



2012 READING VILLAGE

ANNUAL REPORT

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH LITERACY



ANNUAL REPORT

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Dear Reading Village Friends & Family,

In 2007, I founded Reading Village to inspire children to dream and to empower them to achieve those dreams. Six years later, I never imagined that their dreams would carry us as far as we have come. I will forever remember 2012 as the year we realized just how powerful a model we had developed, together.

During the first four years of the Leaders and Readers Program we thought we saw the significant ways in which our teen reading promoters could impact the lives of the generation of children behind them. They were building vocabularies, improving comprehension, and instilling a desire to read. They were creating access to books, engaging students in active learning, and building a foundation for greater analytical and creative thinking skills. There is no question that they were changing lives, but as is true with so much of our work in Guatemala, we had only just begun to scratch the surface of what was really possible.

In 2012, when our aspiration to create a culture of literacy intersected with our students' desires to improve the quality of life in their communities, we began to realize the true extent of that potential.

The leadership development we provide indigenous teenagers encourages a curiosity about the social, political, and historical systems that perpetuate poverty all around them. This knowledge is power. By developing a keen awareness of the context in which they live, our teenagers have begun to see themselves as citizens of a greater social system. Right before our eyes, the concept of who they are has transformed from being victims of circumstance to powerful actors capable of creating change.

And changing they are.

The teenagers with whom we work know that they are more than leaders of story hours and students on scholarship. They are acutely aware of the ability they have to set a new course for the children they spend time with, for their families, and for their towns. The communities in which these kids work will never be the same because of their actions. They are taking on leadership roles in all facets of community life and building libraries where there have never been books.

Beyond my wildest dreams, our students are weaving together a rich social fabric of trusting relationships and enduring connections that will prove essential and catalytic to broad community development. I have never been so proud.

I have, in fact, been so impressed by the ambition and initiative of our current scholars, that in 2013 we plan to add two more communities to the three in which we already operate. This will nearly double our capacity and exponentially increase our impact. In order to do so, we have harnessed the inspiration of our teens, the dedication of our local staff, and the investment of our international network to design a sustainable model of growth. To that end, we are actively seeking partner organizations with which to collaborate across communities and extend our reach even further.

Each year at Reading Village has been bigger than the one before it, and 2013 is shaping up to continue the trend.

Thank you for your partnership in this work. Thank you for transforming lives through literacy.

Sincerely,



Linda Smith

LETTER FROM FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LINDA SMITH

Dream Big

The future of these children should be determined not by the country into which they were born, but by their passion, their education, and their dreams.




“THE MORE THAT
YOU READ THE
MORE THINGS
YOU WILL
KNOW. THE
MORE THAT YOU
LEARN, THE
MORE PLACES
YOU’LL GO. DOCTOR
SEUSS



M MISSION

Reading Village empowers youth to **eradicate illiteracy** and lead their communities out of poverty.



Almost **one-quarter** of Guatemalan women cannot read, and illiteracy rates are much higher in rural and indigenous populations.

Approximately **26%** of the population lives on less than \$2 per day. Among Mayan communities, 72% are classified as poor.

Indigenous Mayans - a historically marginalized population - account for **51%** of the nation's 14 million people.

In rural villages, where Reading Village works, just **1 in 10** teenagers reaches high school and far fewer graduate.

GUATEMALA

An Unfair Choice

A typical Guatemalan family will often have to choose which child to send to school - a decision that determines future health, income levels, and overall prosperity.





LITERACY

Learning begins with literacy. When we can master the written word, we can engage with a world far beyond our immediate environment and in doing so mobilize the resources and inspiration needed to control our own lives and to change the lives of those around us.

Promoting literacy is a diverse and interdisciplinary effort. We know now that one of the most important activities for building the knowledge required for eventual success in literacy is reading aloud to children. Reading Village programs go one step further. Not only do we get kids reading and facilitate literacy-building opportunities, we keep students in school to leverage this literacy for academic achievement and eventual employment. By doing so, Reading Village programs begin with literacy, foster success, and aspire to impact quality of life across the villages in which we work.

OUR MODEL

WHEN **YOU** GIVE A
SCHOLARSHIP



TO A
TEEN ▶

SHE **STAYS IN SCHOOL** & **LEARNS THE SKILLS** TO SUCCEED IN LIFE.

