Children’s Literacy Initiative strives to close the opportunity gap between children in under-funded school districts and their peers in more affluent districts by transforming literacy instruction so more children become powerful readers, writers and thinkers. The single most important in-school component of student success is access to a great teacher, one who can anticipate and identify student needs, address problems and create engaging learning opportunities. Great teaching helps lead students to success in school, a lifelong love of learning and eventual career opportunities. Children’s Literacy Initiative’s proven approach demonstrates that no matter where teaching and learning are taking place, teachers can become exemplary instructors when they receive the right combination and intensity of training and coaching.
You are reading this because you care about children. You know the power that comes with reading and writing, the access it brings. You don’t have to be convinced that without addressing the systemic inequities in our education system, we will not be the country we aspire to be. You are reading this because you want to do something about it. Maybe you are and you want to do more, or learn more.

Back in February, before COVID-19 closed school facilities and the phrases “synchronous learning” and “asynchronous learning” became part of the educator vocabulary, we emailed our district colleagues as they prepared to teach children remotely. We acknowledged the enormous complexities educators faced in this effort, and outlined ways we could pivot our organizational support to improve teaching and learning. We highlighted three priorities for Children’s Literacy Initiative (CLI):

1) coaching teachers to support their transition to virtual instruction; 2) providing lesson planning support for virtual teaching environments; and 3) creating videos and activities to facilitate children’s learning at home.

Since then, we have delivered more than 42,000 coaching hours online, created 1,300 lessons for online learning and produced hundreds of videos and other resources to support learning from home. Everyone at CLI contributed enthusiastically, even while dealing with their own strained circumstances. We cannot tell you how grateful and proud we are to be a part of this group.

Like you, we are concerned about the pandemic’s impact on children. We know that impact will be disproportionately felt in communities of color, the communities we serve. We need to do more to provide children with access to the opportunities that come with being strong readers and writers.

You are reading this because you want to help initiate change and make a difference. The time for that change is now.

Join us in doing more together.

David J. Bloom
Chairman, Board of Directors

Joel Zarrow, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer

LEARNING TRANSFORMED
Children’s Literacy Initiative works with pre-kindergarten through fifth-grade teachers to improve literacy instruction so that children can become powerful readers, writers and thinkers. We accomplish this by providing (virtually or in-person):

- One-on-one, job-embedded teacher coaching
- Trainings in the best practices in early literacy instruction
- Leadership development to support sustainable change
- High-quality classroom books and materials

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

**2019–2020**

**BY THE NUMBERS**

Children’s Literacy Initiative works with pre-kindergarten through fifth-grade teachers to improve literacy instruction so that children can become powerful readers, writers and thinkers. We accomplish this by providing (virtually or in-person):

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

**BY THE NUMBERS**

- **295 Schools Served**
- **104,419 Students Served**
- **5,894 Educators Served**
- **34,907 Books Distributed**
In March 2020, when COVID-19 struck and physical classrooms closed, CLI district partners scrambled to provide distance-learning solutions for students. Having previously made initial investments in online learning for teachers, CLI quickly pivoted its 30+ years of experience to give students, teachers and districts the support they needed as quickly as possible.

COVID-19 has changed how classrooms function. It has also altered the lives of students outside of school. This is particularly true for the predominantly Black and Brown communities CLI serves. Due to systemic health and socio-economic inequities, these communities experience disproportionately higher COVID-19-related deaths and job losses. This damage continues as we enter the 2020-21 school year. With its partners, CLI is working to help teachers deliver the best literacy education possible under these circumstances.

Over the summer, in preparation for a school year in which fully in-person classrooms would likely not be an option, CLI launched a series of virtual workshops designed to help guide teachers through the difficult transition to distance learning. With many schools offering asynchronous, hybrid or fully online classes, CLI leveraged its role as a leader in education research and implementation to give teachers a place to learn from CLI’s best practices, current research and their peers.

Through these workshops, CLI provided teachers with information on everything from fostering a caring classroom online to teaching literacy in a world where so many children are experiencing pandemic-related trauma and disconnection. CLI will keep working with its education partners, funders and donors to ensure that teachers and students get what they need to stay on track during these challenging times. While students and teachers face many obstacles, CLI is finding new and efficient ways to ensure that children, regardless of where they live, are able to get the resources they need to become strong readers, writers and thinkers.

