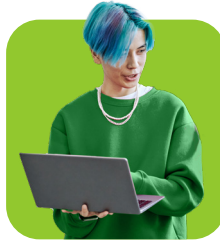
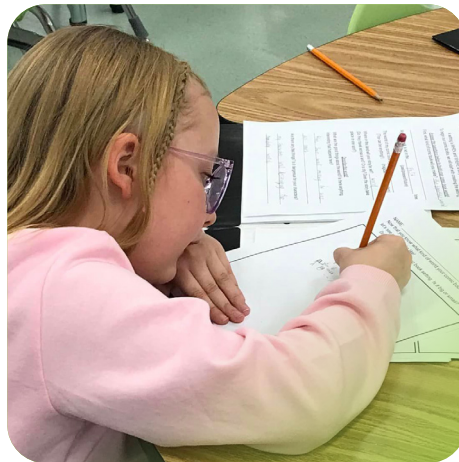




EST. 1899  
United for Literacy  
Littératie Ensemble

# Advancing Literacy for ALL



Annual Report 2024





EST. 1899

## United for Literacy Littératie Ensemble

Formerly Frontier College, United for Literacy is the national registered charity dedicated to improving the lives of children, youth, and adults through literacy. With over a century of frontline experience we know just how profoundly literacy changes everything ... for people and communities. No other skill shapes the trajectory of a person's life more than the ability to read and write. Supported by volunteers, we reach out to people wherever they are and respond to their learning needs. Our services are free for learners because we believe literacy is a human right.

### Unite with us.

35 Jackes Avenue Toronto, Ontario Canada  
M4T 1E2 1-800-555-6523  
information@unitedforliteracy.ca  
unitedforliteracy.ca



Charitable Registration Number 10740 8445 RR0001



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## Message from the president

# Let's write a brighter future for all

Sometimes I'm asked why United for Literacy still exists after 125 years. Shouldn't the literacy problem be solved by now?

The reasons why someone may not read or write as well as they would like are varied and complex. For some, books are not available in their communities. For others, working to support their family leaves little time for learning. Every person has a story.

As we envision the future, the staff and volunteers at United for Literacy are ready to provide literacy and learning support for all who seek it. But improving literacy in Canada is not an individual achievement: It is a collective responsibility.

Our founder, Alfred Fitzpatrick, said that humanity is "entitled to food, clothing, and shelter, medical and surgical service, a home with running hot water and cold water and bath." This quote comes from the turn of the *last* century. People *still* struggle to find adequate housing, food, and medical care.

Strong literacy skills may not erase these problems, but they make it easier to navigate systems, find meaningful employment, and take care of physical and mental health.

This is why United for Literacy works with other organizations and partners to engage stakeholders, including those focused on youth, poverty reduction, employment, and immigration. Together, we are building an ecosystem where anyone who wants to learn can find support. It is our shared hope to dismantle barriers to literacy and create a just society. Last year, 41,381 people were engaged in our programs with the support of 1,600 volunteers in 183 communities.

As you read these pages, I invite you to share our pride in what we've achieved and excitement at what we're working on. I ask that you join us in making every place a learning place. The future is ours to write.



*Melanie Valcin*

President & CEO

## STRENGTH IN NUMBERS



**41,381 individuals**

in 183 communities across Canada participated in United for Literacy Programs between April 2023 and March 2024



**68,663 free new books**

were distributed to children and families

## Message from the chair

# Building relationships to shape the future

When I think about the remarkable things that United for Literacy has achieved over the last year, I'm continuously impressed by the commitment of everyone involved in the movement to empower people through literacy. I want to express my gratitude to you for being part of the community that knows that literacy changes lives.

On behalf of the board of directors, I want to acknowledge the foundation of this organization: the strong collaborations we've built over 125 years. Our relationships with our volunteer tutors and partners are crucial to our programs' success. Knowing that learners across Canada trust us to support their learning fills me with pride. The strength of our past and the lessons we learn today allow us to dream of a future where more people achieve their learning and life goals. I hope you will join me and United for Literacy's board of directors, staff, volunteers, learners, and partners as we look at this year's successes and envision the future of literacy in Canada.

