

Sit Stay Read



Photo: Andrea Mandel

IMPACT REPORT

2020-21

WELCOME LETTER

STAYING CONNECTED TO KEEP READING

Dear SitStayRead Community,

If this past year has taught us anything, it's that the world around us is always changing. But we've also learned that we can change, too. When we brought our first Book Buddies and Dog Teams to Hendricks Community Academy in 2004, we had no idea what changes the next 17 years would bring.

And now, nearly 20,000 students, 700 classrooms, four grade-levels, and one remote learning curriculum later, we are so proud of our adaptability, agility, and growth. These things allow us to continue bringing rigorous, literacy based, social-emotional content to our classrooms no matter how the world changes around us.

But our work has never been about us, it is about our incredible students, who continuously rise to the challenges presented to them in and outside of the classroom. Over the course of the last year, we've had the amazing opportunity to assist SitStayRead students in their learning at home and at school. As we share their accomplishments in the pages ahead, we are incredibly proud of our students and teachers. We are also incredibly grateful for the SitStayRead community who continued to support and invest in our students.

Sincerely,
SitStayRead Staff and Board Members



Photo: Mara O'Brien

You all ROCK! This is such a strong support of what we are and have been learning... My students are motivated and engaged by the activities... even amidst the constant and unplanned changes of this past year!"

Consuelo Gaines
Kindergarten Teacher

Impact Report designed by: Beatriz DeBoer

LITERACY IS FOR

EVERYONE

Around third grade, students transition from focusing on learning to read to reading in order to learn. Children lacking strong basic reading skills are left behind by this transition.

Feeling successful when reading is something all students should experience. Children growing up in low-income communities are more than four times less likely to enter Kindergarten school-ready than their peers in higher income communities. This data suggests that greater efforts are needed to improve our education system for all children.

SitStayRead recognizes the ambition, curiosity, and limitless courage that exists within our students, and centers our work around these assets. By pairing our curriculum with Certified Reading Assistance Dogs, we transform the learning environment for our students to find joy and confidence in reading, while building their literacy skills.

Together with our students, partner schools, and supporters, we work to create the opportunity and inspiration for our students to become enthusiastic, proficient readers and find success in their lives.

