Behind the Book’s mission is to inspire New York City public school students to love reading by bringing accomplished authors and their books into classrooms and creating rich, innovative literacy programs.

Our organization empowers students from low-income neighborhoods with literacy programs that enrich learning and nurture appreciation for books.
Dear Friends:

There are so many moments from last year that stand out in our memories but one of our favorites was the first grade class that read the book, *My Mummy Is An Engineer*, and then created wildly imaginative buildings from spaghetti and marshmallows. We were also moved by the insights of a 9th grade class at Collegiate Institute for Math and Science who read about human trafficking in the book *Sold* by Patricia McCormick. They then visited the Bronx DA’s office and met with an attorney who made the problem relatable and gave the students new-found empathy for survivors.

In the 2017-2018 school year, 87% of our students lived at or below the poverty line. We strive to create programs and find books and authors that will resonate with them as well as fit into the core curriculum. We’re proud that last year 56% of our programs were focused on social justice. We took our kids on more field trips than ever and to places which had profound effects on them, such as the African Burial Ground Monument, The Skyscraper Museum, The United Nations, Weeksville Heritage Center and many more.

We worked with 1,845 students in 16 Title I schools and completed 84 programs, consisting of 506 workshops. Our principals recognized the value of our programs for special education students and 23% were with either self-contained or Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classes.

We also added four new schools to our roster: P.S. 375 in Harlem, M.S. 322 and M.S. 328 in Washington Heights, and Explorations Academy High School in the Bronx. We’re looking forward to long partnerships with all of these schools.

Below is a link to the 2017-18 books written and illustrated by our students and designed and printed by professionals. This year we published 22 student books, making 700 kids published authors. We never get tired of revealing a new book to a class. The grins on their faces as they carefully autograph their first published work could power cities.

[Click here to see this year's books.](#)

We have a new passion project – giving away books to homeless shelters, community centers, and neighborhood kids. Of the many young people who come into our office looking for a good read, two stand out. They’re ‘young girl entrepreneurs’ who sell peanut clusters and other home-made treats to save money, hoping one day to open their own store and inspire other young entrepreneurs. We admire these young ladies and they always leave our office with fewer treats and some good books.

In total, we donated over 12,000 books to kids around the city. This includes 3,200 books we gave to our elementary and middle schools to combat summer slide. With the continued support of Scholastic, Penguin Random House, and KPMG we hope to give more books every year.

Interaction between students and volunteers has become a vital part of our services. Volunteers enhance our research and writing workshops in addition to supervising field trips. The teachers appreciate the one-on-one attention given to their students and frequently credit what we do for the students improvement in writing. This year 473 volunteers donated more than 1,935 hours to Behind the Book. We couldn’t do what we do without them!

We work every day to light that spark that will inspire the next generation of readers, writers and artists. We would never be where we are today without your support. Thank you!

Happy Reading,

Susan Elman     Jo Umans
Board Chair     Executive Director
One thing that I learned about myself was that I thought I was a bad artist but I was really good. And also I thought I couldn’t write a poem but I could write a poem.

Grade 3, P.S. 375
Behind the Book provides immersive literacy programs for Title 1 public schools in New York City. We work with Pre-K through 12th Grade in schools at which 75% or more of the student population lives below the poverty line. Our results come from our unique strategy:

**Customizable Programs**

Behind the Book invests individual attention in each classroom. We work with each teacher to develop a program that is appropriate for the class’s starting reading levels and fits into the core curriculum and then design materials that scaffold advancement. Our programs can be customized for populations such as English Language Learners and Special Education classes.

**Diverse Literature**

Our programs introduce the students to an accomplished author and, whenever appropriate, are based on an anchor text which reflects the lives of students in New York City. Meeting an author encourages students to see themselves as writers and reading books that are familiar, vivid and relevant is key to fostering reading engagement and real-world connections.

**Book Ownership**

Behind the Book purchases at least one book for every student. Book ownership allows our students to identify as readers and writers and helps sustain engagement after our programs are completed.

**Multiple Workshops**

Each Behind the Book program involves six to eight workshops that bring books to life. In addition to meeting the author twice, every program includes an art workshop designed and taught by BtB teaching artists. This provides students with an outlet to creatively express connections to the anchor text. Programs are also supplemented with writing workshops supported by our dedicated volunteers. Students receive individualized attention that drives their success and are exposed to people from diverse backgrounds. Field trips bring students to museums and historical sites in New York City that complement the subjects of the books. Our programs broaden students’ experiences while developing literacy skills.