[Since she can **read** and **write** and has learned subjects like arithmetic + history + health,]



SHE OBTAINS A
HIGHER PAYING JOB LIKE A TEACHER
OR A NURSE,

AND SHE
SHARES THIS INCOME
WITH HER FAMILY, SO THAT HER BROTHERS & SISTERS
CAN GET AN EDUCATION, TOO.



And this whole time she is reading to children in her **community** so that they, too, learn to **read** and **write** and **dream**. Over time, she begins to see herself as a changemaker.

With her
EDUCATION



her
INCOME



her
SKILLS



SHE BECOMES A
LEADER
AND INITIATES
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
PROJECTS, like building a library or paving roads.



AND AS
LITERACY CLIMBS

and opportunities increase,
and household income
improves ▶

SO, TOO, DOES
QUALITY OF

LIFE.

SLOWLY BUT
SURELY



ENTIRE **COMMUNITIES**
BEGIN TO **PROSPER.**



THE CYCLE OF
POVERTY IS

BROKEN

[for good.]



ALL BECAUSE OF A
SINGLE SCHOLARSHIP.



INVEST IN

1
TEEN

AND YOU CAN CHANGE

1,000s
OF LIVES

2007 - 2012 SUMMARY

- Reading Village programs have changed the lives of more than 12,000 children.
- 4,634 books have been delivered to orphanages, schools, and libraries.
- Through our Book Bank program, we have partnered with 31 organizations to reduce the primary barrier to literacy: access to books.
- Our teen reading promoters have spent 9,240 hours reading to children in their communities.
- Our Leaders & Readers program has served more than 50 teen scholars.
- In 2012, we expanded to our third community; we now serve Chuacruz, Los Morales, and Concepcion.



Education Works.

In Guatemala, every year of school that a child finishes will increase his/her future income by as much as 13%.

A Reading Village scholar uses a storybook to capture the imagination of a young child.

Working collaboratively in marginalized communities, the Reading Village model combines innovation and cultivation to co-create human capacity. In this way, we aim to develop not only the next generation of leaders, but also generations of readers thereafter.

PROGRAMS

BOOK BANK PROGRAM

Around the world, **1 billion adults are illiterate**. In many developing countries, such as Guatemala, there is no culture of literacy. Rates of secondary education are low, families live in poverty, books are inaccessible, community libraries are scarce, and the school system is the worst in the Americas.

Access to books is the first barrier between millions of children and their ability to imagine and achieve a more fulfilling, creative, and productive life for themselves. Reading Village's Book Bank supports reading promotion efforts through the acquisition and distribution of books to low-income communities.

In 2013, Reading Village will be looking to secure the future sustainability of its Book Bank program through strategic partnerships with international corporations.

SUSTAINABILITY

Since 2006, we have partnered with 31 institutions, including orphanages, schools, and libraries to improve access to books among indigenous Mayan children. Book distribution started as our cornerstone program and is now just one small piece of what we do. To date, we have distributed nearly 5,000 books to the benefit of approximately 10,000 children.

**THIRTY-ONE
PARTNERS
5 THOUSAND
STORYBOOKS
10,000
CHILDREN**

LEADERS & READERS

Our Leaders and Readers Program **empowers Mayan youth** in rural Guatemalan communities to eradicate illiteracy and lead their villages out of poverty.

We invest in teenagers through scholarships, mentoring and leadership development, enabling them to complete high school (an accomplishment that less than 10% of their peers achieve). In return, they volunteer as “reading promoters” – each teenager runs several weekly reading circles for the young children in his or her community. Together, reading promoters and program alumni initiate supporting projects to develop a culture of reading within their own villages, where only 50% of adults are literate. In this way, our teen scholars become the first generation of adults in their communities to read to their own children. And the children they have taught over the years will continue the legacy of reading, learning and aspiring, thereby improving quality of life for themselves and the entire community.

In 2013, Reading Village will expand its Leaders & Readers program by sharing curriculum and training materials with partner organizations.

SUSTAINABILITY

In 2009 we began with just six reading promoters in one single community. Since then, we’ve grown exponentially. Currently, our Leaders & Readers program operates in Concepcion, Chuacruz and Los Morales, and we will begin 2013 with forty promoters reaching over two thousand children!