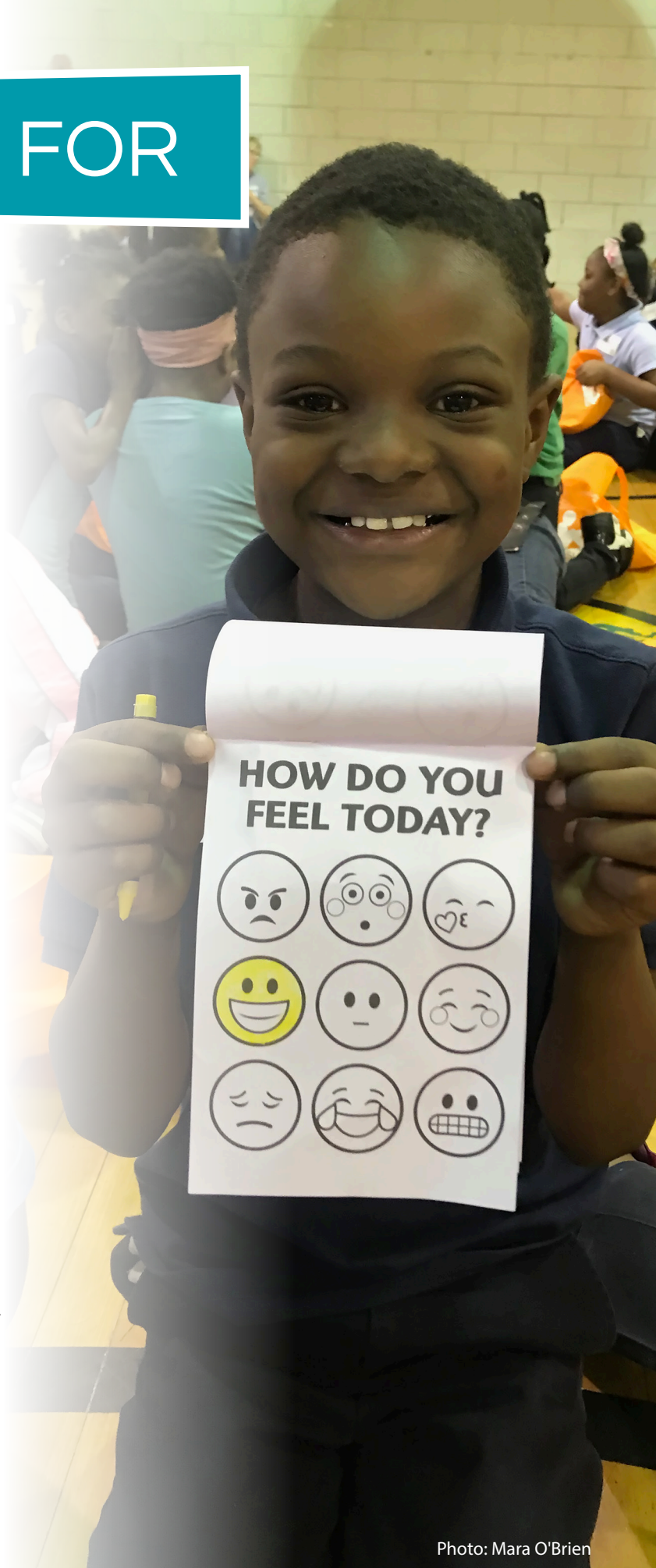


Photo: Mara O'Brien



Photo: Andrea Mandel



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BECOMING AN ANTI-RACIST

ORGANIZATION



Photo: Mara O'Brien

SitStayRead is working to become an anti-racist organization. As we pursue this next phase, it will require bold leadership, skilled management, and a deep commitment to creating an inclusive environment.

As an organization, we are working on creating an environment where students, staff, and board members feel safe, trusted, and cared for as a part of SitStayRead. This means slowing down the work, listening and including all voices in decision making to understand the needs, impact, resources, progress, and goals.

We are working on truly grounding ourselves in a student centered approach reflecting input from a broad set of stakeholders. This also means expanding how we work with our school partners to include the whole community and become a literacy resource to all of its members.

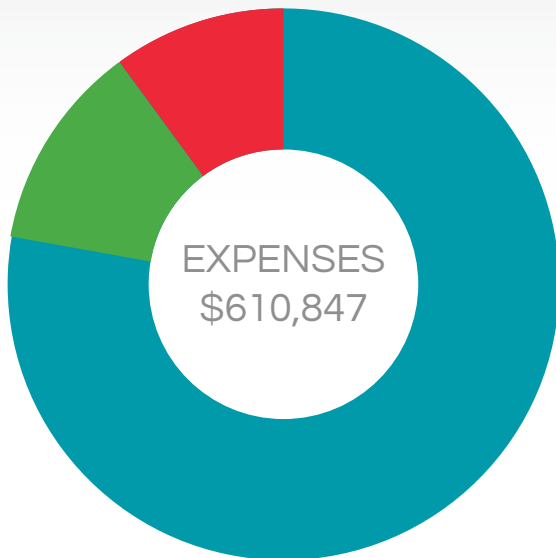
We look forward to the support and commitment of our community as we move past the talk about the importance of diversity, inclusion, and equity, and truly integrate these concepts into our work and how we pursue our mission to advance children's literacy skills with certified reading assistance dogs, trained literacy volunteers, and a bilingual curriculum with an intentional focus on social-emotional learning.

2021

AT A GLANCE

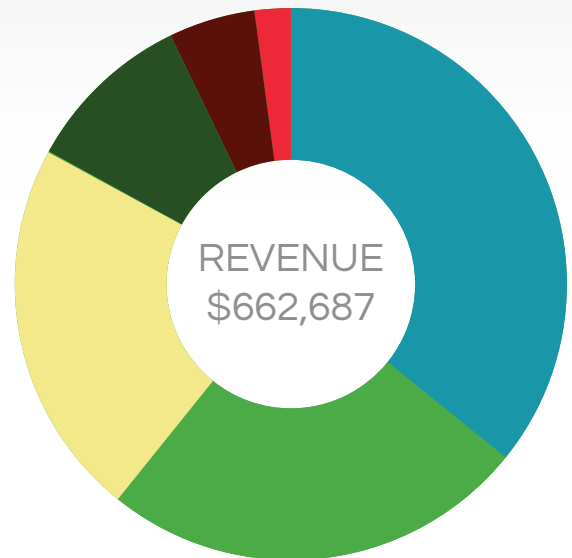
- 17 School Partners -
- 100 Classrooms -
- 2,000 Students -
- 216 Volunteers -
- 88 Certified Reading Dogs -
- 21,000 New Books Provided to Students -

EXPENSES



- Programs 78%
- Fundraising 12%
- Administration 10%

REVENUE



- Grants 36%
- Individuals 22%
- Events 10%
- Corporate 5%
- Other 2%
- Paycheck Protection Program Loan: 25%

OUR PROGRAMS:

CREATING SITSTAYREAD+

In 2020-21, the SitStayRead team worked to build connections and provide programming that reflected what students and teachers know and trust about our in-person programs. This new way of connecting with our students and teachers allowed learning to be accessed no matter where, when, or how it was taking place.

