2021 ANNUAL REPORT

III LITERAL CHANGE

Literacy is a right, not a privilege

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INTRODUCTION

At Literal Change, we believe that literacy is a right, not a privilege, and illiteracy in Canada contributes to systemic poverty.

Since 2016, we have provided hundreds of free remedial literacy instruction to at-risk and marginalized communities in Toronto, using a proven methodology based in structured literacy. Our programming effectively identifies the gaps in a learner's knowledge of the English language, addresses the deficiencies and supports the acquisition of soft skills.

Our educators creates a safe, equitable, and positive learning environment for each individual student, while responding to their own specific needs. Even those who have previously struggled in the mainstream classroom can be successful with our programming and can reach their academic and career goals.

This annual report is important in communicating our commitment to close the literacy gap in our community by making remedial literacy intervention equitable for those in need.

MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDERS





2021 brought with it new perspectives on how we can grow our outreach as a charity. From our groundwork, we learned that the best way to reach more student is through training teachers. This is why our team developed a 30-hour Literacy Specialist e-Learning course designed to train teachers on our structured literacy approach.

We also have a new outlook on funding that moves away from the increasingly precarious grant process. In 2021 we launched a funding campaign looking for financial partners who believe that literacy is the key to lifting people out of poverty and creating a society in which everyone can contribute.

With the pressures of lockdowns and the increased strain on our economy, mental health, and education systems, the demand for our services is greater than ever. We feel confident that with the right partnerships with school boards and funder support, we can continue to meet the needs of our community.

MARTHA JODHAN & ROBYN KEYSTONE

Founders & Executive Directors

OUR TENETS

Our team and volunteers believe in the following tenets:



Structured literacy needs to be embedded into the curriculum in schools.



2.

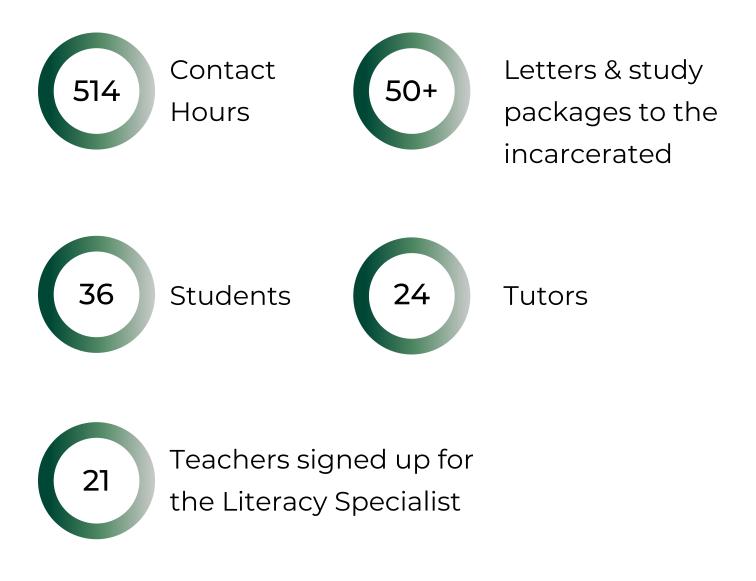
Literacy is a right, not a privilege; Everyone has the right to fundamental literacy education.



3

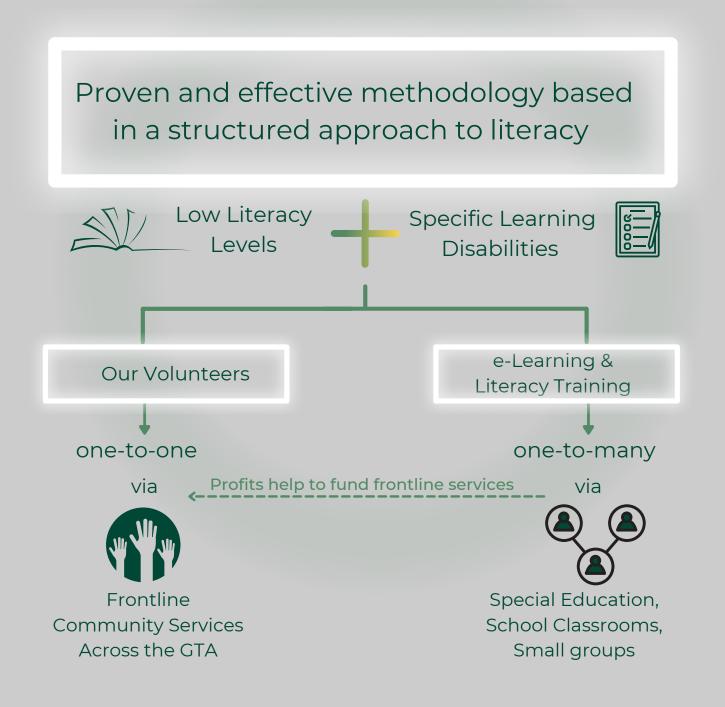
Remedial literacy intervention needs to be equitably available to those in need.





