



**Raising  
A Reader**  
Massachusetts

*Opening Doors by Opening Books*



# ANNUAL REPORT 2021

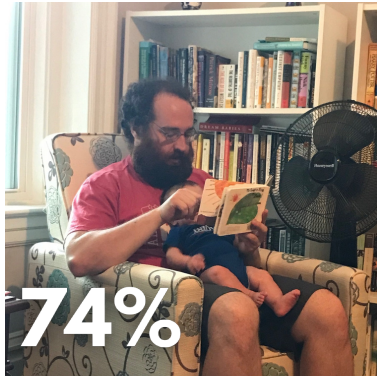
**STATE  
LITERACY  
AWARD  
WINNER  
2021**  
LIBRARY  
OF CONGRESS



# MAKING AN IMPACT

## Our Mission

Our mission is to close the literacy opportunity gap among children birth to age six in under-resourced communities by helping families develop and practice shared home reading habits.

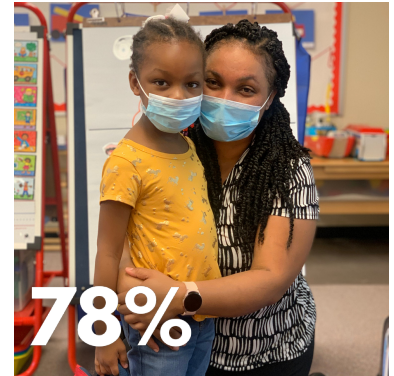


of families reported increased reading frequency.\*

\*Percentage representative of families initially reading less than 3 times per week

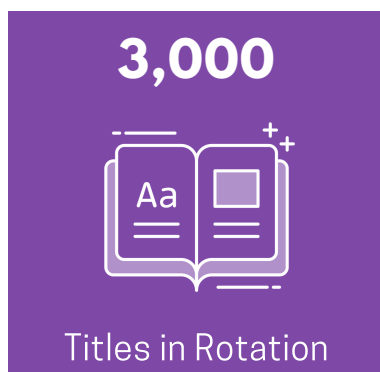


of families use 3 or more dialogic reading strategies after RAR-MA.



of partners share that children showed a greater interest in books and reading

Data based on returned partner and matched family surveys, FY20-FY21 and FY17-FY19 averages respectively.



## FROM A FAMILY

*"The pandemic was a drastic change to the normal way of doing things. There was anxiety and exhaustion along the way. 'All about feelings' was our book to help [my son] understand that his feelings are valid – difficult feelings are not permanent and it's ok to talk about it and ask for help."*

- Mother, Malden

## FROM A PARTNER

*"Reading allows kids to create new worlds beyond the bounds of the one they live in. I believe reading is key in helping children grow to be kind people."*

-Implementer Liaison, Dorchester Family Engagement Network Playgroup & The Boys and Girls Club of Dorchester

# DEAR READERS

## Thank you from the leadership!

Dear Readers,

Imagine not having any books in your home, not being able to dive into a story with a loved one. Moving into a second year of navigating the coronavirus pandemic when schools moved to virtual environments and libraries and other community resources closed, we are committed to our goal: to provide critical literacy support to end the cycle of low literacy among young children in their foundational years. Thank you for your support of our important work to eliminate the literacy opportunity gap in Massachusetts.

Our staff, partners, supporters, and families have demonstrated incredible resilience and ingenuity. The pandemic has revealed further socio-economic inequities and demonstrated even more the need for early literacy resources to build the critical foundation for a lifetime of opportunity.

I am proud of our innovation in rebuilding our signature Red Book Bag program, reaffirming our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, and expanding the reach of our Community Ambassador Program, our program champions. We are especially excited about the addition of Social Emotional Learning and Science Technology Engineering & Math topics to prepare the leaders and critical thinkers of tomorrow.

Celebrating our 15th year in Massachusetts, I am so grateful for the strong relationships we've cultivated with Board members, supporters, partners, implementers, and families who continue to amaze me with their resourcefulness, generosity, and strength. With your help, we are addressing the systemic inequities of low literacy so that all children can find the joy and success that comes from reading, the foundation of all learning.