1 We developed the **SitStayRead+ Virtual Curriculum**: interactive virtual lessons in both **English and Spanish** that students could complete independently.

Remote Learning Supply Packs with activity books, writing supplies, and **six brand new books**.

2

3 We chose books that feature **characters of color**, reflect a **variety of family structures** and **take place in diverse neighborhoods**.



Photo: Andrea Mandel

We made sure that books were steeped in **social-emotional learning** that help students identify **emotions and feelings** such as **identity, anger, belonging, expectations, and community**.

4

5 **Live Virtual Visits**: we joined students in their virtual classrooms where we read books, wrote group stories, and got to know our SitStayRead Dog Teams (and some of our students' pets, too!)



Photo: Andrea Mandel

STUDENTS



SITSTAYREAD

Here's what our students have to say about SitStayRead!

I like SitStayRead because...

"We get to read. It makes me better at reading."

"I get to see the dogs!"

"I learn to write the words."

"They have videos with real dogs and we could listen to the read aloud stories."



Photo: Andrea Mandel

"I got new books to read."

"It is fun... like super fun!"

"I get to write my own stories."



Photo: Andrea Mandel

TEACHERS



SITSTAYREAD

Here's what our teachers have to say about SitStayRead!

"My students truly enjoyed participating in SitStayRead. They began asking if they would have it in third grade as well. The activities were fun and engaging for them."

-Second Grade Teacher at Fuller Elementary

"SitStayRead creates fun and engaging activities for students to do and makes them virtually compatible."

- Second Grade Teacher at Fuller Elementary

"The lessons were catered to Social Emotional learning and that fit perfect with my class."

- Diverse Learner Teacher at Gale Community Academy

"The students can't wait for their summer materials and the new school year of the program."

-First Grade Teacher at Manierre Elementary

"This program is great for my class. It stimulates the students' imagination!"