SIX YEARS

3 COMMUNITIES

FIFTY-SIX

TEENAGERS

2 THOUSAND

CHILDREN

SPOTLIGHT

A Community's First Library

This past summer, the teenagers with whom we've been working to develop leadership skills and finish high school in the village of Concepcion informed us that they would be building their village's very first library. They petitioned their town council for a building and organized the community in renovation efforts.

Never before has a return on our investment felt quite so tangible: four walls, a few dozen shelves, orange paint, and a group of impassioned teenagers who believe in the power of reading and writing to change their community.

Change from Within

The initiative that these teens are demonstrating exemplifies the sort of sustainable community development that we strive to foster. *Reading promoters hold the key to their community's very first library.*



The Freedom to Choose

In an increasingly global society, access to education gives youth, like Carlos, the opportunity to choose their future rather than to settle for the status quo.

Carlos reading a storybook to some of his younger neighbors.



CARLOS' STORY

Carlos is a smart & dynamic teenager who had always assumed he'd be a mechanic until he became a reading promoter three years ago. Now, a few years into the program, Carlos is passionate about every page he turns as he reads to young children; he's a walking success story. Never tiring and always enthusiastic, he tells us with pride – "I'll still be a reading promoter when I'm old and grey!"

LEARNING JOURNEY

The best way to understand Reading Village's vision for a culture of literacy is to visit our program sites, meet our staff, and read with our scholars. Whether you're eighteen or eighty, there's something to learn from Guatemala.

Over the course of eight days you will visit the colonial town of Antigua, explore the ancient Mayan ruins of Iximche, and tour a coffee cooperative on Lake Atitlan. What's more, visiting our reading promoters and program staff, you will get to know the teenagers personally, the challenges they face, and the impact they have. You'll visit their homes, share a meal with their families, and have an authentic experience of Mayan traditions and rural life.

“I have never been on a trip where I so intimately entered the culture and the lives of local people.

— Learning Journey Participant, 2011

Visit: www.readingvillage.org/literacy-program/learning-journey to learn more. In 2013, our Learning Journey dates are:

DATES

April 25th - May 2nd, 2013
November 2nd - November 9th, 2013

Email learningjourney@readingvillage.org for additional details.

**“ I HAVE TRAVELLED
TO MANY PLACES
IN THE WORLD.
THIS WAS BY
FAR THE MOST
MEANINGFUL &
INTIMATE CULTURAL
EXPERIENCE
I HAVE EVER HAD.**



Creating Generational Change

The combination of leadership development, reading promotion, and education empowers one generation and inspires another. *A reading promoter leads literacy games in his local community.*

The Reading Village model is innovative, responsive, and effective, in equal measure. We could say the same of our board, staff, and supporters. All around the world, inspired individuals have joined us to **change lives through literacy.**

RESOURCES

LEADERSHIP

Linda Smith . Founder & Executive Director

Linda has a background in education, public health, business, solar energy, and community sustainability, in both for-profit and non-profit sectors. She has been connected to Guatemala since 1988 and founded Reading Village in 2007.

Martin Kruger . Board President & Treasurer

Martin is the Chief Operating Officer at Earth Island/Follow Your Heart, a Los Angeles manufacturer of natural/organic, vegetarian/vegan food products. Martin has led Reading Village's financial management and strategic planning process since 2008.

Debra Robbins . Board Secretary

Debra is the Associate Rabbi at Temple Emanu-El in Dallas, where she has served the largest Reform synagogue in the state of Texas for 21 years. Debra also supports the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Jewish Family Service.

Alice Swett . Board Member

Alice has managed the Youth Opportunity Advisory Board in Boulder, CO for 15 years. While she develops teens' leadership skills in Colorado, she supports our curriculum development and program design in Guatemala.

Larry Dressler . Board Member

For over 25 years Larry Dressler has helped people mobilize their collective insight, commitment, and energy to make a positive difference in their communities. Larry is a facilitator of high-stakes conversations around the world.

Julia Young . Board Member

Julia Young is a co-founder of Facilitate.com, developer of collaboration tools for innovative thinking and decision making. As a facilitator and process consultant, Julia explores how collaborative and innovative thinking can augment team effectiveness.