With gratitude,



Christine Ward, Executive Director



Dear Readers,

Thank you for your continued generosity to support our goal to end the literacy opportunity gap. I continue to be impressed with and thankful for the work we do and the families we support. We could not do this important and ambitious work without your help. Our success is thanks to the strength of our inclusive dual intervention program model, dedicated staff, committed program partners and generous donors. Despite the unique challenges of this past year, we have maintained the majority of our program partners and we are grateful for their unwavering commitment to our mission.

We remain steadfast in our work to address inequities by adding resources for our constituents while maintaining the core of our program model through our family engagement workshops and the rotating library of high-quality, age appropriate and culturally relevant books. We continue to build our diverse board and add resources, including a DEI task force, to address important issues around representation, inclusion & social justice - and how our mission relates to these challenging topics within our communities.

I am proud to be a part of this organization and your partnership and continued support is instrumental to our impact on the literacy opportunity gap.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Gregg Dooling, Board Chair

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Chair - Gregg Dooling

Managing Director, CFO, Amundi US

### Vice Chair - Francine Rosenzweig

Former Attorney

### Treasurer - Heather Dickinson (through 9/20)

Managing Director, Deloitte & Touche, LLC

### Treasurer - Jill Quinby

Audit & Assurance Partner, Deloitte & Touche, LLC

### Secretary - Daryl Andrews

Partner, Andrews DeValerio, LLP

**Melissa Alexander** - IT Director, Foundation Medicine

**Bill Barke** - Senior Advisor, Open Scholar

**Brandon Burns** - Corporate Audit Vice President, State Street

**Camille Carlstrom** - Managing Director of Research, Fidelity Management & Research Company

**Mercedes Dahar** - Executive Director of Customer Success, athenahealth

**Dale Dowdie** - CEO/Founder of BlackFacts.com, Intellitech Consulting Enterprises Assurance

**Ola Friday** - Executive Director, Early Educator Investment Collaborative

**Aria Glasgow** - Associate Partner, AON/Radford Advisory

**Susan Houston** - Founding Executive Director, MassEcon

**Jonathan Slawsby** - Owner & COO, Madison Food Corp.

**Shelley Wilson** - Marketing Director, PwC

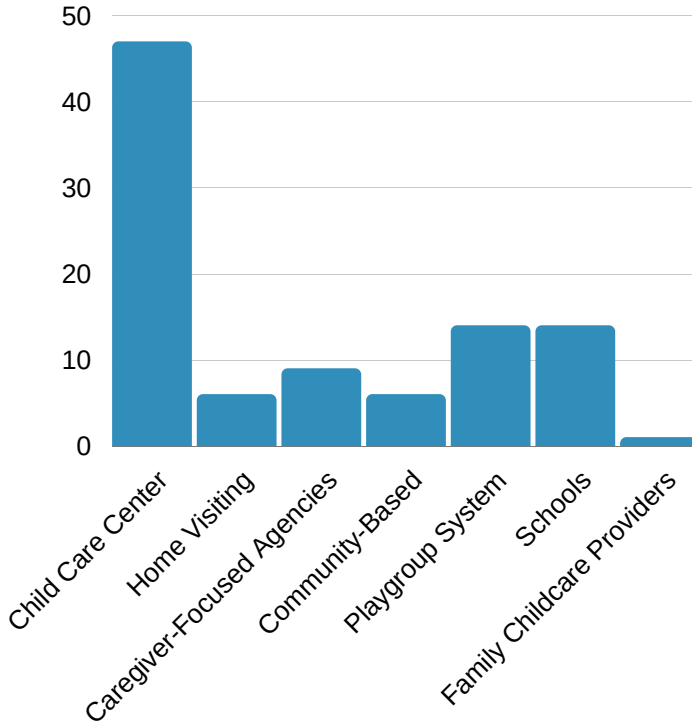
**Jonathan Nesbit** - (through 1/21) Managing Director, State Street Global Exchange

