# BOOK HARVEST 2019-23 STRATEGIC PLAN

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2019-2021 Strategic Plan
Background
Background

• Founded in 2011, Book Harvest is a Durham, North Carolina non-profit that provides books and literacy resources for children and families in our communities.

• Book Harvest serves children from birth through high school, with special emphasis on the first decade of life.

• In November 2018, Book Harvest reached a major milestone, providing its one millionth book to a child.

• Book Harvest is proud to be among a growing group of organizations devoted to literacy and to enjoy partnerships on local, state and national levels where synergies align.* We expanded our footprint outside of the Triangle area for the first time with a Winston-Salem based partner in 2018.

• Book Harvest is committed to keeping up-to-date regarding new studies and findings surrounding literacy as we address serious research-validated issues.

• Book Harvest will continue delivering against its mission and work toward achievement of a vision that will change the literacy landscape, first in Durham and eventually across America.

*See Appendix for chart outlining other literacy champions
This plan, anchored in our mission and goals, lays out a roadmap for 2019-2021. It will function as the organization’s “constitution,” serving as:

- the strategic reference point for guiding decision-making and budget allocation through the year 2021, and
- the basis for self-evaluation as the organization evolves. While global objectives and strategy will not change, some implementation specifics may evolve based on ongoing experience, new information, and changing external factors.
The Current Literacy Landscape

Book Harvest addresses a critical need that is alarmingly evident across the country, in North Carolina, and in its own backyard.

Across America

- 67% of children in poverty in America are growing up in homes without books. The average number of children’s books in a low-income household is 0-2, while middle to high income households average 13 to 99 books per child (Allington).
- Children growing up with no books are on average three years behind children in homes with many books, even when controlled for other factors (McQuillan).
- Two out of three of our country’s children are not reading proficiently in third grade. If left unchecked, this crisis will undermine efforts to end intergenerational poverty, close the achievement gap, and reduce high school dropout rates. Far fewer of the next generation will be prepared to succeed in a global economy, participate in higher education, or enter military and civilian service (Smith).
- Summer learning loss accounts for a shocking 80% of the income-based achievement gap. A child with a dozen self-selected books at the start of summer for three years in a row derives the same benefit as attending a $3,000 summer school course. The benefit can be as much as an increase in a student’s reading achievement by 35% – 40% of a grade level (Allington).
The Current Literacy Landscape (cont.)

In North Carolina

- North Carolina is home to 552,069 children who live in poverty – or 25% of all children. It ranks 14\textsuperscript{th} highest in childhood poverty among all states in the nation. (\textit{NC DPI})
- In the 2016-2017 school year, 59.82\% (850,000) of North Carolina children qualified for free and reduced lunch programs (\textit{NC Child}).
- The 2016 school performance grades across the state revealed that schools with higher poverty receive significantly lower performance grades (Cs, Ds, and Fs); 98\% of schools that received an F grade had poverty rates of 50\% or greater (\textit{NC DPI}).
- The 2017 National Assessment of Educational Progress, known as the nation’s report card, reported that only 39\% of North Carolina fourth graders and 33\% of eighth graders were rated proficient in reading (\textit{NAEP}).
The Current Literacy Landscape (cont.)

In Durham

• 70% of Durham Public School’s 16,550 elementary school students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (Durham Public Schools).

• The State of Durham County’s Young Children 2017 Task Force reports, “Children in Durham’s black and Hispanic communities are more likely to live in low-income households (57% and 86%) than white children (14%).”

• In 2017-2018:
  ➢ only 38% of Durham’s kindergartners were assessed as proficient in early literacy/reading skills; 62% are not ready for kindergarten according to these measures.
  ➢ 56.8% (1,474) 3rd graders were not reading on grade level.
  ➢ 25.5% (660) of 3rd graders were retained because they were not proficient readers.
  ➢ 33% of DPS students have only a limited command of reading, compared to 21.6% statewide.
  ➢ Of the 30 elementary schools in Durham, only two received an “A” or “B” rating in school performance; of the remaining 26, seven received an “F”.

(Durham Public Schools)
What the Research Tells Us

Key Principle: Access to books in the community is critical.

• “Access to books and educational material is the single biggest barrier to literacy development in the United States and beyond. If we can solve the problem of access, we will be well on the road to realizing educational parity – a goal which has eluded this country for generations” (Neuman).
• 80% of preschool and after-school programs serving low-income populations have no age-appropriate books for their children (Neuman).
• Books in the home are the biggest indicator of a child’s academic success, as much as or even more than parents’ education, zip code, gender, or income (McQuillan).
  ➢ 61% of low-income families have no books at all in their homes for their children. (U.S. Department of Education).
  ➢ Providing self-selected books for summer reading produces as much or more reading growth as attending summer school (Allington).
  ➢ For the poorest children, a summer book distribution has twice the impact as attending summer school (Allington).
Key Principle: Books in the home are critical.

- Books in the home are the biggest single indicator of a child’s academic success, as much or even more than parents’ education, zip code, gender or income (Quillen)
- “The difference between being raised in a bookless home compared to being raised in a home with a 500-book library has as great an effect on the level of education a child will attain as having parents who are barely literate (three years of education) compared to having parents who have a university education (15 or 16 years of education). . . . Both factors, having a 500-book library or having university-educated parents, propel a child 3.2 years further in education, on average. “ (Evans, Kelley, and Treiman)
What the Research Tells Us (cont.)

Key Principle: Reading to children at home from birth and ongoing literacy support prior to third grade are critical.

- By the age of two, children who are read to regularly display greater language comprehension, larger vocabularies, and higher cognitive skills than their peers (Raikes et al).
- Just 15 minutes of reading with a parent every day exposes a child to a million words a year (Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding).
- Children who were read to at least three times a week by a family member were almost twice as likely to score in the top 25% in reading compared to children who were read to less than three times a week (Denton and West).
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents start reading to their children at birth.
Key Principle: Parents hold the power to transform outcomes for their children.

• Literacy, or the ability to read and write, is composed of a variety of skills that range from letter recognition and phonemic awareness, to oral language, vocabulary, story comprehension, and motivation. These skills begin developing at birth, and a substantial and solid research base confirms that families play an important role in promoting them (Wasik and Van Horn).

• Parent involvement in early literacy is directly connected to academic achievement. Children need parents to be their reading role models with daily practice in order to navigate successfully through beginning literacy skills (Evans, Shaw, and Bell).

• When parents and their children engage in warm, nurturing, and encouraging interactions, children become more engaged, which in turn enhances children’s growing literacy skills (Bennett, Weigel, and Martin).
Book Harvest Core Programs: Answering the Call

Book Harvest work centers around four core programs designed to address what the research reveals:

- **Book Babies** works with families and their Medicaid-eligible children during the first five years of life, providing books and in-home literacy coaching from a child’s birth through kindergarten enrollment.

- **Books on Break** combats summer learning loss by creating free “pop-up bookstores” in schools across North Carolina; children in grades K – 5 select as many as 10 books each to take home over the summer and keep forever.

- **Community Book Bank** connects with families in settings they frequent (such as community health clinics, social service agencies, faith-based organizations, laundromats, barbershops, and public housing communities) through a vast network of bookshelves and book selection events. Children and families select books to build their own home libraries.

- **Books to Go** provides books to middle and high school teachers and partner organizations to share with tweens and teens.
## Book Harvest Core Programs: Answering the Call (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Harvest Program:</th>
<th>Correlating Principle:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Book Bank</strong></td>
<td>Access to books in the community is critical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Books To Go</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Books on Break</strong></td>
<td>Books in the home are critical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Book Babies</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Book Babies</strong></td>
<td>Reading to children from birth is an essential component of a healthy childhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Book Babies</strong></td>
<td>Parents hold the power to transform outcomes for their children.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Core Values, Mission, and Vision
Book Harvest Core Values

Book Harvest’s core values are the foundation upon which our mission, vision, strategies and tactics are built.

1. **All children have the right to own books from birth.**
Books are essential to the well-being and healthy development of children. Books, readily available and in abundance, are vital to school readiness, academic success, and lifelong learning.

2. **Parents know what is best for their children and are passionately committed to their success.**
Parents are their child’s first and most important brain-builders and have the power to ignite and sustain their children’s literacy development from birth. We will meet parents where they are to support them in realizing their goals for their children.

NOTE: “Parents” refers to primary caregivers and could include grandparents, aunts, other extended family and foster parents.
Book Harvest Core Values (cont.)

3. All children are born with the ability to succeed.
When we provide the tools and support ALL children deserve, foster their roles as active participants in their own literacy journeys, and honor their inherent brilliance, we are laying the groundwork for productive lives.

4. Books must serve as "mirrors, windows and sliding glass doors" for all children.
Books must portray all children, honoring diverse backgrounds, languages, abilities, and perspectives, and include stories by and about people of color.

5. We CAN create the world our children deserve.
We believe in the capacity of collective goodness and collective action to transform the eco-system currently failing America's children and to create a more equitable world.
6. We are committed to research.
Continuous self-assessment, including rigorous external evaluation, is essential to identifying best practices as we expand our efforts to rewrite outcomes.
Mission
We provide an abundance of books and ongoing literacy support to families and their children from birth, and serve as a model for communities committed to ensuring that children are lifelong readers and learners.

Vision
A world in which reading, learning and access to information are considered rights not privileges, so that all children thrive.
Target Audience
Target Audience

The lives we touch and the people with whom we collaborate are numerous.

