

# THE WORLD TURNED **UPSIDE DOWN**



# 2019

# 2020



# What Makes SEEDS OF LITERACY from other programs?

# Different

## OTHER PROGRAMS



Expensive



Semester Enrollment



Traditional Class



Their Speed



Strict, Set Schedule



Time's Up!

## Seeds



### 100% FREE FOR STUDENTS

We provide the materials, official practice tests, and tutors at **NO COST**.



### WEEKLY IN-PERSON ENROLLMENT

No waiting until next month/quarter/semester. Students can come to Seeds for orientation, ANY WEEK, *without* an appointment.

**2-DAY ORIENTATION** Must attend both days. CHOOSE **12:00** OR **4:00**

MONDAYS/TUESDAYS (Seeds West) or

WEDNESDAYS/THURSDAYS (Seeds East)



### "CLASS" TIME IS REALLY TUTORING TIME

There's no teacher at the front of the room teaching everyone the same thing at the same time. Students work one-to-one with a tutor.

**TUTORING TIMES** MONDAY - THURSDAY

9AM - 11AM • 1PM - 3PM • 6PM - 8PM



### LEARN AT INDIVIDUAL SPEED

Students won't fall behind. At Seeds, each works at his or her own **SKILL LEVEL**, at his or her own **PACE**.



### SEEDS DOES NOT HAVE A STRICT ATTENDANCE SCHEDULE

because life gets in the way of even the most dedicated students. Students can come as **OFTEN** as they like, at **WHATEVER TIME** works best for them — even if it's not the same time each day.



### THERE IS NO SET TIME FRAME TO GRADUATE.

The Seeds program is **ONGOING**. Most students need at least a few months of tutoring but it's not uncommon for students to be with us a year or more.







# Dear Friends,

## Strong Start, Shocking End to FY 2019-2020 • *December 31, 2020* •

Fiscal Year 2019-2020 ended just as a global pandemic tightened its grip on the world. Even as I write this, we've been battling COVID for nine months...ending the calendar year with our classrooms *still closed*.

My last Annual Report address discussed the devastating loss of funding from the State and our tireless advocacy efforts that reversed their decision. With those funds returned, we began the fiscal year with the full support of an expanded, newly invigorated Board of Directors and were set to embark on an aggressive growth plan. We restructured, adding to our staffing needs, and began building corporate support. We were set to do what we do best —deliver free, one-to-one tutoring to those that need it most— *but we were positioned to do it better than ever before*.

**Then the unthinkable happened.** By March, the pandemic had found its way to Ohio, closing our classroom doors. To protect the stability of the organization, I made the difficult decision to reduce our newly grown staff by more than half, allowing us to redirect funds toward building a new, technology-based infrastructure to ensure the organization's viability in the future.

We had to quickly pivot our strategy and remain nimble in our response to a situation that became frustratingly fluid. The guidance from the government kept changing as we learned more about the devastating virus. Adult Literacy agencies across the country began closing —and as days turned into weeks and months, many of those temporary closures became permanent.

Those early months resulted in a lot of sleepless nights for my staff. Despite coping with the shock, helplessness, fear, and uncertainty of their own, each of them recognized that our students and tutors were struggling with those same feelings. They reached out to share hope, friendship, and encouragement, with a promise that we were *in this together*. **What those eight people accomplished during the initial crisis is nothing short of remarkable.**

Our initial online offerings were meant to fill a brief gap in on-site learning. Since the on-site gap has been anything but brief, we've now formalized our offerings into an incredible program. I can't wait to tell you more about it...in the *next* Annual Report. Until then, please know that your support, even through this unprecedented crisis, is what has enabled Seeds to not only survive...but thrive.