-First Grade Teacher at Brunson Elementary



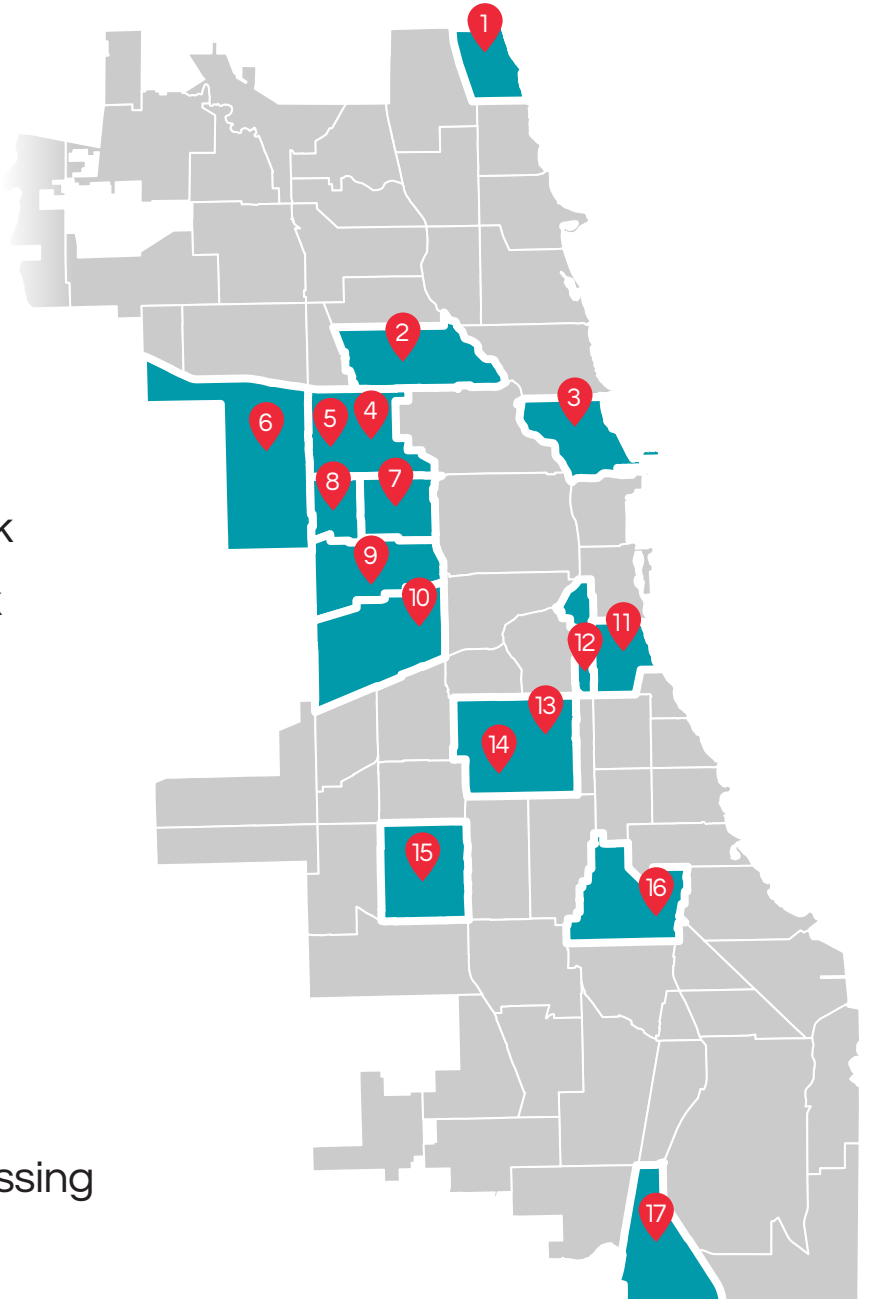
Photo: Andrea Mandel

WHERE WE WORK

SitStayRead partners with schools where at least 90% of households are considered low-income and where 60% of students in third grade score below the national average in reading.

2020-21 PARTNER SCHOOLS

01. Gale, Rogers Park
02. Funston, Logan Square
03. Manierre, Near North Side
04. Lowell, Humboldt Park
05. Cameron, Humboldt Park
06. Brunson, Austin
07. Faraday, East Garfield Park
08. Melody, West Garfield Park
09. Hughes, North Lawndale
10. Paz, Little Village
11. Fuller, Bronzeville
12. Hendricks, Fuller Park
13. Hamline, New City
14. Fulton, New City
15. Marquette, Chicago Lawn
16. Tanner, Greater Grand Crossing
17. Carver, Riverdale



PARTNER SCHOOL

HIGHLIGHT

Carver School | Riverdale Neighborhood

Written by Sue Hering, Program Coordinator with contributions from Ms. Davis, First Grade Teacher

Carver School is located in the Riverdale community on the far south side of Chicago, bounded by the Bishop Ford Freeway, Little Calumet River, and the Water Reclamation District. Carver is one of three schools in Riverdale dedicated to serving the children and families. Like many of the communities where SitStayRead Partner Schools are located, Riverdale is full of potential. Families are motivated and resourceful, but access to literacy resources is limited.

Carver School has partnered with SitStayRead for seven years. Over this time, the partnership has expanded from four classrooms to nine, reaching all of Carver's students in kindergarten through third grade.

SitStayRead leverages the power of the human-dog bond to inspire Carver students to become confident and enthusiastic readers, and as a result, Ms. Davis, a first-grade teacher at Carver, can see students' pride and purpose grow during SitStayRead.

"My SitStayRead volunteers and Program Leader were wonderful. All of my students showed growth with the reading and writing of books. The program aligned with the curriculum and it had a positive effect all around. I really like how the Program Leader would select a few students' writing to share out at the end of a session, which had an enormous impact on my struggling writers. It really motivated them."



Photo: Victoria Luisi

VOLUNTEER

HIGHLIGHT

Written by Kia Smith, Volunteer Coordinator

SitStayRead Volunteers provide one on one attention to help motivate and inspire the students we serve. This past year brought many unique opportunities to SitStayRead and in particular, we were challenged to rethink how we connect with our students and teachers. With the creation of SitStayRead+, many of our volunteers (human and fur) found themselves volunteering in a new and different way. Volunteers from all over Chicago, as far south as Altgeld Gardens and as far North as Evanston committed to providing a unique student experience regardless of where students were learning. They all helped to contribute over 130 volunteer hours to help create content! We are forever grateful to them all for sharing their time, treasures, and talents to help us bring programs, books, and materials directly to the students we serve.

With the addition of our first ever bilingual programming, Monse Mariquez, who is from Central Mexico, was able to share her talents in a meaningful way to help support the diverse population we serve. Below is a shout out to all those volunteers who jumped into the virtual classroom with us this year. For a full list of volunteers, please see the pages below.

