

# Children's Literacy Initiative



*“Now I have the vision and can see how this is going to work in my classroom.”*

- Chicago teacher receiving CLI services



## Children's Literacy Initiative works with teachers to transform instruction so that children can become powerful readers, writers and thinkers.

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Children's Literacy Initiative envisions a nation where every child has the power of literacy and the opportunity for a lifetime of success.

Founded in 1988 and headquartered in Philadelphia, CLI is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides educators with training and coaching in the most effective practices for early literacy instruction for prekindergarten through third grade. Our workshops and institutes build teachers' understanding of literacy and the art and science of teaching children how to read and write.

We coach teachers – one-on-one and in small groups in the classroom – to provide them with demonstrations and feedback that will help them incorporate the effective literacy practices into their daily work with students.

In addition, we stock classrooms with learning materials and collections of high-quality children's literature (for classroom and take-home use) and extend our services with online professional development resources.

In our 2014 fiscal year, CLI worked with nearly 250 schools, including large projects in Camden N.J., Chicago, Philadelphia and Newark N.J., for which CLI partnered with American Institutes for Research (AIR) to verify that our approach impacts student achievement and teacher effectiveness. Also in 2014, CLI earned its third consecutive four star rating (out of four) by Charity Navigator for our adherence to good governance and fiscal responsibility.



1,585  
Educators Served



34,750  
Students Served



81,237  
Books Distributed



248  
Schools Served

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Dear Friends of Children's Literacy Initiative,

Across the country, more than half of all fourth graders do not read and write at grade level. In public elementary schools in larger cities, reading at grade-level is the exception, not the norm. Research shows that students who are not reading at grade level by third grade are four times more likely to leave high school without a diploma than peers who meet that benchmark. Other studies report that one million U.S. high school students drop out of school every year. This reality should be unacceptable to each of us.

Children's Literacy Initiative (CLI) has a proven track record of helping educators teach young children how to read, write and think — critical, fundamental skills to a child's long-term well-being — in schools where families have few resources.

We are now preparing to expand our impact. In April 2014, the CLI board hired Dr. Joel Zarrow as our new Executive Director. Joel came to CLI with a career-long commitment to education, experience working in the private, non-profit and the government sectors, and an immediate understanding of the challenges and opportunities that CLI faces. With great vision, Joel and his staff have crafted a strategic plan to enable CLI to confirm its mission by growing even stronger.

Yet CLI cannot transform the state of early literacy education alone. Please take a look at how CLI is building the foundation for many children's success and consider how you, too, can help!

Yours in child advocacy,

Christine S. Beck  
Chairperson  
Board of Directors

Dear Friends,

I am proud and grateful to have become the Executive Director of Children's Literacy Initiative (CLI) in April 2014. Here, I get the opportunity to lead a thriving organization producing strong results in an area that is profoundly important to me: ensuring that children can read and write by the end of third grade.

CLI works hard to provide teachers with the tools—the books, the skills and the knowledge—they need to achieve this goal. Learning how to read, write and think changes a child's future. With our district partners, CLI transforms both teachers' instruction and students' lives.

American Institutes for Research (AIR) is winding up a three-year randomized-control study of the CLI Model Classroom™ program in four cities and its impact on children's reading achievement. The study shows that we positively impact student reading skills, teacher instruction skills and the literacy learning environment for kids.

CLI is now scaling up to more widely address America's low levels of literacy. We are implementing a three-year strategic plan to expand geographically, use digital technology to extend our programs' impact and reach, and invest in our prekindergarten services and curriculum (see page 18 for more details). But transformational change — the kind CLI pursues and creates — is not a solo sport. We seek partnerships with like-minded people and organizations willing to step up and join us in our efforts to overcome illiteracy, a devastating social inequity. I welcome your engagement and support as we advance CLI's work nationwide.

Best,

Joel Zarrow  
Executive Director

## Student Impact

How do we know we are making a difference for students? The data tell the story.

