

# 2020 Annual Report



LITERACY  
SERVICES  
of INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

Literacy Services of Indian River County, Inc., is a nonprofit United Way agency partner. We were founded in 1971 and incorporated in 1975.



*Kent Jones*

Dear Friends of Literacy Services,

Over the past twelve months, our Board of Directors has grown in size and has approved an ambitious, inspiring Strategic Plan. Seven new Board members have added their diverse backgrounds, experiences, and skills to our team, and they have brought energy, passion, and insight.

The Board engaged the services of a consultant to guide us in a rigorous, six-month, strategic planning process. The Board divided into three task forces, each focusing on a Strategic Priority: Impact, Influence and Capacity. Each task force created goals, objectives, actions, and measures of success. The Board adopted bold revisions to our Vision and Mission Statements and created five Core Values, all contained in this report.

The resulting Strategic Plan aligns with the community-wide literacy initiative, of which we are active participants, and addresses needs identified in the Community Needs Assessment. The Plan will guide our work for three years as we aim to reach more students with more comprehensive learning opportunities. A copy of the Strategic Plan can be found on our website.

In February, Literacy Services was honored as a recipient of a generous, transformative grant from the Windsor Charity Polo Cup, which will enable us to begin implementing our Strategic Plan. We are grateful to the Windsor community and to all our vital supporters, community partners, volunteer tutors and dedicated staff. Thank you!

Sincerely,  
Kent Jones  
Board President

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## MISSION

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Deliver comprehensive and innovative learning opportunities to local adults seeking English language and literacy skills to achieve their goals.

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## VISION

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All adults are empowered with the literacy skills they need to thrive in our community.

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## CORE VALUES

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**Empathy:** Show compassion and advocate for English language and literacy students.

**Inclusiveness:** Embrace diversity and create equitable learning and work environments.

**Respect:** Assume positive intent, keep an open mind and communicate with care.

**Collaboration:** Work as a cohesive team and be creative in our approach to teaching and learning.

**Commitment:** Dedicate time, talent and treasure to ensure the success of our mission.

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# Leadership

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## BOARD

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Kent Jones, President  
Katy Healy, Vice President  
JoAnn Hitt, CPA, Treasurer  
Lt Joseph Abollo  
Judge Paul Kanarek  
Karen Malits  
Román Ortega-Cowan  
Chris Steinkrauss  
Lorna Stengel  
Diana Walker

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## STAFF

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Jessica Schmitt, CFRE, Executive Director  
Elida Gomez, Community Engagement Coordinator  
Cindy Mercado, Education Coordinator

# 2019-2020 Fiscal Year Operating Overview\*

Literacy Services received contributions of \$351,730 during the fiscal year ended June 30, 2020. This amount includes a \$111,000 transformational gift from Windsor, approximately \$91,000 in grant funding, nearly \$79,000 from individuals, and income from Special Events of approximately \$68,000. Expenses totaled \$203,545 of which 73% was spent on programs, including ongoing training of volunteer tutors and vital curriculum supplies. Literacy Services had net assets of approximately \$388,000 at June 30, 2020.



