

2022

YEAR IN REVIEW



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Dear Friends,

First and foremost, thank you so much for being a friend and supporter of the READ Center. Our Founder, Jean Proffit, would often begin a thank you letter she was writing to a READ Center Donor by exclaiming “isn’t it wonderful that you are able to read this note!” I think that Jean’s point was that those of us who were fortunate enough to have received good reading skills likely take this advantage for granted. Unfortunately, far too many in our Richmond Community have been let down by the failure of our society to provide the basic skill of literacy to them—in actuality an estimated 83,000 of our neighbors. This is unacceptable.

So what shall we do? You would not be receiving our Annual Report if you were not already a supporter of our mission so I know that I am “preaching to the choir!” Through your generous support, we have been able to offer an effective adult literacy program that has served and continues to serve many in our community, but we can and should do more.

It is my goal, and I ask it to also be your goal, to expand the services of the READ Center from servicing approximately 125 students during the past year to servicing a minimum of 250 students during our July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024 fiscal year. And this should only be the first step in our joint efforts to expand our work to serve more Richmonders in need of our services. Our mission is not only to reduce low literacy levels for adults within the Greater Richmond Community, but to eradicate the challenges of low literacy for adults from our Greater Richmond Community.

Let’s get to work!

My very best,
William F. Seymour, IV
President—The READ Center

Accomplishments

In our continued quest to provide excellent services to our students, empower our tutors, and positively change the adults with low literacy skills, The READ Center has been strategically working to make a greater impact on the communities we serve by increasing our physical space, teaching capacity, class offerings and student engagement.

We moved the office to our new space which allows for classes to be held in our own space. This has provided the opportunity to level classes by reading level; provide library space and materials for students, tutors, and teachers; provide programing space for staff and teachers; and provide a teacher meeting space.



- Created Foundations class – first piloted with a teacher very knowledgeable in the Wilson Reading System, then hired a teacher to specifically train for this class.
- Hired a teacher to allow the continuation of a Chesterfield class location.

- Hired a teacher to allow for additional evening classes.
- Continued offering two online classes and gained knowledge around how to grow our virtual class offerings.
- Created digital literacy classes for students to learn to use the computer, the mouse and the keyboard. Although we do not have a Distance Learning Coordinator at this time, we have learned these classes are very valuable to and wanted by the students, so we will continue to offer them.
- Published the 2nd in our series of READable's about Jackson Ward. Also published two editions of the Student Voice publication which are stories written by our students.
- Student council members wrote a letter to their State Representatives which was also sent to various local representatives and READ supporters.
- Our classroom/office assistant was instrumental in helping us prepare for the move and has digitally cataloged all the books in our library to enable online borrowing by students and tutors.
- Our tutors/volunteers are a big part of what we do. They provide additional ears, eyes, and hands in classrooms to help teachers navigate the many complexities of learning and in one-to-one settings where they lead the session. In order for tutors to feel empowered to lead and assist, foster trust and share ideas.





“Without literacy, there is no equity” is a phrase READ started promoting heavily last year, and it is a testament to our students’ self-efficacy. Prior to Covid the two students below did not use computers at all or to the extent they use them today.

One of our students spent a month visiting family in Saudi Arabia and Egypt. She did not have the internet in Saudi Arabia, but once she got to Egypt, she was attending class again. Another student has moved to NY, and is continuing to attend from there.

- We offered teacher-led tutor workshops – topics driven by tutor requests for additional assistance (Adding the Sauce)
- We were able to start conducting classroom observations during tutor training once COVID waned a little. We continued to have tutor training remotely, and continue to have more interest from the public in volunteering.
- We celebrate our tutors year round and especially during National Volunteer Week. In April tutors were invited to the office for a meet and greet with staff, teachers and other tutors.

Student Demographics

Education

- Less than 12th grade: 47%
- HS diploma, other diploma, GED: 41%
- Some college: 8%
- Not available: 3%

Gender

44% male
56% female

Race

- Asian: 4%
- Black: 81%
- Hispanic: 2%
- White: 11%
- Two or more races: 1%
- No value: 2%

Age

- 19-24: 5%
- 25-44: 32%
- 45-59: 36%
- 60 and older: 36%

Employment

- Employed full or part time: 37%
- Unemployed: 32%
- Not looking for work: 23%
- Retired: 8%

Reading Level

- Beginning: 60%
- Developing: 10%
- Intermediate: 5%
- Not available: 25%

373

individual goals met
including:

150 reading goals

107 writing goals

41 digital literacy goals

2 driving permit goals

In July of 2022, a month prior to my becoming Executive Director of The READ Center, Virginia passed the Virginia Literacy Act. To quote its own verbiage: “With the passage of the Virginia Literacy Act (VLA) in the 2022 General Assembly, Virginia is taking the lead nationwide to improve early literacy outcomes for Virginia’s young learners. Through the VLA, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) will support school divisions through a multi-year effort with tools, resources, technical assistance and funding.”

