

**20
24**

ANNUAL REPORT FOR ACCESS BOOKS BAY AREA



20
24

LETTER FROM OUR FOUNDER



2024 was a year of exciting partnerships for Access Books Bay Area! We partnered with Stanford for their Juneteenth celebration, highlighting the importance of our work for the African American community in reaching true equity of access to literacy and high quality reading materials. We partnered with the San Jose Sharks Foundation, who are donating \$1000 for every goal scored this season to seven different nonprofits in the Bay Area, including us. We partnered with Google's Women in Tech group for a book drive and other volunteer activities. We continued to partner with Amigos de Guadalupe, an amazing nonprofit serving unhoused families with children. This year we worked with Roblox's Latino affinity group, Comunidad, to provide books for their summer program. We also provided books for their Las Posadas gift program in the winter. And we partnered with fabulous local bookstore Linden Tree, who held a book drive for us over the summer, funding the purchase of hundreds of new books for our fall school library program.

And of course we partnered with all of our amazing volunteers! This year volunteers ran ten book drives for us, collecting a mix of gently used and new books that filled our little libraries and provided books for school classrooms at our project schools. Even more volunteers worked as stewards for those little libraries, driving around the Bay Area delivering books, cleaning and making repairs, and ensuring that children in neighborhoods all over the peninsula and south bay continue to have access to books and can build their home libraries, even when school is not in session. And when school is in session, over 200 volunteers helped us to process library books and paint murals at our three school projects.

In 2024 we welcomed new members to our volunteer team as well. We added new volunteers to our marketing and communications team, including some summer interns for the first time! We also welcomed a new artistic director. We are so very excited for all of these wonderful new people and the energy and enthusiasm they bring. Despite all of this, we remain a very small organization, and we would not be able to do the work we do, without your support. So on behalf of the entire team at Access Books Bay Area, thank you for your support in 2024, and we look forward to more in 2025!

Sincerely,

Amanda Collins, MLIS
Founder and Executive Director

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Rooftop PK-8, Teacher Librarian



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“This year has underscored the critical importance of equitable access to high-quality, engaging reading materials for students in underserved communities. Despite ongoing challenges—whether from inequitable funding for school libraries or efforts to censor what children can read—our board has been unwavering in its dedication to our mission. Their leadership and commitment have been instrumental in helping us revitalize libraries, restock shelves with culturally relevant books, and create inspiring spaces where students can see themselves reflected in the stories they read. Together, we’ve reaffirmed the power of literacy to transform lives, and I am deeply grateful for their passion and support as we continue this essential work.”

— Amanda Collins, M.L.I.S. - Executive Director and Founder



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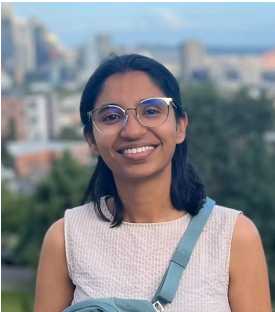
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CECILIA JONES (THROUGH MAY 2024)
Artistic Director



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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, businesses, families and individuals 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 #BOOKSCHANGELIVES

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.

“Behind every successful library transformation is the hard work of our staff. Their commitment to managing the details, from crafting compelling marketing activities to expanding our outreach efforts, our staff ensure that our mission reaches the widest possible audience, ensures that every effort runs smoothly and makes a lasting impact.”

— Linda Forrester, Board Member & Director of Operations/Program Director

2024

2024 PROGRAMS

Access Books Bay Area had another productive and impactful year in 2024. We completed three full library refurbishments, expanding up into the peninsula for our last project, where we worked with a school from the Redwood City School District. Redwood City schools serve a high percentage of students living in poverty, and we plan to continue working with them into 2025.

Our Little Free Libraries program has continued to have a broad reach to children with limited access to books, with our dedicated crew of Little Free Library Stewards, Repair Technicians, and Book Drive volunteers making sure the little libraries are constantly well stocked with high-interest books.

