

BAY AREA

ACCESS BOOKS BAY AREA

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

LETTER FROM OUR FOUNDER

It was year two of the pandemic, and as much as many people were weary of the hardship and just wanted things to go back to normal, people were also eager to help.

After almost a year of lockdown, we began 2021 with an immense outpouring of support from the Bay Area community. People with carpentry skills built little libraries for us to install on the campuses of still shuttered schools. People with artistic skills painted beautiful designs on the little libraries. Families and communities ran book drives and collected thousands of gently used and new books for us to redistribute to those in need. And volunteers showed up in their masks to do socially distanced book sorting and processing.

What all of these people recognized was that the pandemic had only served to heighten the already existing inequities in our community that keep the children most in need from getting access to good books, and therefore from becoming readers. Most of the children served by Access Books Bay Area live in what are referred to as “Book Deserts”. These are areas with fewer than 100 books per household on average, and with extremely limited access to sources of books like public library branches and book stores. In these book deserts the only reliable source of reading material for the children in the community were their schools, and the pandemic had taken that away.

In 2021, hundreds of Bay Area residents stepped up to do something about that. Their efforts helped us to increase access for the



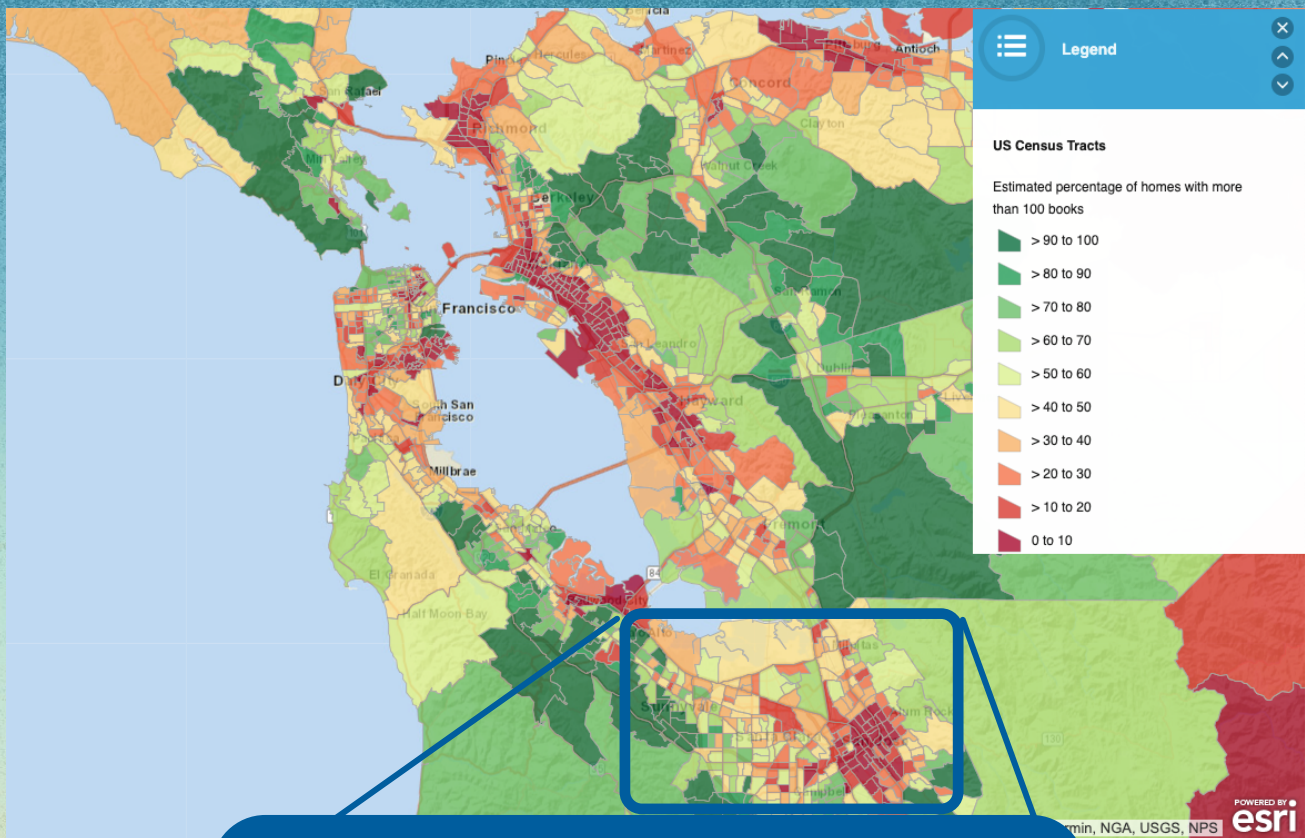
children living in book deserts, installing 23 little libraries in low income communities up and down the Peninsula, in locations where children could get access even when their schools were closed, and providing thousands and thousands of books to fill those libraries. They provided funds to allow us to provide hundreds of books featuring characters of color, written by authors of color for the SFUSD African American Parent Advisory Council’s annual book giveaway event for families of color. They helped us to send books home with holiday gift baskets distributed by Sacred Heart Community Service, providing 1200 books for children ages 6-8. And they helped us make sure that the children of Edenvale Elementary school in San Jose started their year off with brand new books in their library when they did reopen in the fall.

