

# Annual General Report



THE READING PARTNERSHIP

#LITERACYLIBERATES

## 2021 – 2022



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## **Our Vision**

To see every child in every community receive the support they need to learn to write and read so that they can reach their full potential and succeed in school, work, and life.

## **Our Mission**

To create and deliver literacy-focused programs and resources that empower children and their families to be successful at all stages of life.



# Letter from Leadership

2022 marks a huge milestone for The Reading Partnership – we’ve officially been serving children and families for an entire decade! 10 years of important work and incredible impact. We are determined now more than ever to realize our vision that every child in every community receives the support needed to reach their full potential and succeed in school, work, and life.

It’s been a landmark year for The Reading Partnership. We doubled our annual revenue through increased support from individuals, foundations, businesses, and agencies that partnered in our mission to help more kids develop the skills and love for reading. We doubled our impact and served over 1000 children and their families through our programs and initiatives. We officially entered the ed-tech space with the launch of R-POD, the online adaptation of our signature Reading Partnership for Parents (RPP) program. We were named a TD Ready Challenge recipient – our biggest multi-year funding commitment to date – that will help us scale both RPP and R-POD from local to national programs.

Imagine that; a program incubated in the Kingston-Galloway/Orton Park community for the past 10 years, developed in partnership with local educators and volunteers, and shaped and improved by the consistent feedback of program participants, is going to be scaled across the country as an innovative solution for early literacy development. And we achieved all of this coming out of the tail-end of a pandemic.

School closures, lockdowns, and the shift to online learning led to devastating learning loss for school aged children across Canada. We know that COVID-19 compounded pre-existing issues in marginalized communities, and that children from families living on low-incomes, especially those who identify as Black and Indigenous, are overrepresented in the number of children negatively impacted.

Parents were asked to take on a leading role in their children’s education without the adequate skills, knowledge or learning tools to do so. As a result, there grew a significant demand and need for free, accessible, and relevant literacy support for children and families. The work we do is needed now more than ever. Our vision is clear; we have the experience and tools to effect change and give families the support they so desperately need.

We are thankful for our village of supporters who have worked with us for 10 years to help kids in East Scarborough improve their literacy. I never would have dreamt that from one program serving 12 families in 2012, we would grow into an organization that has served more than 10 000 people. Our community has helped to build our foundation, brick by brick, and we’ve developed a blueprint for literacy initiatives that work. We hope that you will continue to journey with us as we endeavor to serve children and families across the country.

I firmly believe in the words of Frederick Douglass that “Once you learn to read, you will be forever free”. For kids to thrive in school and in life, we know it takes a village. From parents, caregivers and educators to local nonprofits and businesses, community support is key to building a foundation for future success. Let’s continue to work together to ensure children have the reading and writing skills they need to build brighter futures for themselves and their families.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Cox', on a white background.

Camesha Cox

Founder & Executive Director

## Programs at a Glance

The past year has seen The Reading Partnership continue to grow and adapt while providing free, high-quality literacy programs to families in East Scarborough and – through online programming – across the Greater Toronto Area.

- **89 families** graduated from **Reading Partnership for Parents** with the skills and confidence to teach their children to read.
- **52 kids** unleashed their creativity and published their stories in **three anthologies** with **360° Stories**.
- **308 kids** gathered to read **four books** together in our city-wide online book club, **Kids ReadTO**.
- **340 books** were mailed out to **255 kids** at no cost through our partnership with **Dolly Parton's Imagination Library**.



# Kids ReadTO

A Virtual Book Club for Ages 9-12

Born out of the shift to online programming during the height of COVID-19, **Kids ReadTO** is an online city-wide book club for kids ages 9-12. It brings together young readers from across the GTA to engage in discussion, games, and group reading.

Throughout the year, **308** kids joined us as we read **four** middle grade novels:

- *Save Me a Seat* by Gita Varadarajan and Sarah Weeks
- *The Barren Grounds* by David A. Robertson
- *Mañanaland* by Pam Muñoz Ryan
- *Dragons in a Bag* by Zetta Elliott

Thanks to the generous support of sponsors like Indigo Love of Reading Foundation, Scholastic Canada, and Penguin Random House Canada, Kids ReadTO is offered at no cost and books are shipped directly to kids.