We continued our partnership with Amigos de Guadalupe, collaborating with corporate sponsors to provide books for their summer enrichment program and winter Las Posadas celebration for children experiencing homelessness in San Jose.

All of our efforts and programs are focused on promoting and supporting reading for pleasure, children being able to choose their own books and immerse themselves in reading, which allows them to develop into readers. We know that 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:
ROBERT F. KENNEDY

Robert F. Kennedy Elementary school is in the Franklin McKinley School District and is located in San Jose. It is Access Books Bay Area’s 17th school library refurbishment overall and the 6th school library we have refurbished in the Franklin McKinley School District. Like all of the schools we serve, a large majority of the students at the school live in very low-income households and the school has not had any dedicated funding to purchase new books for the library in decades. The only new books that have been added to the library in the last 20 years are ones purchased from book fairs or donated, and these are mostly paperback books that are not designed for the high circulation that library books get.

Kennedy’s library is unique in that the school’s Library Media Assistant (LMA) weeded over 3000 books from the library prior to our project, because they were so old, tattered and no longer interesting to the current generation at the school, leaving the shelves quite bare. We were excited to work with this nearly blank slate, and quickly got to work ordering an array of new books to fill up the nearly empty shelves. We purchased 1162 new books for the school, which included two whole book cases of brand new graphic novels, several shelves of new books to update their aged Biography section, many shelves of brand new picture books featuring diverse characters to reflect the multicultural student body, and new books in Spanish to appeal to students who are Spanish-speakers and new to the US.

On Saturday, January 27, 2024, 65 volunteers spent the day putting barcode and spine labels on the new books and shelving the new books, so the following Monday the students were able to begin checking out the new, diverse and super exciting books. Volunteers also painted beautiful murals inside and outside the library, to make the space more welcoming and inspiring. We also refreshed the school’s Little Free Library with a cheerful new design. We are grateful to the volunteers who dedicated their Saturday to work on this project, the donors who paid for the books and processing materials, and for the school administration and staff who worked hard alongside the Access Books Bay Area staff to transform this library.

“Our collaboration with Access Books Bay Area is a gift that will continue to serve our community beyond a timeframe we can ever imagine! The mural was a beautiful addition to our Library, making it a space that now truly invites imagination and creativity. In all the beauty that was brought by this event and what has come since then, the books have been the best part of all of that. The books reflect the languages, cultures, and experiences of our community while inviting us to explore the world beyond our walls.”

-Mariana Alvarez, Kennedy Principal



Completed: January 2024

Number of Students: 308 English Language Learners: 57%

New library books: 1162 Grades: K-6

Socioeconomically Disadvantaged: 71% Hispanic/Latinx: 73%

Vietnamese/ Filipino/Asian: 20%

2024

LIBRARY REFURBISHMENTS: STONEGATE ELEMENTARY

Stonegate Elementary School in San Jose’s Franklin McKinley School District has a majority of students who are economically disadvantaged and BIPOC. Our vision was to provide these students a vibrant book haven filled with high-quality, diverse and captivating stories representative of their realities. We are very proud to mark the completion of this project as our 18th school library refurbishment.

On Saturday, April 27, 2024, 65 volunteers spent the day putting barcodes and spine labels on 1029 new books we purchased so that they were check-out ready for the students returning the following Monday. We replaced excess paperbacks and old books with shiny new ones featuring diverse voices, picture books with gorgeous illustrations, non-fiction books on important, current topics, and Spanish books for the school’s bilingual readers.

Led by our Artistic Director, Cecilia Jones, volunteers also painted beautiful murals inside and outside the library, tracing the designs and then meticulously painting the details to breathe new life into the library and renew its appeal for the students. This quote formed a part of the largest mural: “Every time you open a book, a little magic falls out.”

Additionally, we equipped the library with colorful couches to create a cozy reading nook. We took photos of students the following week, new books in hand, lounging on the couches with big smiles on their faces.

