal, Washington Elementary School, San Jose



Project Completed: January 2022

Number of Students: **446**

English Language Learners: **72%**

New library books + processing materials donated: **1400**

Socioeconomically Disadvantaged: **94%**

Grades: **K-5**

Hispanic/Latinx: **96%**

Black: **1%**

LIBRARY REFURBISHMENTS: SANTEE

The principal of Santee Elementary in San Jose told us that they are at the center of one of the roughest sections of East San Jose, often defined by high levels of poverty and violence. However, Santee elementary offers a safe environment where children can learn and thrive. They serve a transient population of recent immigrants from Mexico, elsewhere in Latin America and Vietnam.

When we first visited the library, the books were hard for the students to access as there was extra furniture blocking some of them, and the shelves were cluttered with piles of paper, boxes, and textbooks for the classrooms that made the books less inviting. The library books themselves were decades old, worn, and far too few of them for a school of that size.

With our help and encouragement, the school staff decluttered the library of the old furniture and materials that weren't needed. For this project, we were fortunate to receive a special donor gift that allowed us to buy additional comfortable and colorful reading furniture. We wanted the kids to have a place to read that was more like a cozy living room instead of a stiff and formal classroom. Our volunteers also weeded over 1,000 tattered and outdated books from the collection to make room for the new books.

While the building was newer, the library lacked signage at the entrances to indicate that a library is inside, so we painted new "Library" signs in English, Spanish and Vietnamese, and the Principal is pleased that the facade is now welcoming to all of the families. Our volunteers also added many new murals that make the library more cheerful, whimsical and welcoming.

With a generous grant from the Dougherty family, we purchased 1,200+ new books for the library focusing on recent high-interest titles and books that feature diverse characters and/or are written by diverse authors. Sixty-one volunteers chipped in to paint murals, prepare books for the library, assemble furniture, and more.

"The school library is a unique and essential part of a learning community. It is also a vital connection between school and home. Access Books Bay Area has given the Santee community access to up to date, culturally relevant, gorgeous books that will encourage Santee learners, educators and families to become lifelong learners and readers. In addition to high-quality reading material, our school library was transformed into a colorful, vibrant and welcoming environment that supports our goal of reading for enjoyment. Thank you to all of the volunteers and generous donors for investing in our beautiful community!"

-Maria Reyes, School Principal, Santee Elementary, San Jose



Project Completed: April 2022

Number of Students: **409**

English Language Learners: **58%**

New library books + processing materials donated: **1200**

Socioeconomically Disadvantaged: **91%**

Grades: **K-6**

Hispanic/Latinx: **82%**

Vietnamese/Asian: **14%**

Black: **1%**

LIBRARY REFURBISHMENTS: FRANKLIN

Franklin Elementary is a school in Southeast San Jose where over 83% of families are considered socioeconomically disadvantaged, and about 13% of the students are unhoused. The library itself, like so many we work with, was neglected and in desperate need of new books, reorganization, and some TLC. The principal, Ms. Ravo, was thrilled to learn of Access Books Bay Area and the services we provide, especially considering that the school had suffered a 17% budget cut for this school year. She was very enthusiastic about having brand-new books to support their focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion and creating a library that reflects not just their students, but their school's values.

On a Saturday in October, over 50 volunteers came together to process over 1500 new books for the library and paint four stunning colorful murals in the library. The energy and ideas of Principal Ravo inspired the participation of many families and staff members of the school. Even the school's custodian on duty was inspired to join in the painting, and the next week brought his co-workers into the library to show off his artistic contribution!

Over the weeks before and after, Access Books Bay Area staff weeded and completely reorganized the library in a way that makes it easier for students to browse and find books. We provided new signage, a colorful rug and teacher chair. The new murals brighten the library, make it more cheerful for the students. We provided 2,000 gently used books to help teachers to build their classroom libraries. The end result for the students at Franklin Elementary is a vastly improved selection of high quality and culturally relevant books to read, a homey and welcoming library, and increased excitement to read.

"We could not be more grateful to Access Books Bay Area for the library refresh. For the past three years our school has been working on our newly written vision of "celebrating differences" through focusing on our culturally sustaining pedagogy and a huge part of that is incorporating books and stories that represent our students' cultures and backgrounds. Unfortunately, as much as we love books, they are not cheap, especially the culturally relevant and sustaining ones. We are trying to teach our students to take pride in themselves and their backgrounds so that they can advocate for themselves in this society. With the grant from Access Books Bay Area, we were not only able to make our library look more inviting to students and representative of our values, but we were able to refresh the books we have so that students can find themselves in the books they're reading. Access Books Bay Area was great to work with along the process, as they listened to us, our needs, and our values to create a library space that represents us as a school community and who we want to be for our students and families. They worked side by side with our community volunteers to empower our students and families to create a space that students choose to go to for fun during their breaks, increasing the sense of belonging for our students. Thank you for helping us create this space for our students so they can feel represented, seen and valued!!"