**Thank you.**

*Bonnie Entler*

Bonnie Entler  
Executive Director

*George Miller*

George Miller  
President, Board of Director

Board President  
George Miller



Executive Director  
Bonnie Entler



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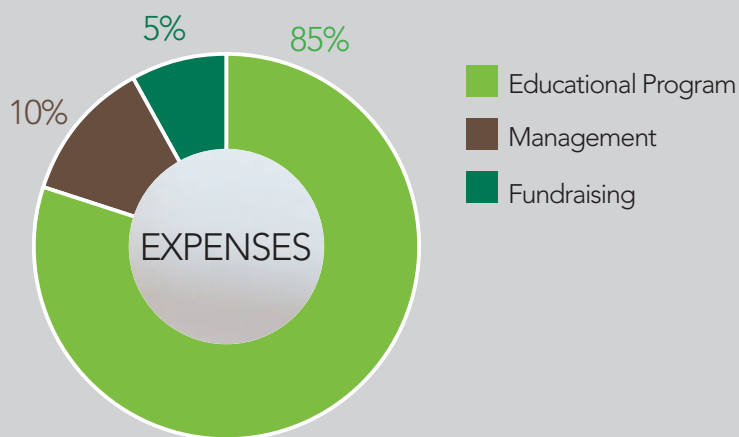
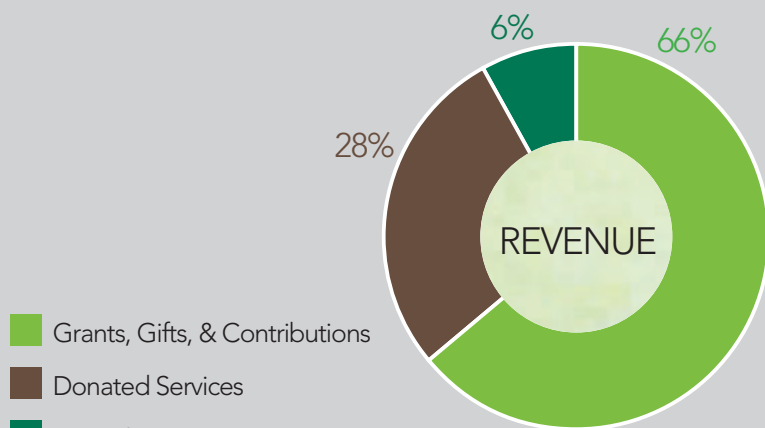
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# How We Did It



For a detailed financial report, contact Bonnie Entler, Executive Director, at 216.661.7950 or [bonnieentler@seedsofliteracy.org](mailto:bonnieentler@seedsofliteracy.org)

SEEDS OF LITERACY'S  
GUARANTEED ANNUAL FUNDING

**\$0**

Every year we raise the money to keep our doors open.



## East Turns 5!

Happy Birthday, Seeds East! Celebrating the September date, the Seeds Family held a big party in November. Students and tutors enjoyed treats, party favors, and a scavenger hunt, concluding the festivities with the traditional Happy Birthday song. Here's to 5 more years!



## GED Grad of the Year

Reginald "Reggie" Latten was honored with the 2019 GED Grad of the Year Award during the GED Testing Service Annual Conference in Chicago in July. He was one of five award winners to receive a \$1,000 scholarship toward a post-secondary education. Like many students at Seeds, transportation was a challenge for Reggie. He traveled 90 minutes to attend, and often stayed for two tutoring sessions. In addition to working with tutors, he also utilized Khan Academy from home, logging nearly 170 hours in five months.

# Our Mission

To provide personalized education that empowers adults to succeed in their communities.



## FISCAL YEAR

7/1/2019 - 6/30/2020

\* = 3 years of consecutive giving

^ = Volunteer

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(\$0.01 to \$49.99)

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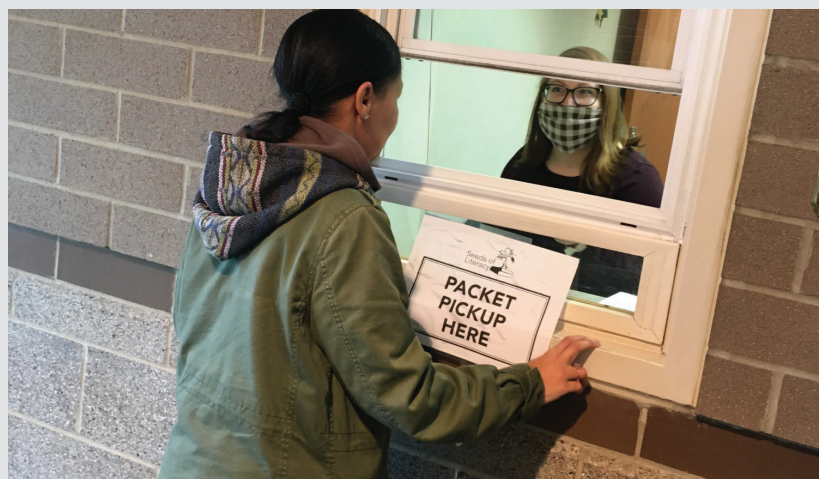
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## Paper Preferred

Just prior to the pandemic, the entire curriculum was in the process of being digitized. When the classrooms closed, Seeds had packets to email! But students who were uncomfortable with technology scheduled appointments to pick up hardcopy packets of curriculum. Even now that remote learning is a fixture for Seeds, the program staff continues to mail dozens of packets each day.