“On behalf of the entire school community, thank you so much for your generous support in accepting our school library into your program. We are particularly grateful for the investment in our library’s collection. The new and current books have transformed our library into a vibrant and inviting hub for reading and learning. Both teachers and students have been thrilled with the diverse selection, which has ignited their imaginations and fostered a lifelong love of literature. Adding new book titles has expanded our students’ reading choices and provides exposure to diverse perspectives and cultures.”

-Mary Redondo, Library Media Assistant



Project Completed: April 2024

Number of Students: 514

English Language Learners: 41%

New library books: 1029

Socioeconomically Disadvantaged: 62%

Hispanic/Latinx: 52%

Grades: K-8

Vietnamese/Asian: 43%

Homeless: 2%

2024

LIBRARY REFURBISHMENTS: HOOVER COMMUNITY SCHOOL

We are proud to announce the completion of our 19th library refurbishment at Hoover Community School in Redwood City. The students of this school are primarily Hispanic/Latino English Language Learners from socioeconomically challenged backgrounds, whom the Library Media Assistant describes as being some of the most vulnerable children in San Mateo County. Unfortunately, the school library was severely outdated, with an alarmingly large number of books going back 20 years. This is where we stepped in. Students at Hoover Community School now have a newly refurbished library with an additional 1290 brand-new, diverse, culturally relevant books in both English and Spanish, and three delightful murals.

Our team and fantastic volunteers were hard at work on Project Day, painting murals and processing the new books in time for the students to check them out the following week. Our social media team documented the amount of work that goes into these tasks here. Everyone pitched in with smiles on their faces and hope in their hearts of a brighter future for the students at Hoover Elementary School.

We are very grateful to the donors, the volunteers and the school administration and staff who worked together to make this project possible. At Access Books Bay Area, we wholeheartedly believe that school libraries matter! With 19 library refurbishments under our belt, we are more excited than ever to continue spreading book joy to schools across the Bay Area.

"I love the quality and the amount of new books. The books are either super funny or sweet, and some have the most beautiful messages. Access Books [Bay Area] really took their time to give us the best books. The murals brought in so much more light, in and around the library. Our library is so much more welcoming. The students here at Hoover deserve it. Thank you for Access Books [Bay Area] for this wonderful gift. We are truly grateful"

-Mrs. Valles, Hoover School Librarian



Project Completed: September 2024

Number of Students: **673** English Language Learners: **67%**

New library books: **1290**

Socioeconomically Disadvantaged: **97%** Grades: **K-8**

Hispanic/Latinx: **96%** Homeless: **10%**

20
24

PRINCIPALS & LIBRARY STAFF SAY:

"I loved working with the community, and knowing that the students will have a revamped, restocked library that they can be proud of at the school."

- Steven Sanchez, FMSD Board Trustee

"Working with Access Books was an amazing experience. The mural that was painted in our library makes the space much more inviting for our students. The amazing books they donated are of amazing quality, and the children were in awe to see how many inclusive, and diverse books we got from the collection. Our collection was not up to date, and access books gave us this opportunity. Our students now are super excited to come in and see all the titles they can see themselves in, and share with their families. Thank you Access Books for this amazing opportunity."

-Angelica, Kennedy Library Media Assistant

"Planning and implementing the project was a pleasure. It was also a pleasure to work with such generous and caring people. Their love for books and their commitment to empowering our students to read inspired our entire staff."

- Ian McCray, Stonegate Principal

"I loved every mural but my absolute favorite would be the beautiful mural with the silhouette of the children reading under the tree in the front of the library. It made our library entrance look and feel more welcoming, it definitely added life."

- Nancy Valles, Hoover School Library Media Assistant

"I think Access Books Bay Area really helped revamp the Hoover library collection. Now there are less books on the shelf that are old and unappealing and more that students are eager to read."

