Dear Friends,

What would life be like if you struggled as a reader? This is not meant as a rhetorical question; take a moment and think about it. Where would you be? What opportunities would have been lost?

Now, imagine you are a child struggling with reading. What would school feel like? How are you going to learn when learning depends more and more on reading? What choices will be open to you? What choices will you make?

These are not idle questions. Nearly two-thirds of children in low-income schools are not reading at grade level by the end of third grade. We know that most of these children never catch up. We know they are four times less likely to graduate high school. For too many children, these questions are not merely a reflective thought experiment; they are real and must be answered.

Frederick Douglass, escaped slave turned intellectual advisor to presidents, wrote, “Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.” The words are true today. The mere act of reading, what seems so natural to many of us, is an extraordinarily freeing act. Reading equals opportunity. Reading equals choice. Reading equals power.

To mark the power and importance of reading, CLI is launching the Reading Equals Campaign. Throughout the year, we will reach out to children and adults to ask, “What does reading equal?” CLI staff answered, “Reading equals learning. Reading equals imagination. Reading equals hope. Reading equals civil rights. Reading equals democracy. Reading equals knowledge.”

With your support, we will continue to enable children to read at grade level by third grade. In the following pages, you will read about how CLI is getting this done. What does reading equal for you?

Joel Zarrow, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer

Dear Friends of Children’s Literacy Initiative,

As we strive to educate our children, the urgency for justice and equality has never been greater. How do we level the playing field to give all children the tools they need to succeed?

Literacy is the beginning, and our youngest children deserve a solid start with outstanding teachers. Training and coaching teachers in schools for under-served children is exactly what Children’s Literacy Initiative does.

In 2016, CLI received a prestigious Invest in Innovation award from the U.S. Department of Education, enabling us to launch new partnerships with four major urban public school districts: Denver, Houston, Broward County FL and Elizabeth NJ. Along with our work in Chicago and Philadelphia, we now reach almost 50,000 children. In addition, CLI is at the forefront of serving districts with high percentages of English language learners, one of the greatest challenges facing our nation’s school system.

We also are expanding CLI’s services and support to Pre-K centers across the country. Teachers in over 125 Pre-K classrooms now have access to CLI’s Blueprint for Early Literacy that provides developmentally appropriate books and lessons to engage Pre-K children in meaningful, fun learning.

I am involved with CLI because of its commitment to provide quality early childhood education and to improve public schools in low-income neighborhoods. Literacy is vital to level the playing field.

With a track record of success, CLI works! Please join me to support it.

With thanks,

Christine S. Beck, Chairman, Board of Directors

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Christine S. Beck, Chairman, Board of Directors
CLI is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization working with pre-K through 3rd grade teachers to improve instruction so children become powerful readers, writers, and thinkers.

CLI creates a sustainable, school-wide culture of literacy that introduces students to the joys of reading, writing, and life-long learning.

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

We stock classrooms with learning materials and collections of high-quality children’s literature. We also extend our services with online professional development resources.

We provide workshops & seminars to build teacher’s knowledge of literacy content and pedagogy.

By helping educators learn high-impact instructional strategies and nurture dynamic professional learning communities, CLI builds lasting capacity in teachers and principals over time.

CLI works with district partners to create sustainable organizational processes that continue the trajectory of improvement in schools. Building a teacher’s instructional expertise impacts student learning over the course of a teacher’s career.

The 2015/16 School Year

- Schools Served: 257
- Educators Served: 1,995
- Students Served: 41,650
- Books Distributed: 39,378

Reading Equals Learning
As the single highest rated applicant and two-time award winner of the U.S. Department of Education’s Invest in Innovation program (i3), CLI launched its work to impact approximately 49,500 students in four major urban school districts: Broward County Public Schools, Denver Public Schools, Elizabeth Public Schools, and the Houston Independent Schools District.

“We’re excited about the opportunities of our CLI partnership,” said Broward County Public Schools Superintendent Robert W. Runcie. “Ensuring our students have the skills they need to be independent readers by third grade is vital to their overall educational success.”

As part of this $20 million five-year initiative, there will be a rigorous third party evaluation to determine impact and lessons learned. As we did in our first round of i3 funding, we have contracted with Washington D.C. based American Institutes for Research (AIR). In their 2015 evaluation, AIR concluded, “The CLI program produces substantial effects on teachers’ classroom environment and literacy practices, which in turn, lead to measurable effects on average reading achievement in early elementary grades.”

At CLI, we purposefully selected our partner districts using four criteria.

**Prioritize Early Literacy**
Potential district partners needed to have an explicit and expressed priority focused on early literacy.

**Clear Student Need**
Districts needed to have a large number of low-income schools with at least 59% of students receiving food subsidies.

**High Concentration of English Language Learners**
Districts needed to have at least 10% of the student population classified as English Language Learners, exceeding the national average.

**Committed District Leadership**
District leaders needed to express a clear interest in partnership and be willing to sign a memorandum of understanding signifying they were 100% on board with supporting each aspect of implementation.