In addition to chairing the board of directors, I also volunteer as a tutor. It's such a joy when my learner and I discover a new book series that we can explore together. I bring the lessons and first-hand experiences of this role when looking at the bigger picture of the organization with the board. It's rewarding to see the impact of my work on a young life.

In the upcoming year, United for Literacy will begin the process of creating a new strategic plan. We will work together to continue finding innovative ways to meet the needs of learners in the modern world while keeping our foundational programs, including tutoring, workplace and basic skills, and delivering free, new books to children across the country.

Literacy changes everything. As a friend of United for Literacy, you are driving that change.



*Anne Parker*

*Board Chair*

## United for Literacy

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*Initially created through an endowment from the federal government, the United for Literacy Foundation oversees the permanent endowment and the annual distribution of funds to help support United for Literacy's operations.*

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Former COO, Managing  
Director, General Counsel and  
Secretary  
to the Board of Directors  
Greystone Managed  
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### ★ 2023 COMPANION AWARD RECIPIENT

*This is the highest recognition the organization confers upon an individual.*

## **Bruce Munro Wright**

Bruce's work with the organization includes nine years on the board of directors, for which he served as chair for two years. Since leaving the board, Bruce has continued to champion the cause of literacy and dedicated himself to finding new supporters in his hometown of Vancouver, throughout British Columbia, and across the country.



**"I am very touched and appreciative,"  
Bruce said upon  
learning of this award.  
"I am beyond delighted,  
and I am so proud of  
what you are all doing!"**

# Advancing Literacy Through Technology

Canada is a vast country filled with people with varied learning needs. Technology helps bring us together.



While in-person tutoring is at the core of United for Literacy's programs, we are devoted to innovation and utilizing technology to support literacy. Online platforms and other digital resources connect tutors with people who face barriers to in-person learning. United for Literacy runs online programs for people of all ages, including computer support in children's classrooms and digital literacy classes for adults.

Accessing online learning does present challenges. It requires learners to have access to hardware (e.g., computer, smartphone) and reliable internet access. It also requires basic digital literacy, including comfort using email and the internet. As discussed at the National Forum on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Literacy, Canada faces a digital divide: the inequality between people who have high levels of digital literacy and those who do not. As CSC ramps up digital

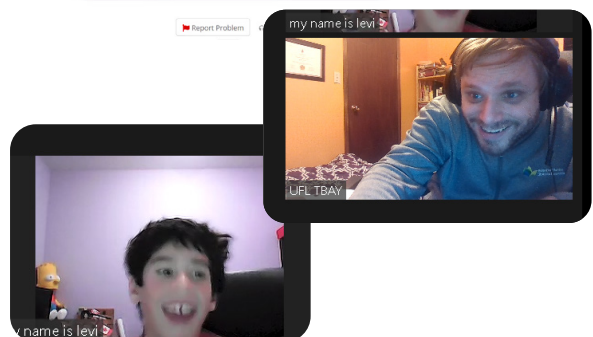
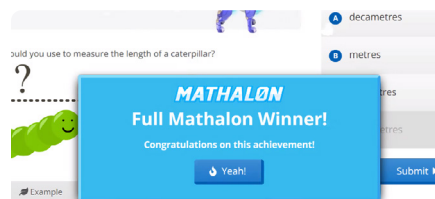
learning, United for Literacy will collaborate with them to make more modules available to federal facilities.

Our partnership with Correctional Services Canada (CSC) is one example of high-impact digital learning. Developed in consultation with the learners, United for Literacy produced Digital Learning Courses for incarcerated individuals. Content is designed to reinforce resilience and build literacy and practical skills for successful reintegration. These programs help to reduce recidivism by building leadership and coaching skills. According to CSC, there has been a high completion rate for our courses. As CSC ramps up digital learning, more modules will be available to federal facilities.

United for Literacy is dedicated to finding new ways to engage with learners so that no one is left behind.

**"It is not just the students who benefit from the technology. I only get to do what I love because of technology. I was born with cerebral palsy and tire easily. I was unable to pursue a teaching degree due to significant pain from the physical demands of classroom teaching. At another time, I may have had to give up my dream job because of my body. Thanks to technology, I do teach, I do impact children with positive learning experiences, and I am a teacher."**

– Digital Literacy Facilitator Alexander Jackson



# Diverse Programming for Distinct Populations

Thanks to federal funding, more adults were able to access high-demand literacy support.