Internal
Members of Book Harvest Board, staff, and volunteers

External

Primary
• Parents and caregivers of all children who participate in Book Harvest Programs.
• Families from Durham and Forsyth counties with Medicaid eligible children (ages 0 – 5) who meet criteria for enrollment in the Book Babies program.
• Children in grades K-12 who attend Durham Public Schools (DPS and charter schools)
• NC children in grades K-5 outside of Durham, where BH interacts in a variety of ways, from coaching to actually providing toolkits and summer learning program materials.
• Children of all ages who interact with child-focused community service providers (health centers, social service agencies, etc.) and local businesses (laundromats, barbershops, etc.) where Book Harvest’s Community Book Bank books are available.
Target Audience (cont.)

Secondary

• Early childhood providers in Durham and Forsyth counties (at mental health clinics, Early Head Start and Head Start, health clinics, Baby Love Plus).

• Teachers, media specialists and administrators at Durham Public Schools (DPS), Charter Schools, and other districts throughout the state.

• DPS Management (system-wide) and Board Members, and North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Officials.
Target Audience (cont.)

Key Stakeholder Groups

*Community Partners*
Health centers, social services agencies, nonprofit organizations, universities, public schools, local independent schools and businesses, faith-based organizations, civic and community groups, etc. (See Appendix for lists)

*Funding Sources*
National and local foundations and corporations, state and local governments, local businesses, and individual donors

*Influencers*
Media (local and national)
Policy Makers
Objectives & Strategy
Long-term Objectives

• Ensure every child, starting at birth, grows up in a home with books appropriate in nature and sufficient in number
• Create real, lasting, and respectful bonds with the families we serve
• Elevate the national dialogue around literacy and transform America’s literacy landscape
• Generate learnings to support how Book Harvest’s work transforms lives
• Establish Book Harvest as an evidence-based model for change; be a thought leader and vital force in addressing the literacy crisis locally and beyond
• Expand existing programming and capabilities in measured fashion, while also maintaining flexibility to take advantage of promising opportunities that arise
• Foster an atmosphere of self-reflection, continuous improvement and accountability
• Ensure all manifestations of the Book Harvest Brand are appropriate, consistent and project a unified voice and image
Short-term Objectives

• Generate learnings across every program to gauge impact on families we serve
• Expand existing programs and test new ways to increase reach and effectiveness
• Grow volunteer and community partner networks
• Increase revenues to fund expanded programming and cover expenses
• Identify and adopt best practices for operations, finance, human resources, and board governance
• Achieve 1.8 million book milestone by 2021
• Distribute 764,250 books across core programs from 2019 – 2021, equating to a 3-4% increase annually
## Strategy

Book Harvest will realize its objectives through activation of an integrated implementation plan united around the following seven goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 1</th>
<th>Goal 2</th>
<th>Goal 3</th>
<th>Goal 4</th>
<th>Goal 5</th>
<th>Goal 6</th>
<th>Goal 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meet families where they are, and ensure their voices are heard and reflected in our culture and our actions</td>
<td>Prioritize partnerships with Public Schools (first and foremost in Durham), as schools are critical to fulfilling our mission</td>
<td>Strengthen existing community partnerships, while building an ever-expanding network that will broaden our reach and heighten our impact</td>
<td>Expand book ownership and ensure the books we provide are plentiful, diverse and inclusive</td>
<td>Measure the impact of our programs to provide insight regarding how our work is changing outcomes and transforming the literacy landscape</td>
<td>Safeguard the long-term viability of Book Harvest</td>
<td>Be an advocate, influencer, and trusted information source at local, state, and national levels on issues and best practices surrounding literacy and book ownership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Implementation
Implementation

Following are tactics correlating to each of our seven major goals. More granular work plans (flowing out of implementation plans), including additional metrics, detailed timelines, project owners, and budgets are created annually by program managers and are available on request.
Implementation: Goal 1

Goal

- Meet families where they are, and ensure their voices are heard and reflected in our culture and our actions

Action Steps

- Engage with a minimum of 25 families per year into direct dialogue at eight different community events per year (Public School parent meetings, Barbershop Series, Community-wide gatherings, DHA Residents Council meetings)
- Increase parent interaction with Book Harvest through holding one open house per year specifically for parents
- Add two parents to serve on BH Board of Directors by 2021, bringing total to four
- Create “next generation” Books on Break Parent Advisory Team under the direction of previous members, starting 2020
Implementation: Goal 1 (cont.)

Action Steps

• Work with Advisory Team to establish best methodology for gathering parent feedback

• Obtain parent feedback to inform and make program improvements, specifically:
  – Survey Book Babies parents annually, report findings and associated program updates
  – Survey parents of all new programs a minimum of once per year to gauge effectiveness and provide reporting/recommendations

• Host four events per year for Book Babies families (i.e. Book Babies Celebration, dinner during PFAST* training, graduation, and monthly storytimes)

• Continue to convene Book Babies graduation committee 3 times per year and support the committee as needed ensuring that the graduation is parent-led

• In 2019, begin hosting monthly storytimes for Book Babies families and by 2021, consider hosting weekly storytimes based on parent feedback

*Parent & Family Advocacy & Support Training
Goal

- Prioritize partnerships with Public Schools (first and foremost in Durham), as schools are critical to fulfilling our mission

Action Steps

- Strengthen relationship with Durham Public Schools by bringing one or more representatives into a formalized relationship with Book Harvest (Board, advisory board, etc.)
- Meet yearly with DPS leadership to discuss Books on Break and to obtain feedback regarding program effectiveness and areas for growth
- One time per year, deliver tailored surveys to school administrators, media specialists and teachers and use feedback to drive program improvements
Action Steps (cont.)

- Continue to expand Book Harvest’s statewide footprint in public schools by:
  - Identifying/fostering relationships with leaders in other school districts, and
  - Focusing on rural and underserved areas of NC
- Implement three Books on Break pilot programs in three new counties each year over the course of the next three years (2019-21)
Implementation: Goal 3

Goal 3
• *Strengthen existing community partnerships, while building an ever-expanding network that will broaden our reach and heighten our impact*

Action Steps
• Hold yearly partner appreciation events to grow relationships among current partner base; track attendance and impact
• Establish formal feedback loops for existing partners via annual review meetings with Community Book Bank partners and via yearly surveys
• Expand Book Harvest community partner network by 5-10 new partners annually by:
  – identifying and leveraging links between current and potential partners, and
  – focusing on priority sectors and like-minded organizations around the state, for new partner cultivation
Implementation: Goal 3 (cont.)

Action Steps (cont.)

• Create a broader presence in untapped areas of the community with which Book Harvest interacts by attending community events, participating in local summits, and other community organizing efforts
Implementation: Goal 4

Goal

• Expand book ownership and ensure the books we provide are plentiful, diverse and inclusive

Action Steps

• Provide 6% more books to children through our four programs (Book Babies, Books on Break, Books to Go, and Community Book Bank) in Central North Carolina

• By 2021, expand Book Babies to a rural community, increasing program reach from two counties to three counties. By spring of 2021, expand Books on Break to nine new counties, increasing program reach from three counties to 12 counties

• Raise awareness among all stakeholder groups regarding the importance of diverse and inclusive books through focused content in existing communications and a new We Love Our Partners annual event
Implementation: Goal 4 (cont.)

Action Steps (cont.)

• Increase our Mirrors and Windows fund (focused on offering more diverse and inclusive books) from $3,500 to $10,000

• Share news via Facebook, Blog Posts, and e-Newsletter about our Mirrors and Windows fund and Mirrors and Windows booklist

• Seek out community members and organizations to run a minimum of ten culturally diverse and inclusive book drives per year
Implementation: Goal 5

Goal

• Measure the impact of our programs to provide insight regarding how our work is changing outcomes and transforming the literacy landscape

Action Steps

• Develop a master research plan to facilitate collection and analysis of data that will illustrate impact of programs.
  – In 2019, identify evaluation metrics for Book Babies, Books on Break, and Community Book Bank
  – In 2019, identify appropriate methods of capturing qualitative and quantitative data for Book Babies, Books on Break, and Community Book Bank
  – In 2019, create a communications plan around sharing the impact of programs based on qualitative and quantitative data gathered from programs
  – Seek out the possibility of using grad students or DISI (Duke Interdisciplinary Social Innovators) to help with evaluation
**Implementation: Goal 5 (cont.)**

**Action Steps**

- In 2020, hire an evaluation and research manager to be responsible for formalized research plan
- By 2021, convene research advisory council to provide oversight to Book Harvest’s evaluation efforts
- Continue to work with an external evaluator to conduct the longitudinal randomized control trial to measure the effectiveness of the Book Babies program
Implementation: Goal 6

Goal
• Safeguard the long-term viability of Book Harvest

Action Steps
• In 2019, hire a senior staff person (new position) to oversee at a director level all aspects of organizational operations, finance, and personnel/human resources, in order to create a more robust infrastructure. This person’s role will include a deep dive each year on personnel (forecasting future needs and how they will be addressed; pay structures and industry-based salary equity); annual budget drafting; and benefits, including the addition of health insurance if and when appropriate
• Conduct annual performance reviews
• Update the operating reserve policy as needed each year; keep the operating reserve fund fully funded according to the policy’s schedule
• Diversify our funding portfolio to include planned giving, venture philanthropy investments and public funding. Set benchmarks for each in 2020 Development and Marketing Committee Workplan
Implementation: Goal 6 (cont.)

Action Steps (cont.)

• Ensure that all insurance – general liability (including a sexual abuse rider), directors and officers, key man life insurance, and workers’ compensation – are up-to-date; conduct an annual insurance review to ensure that coverage levels and types are adequate and that we have all the coverages we need (and none we don’t need) to minimize liability and risk

• Maintain compliance with Book Harvest’s Child Safeguarding Policy; update the policy as needed

• Continue to run criminal background checks on all staff and on all regular volunteers. Create/Enforce policy whereby we do not engage with any whose check turns up something of concern

• Develop a crisis response protocol

• Develop an executive leadership succession plan

• Ensure IRS Form 990 is filed annually and with precision
Implementation: Goal 6 (cont.)