# OUR PARTNERS

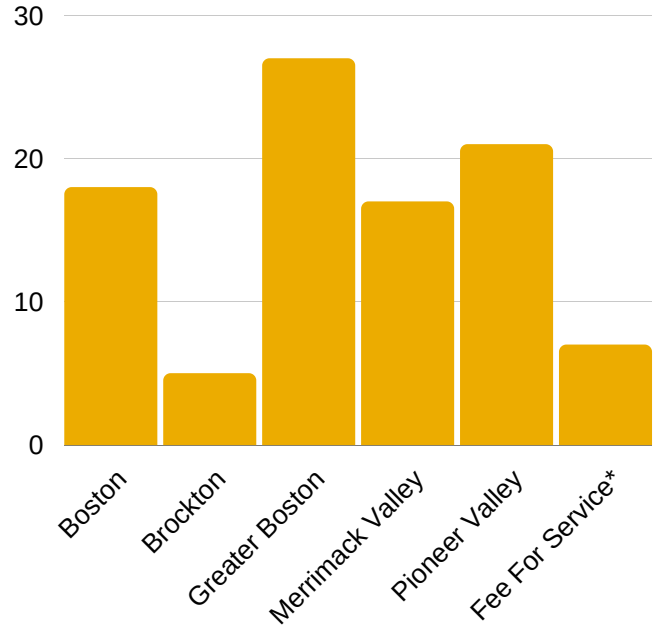
## Convenience in a trusted setting.

We reach families including parents, caregivers, and their children through trusted community partners. In total, we work with 97 partners in under-resourced communities.

Number of Partners by Type



Number of Partners by Region

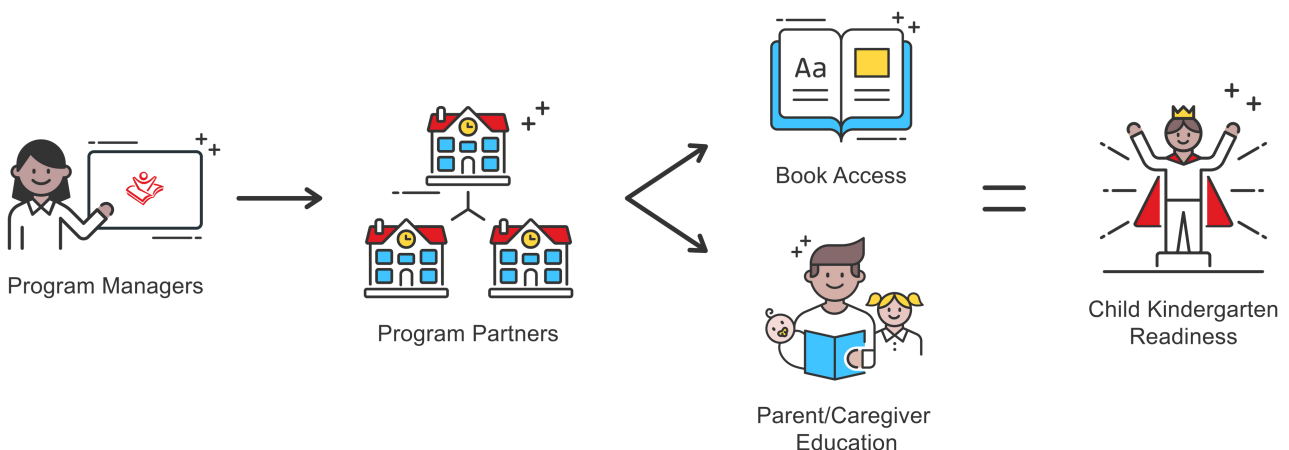


\*Fee for service programs (satellite, workplace, and professional development only) not in our direct service communities

# OUR DIFFERENTIATOR

## More than a book donation program.

We teach families dialogic reading strategies to effectively engage children in interactive reading that supports healthy brain development, and provide age-appropriate and culturally relevant books through our rotating library.



# OUR FAMILIES

We are proud of the diversity of the families we serve.

RAR-MA families speak many languages at home, including Arabic, Cape Verdean-Creole, English, Haitian-Creole, Khmer, Portuguese, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese languages, and others.

Data from the last three years shows that:



**18%** of parents/caregivers have less than a high school education, and **33.7%** have a high school diploma as the highest education level.



**47%** of parents/caregivers report that English is not the primary household language.



**34%** of parents/caregivers report household income of less than \$25,000.\*

\*All data captured through parent/caregiver surveys. Parents that did not respond to these questions were not included in the total.

