

ANNUAL REPORT



BONNIE ENTLER, President & CEO • October 2024

Just after Seeds of Literacy celebrated its 25th Anniversary, I marked my own milestone: I've led Seeds for 20 years.

After two decades, I've seen the organization grow from church basements to dedicated classroom spaces. The staff grew from 4 to 6 to 8 and now, nearly 30 people are part of daily operations. The students are incredible; the graduates inspirational.

Our Graduation keynote speaker this year was one of the earliest graduates of the program, pre-dating even my tenure. When she stepped up to the microphone and introduced herself as a 2004 graduate, she looked around the room and told them "We sure didn't have a beautiful celebration like this back then."

I'm proud that we're able to provide our adult learners with an experience they'll never forget — walking across the stage in a cap and gown, hearing cheers from their loved ones. And I'm even more proud to have walked with them on their educational journey.

Our efforts have been recognized by the media, adult education organizations, and our local government.

Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb met with us in the fall, touring the facility and getting to know some of our students. Newly

published authors Melissa and Denise beamed with pride showing him their short stories. When Melissa was a child, she had a teacher who told her she could *never be a writer*. For decades, she struggled with self doubt until she found Seeds and started submitting her writing.



This was the story that the Mayor shared during his State of the City address.

We've always known the impact literacy plays in daily life. But others are starting to recognize that impact too.

Spectrum wanted to assist us in our mission and provided funding for the second year.

The Board has grown, and with it, our reach in the community.

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We welcome everyone to stop by and see how Seeds operates. Our students love having visitors and telling their stories. Stop by, see for yourself.

With gratitude,

Bonnie



2024 *Women We Admire*
Top 50 Women Leaders in Ohio
BONNIE ENTLER

2024 *Ohio Business Magazine*
Ohio Success Award
SEEDS OF LITERACY

2024 *Crain's Cleveland Business*
Notable Board Leader
MARK YANOCHKO

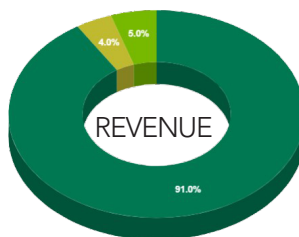
2023 *OAACE*
Instructor of the Year
KARA KRAWIEC

2023 *OAACE*
Support Staff of the Year
CINDY RODRIGUEZ

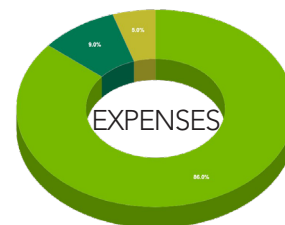
20 Years Leading Seeds: Bonnie Entler



We have no guaranteed stream of income. We have to raise our entire budget every year.



- Special Events
- Donated Services
- Grants, Gifts, Contributions



- Educational Program
- Management
- Fundraising



Class of
2024

SATURDAY, JUNE 29, 2024 • TRI-C METRO CAMPUS CENTER



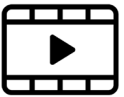
120 Grads, 31 Attended



Proclamations from Senators
Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and
JD Vance (R-OH)

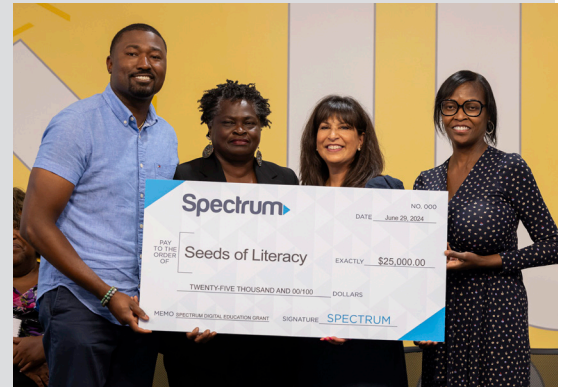


← **Speakers Top to Bottom**
Keynote: Teralawanda Aaron (Seeds '04),
*President & CEO of The Spot Youth of
Empowerment,*
Eriselda Kola,
Cordine Anderson,
Jeffrey Turner



Video Address from
Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb

Spectrum awarded Seeds the Digital Education Grant of \$25,000 for efforts in bridging the digital divide. The check was presented by former Senator and Seeds Board Member SANDRA WILLIAMS, along with Ohio State Representative TERENCE UPCHURCH and Cleveland Councilwoman DEBORAH GRAY. This is the second year Spectrum has supported Seeds, bringing their total contribution to Seeds to \$65,000.