Action Steps (cont.)

• Engage an auditor to conduct a full audit of our finances every year shortly after the end of the fiscal year; bring the audit to the board every April or June for discussion and vote to approve

• Create written protocols for all aspects of financial management and of personnel policies, including hiring protocols and annual performance review protocols

• Under the leadership of the new Operations and Finance Director, ensure that staff composition remains appropriately diverse and that all job searches and hiring are done with an equity lens and with a priority on sharing open positions with adults whose families are involved with our programs

• Under the leadership of the Board officers, ensure that board composition aligns with the board governance work plan’s goals (set annually) and that all new board member cultivation is done with an equity lens

• Continue to conduct annual performance reviews for all staff, including Executive Director
Implementation: Goal 7

Goal
Be an advocate, influencer, and trusted information source at local, state, and national levels on issues and best practices surrounding literacy and book ownership

Action Steps
• Communications Manager (newly established position) to develop an annual communications plan (including schedule and target goals for press releases, op-ed submissions, whitepapers, podcasts, etc.). Plan audit to commence at year’s end to evaluate effectiveness. Increase the number of touchpoints 10%-20% per year
• File at least two submissions per year to speak or make workshop presentations at regional and national conferences
Implementation: Goal 7 (cont.)

Action Steps (cont.)

• Ensure that Book Harvest leadership attends at least four regional and national conferences per year, such as Smart Start, NC Home Visiting Summit, Zero to Three Conference, National Center for Families Learning Conference, Institute for Educational Leadership conference, Campaign for Grade-Level Reading Huddle, and LaundryCares Summit

• Look for opportunities for leadership to serve on external boards and commissions (examples at present: our Community Partnerships Manager serves on the City of Durham’s Human Rights Commission; our Executive Director serves on the First Book National Advisory Board)

• Continue Book Harvest active presence on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), sharing resources and articles that are relevant to our work wherever possible (see work plans for metrics)

• Create a small Book Harvest speakers’ bureau, whose members are trained and available to speak to meetings of civic organizations, businesses, and partner organizations
Implementation: Goal 7 (cont.)

**Action Steps (cont.)**

- Book Harvest to submit feedback to any draft reports issued by NC’s Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Department of Public Instruction, or other government agencies.
- Ensure that we have at least two touches per year with members of the NC General Assembly, and at least two with the office of the Governor and the Executive Branch.
- Create materials, toolkits, and templates, available as both printed and online resources, that allow Book Harvest to provide trusted content for its various audiences – potential funders, literacy experts, volunteers, media, and constituents.
Financials
Over the course of the first Strategic Plan (2016-2018), Book Harvest generated revenues of approximately $2.5MM and incurred expenses of approximately $2.2MM. In 2018, the Board approved Book Harvest’s biggest budget increase over our 8-year history, reflecting anticipated expenses of just over $1MM. Key investments included:

- Growing staff by more than a third
- Adding a second location
- Expanding every program
- Launching our first replication site of Book Babies
- Investing in expanded external evaluation.

The organization’s overhead expenses (administrative + fundraising) have remained constant over the 2016-2018 planning frame, at approximately 15% of total expenses.
Funding sources also remained fairly constant during that period, with approximately 60% of funds annually streaming from foundations, 20% from individual donors, and the remainder from businesses, government, and other sources. 2018 was the first year Book Harvest received significant funds from a government agency, with an award of $155,000 from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

In 2014, we laid the groundwork for anticipated growth with the establishment of an operating reserve fund and accompanying governance statement. This “insurance policy” enables Book Harvest to grow and seize opportunities as they arise (operating reserve policy is available per request).
## Financials: A Brief History (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Books Provided</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>% growth in expenses versus prior year</th>
<th>Revenues/Expenses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>36,594</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$5,255/ 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>63,877</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$79,395/$6,582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>70,213</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$125,774/$90,477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>82,596</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>$214,761/$160,736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>110,313</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>123%</td>
<td>$662,607/$358,216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>166,559</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>$563,905 / $455,477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>245,837</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>$938,483/$679,882</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>249,274</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>$1,011,570/1,062,458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1,025,263 books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$3,601,750 / $2,813,828</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We anticipate steady, system-wide growth for Book Harvest over the second strategic plan horizon and project annual budget increases of 19% versus prior year in 2020 and of 12% versus prior year for 2021. Realizing this ambitious growth trajectory mandates an expansion and diversification of funding sources. The following three funding sources will be central to our growth:

1. Private Philanthropy (Individuals and Foundations)
Responsible for approximately 80% of revenues to date and will likely remain a cornerstone

2. Public Funding
As Book Harvest continues to advocate for the role of home visiting in realizing progress, we are actively pursuing relationships/funding stemming from numerous government sources and partners. Such partners include Smart Start; Healthy Opportunities Pilots within NC DHHS (Medicaid); the federal Integrated Care for Kids; NC Department of Public Instruction; and additional federal grant opportunities such as Family Engagement Centers.
3. Venture Philanthropy

Up-front major investments (akin to R&D venture capital in the for-profit sector) around literacy have shown increasing promise in recent years. Groups such as Promise Venture Studio, Omidyar, New Profit, and Blue Meridian are actively seeking the most promising innovations to support. Book Harvest is working to build relationships with several of those prospective funders.

Book Harvest will deepen and broaden its work to serve as a trusted information source and advisor for policymakers and elected officials to help increase visibility and stature with these key resources.
## Financials – The Path Ahead (cont.)

### 2019-2021 PROJECTED OPERATING BUDGET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Book Babies</th>
<th>Books on Break</th>
<th>Community Book Bank</th>
<th>Books to Go</th>
<th>Communications</th>
<th>Community Engagement</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Special Initiatives</th>
<th>Fundraising</th>
<th>Admin</th>
<th>NEW in 2020: Policy/Research</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>Increase vs Prior Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>594,393</td>
<td>359,857</td>
<td>122,187</td>
<td>26,052</td>
<td>85,175</td>
<td>64,992</td>
<td>73,711</td>
<td>23,510</td>
<td>116,106</td>
<td>134,104</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,600,087</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>720,000</td>
<td>360,000</td>
<td>140,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>98,000</td>
<td>75,000</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>165,000</td>
<td>85,000</td>
<td>1,908,000</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>805,000</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>155,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>115,000</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>88,000</td>
<td>42,000</td>
<td>145,000</td>
<td>180,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>2,130,000</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2019-2021 BUDGET ALLOCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Book Babies</th>
<th>Books on Break</th>
<th>Community Book Bank</th>
<th>Books to Go</th>
<th>Communications</th>
<th>Community Engagement</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Special Initiatives</th>
<th>Fundraising</th>
<th>Admin</th>
<th>NEW in 2020: Policy/Research</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Timing/Next Steps

• Book Harvest Board of Directors approved this 3-year plan in April of 2019; Staff-generated work plans for 2019 have been completed and are available for review.

• Work plans for 2020 and 2021 will be completed in October of prior year for each.

• Our first review of organizational “progress versus plan” will occur at the Book Harvest annual retreat in October of 2019. Subsequent yearly evaluations with detailed metrics will be presented at 2020 and 2021 retreats.
Appendix
# Literacy Organizations

Book Harvest is proud to be among a expanding group of organizations devoted to childhood literacy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>LAUNCH DATE</th>
<th>AGE OF CHILDREN SERVED</th>
<th>HOME VISITS</th>
<th>HOME VISIT FREQUENCY</th>
<th># OF BOOKS PROVIDED PER YEAR/ TOTAL #</th>
<th>EST. COST PER FAMILY PER YEAR</th>
<th>GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOOK BABIES</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>0 to 5</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>3 home visits per year</td>
<td>20 per year/120 total</td>
<td>$915</td>
<td>Durham County, NC and Forsyth County, NC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>0 to 5</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>12 per year/60 total (1 per month)</td>
<td>$30</td>
<td>50 states and internationally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EARLY HEAD START – HOME VISITING</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Pre-Natal to 3</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1 weekly 90 minute visit; a minimum of 2 group activities for parents and children per year.</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>$9,000 to $12,000 [2012 dollars]</td>
<td>50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAMILY CONNECTS</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>0 to 1</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1 to 3 visits total</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>$700 (2016 dollars)</td>
<td>6 NC counties (Durham, Guilford, Bertie, Beaufort, Chowan, and Hyde counties, the last four of which are rural), additional counties in IA, MD, OR, and MN.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURSE-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>0 to 2</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>60 to 75 minute weekly home visits for the first six weeks after the baby is born; every other week until the baby is 20 months.</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>$4,100 [2011 dollars]</td>
<td>32 states: AL, AZ, CA, CO, DE, FL, IL, IA, KY, LA, MD, MI, MN, MO, NV, NJ, NY, NC, ND, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, WA, WI, WY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Literacy Organizations (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>LAUNCH DATE</th>
<th>AGE OF CHILDREN SERVED</th>
<th>HOME VISITS</th>
<th>HOME VISIT FREQUENCY</th>
<th># OF BOOKS PROVIDED PER YEAR/ TOTAL #</th>
<th>EST. COST PER FAMILY PER YEAR</th>
<th>GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARENTS AS TEACHERS</strong></td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Pre-Natal – 4</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Monthly hour-long home visits to families with one or no high-needs; semi-monthly visits to families with two or more high-needs.</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Between $2,575 and $6,000 per year [2016 dollars].</td>
<td>50 states and DC, as well as six countries internationally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BOOKS FOR KEEPS</strong></td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Students at participating elementary schools self select 12 books to read over the summer and keep.</td>
<td>12 books per child per year</td>
<td>$30</td>
<td>GA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WAKE UP AND READ</strong></td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Students at participating elementary schools self select 10 books to read over the summer and keep.</td>
<td>10 books per child per year</td>
<td>Not known – included in Wake School District budget</td>
<td>Wake County, NC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Book Harvest Is A Member Of These Literacy Collaboratives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NORTH CAROLINA HOME VISITING CONSORTIUM</td>
<td>A group of perinatal and early childhood home visitation programs and maternal and child health organizations working to ensure that home visiting is available to all families who need it in NC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMPAIGN FOR GRADE-LEVEL READING</td>
<td>National collaborative with over 300 participating communities focused on ensuring that more children from low-income families reading proficiently by 3rd grade; Book Harvest ED serves as an advisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DURHAM’S CAMPAIGN FOR GRADE-LEVEL READING</td>
<td>Local collaborative working to double the number of Durham children from low-income families reading proficiently by 3rd grade by the year 2025.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References and Sources