Books in the RAR-MA rotation are available in 13 different languages:

- Arabic
- Nepali
- Burmese
- Portuguese
- Chinese
- Somali
- English
- Spanish
- French
- Vietnamese
- Japanese
- Braille
- American Sign Language

# COMMUNITY SNAPSHOTS

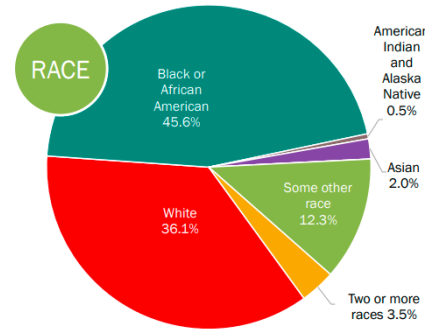
## BROCKTON

14 thousand households with children under 6 (~43%)



### TOP LANGUAGES

- 61% English (only)
- 15% Portuguese or Portuguese Creole
- 11% French Creole
- 8% Spanish or Spanish Creole



11.1%

of Hispanic or Latino descent

Data: American Community Survey 2015 & 2019 5-YR Estimates

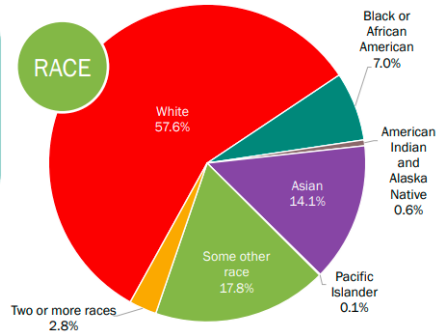
## MERRIMACK VALLEY

30 thousand households with children under 6 (~45%)



### TOP LANGUAGES

- 43% English (only)
- 38% Spanish or Spanish Creole
- 8% Mon-Khmer, Cambodian
- 3% Portuguese or Portuguese Creole



44.2%

of Hispanic or Latino descent

Data: American Community Survey 2015 & 2019 5-YR Estimates

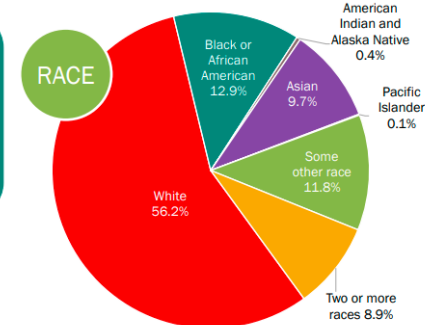
## GREATER BOSTON

48 thousand households with children under 6 (~46%)



### TOP LANGUAGES

- 47% English (only)
- 27% Spanish or Spanish Creole
- 5% Portuguese or Portuguese Creole



35.0%

of Hispanic or Latino descent

Data: American Community Survey 2015 & 2019 5-YR Estimates

## FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS

"STEM are complex topics. Our diverse STEM book titles and family engagement workshops help demystify these subjects into acts of thinking, doing, and measuring - and in doing so spark children's natural curiosity," said Katee Duffy, our Director of Programs. "The youngest learners of today are the critical thinkers of the future. I imagine the next generation of Raising A Reader Massachusetts alumni will be leaders solving climate change and preventing global pandemics. It is a pleasure and a privilege to create opportunities for that path of exploration through books."



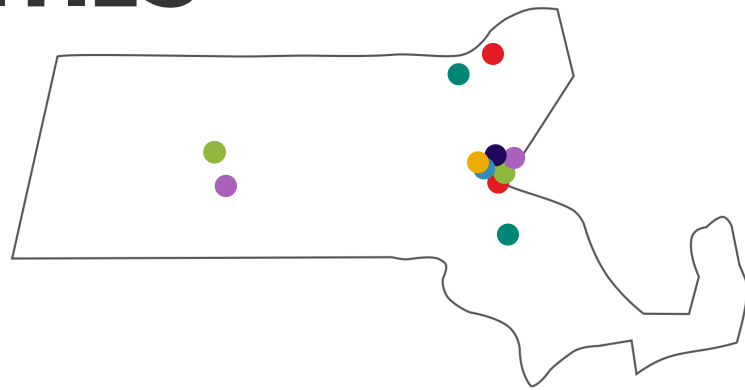
# OUR COMMUNITIES

The state of early literacy.

