



2019-20

IMPACT REPORT

**CELEBRATING 16 YEARS
OF SITSTAYREAD**



FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT



2019-20 SCHOOL YEAR

To SitStayRead's supporters, volunteers, and community,

The challenges of 2020 cannot be overstated. The COVID-19 pandemic and social unrest in response to systemic racism and racial inequity have caused significant disruptions in the lives of our students and community, and the full effect of these events won't be fully understood for years.

SitStayRead has not been immune to the struggles of 2020. Our program team and volunteers had to end our spring semester early. Our staff began to work remotely, and the Paycheck Protection Program loan we received helped to ensure our team's stability. Our annual fundraiser, Bark 'n Ball, went virtual, and despite the quick pivot to the virtual environment, our supporters helped us raise \$73,485! As of the writing of this report, our work is still entirely remote, and we expect that will continue to be the case for some time. But, from necessity comes innovation, and adaptability has been a central trait of our organization from the beginning.

Since our founding in 2003, SitStayRead has responded to the needs of our students and found innovative methods to build a love for reading through a love for dogs. At first, our founders were looking for ways to engage their well-trained dogs in volunteering after meeting at Call of the Wild School for Dogs in Chicago. Their idea was to bring their dogs to the local library for storytime with children. As we developed our program in local libraries, we realized that we weren't reaching the children who most needed our help. We began developing a curriculum for classrooms and started our relationship with Chicago Public Schools. Since then, we have developed programs geared for grades K - 3 and, as of the 2019-20 school year, were offering our no-cost services in 18 schools where 94.4% of students come from low-income households.

With the shelter-in-place order, our program team immediately began strategizing ways to keep serving our students while they transitioned to distance learning. They stayed in close contact with our partner teachers, and have now created a fantastic new remote learning system that will help all of our students, both English- and Spanish-speaking, learn to love to read, regardless of the consistency of their access to the internet. This new program is described later in this report. It will help us to work with our students while they are temporarily learning remotely, and more importantly, it has allowed us to create an innovative new approach to our work that will change the future of our organization, make us more effective, and reach more students.

SitStayRead has been able to be there for our students through times of instability thanks to our steadfast supporters. We are incredibly grateful for all of your support as we have navigated these unexpected circumstances, and I am excited to see what the 2020-21 school year will bring.

Thank you,



Ann Scholhamer
Board President

OUR MISSION



Is to advance children's literacy skills using an engaging curriculum, dedicated volunteers, and certified dogs.

Our program team worked diligently this year to support the development of our students' literacy and social-emotional skills, and we continue to see those children develop a love for reading and writing. While we did not reach our goal number of students this school year due to COVID-19 and the Chicago Public School teacher strike, we still worked with **1,298** students in **57** classrooms. In the 2019-20 school year we offered the following:

- **Kindergarten Program:** 77 students in 4 classrooms.
- **Little Buddies:** 456 students in 19 classrooms.
- **Tail Blazers:** 463 students in 21 classrooms.
- **Poetry Pals:** 302 students in 13 classrooms.
- **Community Programs & Family Literacy Events:** 421 students at special events, and we also sent home 2,228 books with those students!

IN 2019-20:



1,298
students served

193
volunteers



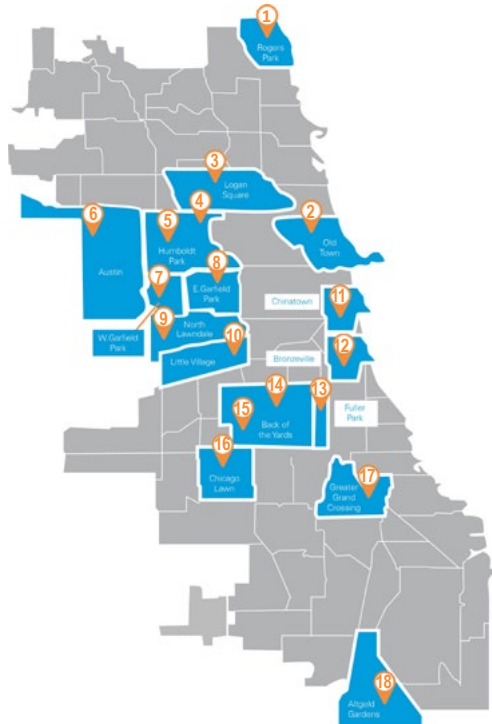
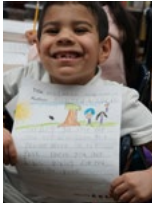
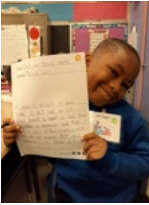
57
classroom
programs