[https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/134/2/404](https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/134/2/404)


Durham Public Schools: https://www.dpsnc.net/domain/127

Evans, M., Kelley, J., Sikora, J., & Treiman, D. J. *Family scholarly culture and educational success: Books and schooling in 27 nations*. Research in Social Stratification and Mobility, 28(2), 171-197, 2010


National Assessment of Educational Progress: https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/

NC Child: https://www.ncchild.org/

NC Department of Public Instruction: [http://www.ncpublicschools.org/data/reports/](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/data/reports/)


Smith, Ralph, Campaign for Grade-Level Reading: [https://gradelevelreading.net/about-us/from-the-managing-director](https://gradelevelreading.net/about-us/from-the-managing-director)


Background/Purpose
The current Book Harvest Strategic Plan was approved by the Board of Directors in 2018 to serve as the organization’s guiding document for the period 2019-2021. But as the Coronavirus pandemic changed life for all Americans, so too did it change life for Book Harvest. The purpose of this document is to 1) chronicle how Book Harvest has adapted to unprecedented challenges in order to continue delivering on our mission and vision, and 2) document the pandemic’s impact on implementation plans and metrics as we meet unforeseen needs and mine unanticipated opportunities.

The Changing Pandemic Landscape
On January 31, 2020, the World Health Organization declared a public health emergency for just the sixth time in its history, and by mid-March the US had declared its own public health emergency as states began to issue stay-at-home orders. By the end of July, infections surpassed 4 million and during the month of April unemployment reached record highs of 14%. By August, the US had reached over 1,000 COVID cases per day. And in early November, the nation hit the horrific milestone of 100,000 deaths per day. As of February 2021, there were 26 million reported cases in the US and over 500,000 deaths.

At the time this document was drafted, North Carolina had reported nearly 770,000 cases and over 9,600 deaths. Our Book Harvest home of Durham County has reported over 20,000 cases and 189 deaths. Research has validated what Book Harvest gleaned early – that low-income
neighborhoods with more residents working outside their homes and frequenting more crowded public venues suffer higher numbers of new cases and disproportionate impacts.

An Unfolding Crisis for Families Across America
The arrival of COVID-19 in early 2020 reconfigured the foundations and institutions of our society in profound and cataclysmic ways, in Durham and beyond. Practically overnight, our country’s children ceased the daily ritual of going to school—a safe and secure place where many received two meals a day and where, even in the most challenged schools, students were in a language-rich, stimulating environment.

Parents were pushed to the brink, increasingly stressed over staying employed, paying rent and keeping their families fed and healthy. Already exhausted, they were tasked with supporting their children’s home-based learning, without technology and supports critical to accessing teachers and materials online. And carving out quiet learning spaces (frequently in homes with children of all ages), plus finding the time and energy to provide learning supervision, was wholly unrealistic.

Tragic for Children
Our country is experiencing a full-blown crisis around children’s development and well-being. The events of 2020 forced us to acknowledge the unfathomable and horrific toll that COVID-19 is taking on the social, emotional, and academic needs of all our children, but most severely on those who were already behind.

Here is a glimpse of the losses that researchers estimate we will face due to cessation of in-class instruction through the end of 2020 (COVID-19 and Student Learning in the United States: The Hurt Could Last a Lifetime, McKinsey & Company, June 1, 2020):

- All students will lose ground, from 3-4 to 12-14 months.
- Black and Hispanic students will lose 3-5 months more than white students. Low-income students will lose 12+ months.
- GDP cost of this catastrophic learning loss is estimated to be between $173 billion and $271 billion by the year 2040. And the consequences to our most vulnerable children may be lifelong.

Tragic for Durham
It is important to note that, even pre-COVID, prospects for Durham’s students were grim. Among the 65,500 children ages birth to 18 who live in Durham County:

- Nearly 20% are living in poverty
- 5.1% have no health insurance; 44.7% are on Medicaid
Only 49% of Durham Public School district students are assessed as grade level proficient, and of the 50 schools in the system, 39 received School Performance Grades of C, D, or F.

**Devastating for Children of Color**

It is clear that race plays a major role in the prospects for Durham’s Black and Hispanic communities where children are more likely to grow up in low-income households (57% and 86% versus 14% for whites), leading to very different outcomes, including the critical predictor of kindergarten readiness. Only 35.6% of the 2,433 Durham kindergartners assessed in 2019-2020 were kindergarten ready and the differentials are stark:

- 30.1% of African American students were kindergarten-ready
- 31.6% of Hispanic students were kindergarten-ready
- 69.2% of White students were kindergarten-ready

Learning loss of this magnitude, on top of already existing inequities, could even more severely damage the prospects for a generation of vulnerable children whose future is already at risk. The need for a rapid and effective response to this COVID-fueled learning loss disaster is urgent.

**Book Harvest: New Paths. Same Journey.**

By March 2020, it was clear that the roadmap for how to continue the important work of Book Harvest had to change immediately. But despite mandatory programmatic and tactical shifts, the Book Harvest Mission, Vision and Core Values, foundational components of our strategic plan, continued to serve as the bedrock against which all decision-making revolved, and programming was conceived.

**MISSION**

We provide an abundance of books and ongoing literacy support to families and their children from birth and serve as a model for communities committed to ensuring that children are lifelong readers and learners.

**VISION**

A world in which reading, learning and access to information are considered rights not privileges, so that all children thrive.

**CORE VALUES**

- All children have the right to own books from birth.
- Parents know what is best for their children and are passionately committed to their success.
All children are born with the ability to succeed.
Books must serve as "mirrors, windows and sliding glass doors" for all children.
We CAN create the world our children deserve.
We are committed to research.

The New Book Harvest Mantra: *Keep Learning Alive*

On March 13, 2020, Book Harvest was forced to suspend office operations and cease 80% of existing programming. Overnight, operations were re-purposed to be COVID-safe, and new, rapidly designed interventions were added to the Book Harvest program portfolio. There was no time to study, assess, prototype, or evaluate new initiatives; instead, Book Harvest got to work—launching new programs as close to scale and as quickly as possible, and incorporating essential feedback loops to inform ongoing refinements and adaptations based on real-time learnings. We also developed COVID protocols and policies that put our community’s health and safety first, including requiring all staff who did not need to be onsite to re-think their tasks to work remotely.

The new work of Book Harvest during the COVID era, captured under the *Keep Learning Alive* umbrella, has two primary goals: providing books and keeping parents connected. The work was conducted from a new Rapid Response Center (RRC), a 6,000 square foot storefront located next to the Durham headquarters serving as our comprehensive book storage, fulfillment and distribution center. The new RRC opened June 1, to enable efficient book provision through the Book Harvest Book Bank with partners Durham’s Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, United Way of the Greater Triangle, First Book and Durham Public Schools.

*Keep Learning Alive: Book Provision*

Book Harvest launched three new book provision initiatives in the spring of 2020, all of which continue today. Here are program descriptions and testimonials:

- **Well Fed, Well Read**
  This newly formed coalition (partners: Durham Public Schools Foundation, Durham County Government, Food Insight Group, Durham Public Schools) pairs bags of age-appropriate, culturally diverse Book Harvest books with meal provision.

  *One father walked to the meal site and could only carry two bags of books with him. He returned 20 minutes later because his kids were so excited about the books and he wanted to make sure each child at home had his/her own bag.*
• **Grab-and-Go Books**

Book Harvest paused Books and Beyond programming and laundromat story times, both programs integral to creating a rich array of informal learning spaces throughout Durham. In partnership with Durham Parks and Rec, Durham Housing Authority, laundromats, grocery stores, and Durham County Library, Grab-and-Go Books was launched to help fill the void.

Our goal is to be present in all the places families frequent, and these rich programs remain a high priority for re-start when COVID recedes. We have continued with community-wide book access events with those same Books and Beyond partners, plus childcare centers and childcare homes, bus stations, and our own Rapid Response Center.

With Grab-and-Go Books, children and families receive new and gently used books in bags grouped by age and grade using safe, contactless protocols.

> My daughter woke up from her nap and had been told before her nap that there would be new books when she woke up. When she woke up, she came running into the living room saying "Mama, did you get my new books? Thank you so much for my new books". We used to be regular library users, but with the pandemic we have not been going and getting kids books is a lot harder via the online request since we used to just browse the aisles and pick stuff out, so I wouldn’t even know what to request. But the books your staff picked out were perfect for her and have been in heavy rotation the last few days. THANKS!

• **Book Provision through Child Care Providers**

This partnership with Durham County, Durham’s Partnership for Children, Child Care Services Association, and Durham County Library provides drop-offs of bags of books to children ages 0 - 5 at dozens of childcare centers and childcare homes in the community.

> This was such a blessing that we were able to be included. I have a lot of black and brown children that we have a hard time finding books for with pictures that look like them, and these books were that. There was a book about hair - that was so great. We loved everything. Thank you so much.