**Creative Final Projects**

Every program culminates in a writing project that reinforces all that the students have learned. Behind the Book celebrates students success by publishing a class book or creating a public exhibit of their work. Celebratory experiences like this demystify the creative process and increase the students’ confidence and willingness to try challenging tasks.
I learned everyone has an author or writer in them.
Grade 12, DeWitt Clinton High School

**Behind the Book Schools**

**Elementary**
- Community Life Center
- Mount Morris Head Start
  Harlem, Manhattan
- P.S. 4 The Duke Ellington School
  Washington Heights, Manhattan
- P.S. 46 Edward C. Blum School
  Fort Greene, Brooklyn
- P.S. 125 The Ralph Bunche School
  Harlem, Manhattan
- P.S. 154 The Harriet Tubman School
  Harlem, Manhattan
- P.S. 241 Emma L. Johnston School
  Crown Heights, Brooklyn
- P.S. 375 Mosaic Prepatory School
  Harlem, Manhattan

**Middle Schools**
- Eagle Academy for Young Men II
  Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn
- M.S. 322 Renaissance Leadership Academy
  Washington Heights, Manhattan
- M.S. 328 Community Math & Science Prep
  Washington Heights, Manhattan
- Urban Assembly Bronx Academy of Letters
  Morrisania, Bronx

**High Schools**
- Collegiate Institute for Math and Science
  Allerton, Bronx
- DeWitt Clinton High School
  Norwood, Bronx
- Explorations Academy
  Morrisania, Bronx
- High School for Dual Language and Asian Studies
  Lower East Side, Manhattan
- International Community High School
  Mott Haven, Bronx
Our Year in Review

1,845 Students Served
506 Workshops

Classroom Programs 84

16 Schools

12,000 Books Donated

22 Student Books

473 Volunteers Gave
1,935 Hours of Time

Student Demographics

- 52% Latino
- 33% Black
- 9% Asian American
- 6% White or Other

87% living at or below the poverty line*
23% Special Education classes
56% of our programs had social justice themes.

* Estimates are based on the most recently available data from the Department of Education for each of our partner schools.
The third graders in Ms. Mandy's class at P.S. 125 in Harlem met Susan Verde, bestselling author of *The Water Princess*, and learned about the difficulties some people have accessing clean drinking water and how that can impact their lives. *The Water Princess* tells the story of a young girl from Burkina Faso who, like all the girls in her village, must walk a long way every day to collect water for her family and is unable to attend school. During Susan's first visit she explained that she based the character on Georgie Badiel, a Burkinabé woman she met while doing research for the book. Georgie now lives in Brooklyn and has a nonprofit that builds wells in Burkina Faso.

The students learned that each bucket the girls carry holds five gallons of water, which is enough to serve one family a day in Burkina Faso as compared to families in the United States that use an average of 552 gallons per day.

Students recorded their own water usage for a day in order to compare theirs with the main character’s family. Then students researched how water is collected and prepared for use. They also went to the Central Park Reservoir and met with the group NYC H2O, who taught them how the reservoir provides the city with drinking water.

At Susan’s second visit, she described her writing and editing process. She showed the comments and suggestions given by her editor in order to emphasize the necessity of editing to improve your work. The students were excited to learn valuable information about the ways to save water and were then assisted in their research and writing by Behind the Book volunteers.

A Behind the Book teaching artist taught the class about The Water Tank Project where artists used NYC water towers to spread awareness about water usage and availability. They then created their own water towers, which were made into greeting cards that they sold to members of their school community. The students got to meet the ‘real’ Georgie and presented the proceeds to her when she came to their celebration. Her foundation, The Georgie Badiel Foundation, is committed to bringing clean drinking water to the people of Burkina Faso.
“How can you stake a claim to the American Dream when people don’t think you belong here?”

The 12th graders in Ms. Akilah’s class at International Community High School in the Bronx asked themselves this question while reading *Undocumented* by Dan-el Padilla Peralta. This inspiring memoir touches on many themes, including identity, adapting to a new county, the meaning of the American Dream, perseverance, and overcoming challenges. Students wrote letters about themselves to Dan-el about their own diverse backgrounds. They began their program with the questions, “What is the American Dream? What things make it easy or hard for it to come true?” and watched videos about the immigrant experience in the United States.