Visit for more photos and video clips
WWW.SEEDSOFLITERACY.ORG/GRADUATION2024

Photography generously provided by
Victoria Stanbridge Photography,
Tim Arai, and Jordaine Dinorog.
Graduate portraits provided by Mark Yanochko.



PROGRAM **IMPACT** 2023-2024



120 TOTAL NUMBER OF GRADS

10 East · 36 West · 74 Virtual

INCLUDES

31 Out of State Grads

59 Grads from Cleveland



568 GED SECTIONS PASSED

147 RLA

122 Math

142 Science

157 Social Studies



TUTORS

\$839,054 VALUE OF DONATED TIME

26,910 TOTAL TUTOR HOURS

East 6,319 · West 5,998 · Virtual 14,593

STUDENTS

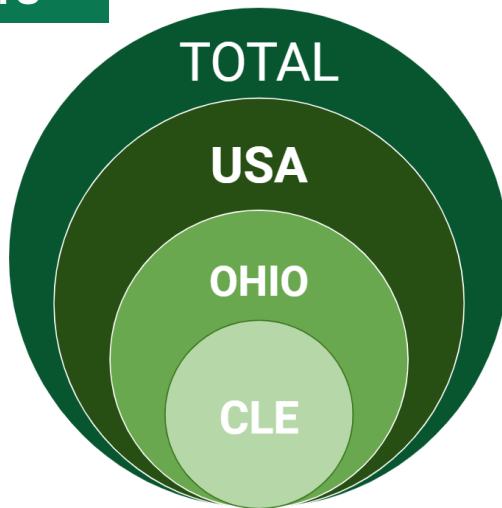
1,672 TOTAL ACTIVE

10 International

1,662 USA

1,466 Ohio

1,038 Cleveland



A COMMUNITY REDEFINED

The popularity of the Virtual Classroom was unexpected and we reached students all over the country (and beyond.)

Unfortunately, our student base grew exponentially faster than our tutor resources.

After surveying stakeholders, we redefined the community we serve, and began requiring Ohio residency in the spring. Existing out of state students stayed in the program as long as they remained active.



IMPACT OF ADULT LITERACY



EMPLOYMENT Workers who have less education than a high school diploma have the lowest median weekly earnings (\$592), 3x less than the highest level of education. Workers from the lowest education level also suffered the highest unemployment rate during COVID-19, compared to all other levels. (Career Outlook, US Bureau of Labor Statistics 2012)



EARNING POTENTIAL High School graduates EARN 42% MORE than those who dropped out. (Career Outlook, US Bureau of Labor Statistics 2012)



THE FUTURE GENERATION

A mother's reading level is the strongest determinant of her child's future academic success, outweighing all other factors such as family income and neighborhood. (US Department of Health & Human Services 2010)



INCARCERATION CORRELATION 75% of state incarcerated individuals did not complete high school or can be classified as low literacy. Inmates who participate in correctional education programs are 43% less likely to recidivate (ProLiteracy, Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education)



RESEARCHER TEAMS WITH SEEDS

WHEN WE READ, DO WE LEARN HOW TO PREDICT? That was the question researcher Brittany Finch set out to investigate. The PhD candidate at Michigan State University specializes in cognitive science and second language studies. She worked with Seeds students to test the hypothesis.

Contrary to previous research suggesting predictive language skills emerge around grade six, her findings indicate that even seventh- and eighth-grade levels exhibit less predictive behavior than previously assumed. Additional instruction can change that. Brittany's initial results showed students improved reading. Even if they hadn't shown prediction after the 10 weeks, their language processing speeds had gotten faster – even if they were just working on math during 10 weeks of tutoring.