I cannot overstate how incredibly grateful all of the board and staff of Access Books Bay Area and I are for the generosity, talent, and above all, the huge hearts of our community. Thank you!

AMANDA COLLINS

*Access Books Bay Area founder & Executive Director
December 2021*

BOOK DESERTS IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA



San Jose and East San Jose, both highlighted in dark red, are the sites of the majority of our library projects and many of our little library boxes.

WHO WE ARE

The 2021 Access Books Bay Area Board of Directors



Amanda Collins, M.L.I.S.
Exec. Director & Board President
Access Books Bay Area, Palo Alto USD



Alison Guan
**Board Secretary/Program
Manager**
Community Volunteer



Linda Forrester
**Director of Operations
/ Program Manager**
Community Volunteer



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Treasurer
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CBIZ Retirement Plan Services



Olivia Wind
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2021 Staff

Kathryn Rydberg
Social Media Manager

Cheryl Kovalchik
Communications Lead

OUR MISSION & VALUES

MISSION STATEMENT

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 a child's life. 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 ~85% of the students live at or below the poverty line, most of whom are also children of color. We also partner with local service organizations to improve classroom libraries with donated books.

#BooksChangeLives

OUR VALUES

Literacy is a fundamental right

We believe that all children, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, 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 walking in the shoes of others.

2021 PROGRAMS

PROGRAMS IN YEAR TWO OF THE PANDEMIC

In 2021 most Bay Area schools remained in distance learning through the spring and up to the end of the school year, and there were strict prohibitions against bringing volunteers on to school campuses, even when they were closed. This posed a significant challenge to our ability to carry out projects in our main focus area – school libraries. And while we had hope that the resumption of in-person classes in the fall would allow us to get back into action, severe teacher and sub shortages, dealing with quarantines and contact tracing, and even periodically shutting down continued to limit the ability of schools to take on anything extra, including partnering on school library projects. Many school libraries also remained closed to students into the fall, as schools took precautions to minimize student use of shared spaces between different cohorts.

Despite all this, we were able to complete one partial school library project at Edenvale Elementary in San Jose, and to do most of the planning and execution for another at Washington Elementary, also in San Jose, which will be completed in January of 2022. It did, however, encourage us to focus more on other ways to get books into the hands of children in our hardest hit communities, including a large number of new Little Free Libraries, as well as two direct book giveaways to low-income children and children of color.