*Jessica Schmitt, CFRE*

Dear Friends of Literacy Services,

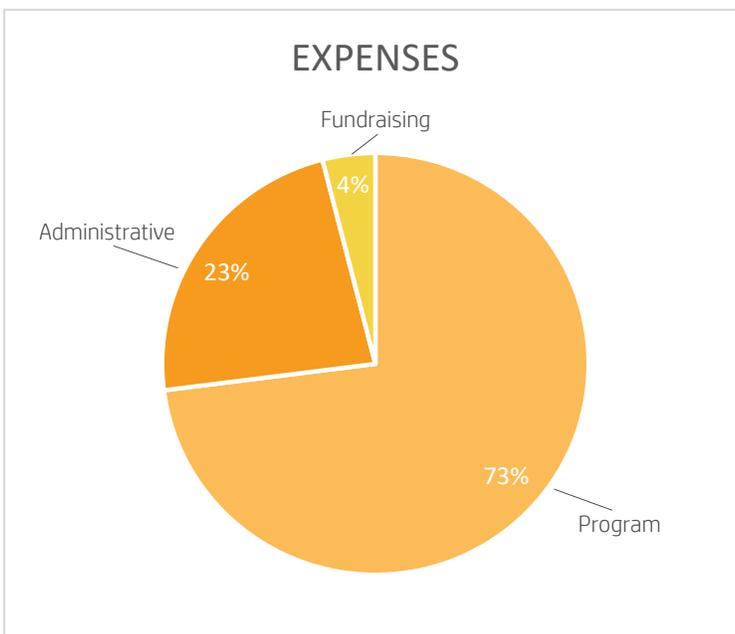
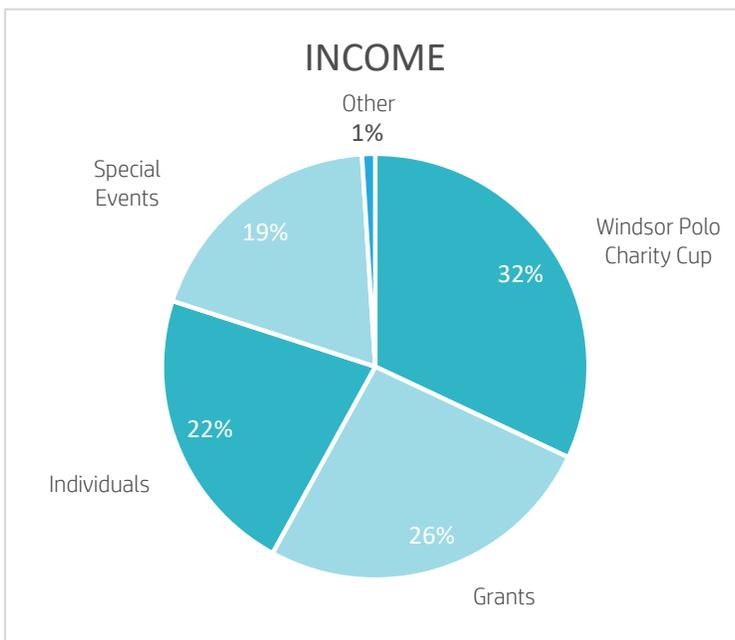
This past year has been an unexpected roller coaster ride for all. In February, we were proud to celebrate student achievement in 2019 with over 200 tutors and students at our annual graduation event. Shortly after, everyone's world was impacted by COVID and the staff, Board, tutors and students have been adapting, planning and pursuing new paths ever since.

Working remotely has improved our knowledge and use of virtual tools. Tutor In-Service Workshops and Student Conversation Groups were offered on Zoom and tutors met with students through Google, Skype and WhatsApp. Although many students do not have computers or the internet, we were able to connect them to important resources as we all navigated the new normal. The barrier of access is a challenge we plan to address in the coming year.

The Board of Directors remained committed to the Strategic Planning process and set inspirational goals to guide us through the next three years. Although the first year will largely be impacted by COVID, we look forward to working towards those goals equipped with a toolbox full of resources gained throughout this time.

Your steadfast support has allowed us to continue fulfilling our mission. While our outcomes look different this year, we will continue to work hard to reach those who need us most so they may thrive in our community. We couldn't do it without you.

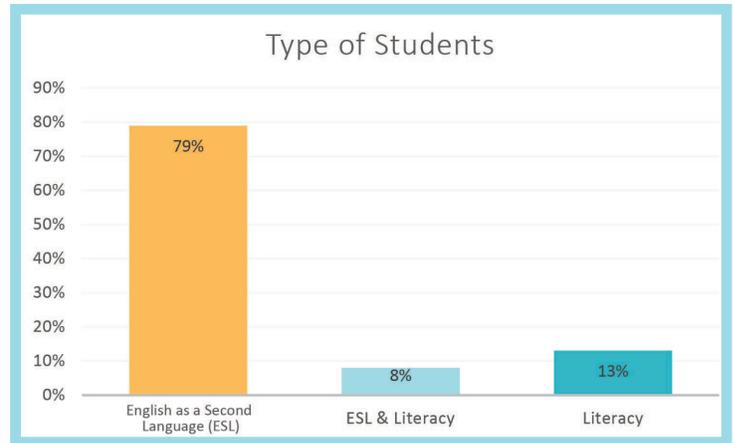
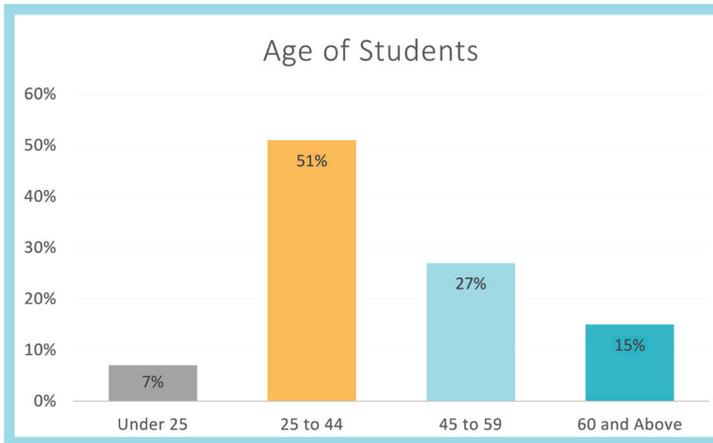
Sincerely,  
Jessica Schmitt, CFRE  
Executive Director



