



Reading Is
Fundamental
Pittsburgh

Reading Is **FUN**damental

Pittsburgh



2016- 2017 Annual Report

6/1/16 - 5/31/17



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RF
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Bill Martin Jr / Eric Carle
Baby Bear,
Baby Bear,
What Do You See?



Dear Friends,

It's been another exciting, eventful year for RIF Pittsburgh, and our dedication to building childhood literacy in struggling neighborhoods throughout our city is as robust as ever!

As you read our annual report, remember that your contributions – money, time or both – are vital to our mission of nurturing young learners. You are a valued and valuable member of our RIF Pittsburgh team.

In fact, expanding our team has been among the highlights of 2017. We were fortunate to be able to hire five new staff members from last year's AmeriCorps crew. All of our programs are reaping the benefits of their high energy and fresh ideas, bolstered by their experience leading Books for Keeps reading celebrations, gaining on-the-road training on the Storymobile, and serving as reading buddies in Everybody Wins! They are a tried and true part of our team, and transitioning them to staff adds stability to our partner relations and continuity to our programming.

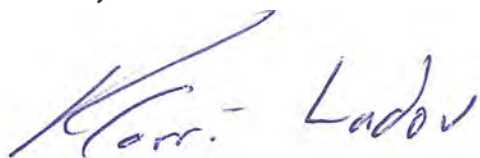
Another piece to our expansion will be the addition of our orange Storymobile, which will bring our fleet of libraries-on-wheels to four! While we will be serving more sites and more children, we are being thoughtful about our growth to ensure that youngsters and their families are not just numbers in a report but remain the heart and soul of our operations.

Other developments you'll read about here include the deepening reach of BFK, our oldest and largest program; the continued success of Everybody Wins!, our lunchtime mentoring program; and the debut of RIF Readers, a pilot project and new model that brings second-graders to the Downtown law offices of Eckert Seamans for reading and conversation, in a setting sure to broaden their horizons and brighten their visions for the future.

In all, we continue to put more than 100,000 books into the hands of more than 21,000 children a year. But books are only part of the literacy equation and, as such, only part of our mission. The books come wrapped in programming designed to build literacy skills, expand content knowledge, and get children excited about reading and learning, with the bonus of social skills needed for school success.

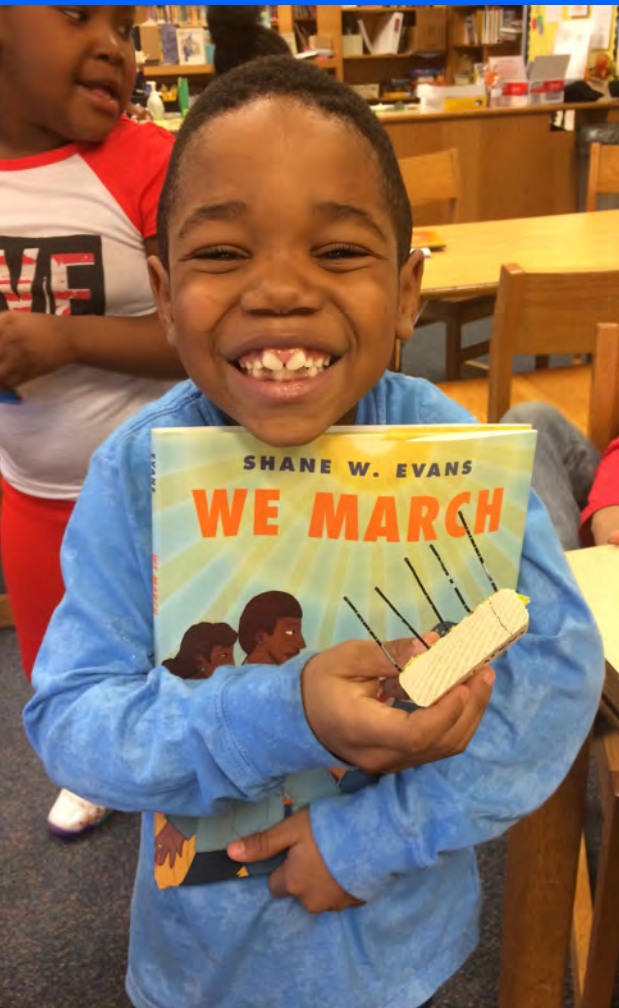
It's important work that we feel privileged to do, and you play a key part in its success. Thank you for all your support! Together, we are making a difference in young lives and building a richer, more just community.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Florri Ladov". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Florri Ladov
Executive Director