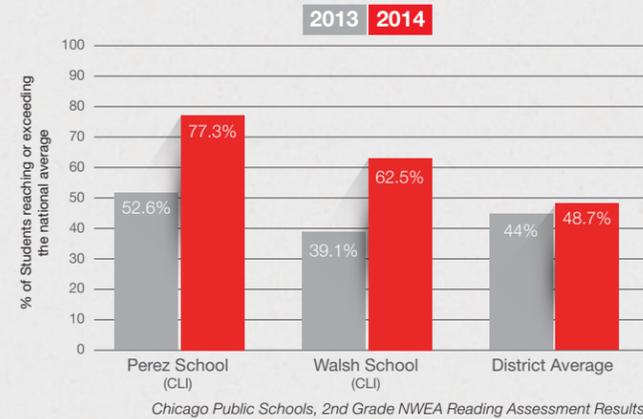
As part of our Investing in Innovation (i3) project funded by the U.S. Department of Education, we improved outcomes across 35 low-income schools in Philadelphia, Chicago, Camden and Newark, N.J. The American Institutes for Research, a nationally recognized evaluation firm, found that CLI positively impacts student learning, the quality of teachers' literacy instruction and the classroom environment.

*"This is very welcome news," says Harvard education professor Heather Hill in a 2014 Education Week article about CLI's i3 results, titled "Professional Development Pays Off for i3-Funded Program." "This joins a number of other recent studies that have found individualized coaching to be effective in improving teaching and learning."*

Professional development for teachers rarely translates directly into student learning results. But CLI is making it happen.

The data in these graphics provide examples of our impact. Whether you look at our results in a single grade level, across grade levels, in specific schools, or across a district, we are demonstrating what can happen when a teacher has high-quality and sustained support.

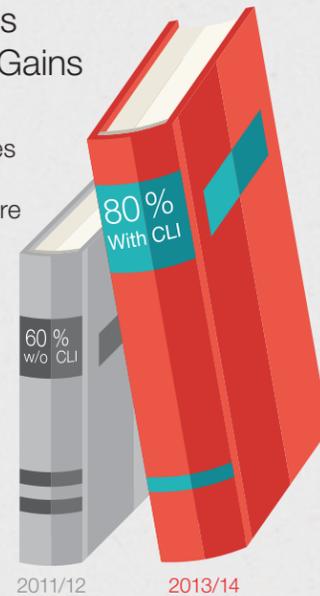
### One Year of CLI Intervention Increases Chicago Student Reading Achievement



### CLI's i3 Project Drives Reading Proficiency Gains in Newark

Kindergarten proficiency rates have risen 20 percentage points since CLI services were introduced as measured by the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA).

Newark Public School District



### CLI i3 Increases Percentage of Philadelphia Students Reaching Reading Benchmark



## Teacher Impact

When teachers are satisfied with their work, they are more likely to stay in the profession and their students are more likely to achieve. Since 2008, job satisfaction rates for teachers have been on the decline. According to the 2012 MetLife Longitudinal Study on the American Teacher, **teacher satisfaction was at its lowest point in over 25 years** with only 39% of teachers reporting that they were very satisfied in their role.

Children's Literacy Initiative is reversing this alarming trend in the profession. In a survey of more than 300 teachers, 81% report that the professional development services provided by CLI led to an improvement in their job satisfaction. Not only does CLI provide teachers with training and support around best literacy practices, **we also improve their overall satisfaction**, making them more productive and effective.



## Case Study: Camden, NJ

When he transferred into his new school in Camden, Manuel had a lot of catching up to do in his bilingual classroom, where his peers were at grade level in Spanish and transitioning to English. Manuel wasn't used to staying in his seat to work. When he should have been practicing his letters and sounds, he would walk around the classroom and distract his classmates.

Manuel's teacher asked her CLI Coach to help her tailor instruction to meet Manuel's needs. In consultation with her CLI Coach, the teacher realized that classroom procedures needed to be tightened up, not just for Manuel, but for all of her students. She and her CLI coach kicked off class conversations about good choices and bad choices.