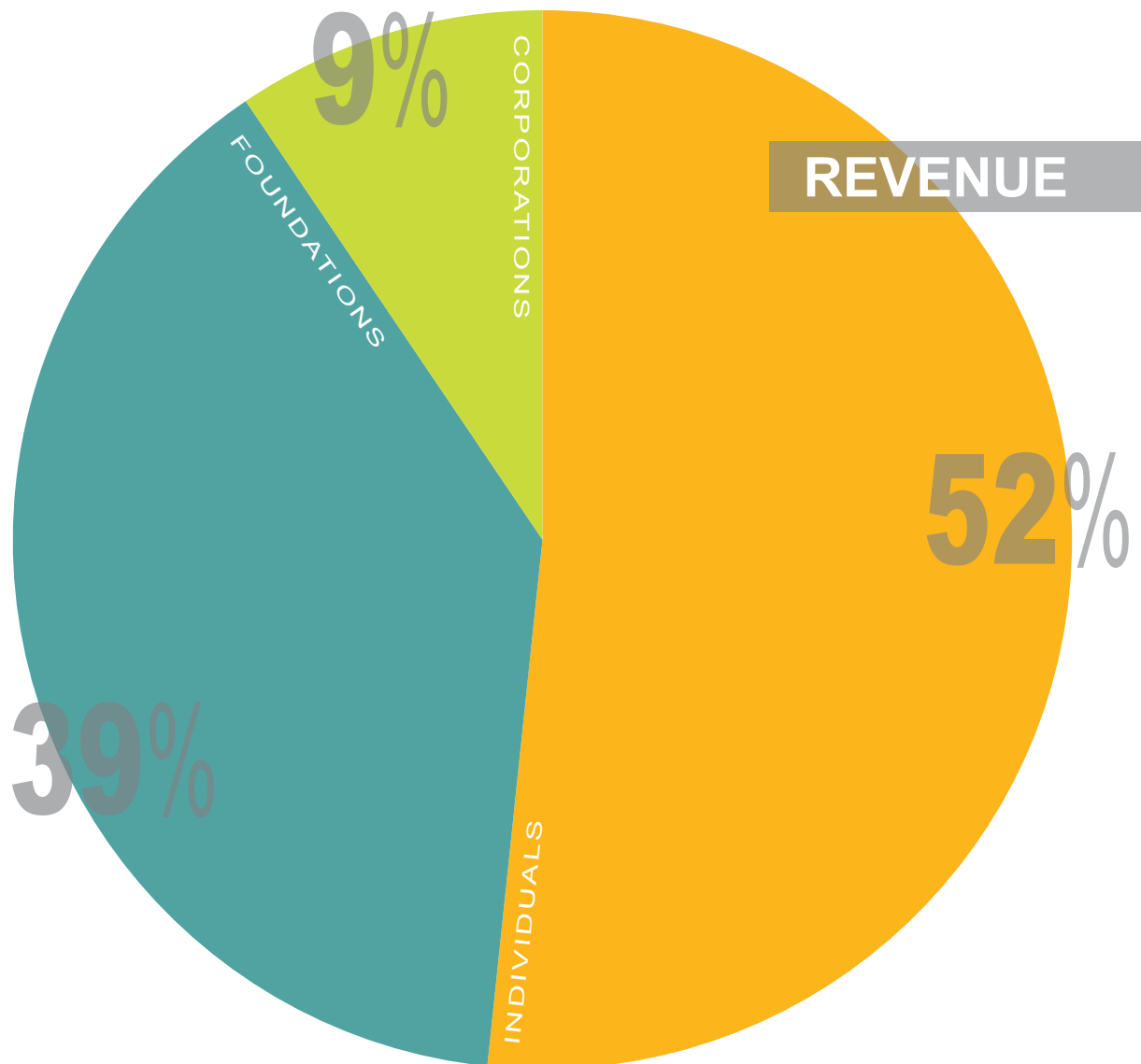
Aaron Smith . Board Member

Aaron is a Staffing Researcher at Google, where he uses data to analyze, improve and scale talent acquisition workflows. Analyst, listener, problem-solver and social entrepreneur, he enjoys working with cross-functional teams toward a common goal.

Ellen Goldstein . Board Member

Ellen is a trusted and accomplished advisor to corporate executives, senior management teams and boards of directors in for-profit and non-profit sectors. She is the Founder and President of IntoGreat Management Partners.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY



2012 BUDGET

Revenue

Donations	\$100,717
Earned Income	\$9,594

Expenses

Program Services	\$53,950
Management	\$48,067
Fundraising	\$10,700

Reading Village is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. We are a small operation with very big ambitions. As a growing international organization with staff in the United States and Guatemala, we pride ourselves on financial transparency and accountability to our donors. With every year of growth and evolution we strive to improve our efficiency and maximize our effectiveness.