"They give you awesome, and I mean awesome, books and the RIF books are funny."



"[My daughter] really showed a 100% improvement in her reading skills."

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Children from low-income backgrounds often face a daunting future. The day they enter kindergarten, many are already significantly behind better-off peers in reading, math and science skills, the National Center for Education Statistics reports. It's no wonder: Their homes on average have fewer books, often none at all. Typically, they've experienced just 25 hours of one-on-one picture book reading before starting school compared with the 1,000-1,700 hours enjoyed by the average child growing up in a middle-class home, according to the Packard and MacArthur Foundations.

It's a jaw-dropping difference with huge ramifications. Sharing books with children is not just an idle pursuit of privilege but a bedrock of developing literacy. That early achievement gap typically widens with time, affecting high school and college graduation rates and ultimately lifetime earnings, McKinsey & Company report.

Pittsburgh statistics mirror those discouraging realities. A+ Schools' 2017 Report to the Community found that over 50% of economically disadvantaged third-graders in Pittsburgh schools cannot read at grade level.

This is the uneven terrain that RIF Pittsburgh staff navigate each and every day to read, sing, talk to and motivate the children and families who are most in need of resources and attention. Our programs are layered to reach kids early and often, from their youngest days into their early teens. Every day shows us that our programs generate excitement around learning and reading! Children come running to the RIF staff members in the blue shirts with hugs and smiles, eager to hear a great read-aloud, play a fun educational activity, and pick out a book of their very own.

That is what keeps us heading out under dreary Pittsburgh skies, through bitter cold or blazing sun, our arms filled with books, literacy kits, math and science experiments, and our hearts filled with the brighter futures unfolding in front of us.

*Please note, our program figures are for our program year 2016-2017 (school year 2016-17 and summer 2017).

Our mission is to provide children with the resources, motivation, and opportunities to develop a life-long love of reading.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bryan Iams, President

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Pace Markowitz

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**"IT'S TRUE,
READING IS FUN!
IT HELPS US LEARN
MORE ABOUT OUR
HISTORY AND OUR
WORLD."**

Student at Pittsburgh Roosevelt

"There is a great appreciation for reading. The students' eagerness to read any text placed in front of them is a wonderful thing to behold."



BOOKS FOR KEEPS

Our oldest and largest program, Books for Keeps is the wellspring from which all our programs draw inspiration, energy and a formula for success.

BFK visits classrooms across the city 3-5 times a year to spread the joy of literacy through Reading Celebrations. The format is simple, so students know just what to expect: a friendly welcome, an engaging read-aloud, an interactive activity, and the opportunity to pick a book “for keeps.”

Each celebration is a party with a theme, and the read-aloud book is the guest of honor! Paired activities include hands-on challenges such as playing games, writing secret messages in hieroglyphics, joining in movement or exploring technology. Whether developing new skills or building on classroom concepts, Reading Celebrations are fun, and help motivate at-risk children to find and follow their passions.

In the 2016-17 program year, Books for Keeps:

- Presented hands-on, exciting Reading Celebrations at **81 sites** across the city of Pittsburgh
- **Interacted with over 15,600 economically disadvantaged students** in early childhood centers, schools, and afterschool programs
- Provided nearly **50,000 high-quality, age-appropriate books** to children whose homes have few or none
- Partnered with the United Way on the Be A Middle School Mentor program, giving more than 800 books to nearly 300 pre-teens and their mentors

“The students benefit from that Reading Celebrations because they get excited about reading. It’s a breath of fresh air to see kids WANT to read!”