Manuel began to understand why there are rules in the classroom and how those rules could help him grow as a learner. He started staying in one spot and stopped interrupting instruction.

Manuel could sound out syllables within Spanish words, but could not blend them into words. His teacher and the CLI Coach brainstormed, practiced and implemented strategies that would help him with this roadblock to fluency and comprehension.

Over time, Manuel grew as a reader and matured as a student. At the end of the school year, the CLI Coach watched as Manuel picked up a grade level book, sat down in his chair and quietly read the entire book. When he got stuck on a word, he stayed in his spot and made eye contact with his teacher. In response, the teacher silently did the motions that remind him of a reading strategy they have practiced together.

Manuel smiled, tried it, and kept reading.

*“Students really thrive on knowing that their work will continue, no matter what stage they find themselves in. That's really powerful, as it may be the first time many of them have felt such ownership over their learning.”*

### CLI in Camden

- 6 Public Schools
- 95 Educators
- 1,725 K – 3rd Grade Students
- 1,687 High-quality Books for Classroom and Take-home Use



“My students' reading scores have soared tremendously, and 90% of my class is reading on or above level!”

- Camden School Teacher (2013/14)

## Case Study: Chicago

Walk into this second grade classroom, and you are in awe. The walls are full of anchor charts, students' hand-written signs about mini-lessons that they have had. Books are all around the room, organized in bins, encouraging children to read. Materials for activities designed to help students learn to read and write are strategically placed, just waiting for children to dive in. It is a place to learn and grow. It is a place you wish every child had the opportunity to be.

You listen to the teacher reading to her class and realize that the easy conversation about the book that she is having with her students is really a well thought-out lesson designed to teach them how to be better readers.

*“Teaching before CLI was black and white, and now things are in color,” explained the teacher.*

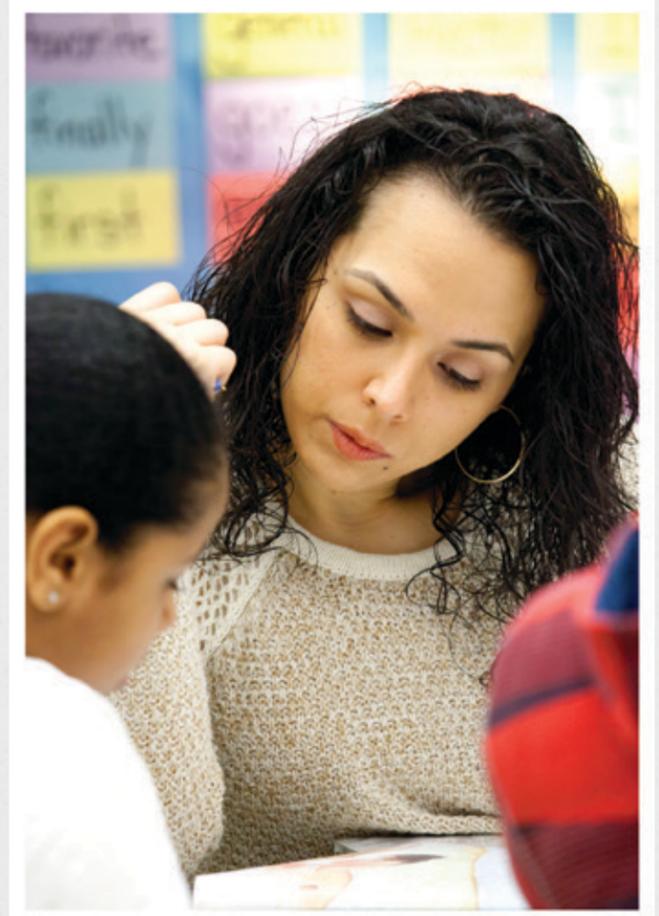
You witness children writing. They are writing about their life. The stories are telling and incredible.

You see children reading to themselves with books just right for them and using reading strategies they have learned earlier in the day or year.

Within the first year of receiving CLI services, the percentage of students reaching or exceeding the national average at the Manuel Perez and John A. Walsh schools jumped an average of 24 percentage points.