GENEROUS. LOYAL. YOU.

The following individuals & organizations have generously donated \$100 or more in the past year. Their investment in the education of indigenous youth is helping to break the cycle of poverty in rural Guatemala. Thank you.

\$1,000 or more

Sue Anderson
Madonna Binkowski
Kathryn Conway Charitable Trust
Kathleen Eakins
Ellen Gager
Estelle Friedman Gervis Family Foundation
The Good People Fund
Vinny Green
The Harvey School
Diana Ho
Christine Holz
Martin Kruger
Lake Atitlan Libraries
Sheila Lucas
Manhattan Middle School
Ruth Pitman
Red Empress Foundation
Debra Robbins & Larry Robins
Aaron & Katy Smith
David Smith
Dorothy Smith
Stephen S. Wise Temple
Debbie Stewart & Kirk Sinclair
Nancy Swett
Tecovas Family Foundaiton
Wall Family Enterprise
Monique Weil
Wilshire Blvd. Temple
Julia Young

\$500- \$999

Carole Balin
Mickey & Marlene Barach
Lyn Konugres Coupounas
Eli Herscher
Carole Rubin Kahn
Richard Lewis
Gerome Simon
Janice Snooks
Dan Speigler
Jane & John Spencer

\$100 - \$499

Angela Antenore
David Arfin
Anne Bentz

Jessamyn Berniker
Kassia Binkowski
Erica Bledsoe
Barry Block
Richard Block
Boulder Valley Unitarian Universalists
Carol Brownstein
Beatrice Briggs
Sherri & Roger Cannon
Richard Dortch
Brian Dressler
Larry Dressler
Selma Dressler
eBay Foundation
Linda Eastman
Iris Elron
Sherry Faris
Carla Fenves
Catherine Foster
Steve Fox
Jeff Gaillard
Lynn Geller
Cindi & Jared Gellert
Lynn Gerber
Troy Gibson
Jennifer Gilburg
Ellen Goldstein
Alan Gomperts
Greta Grimala
Brenda Hageman
Suzan Hirz
Kaye Howe
Kristin Jahn
Diana Janda
Leon Janks
Carmen Jimenez
Mary Kassab
Sharon Kipersztok
David Klehr
John Kostishack
Jan Kristiansson
Robert Loewy
Matthew Mayerson
Valerie March
Linda McMahan
Barbara Meister
Eric Mokover

Joel Mosbacher
Alan Moses & Nancy Friedland
Libby Neumann
Andy Newman
Connie Newton
Rob Novack
Russell Orelowitz
Sue Patterson
Erica Peng
Anne Peters
Michael Price
Laurea Resau
Claire Rienelt
Andrea Robbins
Kurt Robertson
Richard Rosenberg
Peter Rubenstein
Wayne Saks
Penny Salus
David Sandrich
Jacqueline Shehorn
Rona Shor
Warren Shulman
Susie Sigman
Deborah Silver
Dennis Smith
Gerard Smith
Linda Smith
Susan Stark
Jonathan Stein
Alice Swett
Temple Beth El
Temple Beth Or
Temple B'nai Or
Julian Treasure
Steve & Lin Vela
Johanna Vondeling
Kim Wallace
Marcia Walsh
Jeffery Woodruff
Mary Zamore

THANK YOU



Choose Change. Educate a Child.

Time and again, education has been shown to be the most effective way to improve the wellbeing of low-income communities. It's time to choose change and eliminate barriers to education for all children, everywhere.

Kindergarten students in a school that has received books from Reading Village.

CHANGE THE WORLD

- 1** We believe that poverty is a human construct and not a natural condition and can, therefore, be eliminated. The world is as we shape it.
- 2** We believe that every child should be able to grow up free to express their fullest self, with access to the resources and in possession of the capacities to contribute to their families, their communities, their countries, and our world.
- 3** We believe that access to books, the ability to read, and the capacity to think critically and imaginatively are fundamental to the full development of individuals and society.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ?

**TRANSFORM
LIVES THROUGH
LITERACY**