**Keep Learning Alive: Expansion of Book Provision**

In Spring of 2021, Book Harvest honed our ability to define where and how we needed to expand our presence, so that every child in Durham would have ready access to books.
• **Laser-Focused, With New Book Access Index**

Our goal is for every family in living in Durham to be within an easy walk to an abundance of high-interest, high-quality children’s books they can take home to keep.

To help guide expansion with new community-rooted strategies, Book Harvest is currently testing our internally-developed Book Access Index (BAI) prototype, which maps areas of greatest need and identifies "book deserts" ripe for transformation into abundant "book gardens."

This BAI tool was developed by Book Harvest staff in conjunction with Duke’s Fuqua School of Business Alumni and with guidance from a broad team, including early literacy experts Dr. Susan Neuman and Dr. Mariah Evans.

• **Outdoor Book Boxes**

Guided by our BAI, Book Harvest is installing a series of outdoor book boxes across Durham. Similar to Little Free Libraries, these Book Harvest-branded boxes are stocked with high-quality children’s books, but for children to keep—with no expectation of giving or returning books.

This program is designed not only to tap into existing networks and frequently-visited outdoor spaces, but to also fulfill young readers' yearning to choose their own books (impossible during much of the pandemic). The first Book Harvest Book Box debuted at the Durham Bus Station in January 2021 to overwhelming acclaim; a second Book Box was launched in February 2021 in the El Futuro garden, and conversations are currently underway with Durham Parks and Recreation, apartment complexes, congregations and other partners to broaden the program. The goal is to have 12 Book Harvest Book Boxes, each with 100+ books, anchored in key Durham locations by the end of 2021.

**Keep Learning Alive: Keeping Parents Connected**

Book Harvest has embraced warm, deep and long-lasting relationships with parents since its inception. And the importance of those relationships cannot be overestimated during the COVID crisis, when both need and isolation are at all-time highs.

One-on-one parent interactions have been a mainstay for Book Harvest programs, especially Book Babies, where trained literacy coaches regularly go into families' homes. Despite serious concerns at the outset of the pandemic, we are still creating and nurturing deep and fruitful relationships in myriad ways.

Book Harvest completed two rounds of check-ins with all 171 Book Babies families between the months of April and September. These check-ins ensured strong connections with families.
endured and provided parents with vital information regarding technology access to the newly-converted Book Babies virtual programming, facilitating our ongoing work in the field. Program adaptations included the following:

**For Book Babies Parents**
- Converting home visits to be virtual
- Conducting a series of check-in calls with Book Babies families to assess overall well-being and learn what additional literacy supports were needed
- Providing donated laptops to a limited group of families expressing a need
- Providing individualized transition support to families with children preparing to enter Pre-K/Kindergarten

**For all Parents**
- Developing an extensive set of curated resources for parents, available via Book Harvest’s website and shared through social media, texts, blogposts, etc.
- Hosting Family Workshop sessions, in partnership with Springboard Collaborative
- Helping parents develop practical, easy-to-use skills to keep learning alive at home
- Providing donated laptops to a limited group of Book Babies parents expressing a need.
- Conducting more frequent parent surveys

**The Research Pivots, But Never Pauses**
Throughout this protracted pandemic period, Book Harvest’s unflinching commitment to research (see core values) has never wavered, but methodologies certainly have. This forced march has, however, revealed new and potentially better ways to engage with audiences and generated fresh wisdom that will inform ongoing practices long after the pandemic recedes. It will also validate Book Harvest impact as we address future efforts to scale programming to reach audiences beyond our own community.

**Book Babies Randomized Control Evaluation**
Book Harvest’s most comprehensive study, The Book Babies Randomized Control Trial (RCT) in Durham and Forsyth Counties, was launched in 2017 but paused in March of 2020, as conducting in-home assessments, per the study design, became unfeasible. In consultation with our Principal Investigator, the renowned Dr. Iheoma Iruka, Book Harvest determined that discontinuing the RCT was the logical step. Children were passing developmental milestones, and timeframe for resumption of data collection regarding language and literacy development remained nebulous.

The RCT’s conclusion left Book Harvest equipped with three years of rich data about parent-child reading behaviors. In mid-2021, Dr. Iruka will issue a final report with findings and
recommendations for future research that will complement her RCT evaluation of Book Babies issued February 2020. Preliminary results from that study confirmed that:

- Book Babies parents engage in literacy-promoting activities more than their peers.
- Children enrolled in Book Babies show stronger early literacy skills than their peers; this is especially true among Spanish-speaking participants.

In examining the early data, Dr. Iruka concluded:

_These preliminary results give us hope that Book Babies can potentially serve as exemplar of an evidence-based home visiting model that can support low-resourced families and their young children, with lifelong and intergenerational effects._

**Book Babies Parent Surveys**

In the Fall of 2020, 103 Book Babies families (30%) participated in a Book Babies survey. Results reinforced that the program could not only survive, but also deliver with resounding impact. Outlined below are highlights of survey findings, demonstrating the early literacy behaviors and practices of enrolled families. Survey results are detailed below:

- 99% said the books provided made reading routines easier at home.
- 97% said they read with their children at least twice per week.
- 98% said Book Babies supports them in including early literacy strategies in the home.
- 98% said Book Babies helps create a daily reading routine at home.
- 100% of families who partnered with the Book Babies Pre-k/K transition coach were awarded Pre-k slots for their children.
- 86% said Book Babies helps them confidently make decisions for their child’s Pre-k application and enrollment.
- 91% said their early language and literacy knowledge was impacted.
- 83% said they apply the text message suggestions sent to them by their literacy coaches.
- 97% said they trust their Book Babies literacy coach.

**Book Babies Focus Groups**

In Fall 2020, Book Babies literacy coaches conducted a series of 12 focus groups with 43 currently-enrolled book Babies families. Dr. Cristina Gillanders, Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education at University of Colorado, has been engaged to conduct an external evaluation of focus group learnings. Her final report will be issued later in 2021.

**Partnerships with Schools and Families Are a Two-Way Street**

We are committed to measuring the impact of our Covid adaptations and new programming, and to making ongoing refinements as learnings dictate. To that end, we:
• Track book provision for all programs and deploy surveys to Durham Public School administrators, teachers, and staff
• Deliver parent questionnaires with a QR code (to streamline completion process for parents) in every bag of books provided across all programs
• Conduct regular check-in calls and focus groups with family partners
• Deliver partner surveys to multiple partners who provide Book Harvest books to their clients including childcare providers

Programs Deliver, as the Numbers Support
Tracking data through the end of 2020 confirms:
• A total of 179,338 books were provided from January 1 through December 31, 2020
• 83,881 books were provided between April 1 and August 31 (well surpassing the 75,000 books roughly equivalent to the Books on Break goal for spring of 2020)
• Collaborations moved forward with 42 community partners (with a history of hosting 60 bookshelves from which children could harvest books), as well as 24 school district meal provision sites and 36 childcare centers
• 4,460 volunteer hours were logged in 2020, at a value of $121,325 (as calculated by Independent Sector).
• 2,128 carloads of families visited our Rapid Response Center to harvest books through Grab-and-Go Books in 2020.
• 25,978 books were provided to children via Well Fed, Well Read in 2020.
• 29,787 books were provided to children via Grab-and-Go in 2020.
• 10,770 books were provided to very young children and their families through their childcare providers in 2020.

Financial Stability Despite Uncertain Times

The Bigger Pandemic Picture: Imminent Need Spurs Immediate Giving
Many non-profits have suffered irrevocably as funding has evaporated in the chaos of COVID, but others focused specifically on "human services" have actually seen increases in giving. It appears that while giving historically declines during extreme crisis across certain non-profit sectors (i.e. the arts), Americans step up in times of grave need to support causes that address immediate suffering. This has historically been the case with catastrophic weather events, the destruction wrought by 9/11, and presently the devastating harm inflicted by COVID on individuals and their families.
Book Harvest’s Community of Givers: Committed and Strategic

Armed with the understanding that philanthropists large and small not only want to give but to give smartly, Book Harvest has engendered confidence among donors that contributing during the pandemic is not just a solid investment in the future of America’s families, but also a savvy way to maximize the value of their dollar contributions. Tailored Book Harvest communications, electronic media campaigns, and high visibility in the community have highlighted to supporters the overwhelming need among families and how Book Harvest is answering the call. We have also reached out directly to current and potential donors regarding limited-time-only tax benefits conferred via the CARES act and fast-forwarded a new legacy giving program, the Book Harvest Imprint Society, which will soon allow donors to name Book Harvest as beneficiary of their estates.

Here is a snapshot of 2020 Revenues, during which expenses totaled $1,429,205.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASH REVENUE 2020</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>$1,067,422*</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundations</td>
<td>697,325</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>160,041</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorships</td>
<td>141,610</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment Earnings/Other</td>
<td>17,150</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate and Community</td>
<td>14,673</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,098,221</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes early payments on pledges originally scheduled for 2021 and 2022 to take advantage of the CARES Act.

Below are comparisons of the revenue categories from 2018 - 2020.
Funders Stay the Course and New Milestones Are Achieved

At the onset of the pandemic, Book Harvest was justifiably concerned about maintaining the healthy revenue streams critical to retaining employees and delivering against its mission. Despite those early trepidations, however, revenue has remained steady. Actual receipts from loyal donors have surpassed pre-pandemic goals, and in 2020 Book Harvest also received its largest-ever individual gift ($750,000 to be spent over three years but fully disbursed by benefactor in 2020 to take advantage of CARES Act tax benefits).