## Special Events To Stay Engaged

- To encourage students to use the digital platforms, social activities were offered to lure them onto the computer. Captain Courtney Schoch, 2019 Graduate Speaker, hosted a series of conversations and readings from her new book, This Is Your Captain Speaking.
- The Seeds East Book Club was on the brink of completing their first major book, Michelle Obama's Becoming, when COVID prompted the closure. To keep the momentum going, a live stream of the Netflix documentary by the same name was presented to Book Club members and other interested parties.
- Airline recruiters also hosted a series of Job Hunting seminars, covering everything from the application process to handling difficult questions during interviews.





## CONFERENCE IN SUNNY CALIFORNIA

Site Coordinator Kara Krawiec traveled to San Diego in September 2019 for the annual ProLiteracy conference. Kara was invited after winning the first ever ProLiteracy Hero award in November 2018. There, she presented on her award-winning topic: *In The Club: Motivating Adult Students Through Supplemental Clubs* and participated in a panel entitled, *The Future of Tutor Training*. Not only did she get to enjoy the conference, but also got to enjoy the California sun and did some sightseeing on the Pacific Coast Highway. Kara was joined at the conference by Carmine Stewart, VP of Programming and event keynote speaker Captain Courtney Schoch (also Seeds' 2019 Graduation speaker).

### HONOR SOCIETY (\$1,000.00 TO \$199,000.00)

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## An Underestimated Impact

Prompted by Ohio's Stay-At-Home Order, Seeds of Literacy closed classroom doors in the Spring. The staff spent the time reaching out by phone, email, and text to all of our students and tutors — making more than 600 calls weekly. Disappointing revelations were made. (1) Students didn't understand the closure could be long-term. (2) Transportation, childcare, and employment barriers to education were amplified during the pandemic. (3) Some students had lost their jobs/had their hours reduced, but the bills still needed to be paid and rent was due. Others experienced intense burnout from double shifts in what had become "essential" industries. (4) Because of their own lack of education, Seeds' students weren't able to teach their children when K-12 schools suddenly closed. With so much uncertainty, students needed to feel safe and secure before they could even consider recommitting to their education — especially when that education would have to be delivered in an uncomfortable, technological format.





## Traveling New Technological Terrain

Initially, remote learning options included: (1) Telephone tutoring through a conference line (2) Video lessons prepared by tutors and presented to small groups of students (3) Recorded lessons captured during live video lessons, hosted on the website for viewing any time. Although students and tutors were comfortable using their phones, conference lines proved difficult. Video options were completely foreign as they learned together how to share screens, mute background noises, and trouble-shoot technical glitches.

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Mrs. Sally Wachter

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Mr. and Mrs. Richard Peacock

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Mr. and Mrs. Carl Suvak

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*In Honor of Mr. Mark Yanochko*  
Ms. Victoria Weiss

*In Honor of Mr. John Thomas Whalen*  
Mr. Rich Whalen





## Signature Event Attracts State Representatives

The second annual *Thrive!* highlighted student achievement and recognized one outstanding Seeds Stakeholder with the Cultivator Impact Award. It should come as no surprise that 2019's recipient was **ROBERT FROST** — the man who championed Seeds and was instrumental in restoring state funding after Seeds was cut from the budget. Nearly 135 guests joined in the celebration, which included Ohio Senator Matt Dolan, Ohio Representative Thomas Patton, and Rocky River Mayor Pamela Bobst. Student speakers were Keeva Long and Angelo Pennington.