308

kids from across the GTA read along with us this year

71 207

pages read this year by KRTO readers



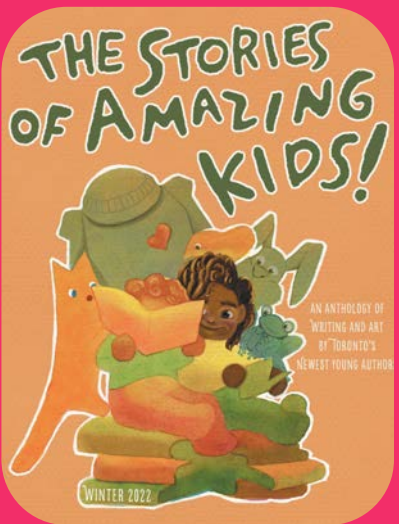
Zetta Elliott, author of KRTO book pick *Dragons in a Bag*, joined a weekly session to answer questions from kids!



5th Anthology  
(May 2021)



6th Anthology  
(November 2021)



7th Anthology  
(February 2022)



# 360° Stories

In Partnership with Story Planet

A program in partnership with Story Planet, **360° Stories** offers kids the chance to tell stories that reflect their lives and the world around them.

With the help of professional artists, kids get to become producers of literature rather than just consumers. As of spring 2022, we have printed and published **seven anthologies** of stories and art.

24

new authors published in May 2021  
~  
*The Land of Scarborough Adventures*

14

new authors published in November 2021  
~  
*Great Stories Through the Eyes of Kids*

14

new authors published in February 2022  
~  
*The Stories of Amazing Kids*

104

new authors published through 360° Stories to date (as of spring 2022)

*"Maybe this one story that I wrote could help maybe even just one kid to find what their meaning in life is."*



Each run of 360° Stories wraps up with an **online book launch** where participants get to see the culmination of their work in a professionally finished book.

Book launches are events that attract friends, family, teachers, and others to gain a sneak peek into the book as well as hear readings from participants.

A fitting finale to the program, it's an opportunity for participants to honor their accomplishment and be celebrated by their community.

*My favourite part was actually finishing my story and seeing my final product. At first I was kind of skeptical about this program, but after finishing my book I'm proud of myself, and I'm happy that I actually came here and tried.*

*- 360° Stories Participant*

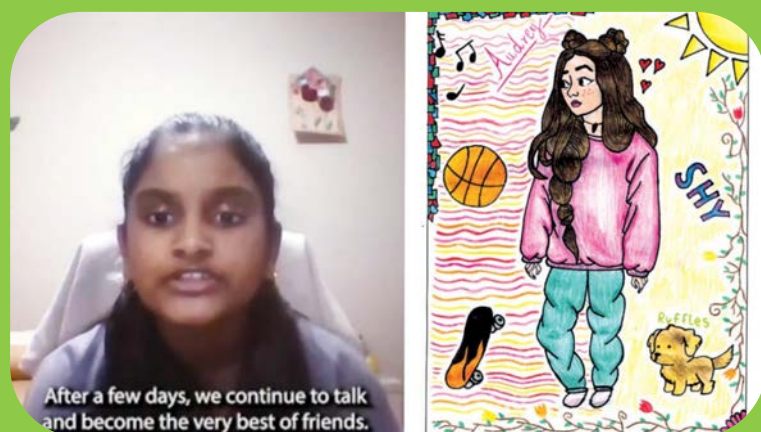
360° Stories not only helps kids improve on their literacy skills and creative expression, but it reminds them that no matter who they are, their stories deserve to be shared with the world.



A look into the January 2022 book launch of *Great Stories Through the Eyes of Kids*



Authors, family, and community members gathered for the launch



One young author shares an excerpt from her story. Viewers also got a look at her original illustrations!

# Reading Partnership for Parents

**Reading Partnership for Parents** is our tried and tested program that equips parents with the skills, tools, and confidence to teach their children ages 4-6 to read.

**Reading Partnership for Black Parents** is a version of the program adapted specifically for Black families. It includes Black-only participation, all Black facilitators, and Black-centric learning tools and materials.

Our **Train-the-Trainer** model equips community organizations across Canada to independently deliver our programming. Thank you to our local delivery partners: BGC East Scarborough, Native Child and Family Services Toronto, and Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities.