-Kristina Ravo, School Principal, Franklin Elementary, San Jose



Project Completed: October 2022

Number of Students: **600**

English Language Learners: **50%**

New library books + processing materials donated: **1500**

Socioeconomically Disadvantaged: **83%**

Grades: **K-6**

Hispanic/Latinx: **48%**

Vietnamese/Asian: **42%**

Black: **3%**

DIRECT BOOK GIVEAWAYS: AMIGOS DE GUADALUPE

This year we gave bundles of books to unhoused children, many of whom are forced to change schools as their families move around, and who often suffer interruptions in their schooling. These books for them to keep in their personal collection were the first books many of them owned for themselves. We partnered with Amigos de Guadalupe through their summer enrichment 'Bridge Builders for Justice' program and their holiday La Posada. Amigos de Guadalupe is a non-profit organization that serves unhoused children and their families in San Jose, providing temporary housing, case management, educational enrichment, and more. They have 250 children in grades K-8 in their program, and we have been proud to partner with Amigos to provide engaging books for these kids living in very tough situations.

"This Summer 2022, Access Book Bay Area donated more than 50 books to Amigos de Guadalupe's Summer Under the Sun Program. Our program focuses on supporting our students in strengthening their literacy skills, and on instilling in them the power of social justice through the work of historical figures. Our students were excited to read about about Jackie Robinson, Justice Ruth Bader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and many more. Our teachers were excited to be provided with brand-new and gently used books. They built their lessons based on the books they received, and allowed students to pick their favorite book and to write about it. Thank you Access Book Bay Area!!!"

-Mayra Cerda, Program Director, Amigos de Guadalupe



Completed: 2022

Unhoused children and their families: **250**

Books given: **950**

Multiple books per child

2 Events, Summer and Winter



LITTLE FREE LIBRARY BOXES. READ IN COLOR

In summer of 2022 finding inclusive, culturally relevant books to read got easier in the Bay Area. Access Books Bay Area partnered with the national Little Free Library® (LFL) nonprofit organization to introduce its Read in Color diverse-books initiative in San Francisco. We did this in collaboration with the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) African American Parent Advisory Council. Through the initiative, 7 fully stocked new Little Free Library book-sharing boxes were established in high-impact areas and more than 2,000 diverse books will be distributed to promote understanding, equity and inclusion over the year following installation. Five additional little libraries will be installed going into 2023.

San Francisco is an incredibly diverse city, so this opportunity to bring books that actually represent the lives and experiences of students directly to their communities and neighborhoods is invaluable. Despite San Francisco's affluent reputation; access to diverse books is sorely needed. In a city with great wealth and opportunity, many families—and especially families of color—get left behind, and this effort helps ensure that every child in SF gets the access to high-quality reading materials that are culturally relevant and engaging to read that they deserve. We are immensely grateful to our partner organizations for helping us make this initiative happen!

The first of San Francisco's Read in Color libraries stands at Bessie Carmichael Elementary, located in San Francisco's Filipino cultural district. The school is home to the city's only Tagalog language and Filipino culture immersion program. It serves 479 students, over 70% of whom are socioeconomically disadvantaged, and 89% of whom are children of color. Other Little Free Libraries have been installed at Tenderloin Community School, serving the area of San Francisco with the most concentrated poverty and high diversity, at the Willie Mays Boys and Girls Club in Hunter's Point, at Ella Hill Hutch Mo Magic and Booker T. Washington community centers in the Western Addition, an historically Black neighborhood, and at private residences in the Bayview and Visitacion Valley.

"It has been my absolute pleasure to work alongside Access Books Bay Area as part of the African American Parent Advisory Council. Together we have installed 7 Little Free Libraries stuffed with books provided by the Read and Color Initiative and Access Books Bay Area. We have installed books in areas throughout San Francisco where access to free, culturally relevant books are limited. Access Books Bay Area has been a thoughtful and strategic partner who has gone above and beyond to make our dream to place Little Free Libraries all throughout communities densely populated with African American and Black students a reality. Support ABBA and do it now!"

- Laticia Erving, African American Parent Advisory Council



WHAT'S NEXT?

As we move into 2023, Access Books Bay Area is pleased to have a queue of schools eager for a library refurbishment. It is difficult to select which schools we will be able to serve in the next year, as so many of them are worthy and in need of our help.