MATH AND SCIENCE

Books for Keeps STEAMs into select classrooms with math- and science-centered programming that encourages students to look at their world with an analytical perspective.

BFK Math and Science Reading Celebrations start with a STEAM-themed read-aloud story. Then, children are challenged to put themselves in the shoes (or the lab coats!) of scientists or researchers and explore scientific concepts through experiments; build, design or create projects; or engage in other activities that flesh out the story's focus in a fun way.

Kids and teachers alike love the interactive, fun explorations that combine arts and science, nudging students into different ways of thinking about and approaching problems. Finally, to top it off, children choose a book to keep from an array including math- and science-themed titles.

In the 2016-17 program year, Books for Keeps Math and Science:

- Engaged more than 3,150 children in exploring science, technology, engineering, arts and math through STEAM-centered Reading Celebrations at 23 sites
- **Combined literature and hard sciences to take advantage of the integrative nature of learning and fuel youngsters' growing sense of intellectual adventure and discovery**
- Livened up classroom presentations with visiting scientists, a therapy dog, and fun activities from fruit painting to animal yoga



"The best thing about RIF is they give us fun experiments that are educational."

EVERYBODY WINS!

Bonding over a good read is the recipe for success of our lunchtime literacy and mentoring program. Everybody Wins! matches first-, second- and third-grade students with corporate and community volunteers. The children thrive under the one-on-one attention of a caring adult. Volunteers love sharing books and their time, as well as the satisfaction of making a meaningful difference in children's lives.

Teachers and parents credit the program with improving students' interest in books, increasing their motivation to read, giving them more confidence in reading aloud and enhancing their content comprehension.

In the 2016-17 program year, Everybody Wins!:

- Hosted weekly one-on-one mentoring sessions at four PPS schools: Arlington, Faison, King, and Weil
- **Matched 200 first-, second-, and third-grade students with corporate and community volunteers** to share conversation and books

- **Loaned books through our "sharing" program**, encouraging students to take books home to read with their families in between mentoring sessions
- Combated summer slide by sending each child home for the summer with six books they selected from a catalog, and mailing two more books to their homes over the course of the summer

An exciting addition to our literacy and mentoring lineup is RIF Readers, a pilot project that debuted in October! Every week, Eckert Seamans' Downtown law offices reverberate with the excitement of Manchester Academic Charter School second-graders sharing books and discussion with their corporate reading buddies. Mentors appreciate the convenience of the new model, which brings the students to them and reduces the time they need to set aside on busy work days. **Children benefit as well from the corporate setting, which fosters a powerful sense of ownership and belonging, opening the door to options and opportunities they otherwise might not have imagined** – coupled with the already substantial academic benefits that literacy mentoring offers.



"I believe they are most influenced by the relationships they build with their reading buddies. The one-on-one reading time helps promote confidence in reading aloud."



STORYMOBILE

Our lending-libraries-on-wheels are the “street” ambassadors of RIF Pittsburgh! Kids make a mad dash for the Storymobile when they see us roll out the steps in their neighborhood, climbing aboard to ask for the next Mo Willems “Elephant and Piggie” book or the latest installment in their favorite chapter series.