## 2021 MCAS RESULTS

### 3rd Graders Partially or Not Meeting Expectations in RAR-MA Communities

Statewide	49%
Boston	67%
Brockton	81%
Chelsea	70%
Everett	75%
Holyoke	85%
Lawrence	80%
Lowell	70%
Lynn	76%
Malden	55%
Methuen	63%
Revere	62%
Springfield	69%



**For minority students, this number increases.**

### Results by Subgroup

English Learners (EL) or Former EL	71%
Economically Disadvantaged	70%
Black	68%
Hispanic/Latino	72%
White	37%

## FIGHTING LEARNING LOSS

Discussions of this year's MCAS results highlight dropping scores and inequities exacerbated by the pandemic. "One of the starkest achievement gaps in Massachusetts was seen on the Grade 3 English/Language Arts exam, on which 32 percent of Black students met or exceeded grade level expectations, down 6 percentage points from 2019. Only 28 percent of Latino students scored that high, down 10 points from two years ago," says James Vaznis, *Boston Globe* columnist.\* The Raising A Reader MA program provides support for families to fill in those gaps during these critical early years.

\*[https://www.bostonglobe.com/2021/09/21/metro/mcas-scores-plummet-during-pandemic/?p1=Article\\_Inline\\_Text\\_Link](https://www.bostonglobe.com/2021/09/21/metro/mcas-scores-plummet-during-pandemic/?p1=Article_Inline_Text_Link)



## OUR COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS

**Advocates within the communities we serve.**

Community Ambassadors volunteer within their own communities, connecting prospective participants with our program and offering a personal connection within the community. Our Community Ambassadors are a valuable resource, engaging parents with providers to build relationships and make a difference.

As champions of our program, the Community Ambassadors participated in the virtual workshop pilot, made videos/storytimes to support our COVID-19 response, and provided valuable feedback for the family resource page.

# CORONAVIRUS' IMPACT

## Innovative solutions to a major crisis.

Moving into a second year of working within the context of the coronavirus pandemic, RAR-MA is proud of the innovations of the last year.

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, the resilience of families and Community Ambassadors, and the innovative thinking of our program team, we've been able to rebuild our signature Red Bag Book program—our rotating library of culturally diverse books and resources; hold virtual workshops to meet with families from the comfort of their homes; offer onsite family engagement workshops in safe settings; create a series of story time videos with guest readers; and incorporate elements of science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM) and social emotional learning (SEL) into our curriculum.



Expanded  
Texting  
Initiatives

Robust  
Multilingual  
Video  
Resources

New Webpage  
Featuring Tools  
For Families

Virtual  
Workshops

Enhanced  
Community  
Ambassador  
Outreach To  
Families

Shared  
Resources  
Concerning  
Racial Justice



## Red Book Bag Rotation Program Update

In March 2020, our signature Red Book Bag Rotation program was suspended to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus. We are happy to announce that our program was reimplemented this year while following the guidance of health and safety experts to ensure families' safety.