\* Amounts subject to audit completion. Audited financials available upon request.

# Demographics

Our 235 students represented 23 countries, the United States and Puerto Rico this past year. Almost 78% were female. Fifty-eight percent of students were employed but 52% of all students were living at or below the poverty level.



## Over 630 Goals Were Achieved by Our Students Last Year

- 81** Reading levels advanced.
- 6** Started college, trade school or Adult Ed courses.
- 57** Improved their communication skills.
- 51** Improved their financial literacy and 26 improved their health literacy.
- 35** Became more engaged in their child's education.
- 10** Became United States Citizens.
- 44** Improved their writing skills.
- 1** Student achieved their GED
- 111** Improved a job situation or skills to obtain a job.
- 19** Are now actively volunteering
- 9** Acquired their drivers license.
- 23** Average users per month spent 300 hours total (between July and March) at our computer lab in Fellsmere completing schoolwork, filling out applications, signing up for services and learning how to use the school district's parent portal.

## Students of the Year



### Russell McKinnon *Literacy Student of the Year*

Russell is a disciplined and determined student working toward his Commercial Driver's License. In addition to working in the Challenger book series, Russell has gained computer and map reading skills this year. His tutor, Deborah, says he is focused and always does his homework. She says it is a privilege to work with Russell and his efforts have led to confidence and success!

### Magda Gutierrez *ESL Student of the Year*

Magda has been with her tutor, Kay, since 2012. She has completed all of the Challenger workbooks and has recently become a citizen of the United States. She is a committed, enthusiastic and driven student. Her improved English skills helped her obtain a better job and help her children who have all attended Indian River State College.



### Veruska Vera *ESL Student of the Year*

Veruska has only been in the United States two years, but has made amazing progress with her English skills. She has soaked up every learning opportunity and is now a respected manager at work. Her tutor, Mike, describes her as a committed student, employee, wife and mother, and is happy to see how learning English has changed her and her family's life. Veruska recently became a homeowner and was promoted at work.

In addition to the updated Mission and Vision statements, the Board-approved Strategic Plan identified three priority areas and set goals for each. More details can be found on our website at [www.literacyservicesirc.org](http://www.literacyservicesirc.org).

Strategic Priority	Strategic Goal
<b>Impact</b>	Offer comprehensive, innovative and effective adult English language and literacy learning opportunities that empower students and build a more literate community.
<b>Influence</b>	Be known throughout the community as a leading resource in adult English language and literacy learning.
<b>Capacity</b>	Ensure financial security and organizational capacity to fulfill our mission.

## Teaching and Learning Virtually

In March 2020, county libraries closed due to public health safety concerns. Literacy Services closed its locations and began working remotely. Initial weeks were spent calling students and volunteers. Adult learners were connected to important community resources as they adapted to financial challenges and managing their children's education at home. Tutors were offered training in Zoom and WhatsApp and encouraged to maintain contact with their students.



As the months continued, additional training was offered to new and active tutors virtually. Mango languages was identified as an effective online learning solution and to date, over 40 students are using this software. Our Conversation Club continued in Zoom and a Student Support Group was created in WhatsApp to keep learners connected.

## Did You Know?

- ▶ One in five adults has substandard literacy skills and 13.5% of local households use a primary language other than English.
- ▶ Children with parents having low literacy skills are more than 3 times as likely to drop out of high school compared to those with literate parents.
- ▶ Non-U.S.-born adults comprise 34 percent of the population with low English literacy skills, compared to 15 percent of the total population.
- ▶ Low literacy costs the US \$225 billion in non-productivity in the workforce, crime and loss of tax revenue due to unemployment.

## How You Can Help

Give - your tax-deductible donation is vital to student success.