- Beth Berlin-Stephens, Redwood City School District Teacher-Librarian

STUDENTS SAY:

"The baby sitters club (graphic novels) are my favorite. Now we have more" - Brianna 4th grade Hoover student

"I really like the husky that's painted on the wall" - Hugo 4th grade Hoover student

"The murals are very pretty" - Alexa 4th Hoover student

"Cristiano Ronaldoooooooooooooo book, Let's GOOOOOOOOOO" - Jose 3rd grade Hoover student

TEACHERS SAY:

I, Julie Sanchez, 3rd Grade Teacher, would like to extend my and my school's heartfelt gratitude for your generous grant of rich, diverse, and informative texts last April at our volunteer event. Thank you also for the opportunity and resources to establish and beautify the space with beautiful images of paintings inside and out. It is now where all students feel welcome and look forward to visiting.

Your support is important to helping us achieve our mission to engage, teach, and represent various readers. Thanks to your contribution, we can provide a bright and cheery library to all of our groups of students and of course, a great source of literature as well. Your kindness and generosity have significantly impacted us and we are deeply grateful.

Your commitment to providing these materials and a vibrant atmosphere in our library is invaluable, and we look forward to enjoying them and respecting our library for years to come.

- Julie Sanchez, 3rd Grade Teacher, Stonegate Elementary School

On behalf of the entire school community, thank you so much for your generous support in accepting our school library into your program. We are particularly grateful for the investment in our library's collection.

The new and current books have transformed our library into a vibrant and inviting hub for reading and learning. Both teachers and students have been thrilled with the diverse selection, which has ignited their imaginations and fostered a lifelong love of literature. Adding new book titles has expanded our students' reading choices and provides exposure to diverse perspectives and cultures.

The comfortable sofas and designated stations have created a welcoming and collaborative environment. They love the murals. Students now eagerly spend time in the library, engaging in quiet reading, group discussions, and research projects. The enhanced atmosphere has significantly increased our students' time reading to promote their academic success and personal growth.

Your program has made an immeasurable difference in our school library. It has created a space where students can feel inspired, engaged, and supported in their educational journey. We are confident that the positive impact of this program will extend far beyond our students' time in this school. Thank you again for your unwavering commitment to literacy and education. Your generosity has made a lasting difference in the lives of our students.

- Mary Redondo, Library Media Assistant, Stonegate Elementary School

"My first graders were thrilled to get their hands on brand new books! Especially the Pete the Cat series!"

- Laura Lentz, 1st grade teacher, Hoover Community School

20
24

DIRECT BOOK GIVEAWAYS: AMIGOS DE GUADALUPE

In 2024 we deepened our partnership with Amigos de Guadalupe Center for Justice and Empowerment with two initiatives to support children experiencing housing instability. Recognizing the unique challenges faced by these children, who often experience disruptions to their education, we collaborated with Roblox Corporation's Latinx employee group (Comunidad) to provide new Spanish and bilingual books to 150 children in Amigos de Guadalupe's summer learning program. In December, we again partnered with Amigos de Guadalupe to provide 250 new English and Spanish books to children living in their temporary housing community. The books were distributed during the Las Posadas celebrations and each set was festively wrapped thanks to the employee group Women@YouTube. Both efforts focused on providing culturally relevant books to foster literacy and a love of reading among some of our community's most vulnerable children.

LITTLE FREE LIBRARY BOOK BOXES

Our program to provide access to mini-libraries is now in its 5th year, and we've stayed committed to supporting the many Little Libraries we have established. Our volunteer Little Free Library Stewards and Little Free Library Technicians work throughout the year tending to the mini libraries and keeping them in good working order, and full of engaging and age-appropriate books for children to select from! These little libraries are open 24/7, with books available for children to select for themselves, and to build their own libraries at home.

25 volunteers engaged, 35 Little Free Library Boxes ~3,680 books, ~6,400 children and their families given access to books!



WHAT'S NEXT?