We look forward to achieving even better results with this new i3 Scale-Up grant!
An Evolving Organization

**ELL**

We have intensified our focus on supporting English Language Learners by identifying linguistic supports and literacy-based programmatic structures aimed at closing the achievement and literacy gaps between ELLs and their peers.

Schools are increasingly serving students who speak languages other than English. We are working with district and school partners to make sure that all students can read on grade level by 3rd grade. At CLI, we believe students’ home language is a valuable and often untapped resource. As such, we are integrating materials that support teachers and coaches, into all aspects of our work. Additionally, we are developing research-based resources to support teachers who are working to create both the bilingual Spanish and biliterate student.

**Early Literacy Specialists**

When the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) created the Anchor Goal of 100% of 8-year-olds reading on grade level, the district turned to CLI as its key partner. CLI is providing nearly 100 full time Early Literacy Specialists (ELS) to SDP.

An ELS works with a school to coach teachers and work closely with the principal to ensure students are reading on grade level. As our employees, CLI recruits, hires, trains, supports, and provides professional development to the ELS. This allows a district to leverage CLI’s extensive evidence-based expertise to improve teacher practice and student achievement.

CLI has been a terrific partner. Their expertise in early literacy and effective coaching brings the kind of support that we believe our teachers deserve.

- Diane Castelbuono, Deputy for Early Learning, School District of Philadelphia
Children’s Literacy Initiative developed and launched LEARN (Literacy Education and Resource Network), a new web platform that provides the education community with a comprehensive and expanding resource to read about, watch, and discuss the best practices in balanced literacy instruction. Each content area offers users downloadable tools, like lesson plans, planning templates, checklists and guides to help implement the practices they’ve learned.

As we expand to more locations, providing access to and use of codified content and implementation knowledge becomes increasingly important. Through our i3 Validation work, we developed a great deal of the content that enabled our successful implementation across multiple sites. Through the i3 Scale-up grant, we have now organized, augmented and are ready to share this work online. CLI’s LEARN platform provides teachers, coaches, and administrators the support they need to implement effective literacy practices. LEARN not only benefits the more than 400 educators annually participating in the i3 Scale-up Project, but also is freely accessible to the public.

LEARN’s content focuses on the core instructional practices identified by the National Reading Panel and validated through our prior implementation: Guided Reading, Intentional Read Aloud, Shared Reading & Guided Writing (MTP), Reader’s Workshop and Writer’s Workshop. In addition, LEARN provides content about Classroom Culture & Environment, Independent Work Time, and Literacy Coaching.

By making our knowledge freely available through LEARN we can support positive changes in balanced literacy instruction throughout the nation.

http://learn.cli.org
Our most significant accomplishment may be raising the expectations for what 4 to 8 year-old students from high-poverty neighborhoods are capable of achieving. Our work has countered the myth that children from disadvantaged households have too many obstacles to overcome to reach the literacy levels of their more privileged peers. Instead, we have demonstrated that when instruction is expert, the vast majority of children will learn to read.

“I have also seen my students’ overall interest in both reading and writing increase over the course of the year.”
- CLI trained teacher in Philadelphia.

“I have seen several of my students go from struggling with reading to almost on level. I have seen my whole class grow to be lovers of reading and build their stamina for independent reading to well over 20 minutes. When we started, their stamina was barely 5 minutes!”
- CLI trained teacher.

In Pennsylvania, the PSSA is administered to all 3rd grade students to assess various skills, including reading level. For three years, CLI delivered comprehensive services (coaching, trainings, and materials) to teachers in a subset of 9 School District of Philadelphia (SDP) schools. A group of 10 comparison schools did not receive these services. PSSA results showed:

- The average PSSA score of 3rd grade students in CLI-served schools was nearly 40 points higher than for students in comparison schools!
- A greater percentage of 3rd grade students in CLI-served schools met PSSA proficiency standards (46%) than 3rd grade students in comparison schools (37%)
- CLI-served schools outperformed SDP comparison schools by 9% and outperformed similar schools from across the state by 6%.

In the graph below, the vertical axis represents the average PSSA scale score, and the horizontal axis represents the percent proficient.
Supporters

Philanthropic contributions to CLI take many forms and we deeply appreciate each gift.

$1,000,000 or more
Target

Other

$500,000 to $999,999

$100,000 to $499,999

$25,000 to $49,999

$5,000 to $9,999

$500 to $999

$50 and under

Donors, companies, foundations, and individuals who support the work of the Center for Literacy and Independence

Supporting the reading equals understanding.