COVID-19 AND THE CHANGING EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

SUPPORTING VIRTUAL LEARNING

After schools moved entirely to distance learning in March, CLI hosted more than 42,000 hours of virtual coaching to support educators as they adjusted to teaching literacy in online classes, provided 1,300 literacy lesson plans and created 350 read aloud and lesson videos to help students stay on track. CLI even developed Spanish and English lesson plans for a New Jersey district’s summer school. By leveraging its already robust online resource, learn.cli.org, CLI was able to provide its district partners with vital support to ensure that teachers felt as prepared as possible.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS MARCH – JUNE 2020:

- 42,000 HOURS OF VIRTUAL COACHING FOR TEACHERS
- 1,300 LITERACY LESSON PLANS FOR DISTANCE LEARNING
- 350 READ ALOUD AND LESSON VIDEOS
In the predominantly Black and Brown communities served by CLI, families were hit disproportionately hard not only by COVID-19 health issues, but also by job losses and housing and food insecurity. Many of the households in these CLI-served districts, on top of dealing with traumatic events, didn’t have reliable internet connections or consistent access to online schooling technology. These issues compounded quickly, making more apparent than ever the inequities in education that so many CLI-served communities face.

This was a difficult time for many CLI coaches and teachers too, not just because they themselves were transitioning to new ways of teaching, but because they had to find ways to engage students from home, often in situations beyond their control.

In a traditional classroom setting, Sharon was able to help James make significant progress in his reading skills by scheduling his small-group reading sessions later in the day so he could always attend. The paramount worry for Sharon was that children would start losing all the reading progress they had made in the classroom.

Sharon worried about James in particular. Before the pandemic, he often showed up late to school, and now he was hardly showing up for online lessons at all. If he did attend, he was distracted and it was beginning to reflect in his overall academic performance. Outside of the typical classroom setting, James—like so many other students—simply wasn’t engaging with the material.

Teachers and coaches have had to adapt to these new kinds of realities, often by embracing new technology and teaching methods. Sharon is no exception to this. Concerned for her class, Sharon used an online platform to turn her coaching sessions and read alouds into interactive games and competitions. The students caught on quickly and participation shot up, especially from James. “Through that, he just came alive,” she said, “he absolutely loved it.” Within a few weeks, James was more participatory than ever before and was on his way to being back-on-track.

Though distance learning can be difficult for students, and those difficulties are often compounded by systemic issues, CLI-coached teachers have been able to find creative and engaging solutions so that students such as James are given the opportunity to succeed. With so many students having to adjust to new learning methods, teachers and coaches like Sharon are doing impressive and vital work, and finding inclusive ways to reinvent and conduct literacy instruction so that all of their students are able to stay on-track.
In late 2019, CLI was awarded one of three spots to become an Early Childhood Support Organization (ECSO) working to achieve systems-level impact in early childhood in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. CLI is excited to be a lever for change in this unique public-private partnership, a joint effort between the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care and the New Profit venture philanthropy organization.

Through this five-year, $3.75M project, CLI will scale its model to a cumulative total of 200 early childhood education classrooms, adding 50 classrooms per year for four years. CLI anticipates partnering with center-based programs in private child care, public schools and Head Start networks. We will work in classrooms for children ages 0-5, to improve educational leadership, teaching, and access to high-quality, research-based resources, such as CLI’s new Blueprint for Early Learning curriculum.

This important new partnership also includes membership in New Profit’s portfolio of organizations receiving support, as well as the community of practice with its fellow ECSOs. New Profit backs breakthrough social entrepreneurs who are advancing equity and opportunity in the United States. Since Social Entrepreneur Vanessa Kirsch founded it in 1998, New Profit has invested over $325M in unrestricted funding and strategic support in a portfolio of 165+ high-impact organizations.

Beyond the gift of unrestricted funding, New Profit provides its investees with support in four core areas: as a strategic advisor, in board membership, in personal growth and in board support. New Profit invests in organizations to increase their scale, reach and sustainability. CLI is excited to learn all it can from New Profit through its work in Massachusetts early learning centers.

“Advancing Quality Early Learning in Massachusetts: New Market, New Partner”

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**Teacher and Student Impact Across the Country**

*Data from 2019-20 CLI-administered teacher surveys*

- 94% of responding teachers serving prekindergarten and children ages 0-3 agreed that CLI was instrumental in facilitating the progress that they witnessed in students’ literacy skills.
- 95% of responding Chicago teachers agreed that CLI was instrumental in facilitating the student progress teachers witness in their students’ literacy skills.
- 85% of responding Northern New Jersey teachers agreed that CLI was instrumental in facilitating the student progress teachers witness in their students’ literacy skills.