Online: [www.literacyservicesirc.org](http://www.literacyservicesirc.org)

By Mail: Literacy Services of Indian River County  
1600 21st Street, Vero Beach, FL 32960

Volunteer - there is a waiting list of students and tutors are needed

Read - share your love of literacy and help build a community of readers

Our Friends of Literacy are those donors who generously contribute \$500 or more to Literacy Services each fiscal year. Gifts at this level can include one-time donations or many gifts a donor makes throughout the year, including events.

**The support from all of our donors, especially our Friends, is vital to our mission.**

## Individuals

Ms. Lois W. Appleby through the  
Indian River Community Foundation  
Ms. Shirley Becker  
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Bickford  
Mr. and Mrs. Don Blair  
Ms. Barbara Butts  
Ms. Deborah P. Clarke  
Ms. Geraldine Condon  
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Covill  
Mr. and Mrs. Chuck Cramb  
Mr. and Mrs. David O. Danis  
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Detwiler  
Mr. and Mrs. Rene Donars  
Mr. and Mrs. Stewart Dunn  
Mr. and Mrs. Mike Fuller  
Ms. Michelle Gee  
Mr. Mike Godown  
Ms. Mary P. Graves through the  
Indian River Community Foundation  
Mr. and Mrs. Doug Graybill  
Mr. and Mrs. Randy Groom  
Mr. and Mrs. Duke Habernickel  
Ms. Susan Hale  
Mr. and Mrs. Adam Hitt  
Mr. and Mrs. William S. Hoffman  
Ms. Nat Jackson  
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas R. Jackson  
Ms. Elizabeth S. Jacobsen  
Mr. Kent Jones and Ms. Mary Arnold  
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Kanarek  
Mr. and Mrs. John La Duc  
Ms. Wanda Lincoln  
The Late Ms. Alma Lee Loy  
Mr. and Mrs. Don Mann  
Mr. Charles Mappin and  
Mr. Robert Franklin  
Ms. Gaye McIntosh Ludwig  
Ms. Liz Melnick  
Mr. and Mrs. Steve Pelletier

Mr. and Mrs. Carl Peterson  
Ms. Donna Remsnyder and  
Ms. Fran Adams  
Mr. Domenic Restuccia  
Mr. and Mrs. Larry Salustro  
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Severino  
Ms. Susan R. Sheehan through the  
Indian River Community Foundation  
Mr. and Mrs. Ned Sherwood  
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Solomon  
Mr. and Mrs. William Stengel  
Mr. and Mrs. Bob Stork  
Mr. and Mrs. Byron Sugahara  
Mrs. James Titelman  
Dr. Francis X. Van Houten  
Mr. and Mrs. Ken Walker  
Mr. Kenneth L. Wessel  
Mr. and Mrs. Mike White  
Mr. and Mrs. Barry Wiksten  
Ms. Hope Woodhouse  
Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Zunk

## Businesses

CenterState Bank  
Colton Williams & Reamy, LLC  
Comfort Zone A/C & Heating of FL  
George E. Warren Corporation  
John's Island Real Estate  
Proctor Construction Company  
ProLiteracy  
Rossway Swan Tierney Barry  
Lacey & Oliver  
United Juice Company

## Grants & Foundations

Dick and Betsy DeVos Family  
Foundation  
Dollar General Literacy Foundation  
Endicott Family Charitable Fund  
Four-Four Foundation  
Grand Harbor Community Outreach  
Program, Inc.  
Head, Heart & Hands of  
Indian River Club  
Higgs Family Foundation  
The Hitt Family Foundation  
J.M. Hopwood Charitable Trust  
John's Island Community  
Service League  
The Kahle Foundation  
Kimley-Horn Foundation  
Rotary Club of Vero Beach Sunrise  
William P. and Lorna G. Stengel  
Charitable Fund  
Syde Hurdus Foundation Inc.  
United Way of Indian River County  
Windsor Charitable Foundation

## Gifts in Memory Of

Mary Hale  
Sandy Northfield  
Dominga Sanchez

## Gifts in Honor Of

Ricki Michals

**Become a Friend of Literacy, call (772) 778-2223  
or visit us online at [www.literacyservicesirc.org](http://www.literacyservicesirc.org)  
YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**



1600 21st Street  
IRC Main Library  
Vero Beach, FL 32960

1001 Sebastian Boulevard  
North County Library  
Sebastian, FL 32958

22 S. Orange Street  
Fellsmere, FL 32948

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**[www.literacyservicesirc.org](http://www.literacyservicesirc.org)**