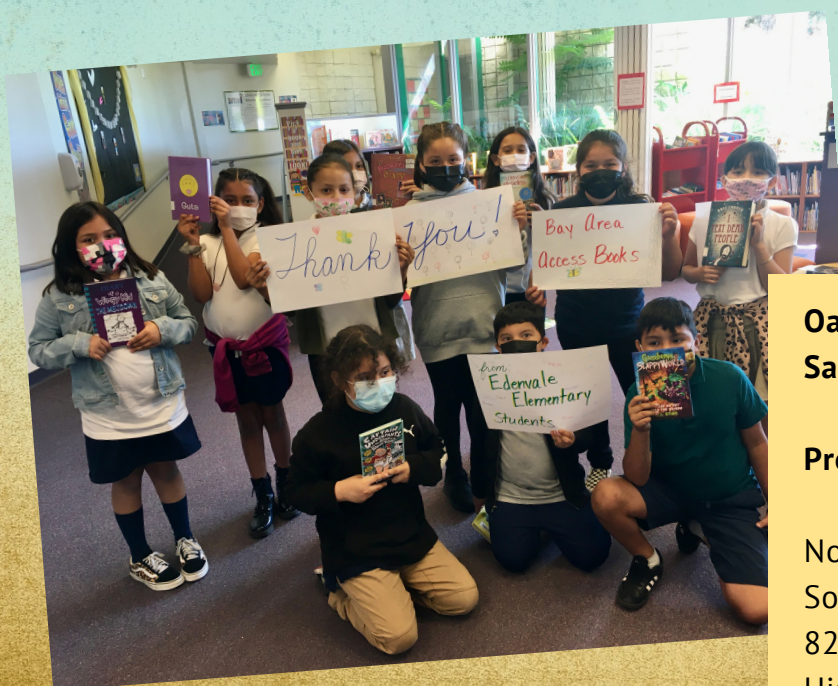
"On behalf of Oak Grove School District and Edenvale Elementary School, I would like to thank Access Books Bay Area for their generous donation. Edenvale Elementary students were ecstatic to receive their new Library books and see how the new furniture and rug brightened up their library! The books donated were a wide assortment of subjects as well as diverse, which reflects our student and community population. Thank you Access Books Bay Area for bringing smiles to our student community, especially during covid-19 when materials are hard to come by!"

- Lexie Zapien, District Library Tech
December 2021

SCHOOL LIBRARY PROJECTS

Edenvale Elementary School in Oak Grove Elementary School District is a small K-6 school serving a largely Latinx population, and located in one of the many book deserts of the Bay Area. The school applied for a project with Access Books Bay Area in late 2019, but the pandemic closures prevented us from completing this project until late spring of 2021. And despite the school re-opening for in-person classes, volunteers still could not be brought on campus. The books for this school were processed by Access Books Bay Area volunteers off site in an outdoor setting. Unfortunately we were unable to get into the school to paint murals due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Despite these constraints, the school library received nearly 1000 brand new, culturally relevant, engaging books, every single one of which has been checked out at least once since May. This constitutes unprecedented success for library books, the majority of which are never checked out in any given school year. And of course many of the new books have been checked out many more times, with the average checkout rate for the new books at 3 checkouts per book in the last six months of the year.



EDENVALE ELEMENTARY

**Oak Grove Elementary School District,
San Jose, CA**

Project Completed: May 2021

No. of Students: 469 Grades: K-6
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged:
82%
Hispanic/Latinx: 89% Black: 2%
English Language Learners: 62%

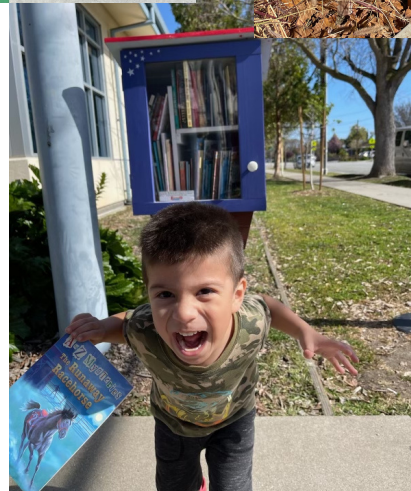
**New library books + library processing
materials donated: 985**

LITTLE FREE LIBRARY BOXES

The little library program that we began in 2020 was so successful, we decided to expand it in 2021. These little libraries provide books to the school community 24/7, allowing students to choose a book anytime. Even when schools re-opened after the pandemic closures, principals continued to report to us that the little libraries were extremely popular.

In 2021 we ramped up production, with volunteers pitching in to build, paint, and install the little libraries, and run book drives to collect the books to fill them. We now have little libraries installed at 30 schools up and down the Peninsula, located in neighborhoods where kids have limited access to books. With help from our volunteers we will ensure that they remain well stocked.

Impact: 127 volunteers engaged, 23 boxes installed, ~6,600 books, ~9,200 children and their families given access to books!