While grant/foundation totals were slightly under ambitious 2020 goals, major funding milestones included the GlaxoSmithKline Impact Award ($40,000), prestigious Library of Congress Best Practice Award ($5,000) and renewal of a $700,000 (over three years) grant from the Oak Foundation. And we are currently on target for achieving stated 2021 financial goals.
Additionally, while the number of first-time donors contributing to the End of Year appeal fell by approximately 20%, total dollars contributed still increased by 17%. Similarly, the number of donors for our largest annual community event (Dream Big) dropped slightly; however, sponsorship dollars of $160K for 2021 represent an increase of over 10%, despite conversion of the event from a day-long celebration in a carnival-like atmosphere to an equally joyful (albeit very altered) drive-through event. Finally, Book Harvest filed for and received two Payroll Protection Program loans, provided to businesses and nonprofits as part of the federal government’s Covid Relief Packages. These two loans of approximately $168,000 each were received in April of 2020 and again in February of 2021; neither has yet been forgiven, but Book Harvest meets criteria and it is anticipated those monies will soon present as revenue in upcoming financial statements.

Here is a recap of fundraising activity in 2020 as well as a comparison from 2018 - 2020.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>FY ’20 Goal</th>
<th>FY ’20 Actual</th>
<th>FY ’21 Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring Appeal</td>
<td>$42,000</td>
<td>$72,335</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End-of-Year Appeal</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
<td>$135,567</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021 Dream Big Sponsorships</td>
<td>$51,000</td>
<td>$145,570</td>
<td>$80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants Awarded</td>
<td>$731,213</td>
<td>$859,966</td>
<td>$934,076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Gifts</td>
<td>$290,000</td>
<td>$814,938*</td>
<td>$360,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This includes a $500,000 advance on an individual’s pledges for 2021 and 2022 to take advantage of the Cares Act.
The Year in Numbers

Below is an overview of Book Harvest’s 2020 expenses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENSES</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Literacy: Book Babies, Pre-K/K Transition</td>
<td>$496,552</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Partnerships: Books on Break, Community Programs</td>
<td>398,848</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>148,574</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Bank</td>
<td>116,204</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>113,536</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>76,371</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>59,673</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Initiatives</td>
<td>19,020</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,428,778</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: these are unaudited figures; audited figures will be available upon request in June 2021
And here is a snapshot of 2020 versus 2019, as well 2021 projections:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>METRIC</th>
<th>2019 (actual)</th>
<th>2020 (actual)</th>
<th>2021 (projected)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revenues</td>
<td>$1,389,566</td>
<td>$2,098,221</td>
<td>$1,596,858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenses</td>
<td>$1,322,166</td>
<td>$1,428,778</td>
<td>$1,582,081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Donors</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>786</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of annual expense budget in operating reserve</td>
<td>42% (on schedule)</td>
<td>50% (on schedule)</td>
<td>50% (on schedule)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Steady on the Path**
The Book Harvest 2019-21 Strategic Plan highlighted three areas of focus for revenue growth:

- **Private philanthropy (individuals and foundation)**
  This source of funding has historically accounted for 80% of all revenues and will remain a cornerstone of fundraising post-Covid, at a similar level to past years.

- **Public funding (i.e., Smart Start, NC DPI Payroll Protection Program)**
  This category will likely exceed 20% of annual revenues going forward. Relationships have deepened with public entities and policymakers this year and investments from public sources and Covid relief funding will continue to be tapped.

- **Venture Philanthropy**
  Contrary to the current strategic plan, venture philanthropy, which has turned more heavily to basic needs and for-profit enterprises, will not be a major focus.

**Poised for a Future Rooted in Good Financial Health**
Despite (and perhaps because of) this remarkable year, Book Harvest's fiscal health is stronger than at any time in its ten-year history. Buoyed by deep expertise on both staff and board, clarity around mission, vision, and core values, and enduring relationships with individual and institutional donors, the organization exceeded 2020 financial goals. 2021 is off to a promising start. We are confident that our operating reserve, which reached a milestone *50% of program expenses* in 2020, will enable us to weather future adverse events, while also taking advantage of unexpected opportunities.
Dismantling Injustice: An American Journey

Perhaps if there is any upside to the horrific loss and misfortune the pandemic has reaped, especially on families of color, it might be that COVID19 served as an accelerator in helping catalyze what scholars call "the broadest and most sustained social movement in US history."

Against the backdrop of escalating racial injustice, violence and a growing Black Lives Matter movement, in an environment devoid of the usual distractions of everyday life that provoked a more aware and listening populace, COVID forced all Americans to witness front and center the catastrophic consequences for communities of color, reaped by longstanding subjugation, income inequality and an inept response to an unprecedented public health crisis atop decades of inadequate healthcare and untreated pre-existing conditions.

According to current CDC figures, Black and Hispanic hospitalization rates from COVID-19 are approximately twice those of whites and deaths rates approximately three-fold higher. As Linda Dixon, Health Law Director for the Mississippi Center for Justice reflects about COVID impact in her state, it's about "...decades of systemic racism putting affordable healthcare out of the hands of many."

Dismantling Injustice: A Book Harvest Imperative

On June 2nd, 2020, with the Pandemic in full flare, Book Harvest published a letter in response to the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and so many others who fell victim to increasing episodes of police violence across our country:

....Now is the moment for all of us, together, to shoulder the responsibility for dismantling systems that are built on generations of inequality and centuries of oppression... as we strive to realize our vision of a world in which reading, learning, and access to information are considered rights, not privileges, we recommit ourselves to work fiercely for justice and equality, and to build a beloved community in which love and safety are the norm, and in which peace and compassion thrive....

With fresh eyes and buoyed by our core values we know we must wholly commit to embracing equity as a central tenet of our work if we are to realize our vision. To lead that charge, Book Harvest has established the Harvesting Equity Project (HEP), led by a working group of staff members and a board member liaison.

The focus for this group is to create an anti-racist framework to inform all internally and externally focused activity and decision-making. The anti-racist framework outlined here is a work in progress; board and staff agree unanimously that a final version will ultimately be formally adopted to become a pillar of the organization. It will also serve as an additional
foundational component of Book Harvest's Strategic Plan and be a major reference point for evaluating progress moving forward.

**Harvesting Equity Project: Five Key Tenets**

The Book Harvest commitment to this anti-racist framework is characterized by five tenets:

1) We understand that we are in a position of power and privilege as gatekeepers of books and literacy resources and supports.

2) Being an anti-racist organization is an ongoing process – we know we make mistakes. We will acknowledge those mistakes and will continue to hold ourselves accountable.

3) We are committed to ongoing learning about anti-racism and how Book Harvest can be more actively anti-racist in all facets of its mission and work.

4) We work toward the identification and elimination of biases and racist processes and outcomes within our organization.

5) We engage in intentional conversations with our partners in the community to identify and eliminate biases and racist processes in systems outside our organization.

**Harvesting Equity Project Implementation Specifics**

The HEP working group has identified the following five areas to address in the short term, as Book Harvest works to become anti-racist. Goals, actions steps and preliminary success measures are also outlined below.

- **Funding**
  
  Our goal is to ensure sufficient funds are budgeted and raised to support the acquisition of resources to further the mission of HEP. We envision creating a HEP-specific fund to help cover costs for engaging external equity consultants, procuring books and conducting ongoing staff professional development.

  **Success Measures**
  
  Potential success measures include dollars raised, # of books purchased, # of professional development opportunities made available and # of external consultants retained.

- **Personnel**
  
  Our goal is to ensure HEP guidelines provide the backdrop against which decisions surrounding finding, hiring and nurturing Book Harvest employees are made.

  **Action Steps**
  
  - Hiring Procedures
    
    – Ensure HEP members are integral to hiring and on-boarding processes for all Book Harvest Employees
Develop a new hiring protocol, applicable to all new employees
Review current hiring process to ensure that resources, infrastructure and supports are available to (1) facilitate Book Harvest’s outreach to diverse communities when conducting job searches and (2) maximize the chance of success for every new hire.

- Staff Professional Development
  Ensure staff and volunteers participate in ongoing professional development – focused on race equity and policies that promote inclusive understanding of diverse cultural practices and traditions.

Success Measures
- Number of professional development sessions offered/completed across all cohorts
- Number of diverse candidates applying for, interviewing, getting/accepting offers
- Employee Satisfaction Levels and retention rates (for new and existing)
- Frequency rate of HEP-related updates provided at Board Meetings

- Board of Directors
  Our goal is for Board formation and practices to reflect HEP priorities and standards, and for HEP to serve as a resource for the Board Governance Committee regarding identification and recruitment of new members.

  Board members will also be held accountable, to the extent possible, for participating in internal professional development sessions and availing themselves of educational opportunities available in the community at large.

Success Measures
  Frequency of formal and informal meetings/info-sessions with Board Governance and HEP
  Number of Board Member participants/hours invested in HEP professional development as well as outside education
  - Degree of HEP visibility (updates/presentations-how often/for how long) at board meetings and annual retreat
  - Board Members participating HEP training
  - Board Member satisfaction levels re: HEP (per survey responses) and number of positive HEP-specific mentions in survey free-text responses

- Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors
  Our goal is to underscore Book Harvest's commitment to the core value at the center of our belief in the transformative power of books—fondly referred to as "Mirrors, Windows and
Sliding Glass Doors," originally coined by Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop. We want children to see themselves in books and to use books as portals into other worlds. "Mirrors, windows and sliding glass doors" should be felt across the spectrum of Book Harvest’s work, from books acquired and donated, to locations where those books reside and our interactions who so painstakingly work to support their distribution.