# OUR DONORS

# FINANCIALS

Fiscal Year 2021 - 7/1/20 to 6/30/21

## Over \$100K

Boston Children's Collaboration for Community Health

## \$20K - 60K

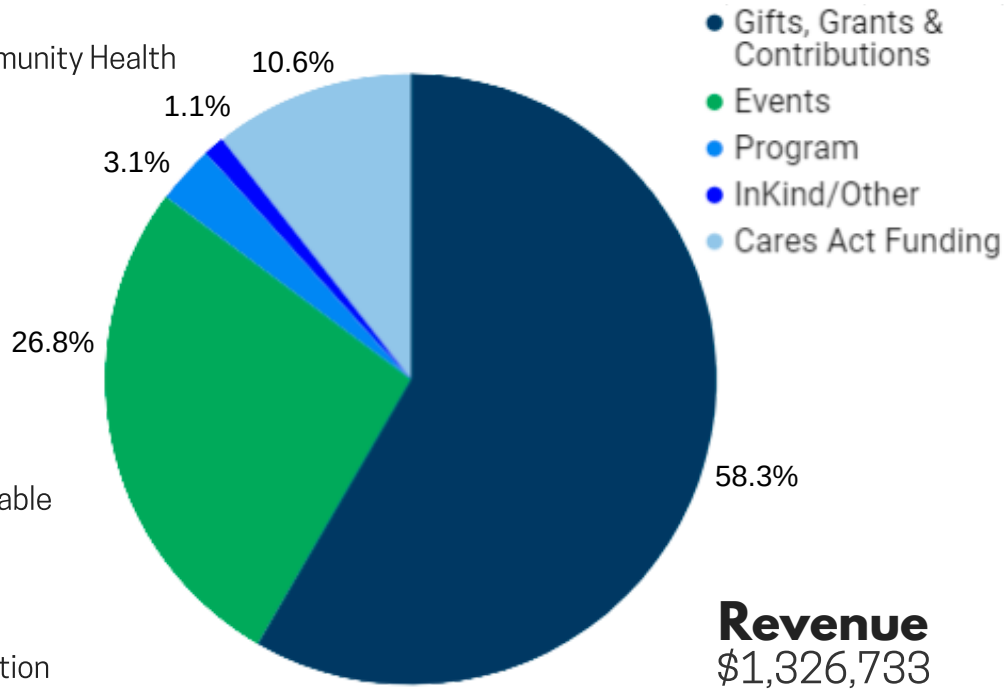
Amelia Peabody Foundation  
 Amundi US  
 Bancel Foundation  
 Cabot Family Charitable Trust  
 Camille & David Carlstrom  
 Fordham Street Foundation  
 Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation  
 John & Susan Simon  
 Lawrence J. and Anne Rubenstein Charitable Foundation  
 Liberty Mutual Foundation  
 Nan Haar Legacy Foundation  
 Nathaniel and Elizabeth Stevens Foundation  
 Perpetual Trust for Charitable Giving, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee  
 PNC Foundation  
 Reeder Foundation  
 Stavros Niarchos Foundation  
 TJX Companies

## \$10K - 19.9K

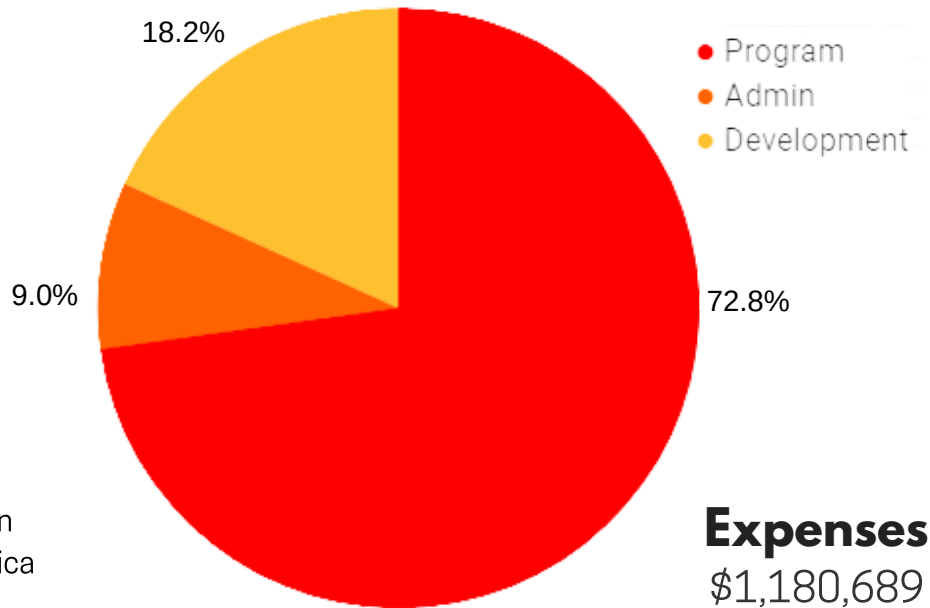
A.C. Ratshesky Foundation (GMA)  
 Adelaide Breed Bayrd Foundation  
 Bill Barke  
 DCU for Kids  
 Deloitte  
 Ellen Roy Herzfelder  
 Francine Rosenzweig & David Davidson  
 Gregg & Robin Dooling  
 Hamilton Company Charitable Foundation  
 Harold Brooks Foundation, Bank of America  
 Jessica & Josh Lutzker  
 John & Kelly Carroll  
 Jonathan & Lisa Slawsby  
 Kate Enroth & Dana Schmaltz  
 Rodman Ride for Kids  
 TD Charitable Foundation  
 Vertex Foundation  
 Vertex Pharmaceuticals Inc.