“I am looking forward to the support of CLI in the 2020-2021 school year. Although it will be a challenging year, I am committed to adapting and learning for the needs of my future students.”

— Teacher, Broward County Public Schools
### NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Board Title</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Employer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David J. Bloom</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>President, Senior Vice President, Senior Financial Advisor</td>
<td>Merrill Lynch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gerald Mosely</td>
<td>Vice-Chair</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>CP&amp;P Development, LLC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victoria Raivitch</td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>CliftonLarsonAllen LLP</td>
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<td>Mary Klein</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Retired Educator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christine S. Beck</td>
<td></td>
<td>Child Advocate</td>
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<td>Richard Berkman</td>
<td></td>
<td>Of Counsel</td>
<td>Dechert LLP</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Bonow</td>
<td></td>
<td>Managing Director &amp; CEO</td>
<td>Public Financial Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henri Crockett</td>
<td></td>
<td>Co-Founder and President</td>
<td>The Crockett Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nelson Flores</td>
<td></td>
<td>Associate Professor, Educational Linguistics Division, Graduate School of Education</td>
<td>University of Pennsylvania</td>
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<td>Frank London Gettridge</td>
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<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>National Public Education Support Fund</td>
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<td>Retired Educator</td>
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<td>Sandra Louk LaFleur</td>
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<td>Director, Social Change Initiatives</td>
<td>Miami Dade College</td>
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<td>Elizabeth F. Pilack</td>
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<td>Director, Audit &amp; Accounting</td>
<td>Kreischer Miller</td>
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<td>Jonathan Risch</td>
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<td>DPIS Engineering, LLC</td>
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<td>Susan B. Smith</td>
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<td>Devereux’s Kanner Center</td>
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<td>Adam B. Spector</td>
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<td>Managing Partner</td>
<td>Brandywine Global Investment Management, LLC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lori L. Taylor</td>
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<td>Senior Counsel</td>
<td>Foley &amp; Lardner LLP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jacqueline M. Woolley</td>
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<td>Attorney &amp; Counselor at Law</td>
<td>The Ezold Law Firm, P.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joel Zarrow</td>
<td></td>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Children’s Literacy Initiative</td>
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### 2019 – 2020 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

With only 15% of expenditures going to administration and fundraising costs, in 2019-20 85% of all expenses were dedicated solely to CLI programming.

Children’s Literacy Initiative’s sound fiscal practices and commitment to accountability and transparency have earned it a Gold Participant rating from GuideStar, the world’s largest source of information on non-profit organizations.

In addition, the University of Pennsylvania’s Center for High-Impact Philanthropy identified CLI as an organization where charitable dollars can do the most good. Its evaluation is based on four key strengths:

- CLI results are externally evaluated.
- CLI programs are evidence based.
- CLI’s approach is cost effective.
- CLI leverages public investments already made by increasing the productivity of existing teachers.

### Program Revenue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School District Contracts</td>
<td>77%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private Philanthropy</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investment Income</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
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</table>

Total Revenue: $30,124,354

### Program Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Expenses: $29,989,067

Change in Net Assets: $135,287
Thank you to all of our partners—individual, foundation, corporate and government—for your commitment to transforming education for underserved students. You play a pivotal role in the continued growth of Children’s Literacy Initiative. You are championing social justice and helping ensure that all children get the resources and instructional support they need to learn to read.

More than $1,000,000
- U.S. Department of Education*
- $500,000 - $999,999
  - Anonymous
  - Steans Family Foundation
  - W.K. Kellogg Foundation*

$100,000 - $499,999
- Brook J. Lenfest Foundation*
- Cornerstone Foundation
- Brid and Kate Vogt
- Drexel University
- Hamilton Family Charitable Trust
- New Profit, Inc.
- PTS Foundation*

The Pew Charitable Trusts*
- The Selander Foundation*
- United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey*
- William Penn Foundation*

$50,000 - $99,999
- The A.D. Henderson Foundation
- Claire and Jeff Black*
- Children’s Services Council of Broward County
- The Jim Moran Foundation
- Joel and Sharon Koppelman
- Powell Foundation
- Summit Park East Associates

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* Multi-year gift
“The injustice inherent in underfunding so many school districts is also appalling to me so I appreciate that rectifying this is a core part of your mission.”

– Adam Ernst
As a teacher, I know that improving literacy at a young age is essential to a child’s success later in life.

- Aimee Smith
“The fact that CLI promotes equity in education is what most appeals to us.”
– Emily Fessler and Ian Mellis