Our mission is a weighty one: to mitigate the achievement gap by delivering high-quality literacy programming to struggling communities whose resources are often directed toward necessities, not enrichment. But on the Storymobile, we approach it in a light, engaging way. Throughout the school year, our programming focuses on kindergarten readiness at early childhood centers and pre-K classrooms. In schools, after-school programs and housing communities, we introduce and reinforce reading and social skills that kids need to succeed in school. **Along the way, we help children and families to establish and build their home libraries with high-interest, culturally relevant books they’ll read and share again and again.**

In the 2016-17 program year, our Storymobiles:

- **Traveled to more than 70 sites, serving nearly 5,100 children**, in our target communities: East Liberty, Hazelwood, Hill District, Homewood/East Hills, North Side, South Side, and Wilkinsburg
- **Helped children self-select more than 14,300 books to keep during our bi-weekly visits** in public housing communities and afterschool programs, as well as during our Reading Celebrations 3-4 times a year
- **Loaned nearly 15,500 books to children through our circulating Storymobile collection**, and loaned over 2,600 books and resource materials to educators

“When I’m sad the Storymobile makes me... HAPPY!”

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Statistically, children from low-income households already lag their more-advantaged peers in reading, math and science skills by the time they start kindergarten, a gap that only increases over time. Where does this achievement gap come from?

One of the things that Dr. Jen Iriti from the University of Pittsburgh's Learning Research and Development Center points to is an early "word gap" – that **a 5-year-old child from a low-income background typically has heard 30 million fewer words** than a child of that age from a wealthier family, according to a 2014 article in The Atlantic. The article goes on to say that adults' investment of time and attention in young children is critical to neurological and cognitive development, so this deficit is formative.

RIF Pittsburgh works to remedy that gap by extending the reach of our programs beyond the time spent in classrooms or on the Storymobile. We reach out to parents, caregivers and childcare providers to raise awareness of their essential role in children's development and motivation.

Our Book Babies initiative encourages new parents to Read, Talk, Sing, Play, EVERYDAY! with their little ones. Book Babies welcomes young families aboard the Storymobile for dedicated storytimes, where staff members model reading, playing, craft-making and nurturing in a safe, supportive environment. Caregivers share tips and resources along with companionship. **These neighborhood play groups**

foster friendships that deepen and grow with the little ones. At each visit, families pick up a bag of books, toys and personal care items to help give tots a happy, healthy start!

In the larger picture, RIF strives to be a visible presence in the city. At community time stops, residents come aboard to browse or chat, and we give adults books from cookbooks, mysteries and biographies to best-sellers. Reading is contagious! Children who see the adults in their lives reading are more likely to read themselves.

We also attend nearly 100 special events a year, from National Night Out block parties to community barbecues, back-to-school nights and street festivals. We give away nearly 9,800 books a year at these events, staking out a place for literacy in a world increasingly dominated by tweets, texts and smartphones.

We are embracing social media and technology to spread the word about literacy. We text RIF families and post updates on our Facebook page to check in with young readers and their parents, and to encourage families to read together.

Going forward, we continue to rely on strong relationships with our site partners; ongoing support from individuals, foundations and corporations; and the enthusiasm, energy and optimism of our "RIF kids" to help create a future bursting with opportunity for the children we serve.



"[My daughter] had a grand ole time...making music and story sharing. She loves seeing new faces and meeting new friends. She truly had a great time. Thank you Storymobile Book Babies."

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

Listing includes individuals and organizations who donated between 6/1/16- 5/31/17

Library Level (\$5,000+)

Nicholas and Cheryl Galizia
Kim Roadarmel
Francis X. Solano Jr. M.D.
and Lenette Solano

Collection Level (\$1,000 - \$4,999)

James R. and Electra P. Agras
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Cary Blancett and Denise
Dufour
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Perry Colosimo
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Markowitz
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Tim and Jessica O'Brien
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Melissa B. Dodge
Ann L. Turnbull
Tom Worrall

Series Level (\$250 - \$999)

Anonymous (5)
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Blumstein

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Jennifer Nanz
Susan Nernberg
Suzan Obagi and Mazen
Youssef
Elliott Oshry
Robert and Lillian
Panagulias
Mr. and Mrs. Demetrios
Patrinios
Alan Pretter
William Recker
Michael Richards
Mona and Bob Riordan
Leonard Silk and Jane
Hepner
Francis Soen
Joan R. Stephans
Kathy and Leonard Stept
Kathryn Van Stone
Jerry Vockley
Thomas Vonlehman
Alan Waggoner
Mark Washington and
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Novel Level (\$100 - \$249)

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Andrew Arnt
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Mary Louise and Chester
Babst
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Joseph Balaban
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Joanne Beckman
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Anna Harbin
Ed Holland
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Jonathan C. Iams
Elizabeth Jobe

"There is a wide variety of books and the children have the opportunity to find what they like."