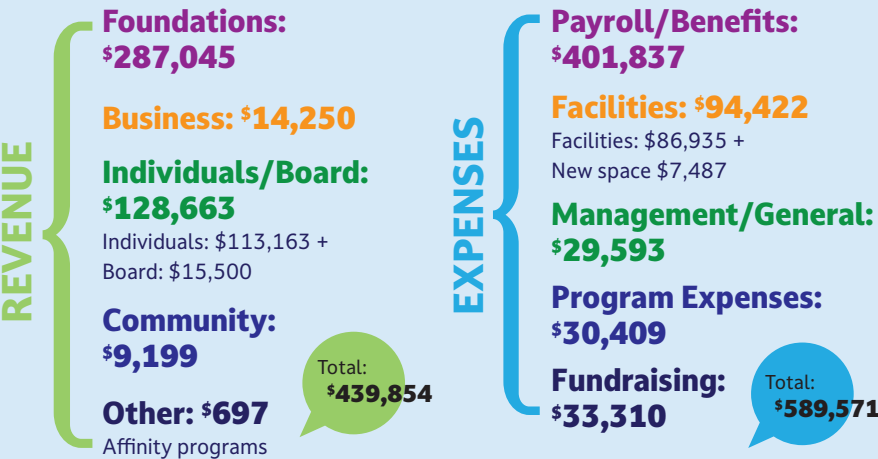
I applaud its efforts to affect and maybe even direct the pathways to success for every child, everywhere. It’s a step towards a better community and I am proud to see Virginia at the forefront of early childhood development, being a father of four myself. What the Virginia Literacy Act does not currently do, however, is advocate for improving literacy outcomes for all, including the more than 83,000 adults over the age of 18 in central Virginia who are challenged daily by low literacy. For more than 40 years, The READ Center has shown up as an advocate for those who are often left out of the literacy conversation—our students. Our resolve to impact more change, to better this community through literacy for all—that has only strengthened with time.

As we look ahead, The READ Center will continue to do what we do best as we provide literacy programs through small classroom instruction and one-to-one tutoring while expanding our impact through the implementation of new programs in digital, financial and health literacy. We will sharpen our focus in strengthening our advocacy efforts that will shine a light not only on the challenge of low literacy, but on the multiple benefits of working towards a community where we all cross the finish line together.

Join us in creating a community in which everyone has an opportunity to reap the benefits of a literate life.

Kind regards,
Ryan Corrigan, Executive Director

FINANCES



The metrics shared are a glimpse into some of the data used to shape how we support our student successes and the mission of the organization:

158 students registered—
this includes new callers and
continuing students

110 students received
instruction—of those, **96** had
12 or more hours of instruction

We provided **6162** hours
of classroom instruction and
1344 hours of one-to-one
volunteer tutoring hours.

Of the classroom hours, **2181**
of those were delivered via Google
Meet video conferencing. This has
allowed students to participate
who may have transportation or
child care challenges. This has also
allowed participation while students
were on vacation.

A total of **109** tutors assisted with
classrooms or one-to-one tutoring
throughout the year.
They provided **3771** hours of
assistance in classrooms and
1344 hours one-to-one.

373 individual student goals were
met over the year. These include
primarily improved reading, writing
and digital literacy goals. Additional
goals met were improved confidence
and becoming more independent.
We also had **2** students pass
the test to receive their driving
learner's permits with the help and
encouragement of their tutors.

Our students' evaluations of our
program this year resulted in **99%**
stating that they liked the classes
and **97%** stating it was good for
learning.

**The most common comment as to
how to make the classes better
was: it's fine the way it is! However,
they would like more tutors, more
students, more homework, more
class time and more math!**

We would too!

**As you have read, your continued
support of READ helps to fill the
space between feeling helpless and
hopeful for the adults who attend
the READ Center.**



For more information about The READ Center
please visit our website: readcenter.org