What We Do

Our Mission: Connecting people of all ages to a world of opportunities through literacy and creative expression.

REACH OUT AND READ SOUTHERN ARIZONA
Partners with pediatricians to prescribe and provide new books to children, as well as early literacy coaching to parents so their children grow up with books and a love of reading.

READING SEED
Pairs kindergarten through fifth-grade students who are reading below grade level with trained, one-to-one reading coaches.

STORIES THAT SOAR!
Gives voice to the original words and creative ideas of young people by bringing their stories to life on stage through professional theatre productions, visual arts, handcrafted books, and an arts integration K-12 curriculum.

ADULT BASIC LITERACY
Offers individualized support to adults in reading, writing, math, and problem-solving skills through one-to-one tutoring, group classes, and individual help in our tutoring center.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION FOR ADULTS
Provides classes for immigrants and refugees who want to speak, write, and read in English so they can fully participate in — and contribute to — our community.

YOUR IMPACT

97,374 books given to children in need
46,447 learners improved literacy and life skills
145 community sites hosted our programs

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Nothing is more gratifying than seeing the light bulb go on for a child or an adult who is learning to master reading or finding the power of their own voice through creative expression. Literacy helps people reach their full potential—to go from “I can't,” to “I can.”

The greatest predictor of a child’s success in school is the education level of the parent, and well over 20% of adults in Tucson lack the basic literacy skills they need to become their fullest selves (National Assessment of Adult Literacy). Not only are their lives impoverished by this skill gap, but so are ours. How many new businesses will not be started in Tucson? Might there be a great piece of music or a medical breakthrough that is lost because some of our neighbors never obtained some basic skills and self-confidence? Literacy Connects is working to improve literacy skills and thus improve our community.

Thank you to each of the 1,049 volunteers and to the 1,696 financial investors who gave critical literacy building blocks to 46,447 children and adults last year.

Let me leave you with Robbie’s story—a first grader who had trouble sitting still and only wanted to play outside. His teacher warned his Reading Seed coach that arriving during his favorite time of the day, recess, would be a problem. Yet, when Robbie saw his coach across the playground he ran to her with open arms, eager to explore the books she had brought. Robbie is learning to love books and the worlds they open because his coach takes the time to read with him and bring him books that are fun and interesting. Student by student, with your support, we are opening a world of opportunities to people of all ages.

With deepest gratitude,

Betty Stauffer
Executive Director
Ana’s Story
“With the help of Literacy Connects, my life is changing.”

I had a hard childhood in Mexico. I remember being at the border fence when I was 14 and grabbing some dirt from the other side. I said, “Someday I will be there.”

I always liked school, but I had to leave when I had my first son. When I was 23 I moved to the United States with my family. I learned English on my own. Eventually, I found a good-paying job as a lab technician at the mines. But it was hard because I was working a lot, sometimes up to 60 hours a week.

It was not long before my American Dream became the American Nightmare. The truth was, my job paid good money because it was toxic. One of my co-workers died of cancer when I was there. I was not safe at work or at home. After years of domestic violence, I finally got a restraining order against my husband. A long, expensive divorce and a horrible custody battle took my kids away from me.

Losing my kids was the most painful experience of my life. I felt like I lost part of my soul. I fought so hard in the courts and all the time I was working as many hours as possible.

Eight months later, I got my kids back. They moved back in with me and we celebrated Thanksgiving. But ten days before Christmas, I was laid off. I was scared but at the same time I felt total freedom—like I could start over. When I looked for a job again, reality hit: good jobs required a high school diploma—and I didn’t have one.

Finding Literacy Connects was a miracle. It was different from the other GED classes that I tried in the past. Before, I always felt like just one more body in the class. At Literacy Connects, the tutors and the other students treat each other like a family. My teacher Cydne believed in me so much.

With the help of Literacy Connects, my life is changing. I started classes in April 2016 and by August 2016 I had my citizenship and my GED! In 2017 I became a Certified Nursing Assistant. I now have a great job at one of Tucson’s premiere assisted living facilities. My dream is to become a Registered Nurse. We really need better care for elders in our community, and I want to be a part of that change.