During Dan-el’s first visit to the classroom, he spoke to the students about his experience as an undocumented immigrant, answered students’ questions, and provided them with notes to consider as they developed their fiction writing. In his second visit, Dan-el led the class in a short writing exercise centered on their experiences and gave his input and advice on their writing. They then drew upon current events and their own personal backgrounds to write short stories describing an imaginary character finding his or her place in a new community where their dream is either destroyed or fulfilled. They worked with Behind the Book’s volunteer writing coaches to examine and revise their first drafts.

To complement their writing, students worked with Behind the Book’s teaching artists to create graphic art. By highlighting a word or phrase from their stories students communicated the underlying meaning of their writing. Their work was then published in a book titled *The Things We Don’t Say*. The collection of fictional stories humanizes the experiences of those traversing many uncertain borders with the hope of bridging the divides that separate us. We celebrated the students’ achievement with a publishing party where they were each given a copy of their book to keep and autographed a copy for Dan-el.
One of the ways that teachers, students and staff view the impact of our work is through the publication of student books. Last year, over 700 students experienced the satisfaction and pride of becoming published authors when we produced 22 professionally designed and printed books composed of student writing and art. The students autographed a copy for the author and the school principal and these books are now in the school libraries for other students to see. Each student also got a book as a permanent reminder of their work with Behind the Book.

Most importantly, through the process students learn that even the most daunting assignment, like editing an essay until it’s worthy of being published, can be broken down into simple and manageable tasks. It is this simple life skill – breaking down the overwhelming into the manageable – that will carry them the furthest in life. The tangible reward of this life skill – holding the book in hand – demonstrates this achievement like nothing else can. This pride of accomplishment spans all grades and age groups of Behind the Book programs.

Becoming a published author provides a platform for students to be seen and heard and to have their experiences acknowledged by others. They become storytellers with both the vision and skills to share their stories. What once seemed overwhelming, is now manageable and seen as just another daily challenge to be conquered.

**Student Books**

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**Student Book Designers**

Sarah Boecher
Annabel Brandon
Troy Cunningham
Eun Mi Do
Rachel Doherty
Nina Dunhll
Oz Durham
Karen Evans
Anita Frager
Michael Hollingsworth
Lauren Kristin
Blake Logan
Lorie Pagnozzi
Krystal Pratt
Sara Reynolds
Khalid Rosemin
Katherine Ross
Iris Shih
Sara Suttle
At the conclusion of last year’s programs, teachers reported that after working with Behind the Book:

- 83% of students demonstrated increased reading engagement.
- 78% of students reported that meeting the author made them want to read more.
- 77% of students demonstrated an increased motivation to write.
- 79% of students delivered higher quality writing.
- 83% of students showed more confidence in their own skills.

**Evaluation Findings**

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- 79% of students delivered higher quality writing.
- 83% of students showed more confidence in their own skills.

Behind the Book gives us a chance to extend our vision and not just focus on what we should learn in the classroom. It shows us the world beside school is also important to us.

Grade 10, DeWitt Clinton High School
We'd like to thank everyone who supports Behind the Book, especially our major donors and partners:

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Classic Car Club of Manhattan
Columbia University
The Daily Show with Trevor Noah
Gayle Forman
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Kendra Scott
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The Late Show
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Elise & Leonard Elman
Susan Elman & Joseph Ronson
Christine Fleming & Jim Wiggins
David Forsh
Ellen & David Freeman
Alan Gallo
Susom Ghosh
Students poured their beliefs into their stories. They expressed themselves in a way they had not done before.

Teacher, Grade 2/3, P.S. 154

1,137 Gifts Under $500 totaling $56,694
When I show my mom she is going to be happy - I want to be just like the author.

Grade 2, P.S. 375
It was incredible! The children were so proud that they got to meet a “real” author—They can’t stop talking about how cool it was.

Teacher, Grade 3, P.S.46
Selecting authors truly matters. Students are more motivated to read when authors have written about topics/characters that they can relate to. I am more mindful when choosing books to share in the classroom.

Teacher, Grade 4, P.S.154

Authors in Schools

Selina Alko
Marc Aronson
Tracey Baptiste
Paulette Bogan
Tonya Bolden
Kerrine Bryan
Marina Budhos
Ann E. Burg
Ruth Chan
Yansook Choi
Lesa Cline-Ransome
Shana Corey
Zetta Elliot
Sarah Fabiny
Gayle Forman
Robbin Gourley
Paul Griffin
Nikki Grimes
Isabel Hill
Rachel Himes
Tiffany Jackson
Marthe Jocelyn
Alicia Klepeis
Jackie Kramer
Caron Levis
Steve Light
Kam Mak
Kevin McCloskey
Patricia McCormick
Rita Meade
Tony Medina
Steve Metzger
David Barclay Moore
Daniel José Older
Emma Otheguy
Dan-el Padilla Peralta
Doreen Rappaport
Sharifa Rhodes-Pitts
Lizzy Rockwell
Julia Sarcone-Roach
Jessie Sima
Susan Verde
Danette Vigilante
Julian Voloj
Amy Waldman
Renée Watson
Monica Wellington
Rita Williams-Garcia
Ibi Zoboi
Volunteers