### CLI in Chicago

- 26 Public Schools
- 235 Educators
- 5,425 Pre-K – 3rd Grade Students
- 23,177 High-quality Books for Classroom and Take-home Use



## Case Study: Newark, NJ

When Juan walked into his kindergarten classroom on a snowy day in 2014, he did not know he would read his very first book that day.

Throughout the school year, Juan's teacher and her CLI Coach had worked to build students' reading stamina using sight words, familiar poetry, and books that matched students' reading levels. Every day, they would show Juan and his classmates how to hold a book, how to whisper-read sight words, and how to look at a book's pictures for clues to reading its words.

During independent reading time, Juan would sit proudly practicing his sight words and attempt to read all of the words in each book he chose. He and his classmates were making good progress.

But on that particular day, the class was quietly working independently when suddenly Juan yelled out,

*"I read the book! I read the whole book! All by myself!"*

The class decided immediately to stop their quiet work and celebrate Juan's accomplishment. Even the school custodian sat on the carpet to listen to Juan read.

Juan read that book 20 times that day and took it home to read to his family that night.

"Our students' NJ ASK scores have increased over the last three years in the 3rd and 4th grade, which is the cohort that began with the CLI grant."

- Newark Principal (2013/14)

### CLI in Newark

- 14 Public Schools
- 189 Educators
- 4,150 K – 3rd Grade Students
- 2,200 High-quality Books for Classroom and Take-home Use



## Case Study: Philadelphia

From the moment in 2013 that Christina first met her CLI Coach, it was clear Christina wanted to become a better kindergarten teacher. Like many teachers working with CLI, Christina knew that her students needed something more from her, but she did not know exactly what to do.

Christina invested in improving her teaching from the first day that she and her CLI Coach set goals together. She worked hard to learn, reflect on and implement the effective literacy practices promoted by CLI's training, coaching and classroom resources. She learned how to best use the CLI book collections with her students.

Christina's investments paid off and she observed changes in her students' attitudes and performance.

*"Students love to read and feel accountable for it. They love showing off their own skills and sharing with the class."*

Changes in Christina's classroom did not go unnoticed by her colleagues. By spring 2014, Christina had become a model for her peers. Other teachers from her school and even from other buildings visit Christina's classroom when her students are working on reading and writing.

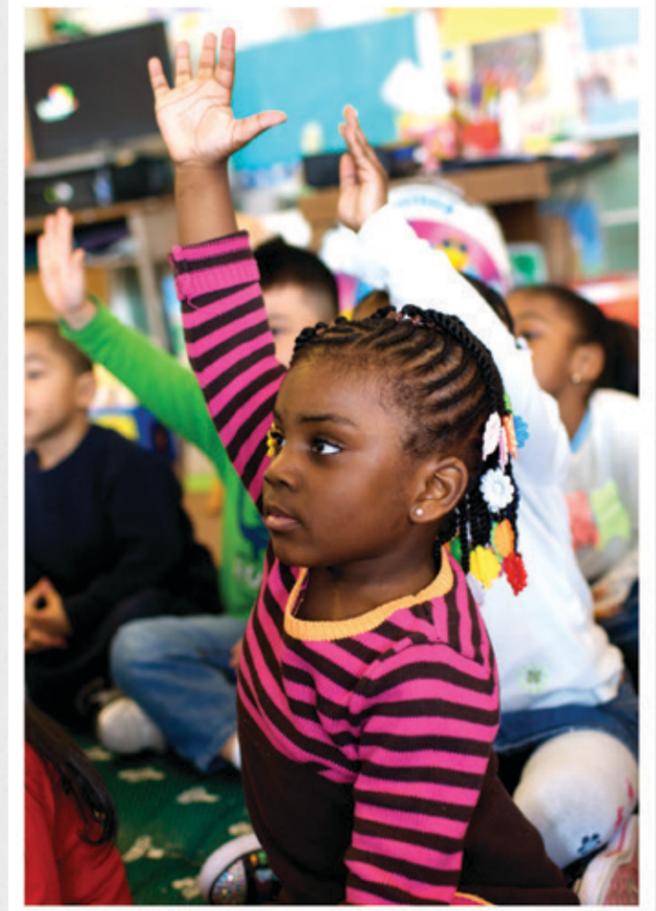
These colleagues came regularly to ask Christina questions, take pictures of her classroom and carefully observe her teaching techniques so that they could replicate them with their own students.