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Michele Organist and Susan	Katy Vernacchia	Patrick and Peggy Findle	Gabe Pellathy
Regan	Sandy Volpe	Seth Finn	Charlie and Jan Petredis
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Robert and Christine	Diane L. Weaver	Geoffrey Gibson	Pamela M. Roberts
Pietrandrea	Carla Weidman	Christine Gove	Susan Rockman

“The best thing about RIF is that we get to pick our own books and do fun activities.”

Laraine Rodney
 Robert and Susan Rudzki
 Abby and Reid Ruttenberg
 Christine Salera
 Liz Salisbury
 Vivienne and Jerry Selia
 Katy and Fred Sherman
 John Shimkus
 Art and Marlene Silverman
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 Leslie Stokan
 Marvin Wedeen
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 Tobey Wolken
 Danila Woolley
 Marquerita Young-Jones
 Shanwen Yu
 Mike and Lisa Zierden
 Marsha Zuckerman

Picture Level
 (<\$49)

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 Jamie Altman
 Leah Amato
 Matthew Bachman
 Harry Back
 Kathryn Bashaar
 Pamela Batz
 Rhonda Bennett
 Richard and Natalie Berger
 Rose and Ed Berman
 Dan Bidwa
 Nick Bolias
 Ed and Donna Brett
 Lois Diamond Bron
 Maria Elizabeth Brown
 Sally Buncher
 Orrean and Barbara Chew
 Joanne Christopher
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"I had fun reading and getting better and now I can read books to my brother."

FOUNDATIONS AND CORPORATIONS

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The Buhl Foundation
The Burke Foundations
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Dollar Bank Foundation
Dollar General Foundation
Dominion Foundation
Donald and Sylvia Robinson
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Duquesne Light
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Family Foundations Early
Head Start
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City of Pittsburgh
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Pennsylvania
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Saturday Light Brigade
Snapology
Sprout Fund
Union Project
The University of Pittsburgh
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Development
Uptown Partners of
Pittsburgh
Urban League of Greater
Pittsburgh
Rep. Jake Wheatley
WQED

"Any program encouraging a love of reading supports my work in the classroom."

VOLUNTEERS

Thank you to the hundreds of volunteers who donate their time to
RIF Pittsburgh each year!