Debbie Liu

Nancy Chacon

Mimi Manzler

Rhonda Milkowski

Lisa Davis

Lauren Comitor

Jennifer Sampson

Linnea Ross

Catherine Painter

Helen Summers

Linda Carallis

Arpana Bhatia

Stephanie Gendron

Melissa Wilhelm

Jeannie Folk

Nancy Devereux

Harry Devereux

Katelyn Shepherd

Rebecca Cline

Peggy Walden

Kim Strellis

Joanne Susmilch

Linda Hamburg

Laura Koch

Annie McEnroe

Jen Christianson

Ross Kooperman

Tory Bassani

Judy Cole

Nancy Joseph

Susan Swaringen

COMMUNITY PARTNER

HIGHLIGHT



Neighbor to Neighbor Literacy Project

Written by Tarika Ranson, SitStayRead Community Liaison

Neighbor to Neighbor Literacy Project works to eliminate book deserts and expand access to books in Chicago. They do this by installing Book Boxes in previously untapped spaces to make free books available 24/7.

Over the past year, Neighbor to Neighbor and SitStayRead have worked together on two main projects. The first project focused on supporting a partnership with My Block My Hood My City to fill Free Little Libraries in ten neighborhoods on the south and west sides of the city. More recently, we provided books for Little Free Libraries throughout the Riverdale neighborhood, where Carver School is located.

This partnership is important because it is one of the first major community partnerships we've been cultivating that serves students in Riverdale and other neighborhoods on the south and west sides. Nancy and the folks at Neighbor to Neighbor are doing really good work, and we are honored to be able to be a part of it.

One of our goals for the years ahead is to build more meaningful relationships with our students' communities, and working together with Neighbor to Neighbor allows us to build those relationships in an organic way.

FUNDER SPOTLIGHT

For over six years, KPMG Family for Literacy and SitStayRead have worked together to host Keep Reading Celebrations, school-wide events that bring together students and volunteers to celebrate the hard work that they have all done throughout the school year.

Each student also gets to take home brand new books and receives a Summer Reading Fun Pack which includes supplies like pencils, erasers, pencil sharpeners, crayons, and a notebook. Through this partnership, KPMG has invested over \$150,000 and provided 50,000 books.



WALK, BARK 'N BALL

This year, the SitStayRead community celebrated our annual gala in a new way. Supporters moved their feet to raise funds and awareness and participated in our first ever walk-a-thon.

SitStayRead walkers committed to taking their best friend (fur or human) on a walk everyday for a month. After hitting their personal best for the walk-a-thon, the community came together for a virtual celebration showcasing the inspiring work of our students, dogs, and volunteers as well as a silent auction, golden ticket raffle, and fund-a-need 'paddle' raise. Through this new event, SitStayRead supporters helped us raise over \$85,000!



2020-21

FINANCIALS

Total Income: \$662,687

Total Expenses: \$610,847

Net Operating Income: \$51,840

Net Assets: \$419,483

REVENUE BREAKDOWN:

Grants \$239,700

Individuals \$148,017

Paycheck Protection Program Loan: \$168,807

Corporate 34,831

Events \$71,231

Other \$101

EXPENSE BREAKDOWN:

Programs: \$413,816

Management and General: \$66,946

Fundraising: \$130,085

*FY21 financials currently being audited and should not be considered final. Full financials available upon request, or by visiting sitstayread.org.

TEAM AND

BOARD

SitStayRead Team

Jamie Crockett, Program Coordinator
Sue Hiering, Program Coordinator
Christine Huge, Development Assistant
Kate McIlvain, Managing Director
Sarah Mylan, Program Director
Tarika Ranson, Community Liaison
Mizael Robledo, Bilingual Programs Coordinator
Kia Smith, Volunteer Coordinator
Amy Taylor, Executive Director

SitStayRead Board of Directors

Allison Williams
Julie Carlson, Vice President
Luciano DeNisco
Julie Hagman
Justin McCarthy
Kevin Oran
Audrey Pang
Brett Sanchez, Secretary
Tony Saracco
Elizabeth Scharon
Michael Schaffer, Treasurer
Ann Scholhamer, President
Glenn Shapiro

SitStayRead Associate Board

Katrina Cairo, President
Nick Conti
Haley Crowe
Beth Czechanski, Secretary
Sasanka Kalari
Amanda Oritz
Andrew Shapiro
Zach Walz, Vice President

A young boy in a white shirt is smiling and leaning towards a dog. The dog is wearing a blue vest with the words "Service Dog" printed on it. The background is a blurred indoor setting with other people.

THANK YOU!

CLICK TO VIEW

The Donor List

CLICK TO VIEW

The Volunteer List