7

sessions run with the support of program delivery partners

89

families graduated from RPP this year

40%

took part in sessions exclusive to Black families

400+

families have graduated from RPP since our first session in 2012

## Reading Program On Demand (R-POD)

**Reading Program on Demand (R-POD)** is a new ed-tech solution adapted from our RPP program that allows caregivers to help their kids learn to read on their own time and at their own pace. R-POD's instructional videos feature interactive lessons and games, and caregivers have access to live coaching support.

**54 families** helped launch our first ever 10-week R-POD program session in the spring of 2022.

## Story of Impact

Throughout our 10th anniversary celebrations, it's been exciting to hear from Scarborough parents like Bhanumati who participated in our **'Reading Partnership for Parents'** program eight years ago with her daughter, Selena.

Bhanumati said that the program helped her to be *"more open-minded - **teaching kids to read is more than sitting still and reading a book**, but can include drawing letters in the sand, looking at signs in the neighbourhood, reading labels or menus."*

Bhanumati also appreciated how the program **created a sense of community among parents**, offering opportunities for honest conversations about when they were and were not having success. She felt reassured and supported by facilitators who listened and offered creative solutions.

Bhanumati has seen the benefits of **building a strong foundation of reading and writing**. Selena, now 12 years old, loves books and participates in opportunities like virtual reading clubs hosted by the University of Toronto.



**Bhanumati and Selena participating in RPP eight years ago**



**Mother and daughter today!**



# Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

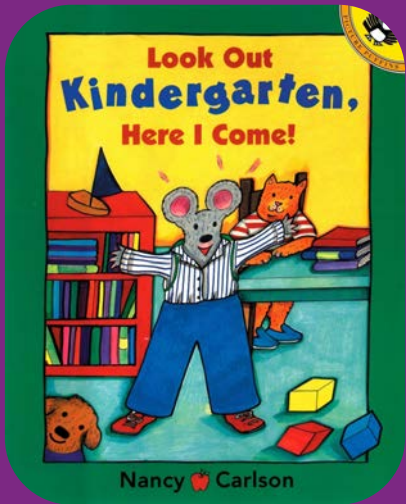
Through a new partnership with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, kids in East Scarborough will receive a high quality book every month until their fifth birthday, at no cost to the family.

**This partnership is another way for us to get books into the hands of kids who need them most.**

Launched in the fourth quarter of our 2021-22 year, our branch of the program can accommodate **550 kids** in underserved areas of East Scarborough.



The first book all registered children receive is a custom version of *The Little Engine That Could™*



The month of their fifth birthday, each child will receive a custom version of *Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come!*

**255**

kids enrolled in the program



**340**

free books mailed out so far

*We love this program. My child is so excited to receive a new book in the mail each month addressed directly to him. It has created an excitement for books in our home and lots of opportunities to read interesting stories together!*  
- DPIL caregiver

## Special Initiatives

In September 2021, for International Literacy Day, The Reading Partnership and YouthREX co-hosted [Building Black Futures Through Literacy](#).

The panel discussion focused on the importance of literacy learning that centres the cultures, histories, and identities of Black communities and highlighted our work to support Black families through the **Reading Partnership for Black Parents (RPBP)** program.

RPBP has been identified and funded as an **'Innovative Support for Black Parents'** by the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism.

We had incredible success in the spring of 2021 with our first edition of **Kids ReadTO Jr.**, delivered in collaboration with Alpha Alpha Delta Omega Chapter, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

The program for kids ages 6-8 brought together **30 families** from across the GTA for a 4-week virtual book club featuring books written by Black Canadian female authors, guided reading activities, and crafts.

Special thanks to the Jamaican Canadian Association of Nurses for making this initiative possible.



Jay Pitter, award-winning placemaker, author and speaker, gave opening remarks during the event.

Our Executive Director, Camesha Cox, spoke on the expert panel.



ONE FOR THE BOOKS



Young participants receiving their KRTO Jr. activity kit for the program



# Looking Ahead

Thanks to the financial support of TD Bank Group through the TD Ready Challenge, we are currently working on scaling our Reading Partnership for Parents program across the country.