73

Certified Reading Assistance Dogs

OUR PARTNERS



2019-20 PARTNER SCHOOLS

- 1 Gale Community Academy, Rogers Park
- 2 Manierre Elementary School, Old Town
- 3 Funston Elementary School, Logan Square
- 4 Lowell Elementary School, Humboldt Park
- 5 Cameron Elementary School, Humboldt Park
- 6 Brunson Elementary School, Austin
- 7 Melody Elementary School, W. Garfield Park
- 8 Faraday Elementary School, E. Garfield Park
- 9 Hughes Elementary School, N. Lawndale
- 10 Paz Elementary School, Little Village
- 11 National Teachers Academy, Chinatown
- 12 Fuller Elementary School, Bronzeville
- 13 Hendricks Community Academy, Fuller Park
- 14 Hamline Elementary School, Back of the Yards
- 15 Fulton Elementary School, Back of the Yards
- 16 Marquette Elementary School, Chicago Lawn
- 17 Tanner Elementary School, Greater Grand Crossing
- 18 Carver Elementary School, Altgeld Gardens

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Remote Learning Curriculum

During the final months of the 2019-20 school year, our program staff created remote literacy resources for teachers and administrators such as online read-alouds, tutorials, and other extension activities. New content featuring SitStayRead staff, volunteers, and pups was created weekly. Students and parents could access these resources at any time, and our partner teachers appreciated the ease of access and flexibility these activities provided.

Our weekly read-aloud videos with accompanying downloadable worksheets became the inspiration for the fully formed Remote Learning Curriculum we are creating today. The program team envisioned accessible, dog-themed virtual lessons accompanied by physical materials students can use to build their literacy skills no matter where their learning is taking place, and we are proud to share that as of this printing, our Remote Learning Curriculum for 2nd and 3rd graders has been shared with our partner teachers, Student Materials Packs for those students have been delivered to our partner schools, and the work to get our programs for 1st graders and kindergarteners is well underway.

Our Remote Learning Curriculum is research-based, aligned with the Common Core State Standards and the Illinois State Standards for Social/Emotional Learning, and includes SitStayRead's four program pillars - reading, brainstorming, writing, and interaction with comforting dogs. Pre-recorded videos featuring SitStayRead staff, volunteers, and pups work in concert with our virtual activities, pencil and paper student activity book, and 6 brand new books for the home library to make up the full program.

In addition to this complete pivot to remote programming, we are proud to be able to offer for the first time ever all of our lessons in both English and Spanish. Students, teachers, and parents are able to choose which language and lessons work best for them, so that they can get the most out of their remote learning experience. We recently hired a new full-time Bilingual Programs Coordinator who oversees the Spanish language curriculum and Spanish language school support.



COVID-19 RESPONSE

(Continued)

Bark 'n Ball: At-Home Edition

Our annual Bark 'n Ball fundraiser, originally envisioned as a large in-person gala to take place in late April, was deftly pivoted to a completely virtual event.

Despite the quick change, our staff and supporters helped us raise \$73,845 during what turned out to be an unforgettable night. Complete with a silent auction, Golden Ticket raffle, and special appearances by staff, family, and friends, Bark 'n Ball: At-Home Edition was a blast!