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HOW ARE WE ADDRESSING THE LITERACY NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY?



KEY INITIATIVES



Youth Literacy Initiative

Through the Youth Literacy Initiative we continue to deliver structured literacy instruction to at-risk youth who need it the most. In 2021, we expanded our network of community partners and referring organization to reach more students. We rely on our dedicated volunteer tutors for the success of this program, every tutor that works with us is trained to deliver structured literacy lessons online.



Teacher Training

By partnering with school boards across the GTA, we are delivering Literacy Specialist training to teachers. Our first partnership formed in 2021 with the TDSB and we are working on a similar partnership with Peel and other school boards. We are training teachers to recognize how literacy acquisition is impacted by various learning exceptionalities and how to give students meaningful accommodations in the classroom.



Adult Literacy Initiative

Delivering in-person literacy lessons at Toronto's Detentions Centres continues to be a big challenge with the current restrictions. We continue to send literacy material, books, and letters to incarcerated students for support. In 2021, we began organizing with the Toronto South Detention Centre (TSDC) to to facilitate their library program when we have access to visits again. In addition, we launched a book donation drive to supply the TSDC library with more books.

THE LITERACY SPECIALIST E-COURSE

In 2021, Literal Change developed the Literacy Specialist eLearning course because teachers asked for it. We now know that whole language acquisition does not work for 20-25% of students. These individuals need to be directly taught with structured literacy in order to gain the skills they need to read, write, and spell. Our course provides all educators with the knowledge and practical skills to tackle low-literacy at any grade level.

"I've learned more about teaching literacy in one module than I had in an entire semester in teacher's college"

- Rachel S. Ontario teacher

In 2021, we launched training with 13 educators and booked the first 2 months of enrollment for 2022. All proceeds from the course go towards programming for at-risk and marginalized individuals. By using the profits from out e-learning course to fund our frontline services, we become more self-sufficient as a charity.



FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

Total Revenue \$82,500



Total Expenses \$124,250 \$ 68,300 Salaries \$ 27,300 e-Course Expense \$ 28,650 Tax & Administrative

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LOOKING AHEAD 2021 AND BEYOND

What does illiteracy really mean for our community?

Our team considered this questions and we let the answers inspire our vision for the future.

Low literacy plays a demonstrable role in the school-to-prison pipeline; it results in feelings of shame and embarrassment and makes it difficult for young learners to function in a mainstream classroom. Studies demonstrate that youth in conflict with the law commonly have challenges with literacy. The challenges are not limited to justice involved youth, up to 20% of the population struggles with a language-based disability.

Our work has made it clear to us that a structured literacy approach is the best remedy for individuals struggling with reading and writing, no matter what background they come from. That is why our vision for the future includes having structured literacy embedded in the education curriculum across Canada, and making remedial literacy intervention available for every person who needs it.

With approximately 1,000,000 students in Grades 6 to 12 in Ontario, at least 200,000 students need structured literacy to acquire reading and writing skills. To make gains towards our vision, we've formulated a 7-year plan to reach 10,000 students.

Sincerely,

The Literal Change Team



GROUND CREW

ERIN LEIGH YLI PROGRAM COORDINATOR

> DINA YAGHI COMMUNITY LITERACY COORDINATOR

MARTHA JODHAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ROBYN KEYSTONE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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