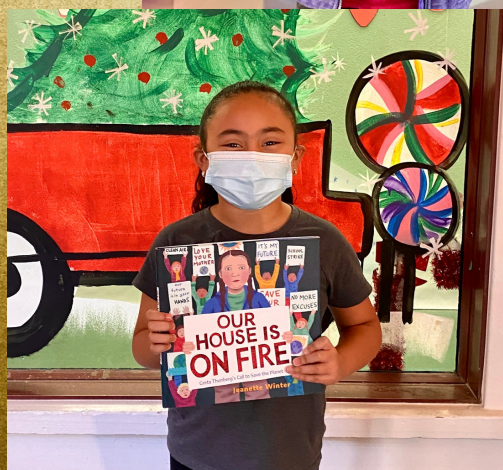


DIRECT BOOK GIVEAWAYS WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS

In 2021 Access Books Bay Area continued to provide books directly to children living in poverty living in book deserts whose access to books both in and out of their homes was severely limited. We did so with the help of partners both old and new.

In February of 2021 we initiated a new partnership with the African American Parent Advisory Council of San Francisco to give away 250 new diverse books featuring characters of color as part of their annual book giveaway. And in December we once again partnered with Sacred Heart Community service, providing 1200 brand new books for children ages 6-8 that were distributed along with gift baskets to families living in poverty in the San Jose area.

Impact: 1450 books to approximately 1250 children



WHAT'S NEXT?

As we look forward to 2022 and beyond, it is our continued community engagement and partnerships that give us the most to be excited about. In 2021, we initiated partnerships with South Bay makerspace MakerNexus, the African American Parent Advisory Council (AAPAC) of San Francisco, and Little Free Library national organization for the Read in Color program that we will roll out in 2022. Read in Color distributes books that provide perspectives on racism and social justice; celebrate BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and other marginalized voices; and incorporate experiences from all identities for all readers. In San Francisco we will install 15 Read in Color boxes in communities of color around the city.

Another great result of our expanded community presence in 2021 has been connections with more schools in need of our projects. We enter 2022 with three schools in the queue for library projects, including Washington Elementary, for which project planning began in 2021 and will be completed in early 2022. We are also in planning phase for another 2022 project at Santee Elementary in San Jose, sponsored by a generous donation from Marilyn Dougherty. Our final 2022 project will take place in the fall at Franklin Elementary school, also in San Jose.

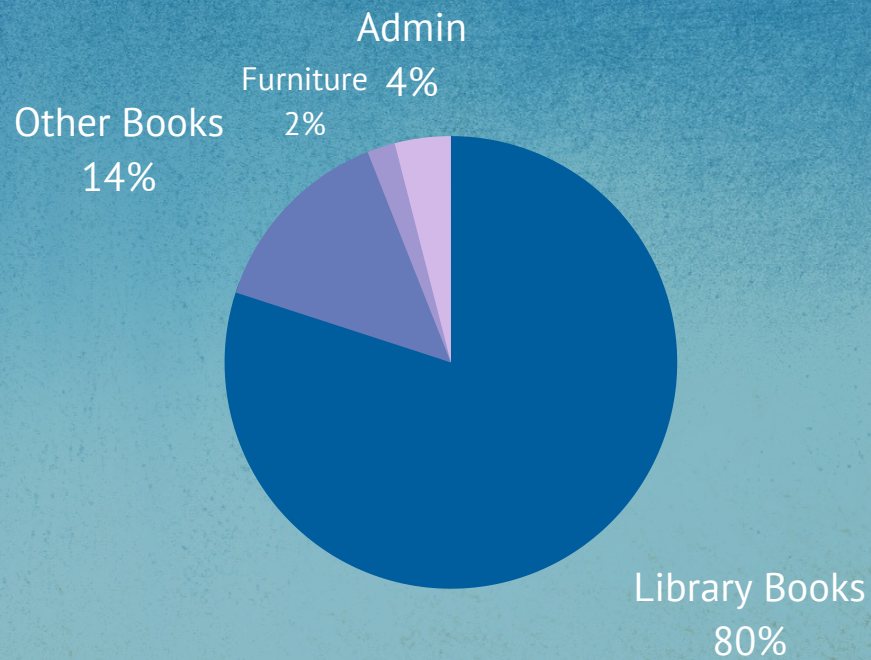
And of course as we move forward with more school projects, we will continue to benefit from the incredible engagement of our community of volunteers, running book drives, volunteering to sort donated books, showing up for book processing and mural painting events at schools, and more!