## \$5K - 9.9K

Aria Glasgow  
 Brian Bell & Rakel Meir  
 Dan & Sue Farrell



**Revenue**  
\$1,326,733



**Expenses**  
\$1,180,689

Proud partner of



United Way of  
Greater Plymouth County





Eastern Bank Foundation  
Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation (EHTF)  
EY  
FGS Printing  
Foundation M  
HarborOne Foundation  
Heather Murray & Rob Pawliuk  
Janet Porter & Jim O'Sullivan  
John Cassell & Karin Landry  
John Hancock  
Katherine Chapman Stemberg  
Kelly & Frank Panayotou  
Lovett-Woodsum Foundation  
Progress Partners  
Richard K. and Nancy L. Donahue  
Charitable Foundation  
Susan & Julian Houston  
Thomas Anthony Pappas Charitable  
Foundation  
William & Mari-Ann Hogan

### **\$2.5K - 4.9K**

Barry Hynes  
Carol McKean  
CBIZ, Inc.  
CHT Foundation  
Daryl & Chris Andrews  
Gina Dineen  
Greater Lowell Community Foundation  
Heather Dickinson  
Jeanne Blasberg  
Jonathan Nesbit & Gillian Meek  
Justin & Lydia Hayward  
Lisa Jones  
Michael & Margaret McDonald  
Michael Corrado  
Paul and Edith Babson Foundation (GMA)  
People's United Community Foundation of  
Eastern Massachusetts  
Robert & Geary Vail  
State Street  
Stefan Spazek  
Stephanie & Brian Spector  
TD Bank, N.A.  
The Charlotte Home  
United Way of Greater Plymouth County  
Willard G. McGraw  
Woodbury Andrews

### **\$1K - 2.4K**

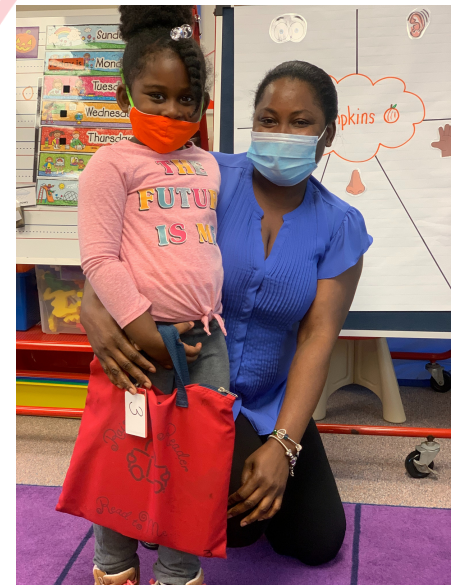
Alexandra White  
Anthony Koenig  
Aon Service Corp.  
Ben & Tonya Mezrich  
Birch Hill Investment Advisors  
Boston Estate Planning Council  
Catherine Donaher  
Christopher Perry  
Cynthia & Brian Casey  
Dale Dowdie  
Donna DiFillippo & Michael Ruttner  
Elizabeth Fisher  
Emily Roman  
Gary Blank  
Geoffrey Smith  
Horace A. Moses Charitable Trust  
Heather Trafton  
Jason & Heather Lang  
Jeannette Hsu  
Jeff Davis  
Jessica Southam  
Jill Quinby  
Jim & Ann Marie Ross  
Joe Baerlein  
John Carey  
John Isley  
Kathy Sherbrooke  
Kelly Newman  
Kerry Nelson & Alan Milinazzo  
Laura Palmer  
Louise Elving  
Mary Dooling  
Mass Center for the Book  
Mass Mutual Life Insurance Co  
Mercedes Dahar  
Nick MacShane  
Nina Hughes  
Shelley Wilson  
Stefania Mallett  
Steve Grossman  
Sylvia Hammond  
Theresa Beach  
Thomas Shapiro