Listing includes individuals who volunteered between 6/16- 5/17

Aerion Abney	Michele Cooper	Kent Huzzey	Ryan Neely
Patty Alexander	Kyle Cunningham	Mary Robb Jackson	Willie Neiswanger
Elizabeth Allison	Keith Daniels	Celeste Janosko	Liz Nelson
Geoff Atkinson	Jillian Davern	Ed Johnston	Kathleen Newmeyer
Amy Bair	Vanessa Davis	Marge Johnston	Rebecca Obley
Sue Balcer	Roger Day	Kristin Kalson	Amy Ogren
Tricia Baldridge	Lauren Deithorn	Siena Kane	Connie Orient
Christine Balsley	Alyssa Dervin	Chet Karas	Tina Packer
Marcia Bandes	Ardeth Devlin	Courtney Kase	Sandra (Sam) Palmer
Elizabeth Barbaro	Molly Dickerson	Mike Kauffelt	Taylor Pastrick
Tanya Baronti	Melissa Dodge	Barbara Kengor	Jennifer Petrisek
Kathryn Bashaar	Pam Dotter	Andrea Ketzal	Allyce Pinchback
Cynthia Battle	Sharon Drake	Joan Kimmel	Shannon Plush
Ellen Baylis	Zandy Dudiak	Ann Marie Klipa	Ann Poliziani
Joanne Beckman	Elyse Eichner	Mary Adele Krolikowski	Kelly Pollard
Rachel Beers	Melvin El	Mike Lambert	Kate Porigow
Peter Belcastro	Pam Evans	Meryl Lazar	Hally Ramirez
Rhonda Bennett	Colleen Fedor	JoEllen Leech	Kim Reilly
Jordan Blask	Sandra Fennell	Nancy Lepore	Abby Resnick
Susan Bodziach	Peter Fernie	Bob Linden	Madison(Cali) Riley
Alec Boright	Emily Ferri	Linda Loar	Carolyn Ristau
Mimi Botkin	Peggy Findle	Susie Lovejoy	Kim Roadarmel
Sara Brethold	Mary Fine	Kathy Lutins	Renee Robinson
Ed Brett	Jennifer Finkelstein	Lisa Macesich	Laraine Rodney
Donna Brett	Roslynn Fitzgerald	Tina Magri	Tom Rowe
Renee Brewer	Nick Galizia	Nicholas Martini	Claudia Saitz
Janet Bronder	Anne Marie Gebhardt	Maria Massini	Liz Salisbury
Jordan Brown	Jim Gemperle	Kathy Matesic	Paul Scherrer
Karen Brown	Stephanie Glenn	Matt Mauclair	Cathie Schmidt
Carmen Brown	Lynn Glorieux	Linnea May	Mary Scott
Margaret Burley	Shirley Golden	Rebecca McCarthy	Carol Scott
Sydna Burns	Caity Gonano	Sarah McDaniel	Mary Scott
Erin Butler	Cindy Goodman-Leib	Tangerine McDaniels	Barb Semich
Jennifer Cairns	Sue Goodwin	Alison McGee	Eddie Shaw
Linda Campbell	Joseph Gregorini	Becky McGhee	Cynthia Shay
Juli Cehula	Matt Groff	Karen Merrick	Suzanne Sheets
Kimberly Chamberlin	Sandy Grote	Jim Mesloh	Sonja Simonson
Alicia Chatkin	Anthony Hamlet	Jenny Michaux	Timothy Smith
John Cheng	Annie Henry	Katherine Mills	Verris Smith
Leah Cillo	Aleita Hermanowski	Laurin Moore	Michael Smith
Denise Clayton	Kirk Holbrook	Mark Morrison	Dennis Smith
Meredith Colaizzi	Diane Holohan	Judy Moser	Kiersten Snyder
Tessa Connelly	Kathryn Houchard	Charley Myers	Sarah Spiegel

“Reading books together and playing funny games and jokes. And that is what it is all about.”

Jody Spolar
Ellen Stein
Jolene Steinmetz
Patricia Stover
Lisa Streiff
Lauren Swerdlhoff
MaryBeth Szczepaniuk
Amanda Thomas
Lindsey Thompson
Liz Tobias
Ted Todd

William Toliver
Karel Ulizio
Kathryn Vargas
Ashley Varrato
Katy Vernacchia
Karen Viggiano
Karen Wagner
Camara Watkins
Katie Whipkey
Helen Wigger

Anita Williams
Maureen Willoughby
Mary Wilson
Ciara Windsor
Amy Wisniewski
Sarah Wissinger
Fred Workman
Mark Yost
Mary Zerjav
Michael Zumbo

*Everybody Wins! Corporate
Partners
Alcoa
Bill Few Associates
BNY Mellon
City of Pittsburgh - Mayor's
Mentoring Initiative
Confluence
EQT
Highmark
Jewish Federation of Greater
Pittsburgh
Management Science
Associates
The Mentoring Partnership
The National Avariary
Pittsburgh Public Schools
PPG
RAND Corporation
Reed Smith
SMS Siemag
Tucker Arensburg
UPMC



"Before this program my son didn't like to read; now he has a book with him every day."