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<td>Joel Zarrow</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
<td>Children’s Literacy Initiative</td>
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Reading Equals Ambition

Staff

Ajuba, Ifeoma: Director of Operations
Ajuba, Obinna: Project Coordinator
Ali, Aliyah: Project Associate
Allen, Mia: Director of ELL & Bilingual Services
Amado, Allie: External Relations Coordinator
Aquino, Gilbert: Resource Coordinator
Caponiti, Teresa: Project Manager
Cerabino, Francesca: Literacy Manager
Coulombe, Michele: Content Development Manager
Davis, Sade: Project Manager
Dipadola, Alison: External Relations Writer
Di Leone, Brooke: Research & Evaluation Manager
Donahue, Denise: Payroll & Accounts Payable Coordinator
Dores, Danielle: Project Associate
Echerhofer, George: Senior Technology Manager
Federman, Pat: Co-Founder & Lead Regional Manager
Folkman, Claire: Executive Coordinator
Gabriel, Nicole: Project & Events Coordinator
Gandolfo, Patricia: Assoc. Regional Manager
Garofola, Beth Ann: Literacy Supervisor
Grossman, Frank: Chief Academic Officer
Henning, Caryn: Director of Program Design & Professional Development
Hill, Erin: Literacy Supervisor
Howell, Jessica: Project Accounting & Analytics Manager
Jones, Michael: Director of Marketing
Kasher, Jacqueline: Assoc. Regional Manager
Koenen, Sarah: Regional Manager
Kretschmann, Christopher: Accounting Manager
LaCoursiere, Michele: Regional Manager
Lazrow, Sara: Content Development Manager
Lineberger, Michele: Project Coordinator
List, Mary: Regional Executive Director
Loder, Julya: Operations Coordinator
Longstreth, Galen: Content Development & Book Collections Specialist
Melusky, Stanley: Production Manager
Melinat-Schi, Gina: Assoc. Regional Manager
Mueller, Claire: Regional Manager
Mumford, Amelia: Content Production Coordinator
Nyame-Kusi, Kwame: Project/Finance Coordinator
Owen, Jordanne: Assoc. Director of Program Design & Professional Development
Parker, Claire: Assoc. Regional Manager
Pedrick, Jen: Literacy Supervisor
Phillips, Kelly: Project Manager
Pinkerton, Janet: External Relations Manager
Quinoz, Sarah: Project Associate
Roberts, Cynthia: Director of Finance & Facilities
Robinson, Marcus: Research Assistant
Rudolfker, Ted: Assistant Production Manager
Sharpe, Donna: Literacy Manager
Smith, Betsy: Project Associate
Soroka, Christine: Project Manager
Stacy, Jaclyn: External Relations Manager
Stube, Kristina: Project Associate
Sudia, Douglas: Office & IT Coordinator
Sullivan, Tiffany: Human Resources Assistant
Tchinis, Olivia: Project Associate
Thomas, Jen: Pre-K Supervisor
Valunas, Jill: Regional Executive Director
Weikert, Jen: Director of External Relations
Weldon, Sharon: Regional Manager
Wherily, Meghan: HR Manager
Wildonger, Samantha: Systems Analyst
Zarrow, Joel: Chief Executive Officer
With only 15% of expenses going to administration and fundraising costs, 85% of all expenses were dedicated solely to CLI programming.

Children’s Literacy Initiative’s sound fiscal management practices and commitment to accountability and transparency have earned it a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, America’s largest independent charity evaluator. This is the 4th consecutive time Children’s Literacy Initiative has earned this top distinction.
Since 1992, Madeleine Glowienka has worked as a teacher. Currently, she is a 1st grade teacher at Anna L. Lingelbach School in Philadelphia. CLI asked Madeleine about her experiences and expectations partnering with CLI.

What were your initial expectations about CLI?
I had few—basically I was unsure how it could/would really make a difference. I had taught such an assortment of programs—from basal readers, to whole language, to a company literacy series. Each time it felt as though we were reinventing the wheel, AGAIN!

How did you feel about CLI after receiving professional development services from them?
I truly felt empowered and excited that there was finally a way to teach all our children to love reading and writing.

Have CLI’s trainings, one-on-one, and small group coaching transformed your literacy instruction?
It has made all the difference from the very beginning. Even as a “seasoned teacher,” there was much I had to learn and practice to make all the parts fit together. Through the trainings and coaching, I can honestly say I am able to teach ALL the students in my classroom at their starting place and make an incredible difference in their growth throughout the course of a year.

CLI’s goal is to create a “sustainable, school-wide culture of literacy that introduces students to the joys of reading, writing, and life-long reading.” How have you seen this develop in your classroom?
Through CLI best practices, we have become a community of learners that grow together. My students love to sit together, read their favorite books, and share their thoughts. In Writer’s Workshop, the dialogue is amazing as my students learn to listen and help each other work out an idea. If we miss any part of our literacy block, my children are actually disappointed!

How has your use of CLI best practices helped your students’ learning improve? What changes have you seen due to your use of CLI practices?
So many students are reading chapter books and writing “books” by the end of first grade. Each child in my room succeeds because we all know we are a family of learners. I reflect on my teaching throughout the day, and my students reflect on their learnings. We are not “learning to read” or “learning to write.” We ARE readers, and we ARE writers! CLI best practices ensure that our classroom is a dynamic literacy environment.

What is your literacy goal for yourself and your students during the 2016-2017 school year?
Although we had an “author’s tea” last year, I would like to involve our families even more in our literacy community as often as possible.