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### PICTURED

1. Jody and Bob Frost, Bonnie Entler, George Miller
2. Students Angelo Pennington & Keeva Long
3. Cultivator Impact Award recipients Bill Litzler (2018) and Bob Frost (2019)
4. Ohio Senator Matt Dolan, Bob Frost, George Miller
5. Rocky River Mayor Pamela Bobst hugs Bob Frost

5



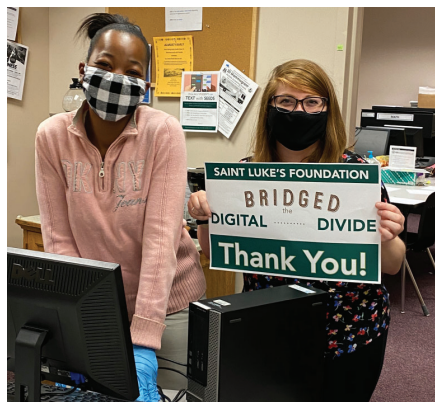
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## The Digital Divide and the Snowball Effect

More than 88% of Seeds' students live in poverty and it is estimated that more than 25% of households in Cleveland proper (where the majority of students live) don't have internet access or service. Conference lines were immediately set up with free access for tutors and students to conduct tele-tutoring. But low-cost carriers (favored among Seeds' students) charged fees to call into the FREE lines Seeds had set up. It was weeks before alternatives were found.

Identifying video software compatible across a variety of devices was the next challenge. But software was just one piece. Most students also needed internet access, a device, and in many cases, BOTH. Local internet providers were providing free service to K-12 and GED households for 60 days, with a catch. Users had to provide and install their own cables and service. Touted as Cleveland's solution to the Digital Divide, "free internet" required many hoops that students were unprepared -- or unable -- to jump through.

Internet is meaningless without devices, so Seeds turned to supporters for help. Area businesses donated more than 40 laptops, offered more at deep discounts, and donated funds towards the purchase of equipment. Staff had to triage the equipment to students without any other means of access.

Even once the conference lines were set up for tele-tutoring, and internet-enabled devices were distributed, there was still a missing piece. The students themselves. Students struggled to accept that the classroom wouldn't reopen in a few days. Always reluctant to use technology, they were slow to accept remote learning options. But the pandemic left them only one choice: *embrace the technology or put their educations on hold again.*



## IN MEMORY OF

*In Memory of Mr. Craig Baron*  
Ms. Carole Roth

*In Memory of Mrs. Raynetta Brown*  
Ms. Byna Elliott  
Ms. Jada Grandy-Mock  
Mr. Shawn Manns-Collins  
Ms. Jadene Poole  
Ms. Andrea Shepard  
Ms. Marsha Thornton

*In Memory of Ms. Nikki Delamotte*  
Ms. Brandi McElhatten

*In Memory of Grandma Gerry*  
Ms. Janissa Macon & Ms. Ayesha Deanel

*In Memory of Sister Barbara Green SSJ*  
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Dolan-Laughlin

*In Memory of Mr. Howard Johnson*  
Ms. Victoria Becknell  
*In Memory of Mr. Howard Johnson*  
Mr. and Mrs. Larry DePompei

*In Memory of Mr. Howard Johnson*  
Ms. Kathy Doner Douglas  
Ms. Becky Hricovec  
Ms. Judith Kohring  
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Lombardy  
Mrs. Patricia B. Masi  
Mr. and Mrs. David and Cynthia Reeder  
Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Romito  
Ms. Bonnie Saunders  
Mr. and Mrs. William and Lillian Smyser

*In Memory of Mr. Rob Lucas*  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lucas

*In Memory of Mr. Thomas O'Rourke*  
Ms. Victoria O'Rourke

*In Memory of Mr. & Mrs. Arthur*  
& Barbra Pape  
Ms. Ann Pape Gerardi

*In Memory of Mickey and Bill Snyder*  
Ms. Becky Hricovec

*In Memory of Ms. Joan Mary*  
Spakowski  
Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Slatt

*In Memory of Mr. Dominic Torrioni*  
Mr. and Mrs. Mike Owen

*In Memory of Mr. Art Zammikiel*  
Mr. and Mrs. Paul King

## SAME SPIRIT, DIFFERENT CELEBRATION

Even though Seeds couldn't host a Graduation dinner, we still wanted to recognize the achievement of the students who passed their HSE and provide them with (as close to) a graduation experience as possible. A photographer was sent to their homes to capture portraits of them in the cap and gowns and the photos were shared during a Virtual Graduation ceremony.

We work hard to present a correct list of our donors. If there is an error, please accept our sincere apologies and contact us to correct our records. Thank you.





[WWW.SEEDSOFLITERACY.ORG](http://WWW.SEEDSOFLITERACY.ORG)

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