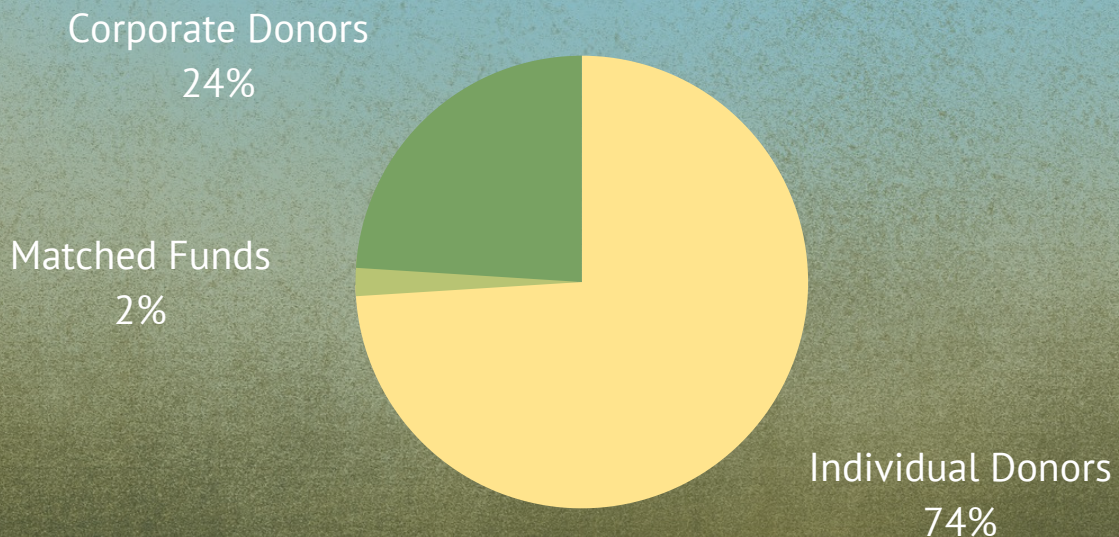
FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Access Books Bay Area revenue in 2021 totaled \$58,289, and expenses totaled \$40,012.

EXPENSES BY CATEGORY



REVENUE BY CATEGORY



OUR AMAZING DONORS

These generous individual donors made up 74% of our income in 2021, and we absolutely could not have made the impact we did without them and the important difference that their gift made in providing literacy opportunities to children in the Bay Area.

\$15,000+

Marilyn Dougherty

\$5,000+

*Diana & Doug Collins
Mary Murphy*

\$1,000+

*Amanda & Stuart Collins
Linda & Christopher Forrester
Susan Irvin Choquette
Alison & Brian Guan
Therese Pasquesi
David Wohlwend
Margaret Seligson*

\$500+

*Kavitha Pendyala
Pete Ravani
Matthew & Meghan
Caudill*

\$200+

*Megan Hornbecker
Theodore Hong
Arsen & Nina Elkin
Gilles Bouvier*

\$100+

*David Furth
Laura Croote
Sarah Grossman-Swenson
Amber Wheeler
Anita Kunst
Leslie Anido
Karen Latchford*

*Sara Sullivan
Michael Tran
Scott Walther
Vivan Poehlman-Hsieh
Helyn Wohlwend*

And a huge thank you to the innumerable Book Donors and Book Drive Sponsors who so generously donated their time and resources in 2021!

OUR AWESOME SPONSORS

We are so grateful to all of the wonderful organizations and companies that have supported our work in 2021. Thank you for supporting literacy in the Bay Area!



FOUNDATION

ARDIAN



SHEARMAN & STERLING



MAKE A DIFFERENCE



BOOKS FOR A LIBRARY

25 books to fill a shelf w/
processing - \$500



READING FURNITURE

One library quality reading
sofa - \$1,500



REFURBISH A SCHOOL LIBRARY

1,000 books, murals, and new
furniture - \$20,000

HOW YOU CAN HELP

STAY INFORMED:

Learn more about our programs.

VOLUNTEER: www.accessbooksbayarea.org/volunteer

JOIN OUR TEAM: go to volunteermatch.org or email info@accessbooksbayarea.org to learn more.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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