**Action Steps**

- **Programming**
  
  With great intention, Book Harvest will work to ensure book distribution and book-drive focused programming revolves around a race equity framework under the “Mirrors, Windows and Sliding Glass Doors” umbrella through:
  1. creation of guidelines for book collection events that reflect our anti-racist/organizational values
  2. on-going training for volunteers, complete with new book-sorting guidelines
  3. recruitment of a more diverse volunteer cohort

- **Books**
  
  We will continue to emphasize and communicate the serious need for diversity in the books we harvest and deliver to families and strive to help Book Harvest increase the number acquired through both purchase and donations.

**Success Measures**

- Total number of diverse books purchased and percentage increase vs YAG
- Percentage increase versus YAG in diverse versus "non-diverse" books harvested and distributed
- Number of initiatives directed at recruiting a more diverse group of volunteers
- Number of new volunteers who meet criteria for being diverse (note: feel free to tweak language)
- Number of training sessions offered/utilized, among diverse/non-diverse cohorts

- **Communications**

  Our goal is to generate awareness and launch a call to action to educate stakeholders and help them integrate HEP tenets into their work and their lives.

**Action Steps**

- Develop BH diversity and inclusion statement to appear as signature as appropriate across outgoing communications
- Create a HEP-specific section on the Book Harvest site to announce the formation of HEP, deliver key information about the initiative and invite all visitors into an ongoing relationship
- Use dedicated space in existing printed materials to support HEP
- Utilize BH partners' communication channels to broadcast HEP messaging

**Success Measures**

- Proportion of HEP coverage on BH website, standard analytics pertaining to electronic media (#visitors, time spent, etc.)
- Level of HEP visibility/mentions on existing printed materials, HEP-specific new print materials developed, audience size and frequency
- Number of visitors opting into deeper HEP relationship (requests for info, volunteer sign-ups, etc.)
- Number/magnitude of monetary and in-kind donations to HEP

**The Path Ahead**

On April 8, 2021, the Book Harvest Board of Directors voted to approve this Pandemic Response Addendum and its incorporation into the existing Book Harvest 2019-2021 Strategic Plan. As of that day, over one year since COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, 559,116 people in the United States had died of COVID-19, and vaccinations had found their way into 109 million arms (https://www.medicaleconomics.com/view/coronavirus-vaccine-and-case-numbers-in-the-united-states-april-8-2021).

With a goal of helping those families suffering most due to the financial impact of the Pandemic, the United States Senate approved a $1.9 trillion COVID relief package in March of 2021. Among other assistance, monies were again pledged to help families pay rent and feed their families.

In Durham, Public Schools finally re-opened elementary classrooms to in-person learning on March 15, 2021, almost a year to the day of their closure. It remains to be seen how grave the impacts will be on the long-term well-being of Book Harvest families; we stand firm in our commitment to providing all children access to books and literacy tools so they can exercise their right to read and thrive.

The learnings from this seminal time in American history will guide us as we focus on strategies for the future with renewed vigor and the unambiguous belief that this important work is more critical to changing young lives than ever.
BOOK HARVEST 2022-2023 STRATEGIC PLAN EXTENSION
Approved by the Book Harvest Board of Directors at its June 8, 2022
Board Meeting.

Background

The Book Harvest Three-Year Strategic Plan, formally adopted by the Board of Directors in December 2018, was created to provide the strategic framework for all Book Harvest decision-making and activity for the years 2019, 2020, and 2021.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic changed America, still in disarray even as this document is being written. Total known cases have surpassed 81 million, and more than one million people have died.\(^1\) And while Omicron has caused fewer fatalities than its predecessors, in an America where 34% of citizens have yet to receive the two vaccines required to be considered fully vaccinated,\(^2\) this highly transmissible variant continues to wreak havoc on overburdened health systems, Book Harvest families, and schools (which are still facing severe staff/teacher shortages). A recent report released by McKinsey found that more first and second graders finished the 2021 academic year with a deficit of two or more grade levels than ever recorded. The negative repercussions, particularly around academic readiness and lifetime earnings, will be particularly devastating for Black and Hispanic students who are already suffering from decades of disparities.\(^3\)

Despite the longstanding challenges COVID has presented, Book Harvest continues to expand programs and develop innovative approaches to deliver against its mission and work toward achievement of its vision. In May of 2021, at the recommendation of its Strategic Planning

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2. [https://usafacts.org/visualizations/covid-vaccine-tracker-states/](https://usafacts.org/visualizations/covid-vaccine-tracker-states/)
Committee, the Book Harvest Board of Directors approved the Pandemic Response Addendum, which documents how the organization continued to adapt and thrive in order to meet the needs of families in the face of profound challenges created by COVID. It also documents COVID-related impact on Book Harvest implementation plans and metrics as previously envisioned in the 2019-2021 strategic plan.

Given that (1) COVID is still in our midst, (2) the comprehensive Pandemic Response Addendum was approved, and (3) the organization’s critical and strategic underpinnings remain steadfast, the Book Harvest Board has elected to extend the current 2019-21 Strategic Plan to encompass an additional two years and to delay creation of a new three-year plan until the 2024-2027 planning cycle.

2022-2023 Strategic Plan Extension

This 2022-2023 Strategic Plan Extension illustrates how challenging times continue to spur new levels of innovation and optimism at Book Harvest. Specifically, this document:

- Reports actual performance versus projections stipulated in the 2019-2021 Strategic Plan, with updated delivery metrics and financials through 2021
- Outlines the strategic underpinnings, priorities, and key deliverables for years 2022 and 2023
- Debuts bold plans for expanding organizational priorities of book provision and literacy support to children and families beyond the Book Harvest flagship community of Durham, NC.

Book Harvest 2019-2021: Performance Versus Plan

Even during turbulent times, Book Harvest continued to grow, thrive, and further its mission while remaining financially sound.

Book Provision

Despite the challenges created by Covid, Book Harvest continued to deliver on its primary mission of promoting literacy and providing books to children. As depicted in the graph below, with Covid in full swing in 2020, the ability of Book Harvest to provide books at the projected levels was negatively impacted. However, the Book Harvest team actually provided more books in 2021 than in any prior year.
Expenditures
For each of the years 2019, 2020, and 2021, more than 80% of Book Harvest annual program expenditures supported literacy programs (book bank, community programming, and Book Babies/early literacy). As COVID continued to increase in severity, actual expenditures for these programs fell below projections and in 2021 dropped below prior year for the first time. These decreases were the result of intentional fiscal caution during an uncertain and volatile time.
There are several other important items to note regarding Book Harvest expenses for the period 2019-2021:

- Combined administrative and fundraising costs in 2019-2021 held steady at 16-18% of total expenses each year.
- Staff grew markedly during the three years, going from 14 fulltime staff in 2019 to 15 in 2020 to 19 in 2021.
- In 2020, Book Harvest expanded from 7,200 to 10,000 square feet, consolidating operations into two adjacent storefronts at our 2501 University Drive location in Durham; the organization had held space at the W.G. Pearson Center, but discontinued that lease at the end of 2020. Because of a below-market lease in the second storefront added in January 2021, overall occupancy expenses did not change significantly during the three years.

**Revenue 2019-2021**

Throughout these three years, individuals and foundations together accounted for 75-80+% of revenues. Increases were seen in individual donations in 2020 due to pledges paid early in order to take advantage of the CARES Act; there was also a slight dip in foundation revenues in 2020, likely attributable to disruptions in funding because of COVID.

The revenue category of “other” reflects both investment earnings and forgiveness granted for a Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan.
Book Harvest Fiscal Health and Operating Reserve, 2019-2021

The three-year period from 2019 to 2021 saw two important trends:

- Book Harvest deliberately curbed expenses starting in March 2020 in an effort to manage through the great uncertainty of the global pandemic.
- The organization saw significant growth in revenues owing to 1) strong and longstanding donor relationships, which materialized at a challenging time, and 2) government COVID relief efforts such as PPP forgivable loans.
During 2019 and 2021 Book Harvest continued to avoid deficit spending or taking on debt. This fiscally responsible organizational approach has been followed since the founding of Book Harvest, as reflected in the graph below.
Also important to note as a measure of fiscal health is the status of the Book Harvest operating reserve. From 2019-2021, Book Harvest continued to grow this fund, originally designed to help weather financial downturns and take advantage of extraordinary opportunities. This operating reserve fund was established in 2013; in 2021, for the first time it not only met but exceeded the goal of totaling at least 50% of current-year operating expenses.

Book Harvest 2022-2023 Plan Extension: Strategy

Book Harvest will continue to honor the immutable strategic pillars, articulated in the original 2019-2021 Strategic Plan, as the foundation upon which all decision-making and programming rests:

**MISSION**

Book Harvest provides an abundance of books and ongoing literacy support to families and their children from birth and serves as a model for communities committed to ensuring that children are lifelong readers and learners.

**VISION**

Our vision is of a world in which reading, learning, and access to information are considered rights, not privileges, so that all children thrive.
CORE VALUES

- All children have the right to own books from birth. Books are essential to the well-being and healthy development of children. Books, readily available and in abundance, are vital to school readiness, academic success, and lifelong learning.
- Parents know what is best for their children and are passionately committed to their success. Parents are their child’s first and most important brain-builders and have the power to ignite and sustain their children’s literacy development from birth. We will meet parents where they are to support them in realizing their goals for their children.
- All children are born with the ability to succeed. When we provide the tools and support ALL children deserve, foster their roles as active participants in their own literacy journeys, and honor their inherent brilliance, we are laying the groundwork for productive and meaningful lives.
- Books must serve as “mirrors, windows and sliding glass doors” for all children. Books must portray all children, honoring diverse backgrounds, languages, abilities, and perspectives, and include stories by and about people of color.
- We CAN create the world our children deserve. We believe in the capacity of collective goodness and collective action to transform the eco-system currently failing America’s children and create a more equitable world.
- We are committed to research. Continuous self-assessment, including rigorous external evaluation, is essential to identifying best practices as we expand our efforts to rewrite outcomes.