Looking ahead to 2025, the outlook for school funding, both nationally and in California, is not improving. And when schools tighten their belts, the library is often the first to get their funding cut. But we know that all children need access to high quality libraries, and especially to new and engaging books. We remain committed to continuing our school library projects, and will be expanding our work to another school in Redwood City this winter, where 95%+ of students are living at or below the federal poverty line. In the fall we will also work with our first school in San Mateo, at Lead Elementary, where applying for our project has spurred a full overhaul of the library space in addition to our project.

In addition to new school library projects, in spring of 2025 we will revisit sites where we have done projects in the past, collecting information about the impact of our library grants that will help us to improve our operations moving forward.

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FINANCIAL STATEMENT

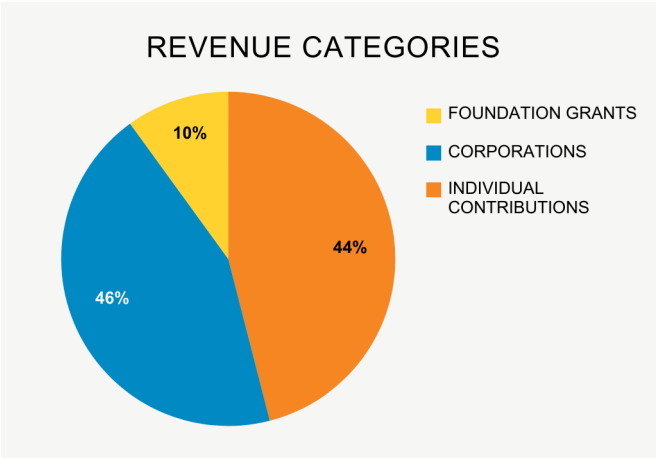


2024 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Access Books Bay Area raised \$59,822 in funds in 2024, an increase of 34% over 2023. While individual contributions decreased, reflecting a downward trend in charitable giving in the U.S., we were able to fund all projects thanks to an increase in corporate donations and foundation grants. The expenses totaled \$64,809.98 with over 88% of expenses going directly towards books and processing for library refurbishments and book giveaways.

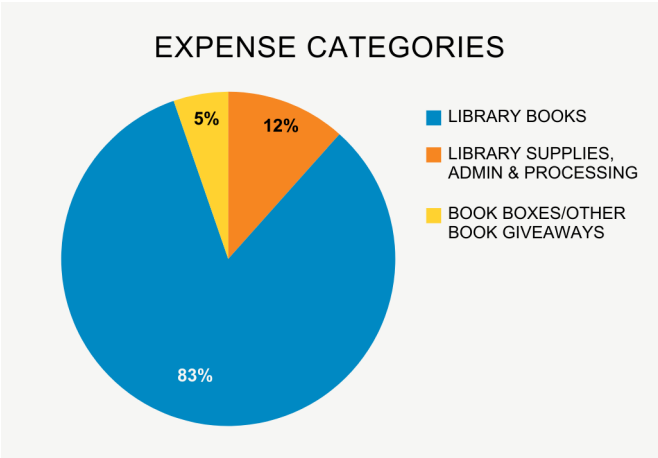
REVENUE

REVENUE CATEGORIES	2024	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
FOUNDATION GRANTS	\$6,000	10%
CORPORATIONS	\$27,661.91	46%
INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS	\$26,159.81	44%
TOTAL	\$59,822	



EXPENSES


CATEGORIES	2024	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
LIBRARY BOOKS	\$53,878	83%
LIBRARY SUPPLIES	\$7,526.05	12%
BOOK BOXES/OTHER BOOK GIVEAWAYS	\$3,405.93	5%
TOTAL	\$64,809.98	




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A Bigger Room

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THANK YOU SO MUCH TO THE GENEROUS INDIVIDUALS, FOUNDATIONS AND CORPORATIONS WHO SUPPORTED OUR WORK IN 2024.

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EIN 81-3039565

DONATE LEVELS:

\$30 - 2 BOOK	\$150 - 1 SHELF
\$60 - 4 BOOKS	\$300 - 2 SHELF

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.