Read more about the study WWW.SEEDSOFLITERACY.ORG/BLOG.

SEEDS IN THE NEWS



7/23 IDEASTREAM

Adult Graduation Ceremony Celebrates NE Ohioans' Progress Towards Dreams

10/23 NONPROFIT HR WOMEN TO WATCH

The Importance of Flexibility and Respect in Creating a Successful Team

4/24 CLEVELAND.COM

Seeds of Literacy To Require Ohio Residency After Pandemic Success Strains Resources

4/24 CITY OF CLEVELAND

Mayor Justin Bibb Mentions Seeds Student During State of the City Address

4/24 ST. LUKE'S FOUNDATION BLOG

Empowering Adults With the Right to Education & Property

5/24 WRUW-FM THE SWEET SPOT

Bonnie Entler & Kara Krawiec Interview



IN LOVING MEMORY

HUGE BODE,
Seeds East Tutor

HENRY CHISHOLM
Seeds East Tutor, Donor

THERESA DAYE
Seeds West Student

DEMETRIUS HAYWOOD
Seeds West Student

SISTER MARY SCHRADER
Congregation of St. Joseph,
Board Director, Tutor

JACK STERLING
Seeds West Tutor, Donor

CONNIE WEIXEL
Brunch Volunteer,
Seeds West Tutor, Donor

BRUNCH AMONG THE BLOOMS



Cleveland
Botanical Garden



SPONSORED IN PART BY

FirstEnergy

Huntington Bank

Carnegie Management &
Development Corporation



SPEAKERS

Jessica Lee, Grad '24

Mike Marjenin, Tutor



CULTIVATOR IMPACT
AWARD RECIPIENT

Jennifer Rosenberg,

Tutor & Donor



Guests learned that even affluent suburbs have illiteracy. Every community, every neighborhood, has someone in need.



FINAL 15 MINUTES
OF THE EVENT

\$16,000+ Raised





TRIVIA TIME A TRIUMPH

Paying attention paid off for these game contestants at the first in-person Trivia Time, held at Market Garden Brewery. Video clips of Student Ambassador Iris Guifu and Tutor Dawn Abrahamson provided many answers to questions asked later in the game. A 50/50 raffle and auction were included as traditional fundraising elements. More than 70 guests attended, many of them learning about Seeds for the first time.

SPONSORS

SPONSORED IN PART BY
Carnegie Management & Development Corporation,
Deloitte & Liz Voskuhl,
FirstEnergy,
George & Pat Miller,
Saint Ignatius High School



Volunteer Appreciation Week in April culminated with a Thank You luncheon at the Greater Cleveland Aquarium. Tutors **Sharon Vejdovec** and **Kathy Jordan** received Tutor of the Year Awards for the time and dedication they've shown to our students. Following a few impromptu speeches, guests toured the Aquarium's exhibits.



CLE MAYOR VISITS SEEDS WEST

The Fiscal Year began in July with a visit from Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb. After meeting with the leadership team, he addressed the entire class, emphasizing the importance of literacy to both him and the community. The Mayor also spoke with Student Ambassadors Melissa Hill Nance and Denise Sanders, praising their dedication to education and acknowledging their recent publication in an adult literacy anthology.

The visit had an impact on him— he mentioned the students he met at Seeds during his State of the City Address and just a few months later, Mayor Bibb addressed the Class of 2024 in a video message at Graduation.



MEMORIES IN THE MUSIC CITY

Honky tonks and huge hotels were an unexpected benefit of enrolling in the GED program at Seeds for Iris Guifu. She worked hard on her studies, passing the first three sections with ease—all while juggling work and encouraging her fellow classmates. Her positive attitude, quick success in the program, and propensity to help others made her the perfect candidate to be a Student Ambassador for Seeds.

She was such a standout among ambassadors that she was selected to represent Seeds at the COABE 2024 Conference in Nashville. There, she immersed herself in adult education sessions, made lasting connections, and explored innovative ideas to benefit her classmates. [READ ABOUT HER EXPERIENCE: SEEDSOF LITERACY.ORG/BLOG](https://seedsforliteracy.org/blog)