Christina was a catalyst for a professional learning network that continues to thrive.

Philadelphia third grade i3 classrooms receiving CLI services had 9.5% more students reaching or exceeding the literacy benchmark than comparison schools that did not.

### CLI in Philadelphia

- 54 Public, Charter & Parochial Schools
- 556 Educators
- 12,000 Pre-K – 3rd Grade Students
- 41,264 High-quality Books for Classroom and Take-home Use





## What Our Partners Say About Us

“My students made huge gains in my first year as the practices were being put in place, but my second year with CLI was like a new world. Because I was able to begin these best practices day one, I began seeing student achievement much earlier in the year. CLI has not only helped me get my students ready for first grade, but I truly believe it is setting up these young students to become college and career ready in their future.”

– Teacher, Chicago

“The greatest benefit CLI has provided to Brennemann School teachers is the professional development. It has had a significant impact on their instructional delivery which has resulted in greater student achievement.”

– Principal, Chicago Public Schools

“The greatest impact from CLI has been the job embedded coaching. The teachers’ instructional practices are more effective as evidenced by the students’ reading growth and joy in reading fiction and informational text.”

– Principal, School District of Philadelphia

“Many of the bilingual students come to Kindergarten with little or no literacy skills. Using the strategies and best practices that I learned from CLI, I have seen incredible growth! The students go from not being able to write their name to writing informational books! It is absolutely awesome!!!”

– Teacher, Camden

“I’ve been teaching for 32 years and have had lots of coaches come and go through the years. You are the first one who said you were here to help and actually stayed and helped. You did not just tell me to do things, you showed me how and you made me feel comfortable and not afraid to try new things. That is why I have been successful.”

– Teacher, Chicago

## Our Supporters

Children's Literacy Initiative is pleased to acknowledge the following donors, including all members of CLI's Board of Directors, for their generosity during Fiscal Year 2014 (July 1, 2013, through June 30, 2014). These private individuals, charitable trusts and organizations support CLI and our work through grants, corporate matches, United Way designations, in-kind gifts and the donation of publicly traded securities. CLI greatly appreciates each gift.



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U.S. Department of Education

### \$500,000 to \$999,999

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*For more information about supporting CLI, contact CLI Director of External Relations Jen Weikert at (215) 561-4676, x129, or [JWeikert@cli.org](mailto:JWeikert@cli.org).*



## CLI Board of Directors 2013-14

CLI Board members' skills, insight and drive help us advance CLI's mission every day. We are grateful for our Board's ongoing and enthusiastic support and encouragement.



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Children's Literacy Initiative

## Fiscal Year 2013-14

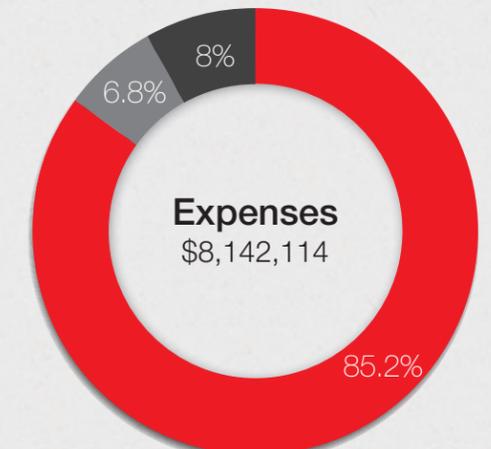
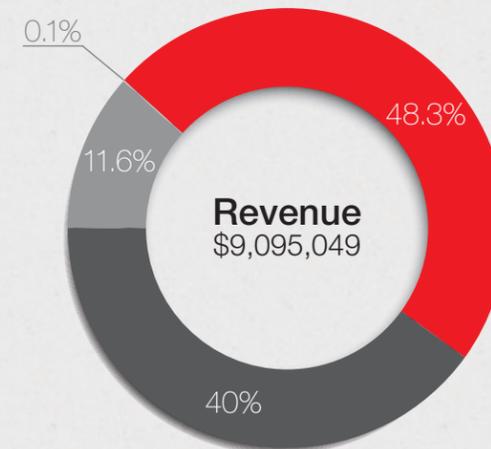
With only 14.8% of expenses going to administration and fundraising costs, **85.2% of all expenses were dedicated solely to CLI programming.**