Daniel Acevedo
Alexa Adames
Melanie Adams
Eitan Adler
Angele Ali
Leann Allen
Reginald Arnely
Nia Imani Atkins
Guadalupe Ayala
Rawan al Baghli
Alex Barker
Samantha Barnes
Janet Barnhart
Jane Barowitz
Jeannette Beasley
James Bell
Myriam Belviso
Amy Bennett
Carin Berger
Clara Bergnier
Donn Bernstein
Luc Blandor
Davina Bhandari
Alexis Blane
Freya Block
Nadia Block
Ryan Bolowsky
Bobbie Borkin
Sylvia Boulotu
Teresa Brake
Angela Brown
Derek Brown
Zeeva Bukai
Meggan Burggraf
Karen Butler
Jean Cadet, Jr.
Stephanie Calderon
Akelia Campbell
Jake Campbell
Andrea Carrasco
Robin Canter
Erika Chambers
Yujia Chang
Francisco Chocholous
Nancy Chung
Christine Clancy
Meredith Clark
Susan Coleridge
Victoria Colen
D'Shandi Coombs
Susan Coronel
Jaida Correa
Ava Lulu Costanzo
Clea Counts
Steve Coupet
Caletha Crawford
Lynette Crippen
Jeremy Czerw
Jessica Cassoni
Maevyn Marie Davis-Rackerby
Genta Daci
Erin Dalvini
Jeremy Davis
Dilshad Dayani
Katharine Deboer
Amanda Demothenes
Kelsey Dickey
Shatina Dockery
Lucien Dossous
Joe Dorfman
Lisa DuBois
Raisa Ebeh
Rachelle Eason
Isabelle Edwards
Lynn Eichenberger
Lauren Eley
Tiffany Elisca
Susan Elman
Carolyn Ely
Annie McCam Engman
Jordan Even-Chen
Deb Fein
Sara Feld
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Angela Felice
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Susie Fogelson
Irene Friedland
Gloria Garcia
Sanamatha Garcia
Teresa Garcia
Jonathan Gardner
Hannah Garner
Jessie Garrtson
Tyroxe Gayle
Sharron Gerrick
Stephanie Gibson
Terri Gillis
Jill Giovan
Kayla Glemad
Omar Glenn
Andrea Glickson
Elizabeth Gold
Brian Goldrich
Kristina Gorcheva-Neuberry
Teresa Goudie
Brittany Grier
Surbhi Gupta
Martha Guillorn
McKenzie Harvey
Jason Harper
Myra Hernandez
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Jake Hirsch
Lisa Hodge
Christy Hood
Jenn Horowitz
Meghan Hourigan
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Olivia Jackson-Lewis
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Fujing Xiong
Jason Youn
What I learned for my experience about the program was that I tremendously love to write. Collecting ideas and writing them down can bring things up that you didn’t even know they were there.

Grade 12, International Community High School
# Financials

## Assets, Liabilities, Net Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assets</td>
<td>$249,784</td>
<td>$198,591</td>
<td>$135,413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liabilities</td>
<td>$10,188</td>
<td>$12,188</td>
<td>$10,684</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Assets</td>
<td>$239,596</td>
<td>$186,403</td>
<td>$124,729</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Summary of Revenue & Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>$609,336</td>
<td>$545,141</td>
<td>$456,426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions - properties &amp; services</td>
<td>$78,123</td>
<td>$54,151</td>
<td>$37,551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment Income</td>
<td>$154</td>
<td>$119</td>
<td>$82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Service Income</td>
<td>$80,000</td>
<td>$56,172</td>
<td>$61,537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Revenue &amp; Support</td>
<td>$767,613</td>
<td>$648,939</td>
<td>$550,195</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Revenue

- **38%** Individuals & Events
- **31%** Foundation
- **10%** In Kind Contributions
- **10%** Fees for Service
- **6%** Corporations
- **5%** Government

## Expenses

- **72%** Program Services
- **13%** Fundraising
- **15%** General & Administrative