### **In-Kind Consulting**

Jay Delaune - (Salesforce)  
Mike Hamilton (RAR-MA Website)  
Zachary Jacobson (Data Entry)

### **DWA Gala In-Kind (\$500+)**

Boston Beer Company  
Boston Red Sox  
Cabot Cheese  
Camille Carlstrom  
Capital Grille (Chestnut Hill)  
Carol McKean Events  
Chatham Thread Works  
Core Cardio Fitness  
Dan Shaughnessy  
Daniela Corte  
DePrisco Diamonds  
Fran Rosenzweig  
Green Mountain Inn  
GrubStreet  
Hank Phillippi Ryan  
Heather & Jason Lang  
Jeanne Blasberg  
Jessica Lutzker  
Karen Mitchell  
Kathy Sherbrooke  
Shreve, Crump & Low  
Steve Smith  
The Newbury Boston  
The Urban Grape  
Total Wine  
XV Beacon  
1-800 Got Junk



## *Thank You!*

# DINNER WITH AN AUTHOR

Our signature fundraising gala for 2021, Dinner with an Author, continued as a virtual event on June 21, 2021. The event provided the opportunity for our supporters to interact with our authors from the comfort of their homes. We are so grateful for the authors, sponsors, supporters and RAR-MA staff who made this wonderful event possible!

**"Stephen King said 'books are a uniquely portable magic'. So that would make the good people at Raising A Reader MA, wondrous magicians. They empower underserved children to free their minds through literacy, and because of that I proudly participated in their virtual Dinner. And to see so many hearts rally to the RAR-MA cause was nothing short of magical."** -Desmond Hall, Author of Your Corner Dark

## Featuring



**Ace Atkins**

New York Times  
Best-Selling Author



**Alison Wright**

Award-Winning National  
Geographic Photographer  
and Author



**Jessica Meir, PhD**

NASA Astronaut

## Dinner with an Author Featured Authors & Guest Speakers

Dr. Jessica Meir  
Ace Atkins  
Alison Wright  
Dan Shaughnessy  
Dariel Suarez  
Deborah Royce  
Desmond Hall  
Hadley Douglas  
Michelle Wax  
William Martin

Hank Phillippi Ryan  
Jeanne Blasberg  
Jennifer De Leon  
Jerald Walker  
Katherine Sherbrooke  
Marjan Kamali  
Melissa Bernstein  
Nikki Giovanni  
TJ Douglas

# EMERGING LEADERS

*The Emerging Leaders are an associate board of young professionals who regularly take action to raise awareness and funds for our core mission and develop into future leaders.*

- Co-chair (CY 2019-21): Emily Leinbach - Keystone Strategy
- Co-chair (CY 2021-22): Sarah Canavan - Vynamic
- Chapman Leedy - Federal Reserve Bank of Boston
- Manusha Chereddy - Free Solo Ventures
- Amanda DiMatteo - Peabody & Arnold LLP
- Maeve Foley - Raines International
- Caroline Greiwe - iBoss
- Parker Greiwe - Stryker
- Bill Hall - Nightshift Brewery
- Arwa Jivani - MGH
- Serene Liu - IBM Resilient
- Annie O'Connell - MassEcon
- Brendan Rice - Magellan Jets
- Ian White - Workbar
- Joshua Zeff - CarGurus
- Bridget Kenneally - Deloitte
- George Xu - CareOne Management LLC
- Noaem Shurin - Raines International
- Mikaela Alioto - The Bowdoin Group
- Rowan Steere - Deloitte



*Opening Doors  
by Opening Books*



Raising A Reader MA is a 501(c)(3) organization with EIN #80-0297898.

Headquartered in the historic Old Corner Bookstore on the Freedom Trail  
3 School Street, 3rd Floor  
Boston, MA 02108

(617) 292-B00K | [www.raisingareaderma.org](http://www.raisingareaderma.org)