I am proof that Literacy Connects helps so many people like me. We experience so many things: domestic violence, poverty, unemployment, but all of us want to improve our lives and our families. With your help this is possible. I believe life returns favors in unexpected ways. Who knows—maybe one day you or one of your family members will be in my care?
"In the job interviews I am using a lot of words that I was learning in this class. I am so happy. I feel more confident.”
- Alicia C., English Language Acquisition for Adults learner

"Stories that Soar! inspires my students to write every day and have fun doing it. Every year I have students who enter my class with a dislike of writing who turn the corner and become writers because of this program. Thank you for bringing Stories that Soar! to Sam Hughes; I love it!"
- Christopher Rodarte, Sam Hughes teacher

“My confidence is like a sunrise in the desert. I'm in my happy place when I'm in the book. Every book we read, the more confidence I get."
- John P., Adult Basic Literacy learner

“My student, who didn't know the alphabet when she started in January, came running up to me in April saying, "I love to read! I'm getting good at it!""
- Joyce C., Reading Seed coach

“Getting books and reading tips from our pediatrician has helped my daughter with her language learning and inspired a love of books and reading.”
- Abe L., Reach Out and Read Southern Arizona parent
The Need is Real

1 in 10 adults in Pima County can’t read at a fifth-grade level.
- National Assessment of Adult Literacy

83.5% of preschoolers in Pima County (approx. 20,400) are at risk for not being ready for kindergarten.
- First Things First

Approximately 1 in 4 third graders in Pima County reads below grade level.
- National Assessment of Educational Progress

In Arizona, an estimated 530,000 adults read at or below a fifth-grade equivalent.
- National Assessment of Adult Literacy

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A LASTING DIFFERENCE FOR GENERATIONS.
"I treasure my morning as a volunteer in the adult literacy program. Literacy Connects provides such an important service to our Tucson community. Each week I am inspired by the students I work with. I learn a great deal from the other tutors as well. I want to continue doing my best to help each student who bravely comes to improve their skills and make our community stronger."
- Patricia Donahue, Adult Basic Literacy tutor
**OPERATING INCOME**

Total: $1,843,038

- Foundation Grants: $568,338
- Individual Gifts: $516,228
- Community Organizations & Businesses: $257,522
- Local Government Contracts & Grants: $264,805
- In-Kind Donations: $192,462
- Fees for Services: $43,683

Thanks to generous gifts from the Margaret E. Mooney Foundation, our mortgage was reduced by $243,500.00 making our total income $2,086,538.00.

**OPERATING EXPENSES**

Total: $1,815,214

- Programs: $1,263,834
- Fundraising: $243,387
- In-Kind Expenses: $192,462
- Administration: $115,531

Our 1,049 volunteers donated a total of over 55,593 hours to life-changing literacy and creative expression efforts. That’s like having 26 additional full-time staff members!
“In addition to volunteer teaching the English intensive classes, I donate because I want to support the vital work of ALL of the programs Literacy Connects offers.”
– Nancy Kwoh, volunteer & donor

“I donate to Literacy Connects because I want to invest in the future of our community. An educated citizenry demands reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills—and it all begins with literacy.”
– Arlene Douglas, volunteer & donor

“We feel a deep need to contribute to social justice on a local level. Literacy Connects is working to even the playing field in Tucson through education.”
– Cathy & Peter Becskehazy, volunteers & donors

Put your TAX DOLLARS to work, right here in Tucson!

Literacy Connects is a Qualifying Charitable Organization that can benefit from your tax dollars!

SINGLE FILING...
$400 MAXIMUM

MARRIED FILING JOINTLY...
$800 MAXIMUM

You have until April 17th to claim AZ Charitable Tax Credits on the previous year’s taxes.
Talk to your tax professional today!

Talk to your tax professional today!
Your gifts help Daniela and thousands of other adults and children to improve essential literacy skills.

“Thanks to Literacy Connects, I got a job, and I’ve started to live my dreams.”

-Daniela, English Language Acquisition for Adults learner

Monthly Giving Club

Make an impact in the life of a learner, every day, with an automatic, monthly donation.

- $15/month ($0.50/day) gives one adult learner the opportunity to learn to speak, read, and write English.
- $25/month ($0.83/day) brings the love of writing to seven children via the Magic Box and Stories that Soar!

Learn more about the impact of your monthly gift by visiting www.LiteracyConnects.org/MGC

Your donations to Literacy Connects are tax deductible and qualify for the AZ Charitable Tax Credit.

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Literacy Connects

is a pathway for people.

It is hope.

It is encouragement.

It is a new chapter to open.

- Rachelle C., GED Graduate