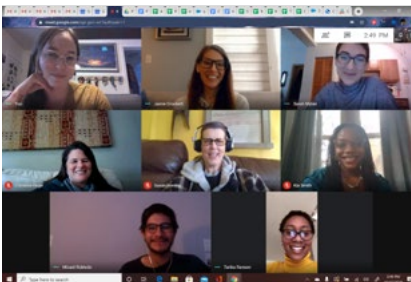
We are grateful to our event sponsors Allstate, BMO Harris Bank, Chapman & Cutler, LLP, KPMG, Logistics Property Company, and Guaranteed Rate for their ongoing support. Thank you to all who attended and supported and to Cassandre Bolan for designing the Bark 'n Ball poster this year.



We are grateful to our event sponsors Allstate, BMO Harris Bank, Chapman & Cutler, LLP, KPMG, Logistics Property Company, and Guaranteed Rate for their ongoing support. Thank you to all who attended and supported and to Cassandre Bolan for designing the Bark 'n Ball poster this year.

Working Remotely + PPP

Thanks in part to funds from the Payment Protection Program, SitStayRead staff began working remotely in March creating a new Remote Learning Curriculum for our students. Our team's support for one another and ability to work together, no matter the challenges we face or the distance between us, continues to shine through in all that we do.



IN THE BOOKS



Hazel's Happy Home

SitStayRead's newly published book, *Hazel's Happy Home*, is a lyrical tale inspired by real stories and poems written by SitStayRead students! This book publication project was made possible by the generosity of The Dogtopia Foundation and is written by J.B. Blankenship and illustrated by J'Aaron Merchant. Last fall, we held a writing workshop with students in Ms. Randle's second grade classroom at Charles Evans Hughes Elementary School. Ms. Randle's students were asked to think about a dog's feelings and how they might express those emotions throughout their day. The stories and poems the students wrote that day provided the inspiration for *Hazel's Happy Home*. Perfect for teachers looking to incorporate more social-emotional learning into their lessons, this book has already been folded into our Remote Learning Curriculum for this year, and it will be a staple in our programs when we are able to return to in-person learning. We are also thrilled to be sending home a copy of *Hazel's Happy Home* with all of our SitStayRead students in the Student Materials Packs that accompany our virtual lessons.

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*Indicates Part Time

2019-20 FINANCIALS

INCOME

Corporate

Donations: \$50,454.25
In-Kind: \$69,642.62

Grants

Unrestricted: \$216,100.00
Family Foundations:
\$59,950.00
Restricted: \$6,500.00

Individuals

Donations: \$119,870.24
In-Kind: \$9,426.47
Stock: \$4,949.21

Events

Donations: \$82,951.16
In-Kind: \$1,000.00

Other

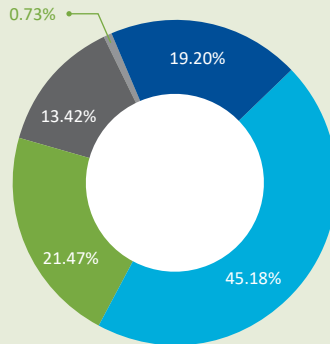
Total: \$4,555.23

TOTAL INCOME \$625,399.18*

TOTAL EXPENSES \$648,048.06

NET OPERATING INCOME -\$22,648.88**

NET ASSETS \$466,109.53



Grants 45.18%

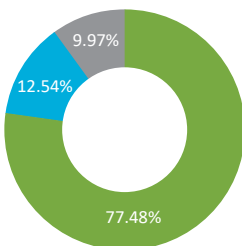
Individuals 21.47%

Corporate 19.20%

Events 13.42%

Other 0.73%

PERCENT OF EXPENSES



Programs

Fundraising

Administrative

*FY20 financials currently being audited and should not be considered final. Full financials available upon request, or by visiting sitstayread.org.

**SitStayRead received a PPP loan in May 2020. The numbers reflected here include the \$82,500 from the PPP loan. SitStayRead has asked for loan forgiveness as of this printing.

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\$20,000+

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Thank you to an additional 267 donors who gave \$0-\$99, totaling \$9,951! Every dollar goes towards making a difference for the students we serve. Due to printing limitations, we were not able to list your names. Thank you!

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2019-20

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