In-person literacy support is central to United for Literacy's adult programs. However, it is challenging meeting requests in regions where:

→ Our in-person programs are at full capacity.

→ There are no in-person programs currently running.

Thanks to funding received from the Government of Canada's Skills for Success program and largely due to new online programming, we were able to increase (to 3,274 from 2,061 the previous year) our outreach to adult learners. These programs allow adult learners, including newcomers and people who want to improve their skills or augment their income, to access one-to-one tutoring at a convenient time and location. The creation of the National Online Learning Program applies regional resources to support learners online. It's an exciting new step with a high growth potential.

Another impactful program model is conversation groups, which create a welcoming environment for newcomers to learn and practice speaking, reading, and writing skills. Maryam, an adult learner originally from Algeria, has been working with volunteer Melanie since 2022.

"Melanie has been incredibly supportive and encouraging. She doesn't just help us improve our conversation skills, she also encourages us to read ... she gives each of us a chance to express ourselves by practicing a language in a supportive environment before going out

into the world. We cover different topics that are helpful in our daily life, such as visiting the doctor, going to the bank, grocery shopping, applying for jobs, and talking to our children's teachers. Melanie is helping us to navigate our new life in Canada. Now I can confidently express myself without the need for someone to translate for me. Because of Melanie's efforts, I was able to enter the Vancouver Community College."

Maryam's experience shows the real-life positive impact of United for Literacy's programs on adult learners' lives. These programs succeed because of our dedicated instructors, volunteers, and learners who are driven to reach their goals.

## ☆ 2023 JOYCE MATTHEWS AWARD RECIPIENT

*The Joyce Matthews Award is United for Literacy's annual volunteer award named for former United for Literacy Board Member, donor, friend, and Reading Circle volunteer Joyce Matthews, who passed away in 2018.*

### Carey Austin

Carey Austin, a volunteer with the Families Learning Together program in Scarborough, Ontario, has worked with learners to achieve Canadian Citizenship; pursue higher education; and enter the workforce. These milestones speak to Carey's dedication, positivity, and creative approach to learning.





# Highlights

## Manitoba

Everyone has the potential to make a difference as a Reading Buddy. Players from the Selkirk Steelers, a Manitoba Junior A Hockey team, participated in our annual “I Love to Read in PJ’s Night” at in the local library. By sharing their love for reading with young learners, these role models are inspiring a new generation of readers.



Manitoba Junior A Hockey team members enjoying books with young readers



## Quebec

“Lecture Pour Tous” is a series of reading workshops led by local facilitators in public housing communities. All participants are newcomers to Canada seeking to improve their literacy skills. This kind of program provides an opportunity to gain knowledge that is key to fully engage in a new country.

Reading group “Lecture Pour Tous”

## Northwest Territories

Every partnership matters. Our team worked with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation Career Centre to provide literacy support to individuals working on their Class 7 Driver’s License in Tuktoyaktuk. Obtaining a new license can lead to many opportunities and improve life outcomes including increased job options.

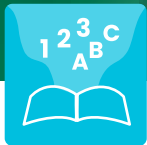
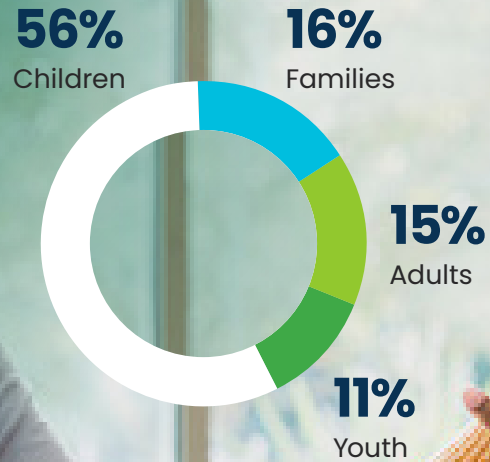


A proud group of learners who have successfully earned their Class 7 Driver’s License

# Our Impact

## A break-down of our programs

### The programs we offer by age group:



### 42% of our programs are tutoring.

Student Success Programs for Children and Youth would include: • Direct One-to-One or Small Group Instruction and Support • After-school Literacy and Numeracy Programs • Reading Circles.