Revenue	
Private Philanthropy	\$4,390,895
Government	\$3,641,894
School District Contracts	\$1,057,330
Investment Income	\$4,930
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$9,095,049</b>

Expenses	
Program	\$6,934,001
Administrative	\$651,874
Fundraising	\$556,239
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$8,142,114</b>

**Change In Net Assets** \$952,935

**Total Ending Net Assets** \$6,010,542

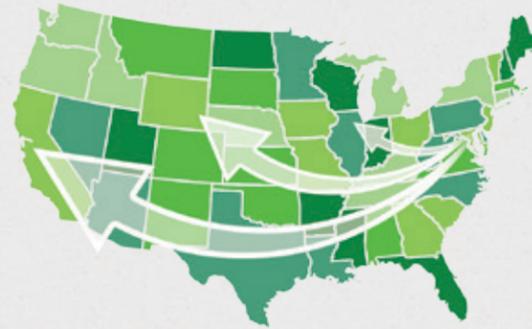


## What's Next For CLI

It's time to expand Children's Literacy Initiative's impact, reach more teachers and students, and become a national force. We are embarking on a Board approved strategy to advance CLI's work through three distinct, yet integrated pathways: geographic expansion, digital expansion and a prekindergarten expansion. These strategic pathways will extend our reach, deepen our impact and diversify our revenue streams, sustaining our work for years to come.

### Geographic Expansion

To be a national force, we need a national presence. Yet education is a local sport; we need to be on the ground to develop relationships with school and district leaders, funders and other key stakeholders. Over the next three years, we will prudently grow our geographic reach. We intend to build our existing Chicago operations into a "hub" office staffed with a team charged with building and maintaining local partnerships with school districts and supporters. We will then open two additional hub offices: one in the Mountain states, the other on the West Coast.



### Digital Expansion

Our trainings need to be cutting edge and exploit the reach of the Internet. CLI will accelerate our adoption of digital technology to enhance our in-person, classroom-based trainings and develop new avenues for offering CLI trainings online. Ultimately, CLI intends to offer educators self-directed online courses and trainings – for credit, where appropriate.

This digital expansion will improve the CLI clients' training experiences, streamline our course development processes, and expedite our research. In addition, digital technology will open up a two-way communication channel with CLI clients and partners that will strengthen our program impact and research, grow our online community, and support targeted marketing campaigns.



### Prekindergarten Expansion

Kindergarten readiness is an essential transition in early literacy. To capitalize on continued government and public support for universal prekindergarten access, CLI will invest heavily in our prekindergarten products and service offerings to serve elementary schools and districts that offer prekindergarten classes, as well as regional prekindergarten networks and Head Start programs.

This year (FY 2015), we are revising our signature prekindergarten curriculum Blueprint, aligning it with the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) used for assessing preschools and designing it to prepare young children for Common Core State Standards for kindergarten. We are training our staff and professional developers to improve support for educators and their students ages 3 to 5. After piloting the revised Blueprint, we will make our new prekindergarten curriculum and services available nationwide.



CLI's Board of Directors, staff and advisors are excited by this shared vision for CLI's future. We invite you to join with us as we work with more teachers to transform their literacy instruction so that all our children can become powerful readers, writers and thinkers. Together we can work to ensure that every child has the power of literacy and the opportunity for a lifetime of success.