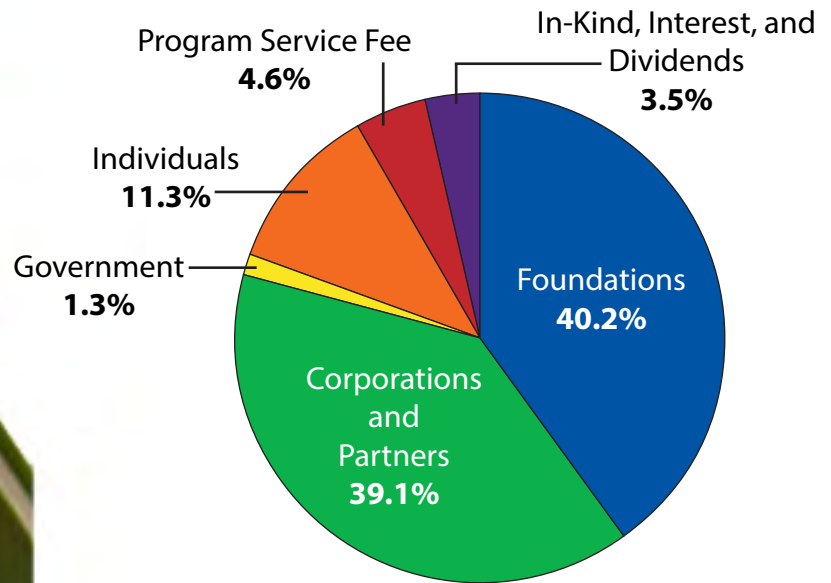
FINANCIALS

Total Revenue:

\$1,653,420

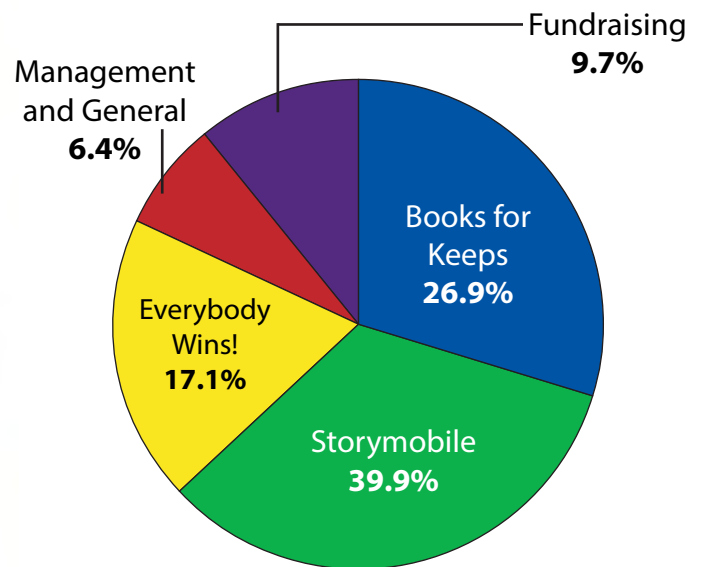
Adjusted Revenue:

\$1,240,920*



Total Expenses:

\$1,035,391



*Less future portions of multi-year grants

"The students light up when it's time for RIF and they carry the books around the school with them."

Be a RIF Pittsburgh Book Hero!



Our programs are supported by foundations, corporations, partners, and individuals who believe that all children should have access to resources and programs designed to foster a life-long love of reading. **YOU** can help a child experience the joy of reading!

- Mail a check to our offices at:
10 Children's Way, Suite 300
Pittsburgh, PA 15212
- Go online to www.rifpittsburgh.org and click on "Donate Now"
- Designate your United Way (#3804) or CFC (#78136) contribution to RIF Pittsburgh
- Volunteer to be a Reading Buddy
- Give us a call at 412-321-8022

Thank you for being part of our mission to inspire a life-long love of reading for the children in our community!



Reading Is
Fundamental
Pittsburgh



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