### 79%

of parents observed that their child's **math skills improved** after participating in the United for Literacy program.

### 92%

of teachers and educators observed an **improvement in reading**.

Life Success Programs for Adults include: community- and classroom-based programs; and workforce development.

### 93%

of learners feel that they have **gained skills they need** to achieve their specific life goals.

### 97%

of tutors noticed that adult learners show **increased confidence** after attending a program at United for Literacy.



### 12% of our programs are Summer Literacy Camps in partnership with Indigenous communities.

### 96%

of campers felt that attending camp **maintained or raised their interest in reading and learning**.

### 99%

of parents said camps were **valuable to their community**.



### 46% of our programs involve larger groups.

Training and Workshops • Presentations and Speeches • Awareness Events • Family Learning Activities • Reading Tents • Conferences

We hosted **95** literacy workshops and conferences attended by **4,391** parents, teachers, literacy practitioners, social service workers, and community members.

# Our Impact

Thanks to our partnerships we were able to distribute:



**68,663**

free, new books to children and families



**6,507**

activity kits to children, youth, and families to support at-home learning



Held in Toronto on March 6, 2024, the 20th Annual **Scrabble for Literacy** tournament added new games, such as Scattergories and trivia. The event brought together dozens of individuals who raised \$108,000 to support United for Literacy.

## What Success Looks Like

The following shows the skill improvement results for our 2023–2024 programs, separated by age group.

### Children and Youth



**92%**  
Reading



**90%**  
Writing



**86%**  
Mathematics

### Adults and Out-of-school Youth



**98%**  
Reading



**94%**  
Writing



**93%**  
Document Use



**93%**  
Technology Use

## From Summer Camp to Year-Round Engagement:

# The Future of Children's Programs

A goal in the evolution of the Summer Literacy Camps program is to increase the number of programs serving children in Indigenous communities year-round. In the summer of 2023, 3,679 children took part in literacy camps in 81 Indigenous communities, with 90% of parents saying their child(ren) liked reading more after camp. Keeping kids learning in a fun and engaging environment during the school year will supplement their formal education and continue to strengthen United for Literacy's connection with our partner communities, enabling us to co-create responses to a broader range of literacy needs in a culturally meaningful way.

As Community Coordinator Emma Warwick says, "It feels great when children ... talk about how much they enjoy our activities. We've heard from community staff that we work alongside how certain children are showing more interest in reading."



One example of our first outreach to build these year-long initiatives include a Learning-to-Read program for pre-primary students at Chief Harold Sapper Memorial Elementary School in Sitansisk, New Brunswick. Our program facilitator uses puzzles, games, and arts and crafts to focus on literacy basics such as phonemes (the building blocks of speech sound) and correctly sounding out words.

Adding year-round activities in more communities where we currently offer summer camps will result in more kids gaining a love of reading and learning at an early age and getting more support for school success.

### ★ THE FITZPATRICK AWARD

*The Fitzpatrick Award honours an organization that shows leadership, commitment, and/or financial support to the cause of literacy.*

### The McCain Foundation

The McCain Foundation is the 2023 Fitzpatrick Award recipient for their work and contributions to children's programs in New Brunswick for almost 10 years.

# THE MCCAIN FOUNDATION

**"The McCain Foundation has been a longtime supporter of United for Literacy with a deep appreciation for their mission to ensure all children are supported in their learning and development."**

– Linda McCain, Chair of the McCain Foundation

## Writing Our Collective Future:

# Collaborations and Partnerships

In the next year, United for Literacy will create a new strategic plan to map our next steps forward. We know that the future will be stronger and brighter when everyone reaches their literacy goals. To succeed, we must work together: volunteers, learners, staff, donors, governments, community partners, other organizations, and everyone else who believes that knowledge is power.

Literacy may not seem like the most vital issue facing people in Canada. Homelessness, hunger, unemployment, and involvement in the criminal justice system all seem more urgent. But these issues are interconnected, and having strong literacy skills can reduce their negative impact. This is why the partnerships we create with a wide range of change-makers are key.

### Over the years, we have collaborated with:



**Imagine Canada** to contribute to the definition and promotion of a policy agenda for the charitable sector. We did similar work with the National Alliance for Children and Youth to determine best practices for contributing to young people's well-being.