As of the close of 2022, we have scheduled projects at Lairon College Preparatory Academy in February, and McKinley Elementary in April, both in San Jose. We will do a third project in Fall of 2023, at a school to be determined.

Work on Read in Color continues as well. In selecting books to provide to children in the next year, we will continue the focus on diverse books, and upholding the freedom to read.

We are grateful that we had a year of relative normalcy in 2022, allowing us to get back into schools more, and complete impactful library projects, complete with dozens of volunteers working together, painting murals, and building community through the shared vision of improved libraries. We look forward to continued momentum with our library projects in the coming year.

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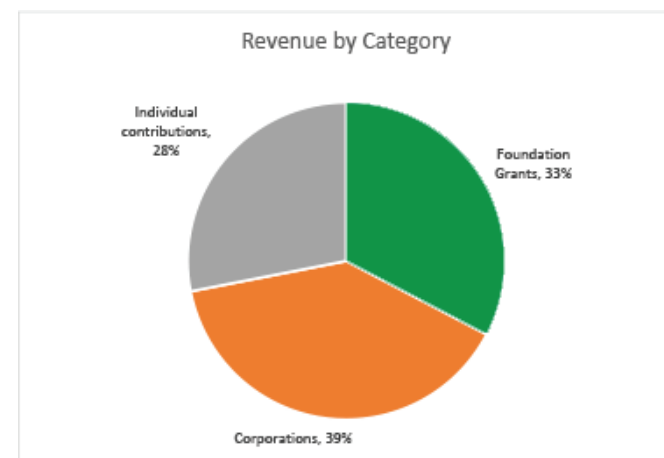
FINANCIAL STATEMENT

2022 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Access books Bay Area raised \$80,928 in funds in 2022 which is an increase of 39% over 2021. This increase was primarily driven by an increase in Corporate donations and foundation grants. The expenses totaled \$82,722 with 91% of expenses related to library refurbishments and 8% related to additional books for book giveaways and book boxes.

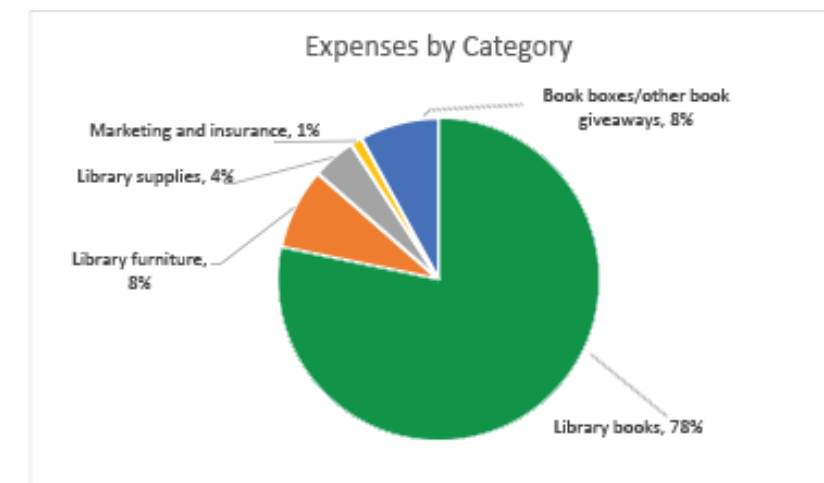
REVENUE

REVENUE CATEGORIES	2022	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
FOUNDATION GRANTS	\$26,444	33%
CORPORATIONS	\$31,769	39%
INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS	\$22,715	28%
TOTAL	\$80,928	



EXPENSES

CATEGORIES	2022	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
LIBRARY BOOKS	\$64,694	78%
LIBRARY FURNITURE	\$6,807	8%
LIBRARY SUPPLIES	\$3,634	4%
MARKETING AND INSURANCE	\$977	1%
BOOK BOXES/OTHER BOOK GIVEAWAYS	\$6,610	8%
TOTAL	\$82,722	



SPONSORS & PARTNERS

THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS WHO SUPPORTED OUR WORK IN 2022.



INDIVIDUAL DONORS

INDIVIDUAL DONORS MAKE UP A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF OUR FUNDING EVERY YEAR.
THANK YOU SO MUCH TO THESE GENEROUS INDIVIDUALS WHO SUPPORTED OUR WORK IN 2022.

\$100 - \$499

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OF REED, ALEX AND EMMA

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\$20 - 1 BOOK	\$100 - 5 BOOKS
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\$20,000 - REFURBISH A SCHOOL LIBRARY	

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Amanda Collins, Executive Director
amanda@accessbooksbayarea.org



Our Mission

To level the literacy playing field for K-8 students living in poverty by providing high quality, high-interest, culturally relevant books, and a transformed school library space that invites students to spend time and read.