2022-2023 Strategic Priorities: The Path Ahead

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We will also continue to honor the four principles we view as key to achievement of our mission:

- Access to books in the community is critical
- Books in the home are critical
- Reading to children from birth is an essential component of a healthy childhood
- Parents hold the power to transform outcomes for their children

The super-charged COVID era and the daunting unmet needs of North Carolina families have lent a high degree of clarity to identifying Book Harvest's priorities for 2022 and 2023. The past two years have also underscored the urgency with which Book Harvest can and must pursue more audacious goals as it embarks upon this second decade, committed to serving more families in Durham and beyond.
The two interrelated priorities below will inform every step Book Harvest takes and will serve as important markers for measuring Book Harvest impact in the years ahead. They also provide the springboard for a new and ambitious third priority facilitating a major expansion that will amplify and extend the organization’s impact, on both local and national levels.

**Priority #1: Honor Parents as Critical Agents of Change**
Consistent with core values, we know with absolute certainty that Book Harvest must harness the power of our most vital partners, PARENTS, as the key drivers of their children’s early literacy experiences.

From the beginning, Book Harvest has invested in relationships with families and made a commitment to work collaboratively with parents if we are to serve their children well. The first core value listed in the 2019-2021 Strategic Plan speaks to parents holding the key to unlocking the power of reading and books. We have made great strides since creating that plan to meet families where they are and to include parents in both strategic and programmatic planning.

Book Harvest has continued to forge deep relationships with parents, despite more serious challenges than anticipated. Even in the largely virtual world where we now function, our relationships with parents have never been more robust, and our conviction around parents as key to their children’s literacy success is even stronger.

**Priority #2: Expand Rigorous Research Initiatives to Understand What Works for Parents and Children**
Book Harvest understands what parents want and need because, quite simply, we ask. We know we must continue to elevate parent voices and respond to their call. The lines of communication are constant; in the fall of 2020, we hosted twelve focus groups with 42 parents to better understand how to support them in their literacy work with their babies and young children. This work to hear parents is ever-present, highly fruitful, and ongoing.

Book Harvest must continue to engage with families in a culturally aware and affirming way as we are welcomed into their homes. When we engage with parents in that manner, while also providing the necessary support and tools, parents will be not only their children’s first teachers but also their best teachers, and their children will read and thrive.

As we continue to prioritize research in 2022 and 2023, we are bolstered by recent findings. The external randomized control evaluation and a qualitative assessment of parent focus groups reveal a common theme—that participating in Book Babies plays a significant role in shaping positive and consistent parent-child reading behaviors. These research studies are listed below, with links to full reports and executive summaries highlighting key findings.
Another way we listen to parents is by inviting them to take an annual parent survey, most recently in the summer of 2021; 99 parents, more than 40% of enrolled families, participated. Here are key findings:

- **97%** reported that books provided by the program make reading routines at home easier.
- **96%** reported that Book Babies has an impact on how satisfied they feel about helping their child develop an interest in books/reading.
- **98%** reported that Book Babies supports them in including early literacy strategies at home.
- **94%** said Book Babies helps create a daily reading routine at home.
- **99%** reported that early language and literacy knowledge is impacted by the Book Babies program.
- **93%** said they trust their Book Babies Coach.

In September 2021, Book Harvest hosted a research briefing, “Parents Make the Difference,” to share and discuss the findings of these three evaluations. We were pleased that 80+ representatives from more than 50 organizations and academic institutions across the country attended. We continue to share the recording and deck from the briefing with policymakers and practitioners.

Expanding our research focus and in-house capabilities is a priority moving forward. In the fall of 2021, we hired our first Data and Evaluation Manager – a fulltime staff person tasked with integrating research into every aspect of Book Harvest programs and planning. Clearly, we will have a multitude of learnings to share in 2022 and 2023.

We are also embedding data collection into programming in new and exciting ways. One such example is from the Book Box program; we now incorporate QR codes that link directly to

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surveys parents and hosting partners may access with ease. We have no doubt this new approach will yield more and better information to guide that work.

**Priority #3: Transform the National Literacy Landscape**

If there is a silver lining to these times, it's the spotlight that is shining on the tragic inequities that endanger the futures of America's children, and the forced reckoning it has prompted. While Herculean barriers still exist, and changing hearts and minds feels like the unattainable prize, COVID has forced an awakening that spans local and national governments, policy makers, thought leaders, public and private funding sources, and industry. The fragility of our interconnected systems and the imperative to shore up parents, children, and public schools if America is to recover, much less thrive, should be apparent.

In October of 2021, the Book Harvest Board of Directors unanimously approved adoption of a plan to lay the groundwork for an expanded Book Harvest organization - one that realizes greater reach and impact in its flagship community of Durham, NC and that maximizes its impact, scale, and policy influence beyond Durham. Current founder and Executive Director Ginger Young has assumed the role of CEO of Book Harvest, Inc., and the Book Harvest Board, in close collaboration with its Board Governance Committee, will establish new governance and managerial structures for this parent entity, with the input of seasoned consultants as necessary.

**The Time is Now: Book Harvest, Inc.**

Some may suggest further deliberation would be warranted before taking the bold steps outlined here amidst such national instability. Book Harvest believes, however, that there may never be a more opportune time. America’s attention has been forcibly captured by new awareness of the inequities and challenges facing our children (not all from traditionally underserved communities); mindsets and funding sources have never been so attuned to the need to address critical inequities around education and literacy. Book Harvest has a well-founded sense of urgency given that American memory, understanding, and even empathy will likely fade as COVID someday recedes. While a detailed strategic plan will be developed in due time, our vision for the expanded organization, in broad strokes, is as follows.

Guided by the opportunities in neighboring communities and the interest expressed by the people who live there, starting in 2022 Book Harvest Inc. will begin translating its Durham model and programs first across North Carolina and from there to the national stage. We are ready to begin delivering against our second-decade goals of expanding Book Harvest impact, scale, and policy influence. While a comprehensive multi-year Book Harvest Inc. Strategic Plan will be developed as part of the 2024 planning cycle, the following priorities will drive Book Harvest, Inc. activity for 2022 and 2023:

**Replication/Expansion**
Book Harvest Inc. will hire a dedicated staff person to lay the groundwork for rolling out current Durham-based programming to three to five additional NC communities in 2023 and 2024, prioritizing those in rural counties. Durham Inc. will build on the already-successful expansion of bedrock programs Books on Break (in Bladen and Columbus Counties), and Book Babies (in Forsyth County).

Public Policy and Advocacy
Book Harvest, Inc. will develop, disseminate, and advocate for policy that advances childhood literacy at the local, state, and national levels. At the start of 2022, Book Harvest engaged Vista Strategies, a North Carolina government relations firm with deep expertise in policy at the state level. Monies have also been earmarked for a Book Harvest Policy Director to be hired late in 2022.

Research and Publication
Book Harvest, Inc. will conduct and publish groundbreaking research and share novel indices on book abundance, early literacy, and community-wide cultures of literacy. We will continue to conduct regular research briefings incorporating parent voices and targeting a broad audience including policymakers, fellow nonprofits, and elected officials.

Movement Building and Communications
Book Harvest, Inc. will build, convene, and mobilize regional and national networks of literacy partners and stakeholders. In addition, Book Harvest will seek to engage with influential media, author opinion pieces, and generate social media content to focus attention on the national literacy crisis and to advance the organization’s impact, scale, and policy influence.

Celebrating Book Harvest Durham
Book Harvest Durham will remain the flagship site and prototype for expansion under the new Book Harvest, Inc. umbrella. In early 2022, an extensive search was conducted for an Executive Director of Book Harvest Durham. We are pleased to announce that Tabitha Blackwell, former Book Harvest Board Chair and an exceptional leader in both the local and national non-profit sectors, has agreed to lead the outstanding team at Book Harvest Durham.

Book Harvest Durham will continue to serve as anchor, incubator and mothership for research and testing of new concepts and scaling approaches in this multi-faceted, diverse, and broadly thinking city that has been so crucial to laying the groundwork for nationwide change.

Very importantly, the Executive Director of Book Harvest Durham will also be charged with the ambitious goal of scaling to meet the needs of every eligible child and family in Durham with books and literacy support, starting at birth. And as Book Harvest, Inc. progresses toward creating a national footprint, North Carolina will likely be front and center.
Outlined below are projected expenses for 2022 and 2023, reflecting the ongoing growth of Book Harvest Durham as well as investments required for the launch of Book Harvest, Inc.

Just a decade ago, Book Harvest inhabited its founder’s garage and minivan; it was an idea powered by an ever-growing cadre of determined volunteers and generous book donors. Fast forward to today, and that same spirit of resilience and perseverance has propelled the organization forward once more, ready to achieve even bigger dreams.

The three years from 2019 to 2021 were unprecedented in the challenges they presented. Fortunately, they were equally unprecedented in the effectiveness of Book Harvest both to meet these challenges from a position of strength and to continue to deliver on its ambitious mission and vision.
Now, as the organization enters its next phase – covering this Strategic Plan Extension's horizon of the years 2022 and 2023 – it does so with more hope, confidence, and resolve than at any time in its history. Ten years of program development, execution, evaluation, and capturing of key learnings inform the organization's unshakeable goal to achieve exponentially greater impact, scale, and policy influence over our second decade. Book Harvest has a community of dedicated staff, board, volunteers, funders, and parents themselves who are ready to do the hard work to transform the landscape both in and beyond Durham. And all are acutely aware that the need for this work has never been greater.

Book Harvest remains steadfast in its belief that, one day, every child will grow up with a love of books, reading and learning, equipped with the language and literacy tools to thrive in school, work, and life.

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