**Public Safety and Correctional Services Canada** to strengthen initiatives to reduce recidivism in the justice system, both as a member of the National Associations Active in Criminal Justice (NAACJ) and through education programming in correctional institutions.



**Volunteer Canada** and the McCall MacBain Foundation to explore innovative ways to inspire youth volunteerism, including offering new ways for young people to get involved.



These examples illustrate some of our many collaborations and exemplify how an integrated approach creates lasting change. We constantly seek new ways to connect and build a culture of knowledge and curiosity across Canada. If you are engaged with an organization that works with children, youth, adults, or families toward a more equitable future, we invite you to join us. If you are an individual interested in supporting learners, please reach out. Thank you for helping us transform every place into a learning place!

## Making a Difference

# Literacy in Numbers

We collaborated with

# 503

community partners to deliver quality literacy support in their neighbourhoods. Our partner organizations contributed space, staff time, snacks, and supplies.



Last year, our work was possible thanks to the

# 1,604

volunteers who gave

# 33,900

## hours

of service to United for Literacy.



We hosted 

# 95

 literacy workshops and conferences.

These workshops and conferences were attended by

# 4,391

parents, teachers, literacy practitioners, social service workers, and community members.



2023-2024

# Our Supporters

## (\$500,000+)

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## (\$100,000 to \$499,000)

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2023–2024

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2023–2024

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2023–2024

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Amy Copland	Tetyana Krukovets	Denise Reaume	
Peter Curzon	Tannys Laughren	Virginia Reimer	
	Patricia Lawler	Meredith Roberts	

# Financials

Full audited statements and notes are available on the [www.unitedforliteracy.ca](http://www.unitedforliteracy.ca).

## Summarized Statement of Operations

	2024	2023
Governments	7,630,286	7,556,867
Fundraising	4,393,011	3,080,612
United for Literacy Foundation Grants	1,089,422	1,288,153
United for Literacy Books	119,030	129,665
Fee for Service & Other Income	356,471	341,838
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>13,588,220</b>	<b>12,397,135</b>
Salaries and Benefits	9,968,747	8,902,037
Program Materials & Delivery Costs	1,017,799	1,078,711
Operational Costs	1,500,002	1,233,827
Travel	507,223	467,867
Fundraising and Communications	342,284	490,986
Cost of Sales	81,178	72,627
Amorization & Interest on Capital Leases	170,987	151,080
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>13,588,220</b>	<b>12,397,135</b>
<b>Excess of Revenue over Expenses</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>

## Summarized Statement of Financial Position

	2024	2023
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash & Cash Equivalents	6,864,858	8,305,315
Accounts Receivable	1,182,354	847,731
Inventory & Prepaid Expenses	358,823	300,259
Capital Assets	719,416	619,131
	<b>9,125,451</b>	<b>10,072,436</b>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
Accounts Payable & Accrued Liabilities	1,026,699	923,782
Deferred Contributions	7,284,077	8,316,051
Other Obligations	30,391	48,319
Net Assets	784,284	784,284
	<b>9,125,451</b>	<b>10,072,436</b>

## Revenue Sources



Fundraising	32%
Provincial and Territorial Governments	28%
Federal Government	17%
Indigenous Governments	11%
United for Literacy Foundation Grants	8%
Fee for Service & Other Income	3%
United for Literacy Books	1%

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We are proud to be the literacy partner of choice across Canada since 1899.



EST. 1899

**United for Literacy**  
**Littératie Ensemble**

## Literacy is...

### ...transformational

It changes lives, families, and communities. It feeds growth, unleashes potential, and empowers people with the capability and confidence they need to realize their goals.

### ...urgent

Everyone can learn. But not everyone can access the help they need. Canada's literacy divide widens daily because so many people and communities lack adequate literacy support.

### ...dynamic

Society demands increasingly sophisticated understanding of written language to fully participate in daily life.

### ...vital

to Canada's long-term success. Solving systemic literacy challenges is key to advancing social equity and prosperity across our country.

### ...achievable

Bridging the literacy gap is something we can do. It's our most effective, achievable tool for change. Results are demonstrable at personal and systemic levels.

## Literacy changes everything.



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