We are so proud to say that a program incubated in Kingston-Galloway Orton Park (KGO) with the help of families, educators, and community members for the past 10 years, is going to be scaled across Canada as an innovative solution for early literacy development.



**4**

provinces will host RPP with the help of community program delivery partners

**736**

families will benefit across the country over three years

We're also working on expanding our signature resources. Our series of Tiny Tales early reader books is growing, and we're working on making our Lit Kits (resource kits used in our RPP programs) more accessible to families across the city and country.

We're hoping that kids and families, whether they're involved in our programs or not, have access to these culturally relevant resources that we know are meeting a need and filling a gap.

## TRP in the Media

In 2021 and early 2022, our Executive Director Camesha Cox had multiple opportunities to share the challenges faced by kids in our community and what The Reading Partnership is doing to help.

[The Globe and Mail](#): “From graphic novels to audiobooks, tips to get kids reading more” by Marsha Lederman (4/21)

ESG Unpacked Podcast - TD Bank Group hosted by Norie Campbell (1/22)

[ByBlacks.com](#): “Meet the Women Disrupting the Education Sector” by Celeste Ceres (2/22)

[Innovating Canada](#): “Recognizing Black History Month” by Mediaplanet (2/22)

[Toronto Star](#): “An East Scarborough ‘book desert’ blooms as The Reading Partnership publishes stories by kids” by Mike Adler (2/22)

[The Parenting Show](#) (Global News) hosted by Pina Crispo (3/22)

[Toronto Star](#): “Many students are being denied the ‘right to read.’ Ontario Human Rights Commission issues 157 calls to action” by Angelyn Francis (3/22)



ByBlacks.com



The Parenting Show hosted by Pina Crispo (top right), joined by Alicia Rose of TD (bottom)

**Camesha Cox**  
Founding Director, The Reading Partnership



**T**here have always been Black advocates and leaders responding to and addressing the challenges Black communities face with ingenuity and creativity. During Black History Month and beyond, it's important to acknowledge and support Black leaders and their initiatives to ensure sustainability and growth. For a decade, The Reading Partnership's work has been shaped by Black women educators who have worked collectively to

develop evidence-based programs to address local issues of literacy. The organization is proud to see these initiatives, incubated in East Scarborough, being scaled nationally to serve children and families in need of support across the country. This is Black Girl Magic at its best!

Innovating Canada

# Donor Support

We sincerely appreciate all of the individuals, foundations, businesses and agencies who have helped advance literacy achievement for kids in East Scarborough and beyond.

Thanks to our supporters and partners, more kids than ever are developing a love for reading.



Supporting 360° Stories and Reading Partnership for Parents National Project (TD Ready Challenge)



Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism



*The Reading Partnership is supported by the Government of Canada's Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative and the Black Business Initiative*

Amazon

Broad Family Foundation

The Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation

The Chawkers Foundation

The Dolly Parton Imagination Library

Indigo Love of Reading Foundation

Jamaican Canadian Association of Nurses

J.P. Bickell Foundation

Laurence Goldberg and Diane Spivak Fund at the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto

The Mary Jacqueline Rosevear Fund of The Fiera Capital Foundation

The McLean Foundation

The Michael and Andrea Barrack Fund - Gluskin Sheff Foundation

Telus Friendly Future Foundation

Traquair Family Foundation

Toyota



# Contributors

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Kwesi Johnson

Neil Price

Stacey Ann Berry

Zaya Kuyena



# Financial Summary

<b>Balance (000s) as of March 31 2022</b>	
<b>Assets</b>	
Current assets	
Cash	\$ 96
Accounts receivable	18
Due from trustee	105
Long-term assets	100
	<b>319</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	
Current liabilities	
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	8
Deferred revenue	148
	<b>156</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	
Reserve fund	100
General fund	63
	<b>163</b>
	<b>\$ 319</b>

<b>Statement of Revenue and Expenses for the year ended March 31 2022</b>	
<b>Revenue</b>	
Government grants	\$ 203
Corporate and community	255
Donations	109
Interest and other income	2
	<b>569</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Salaries and benefits	186
Program expenses	198
Office and administration	49
Professional fees	20
	453
<b>Surplus (deficit)</b>	<b>\$ 116</b>

The complete audited financial statements are available upon request by email to [info@readingpartnership.com](mailto:info@readingpartnership.com).





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