



Learning Lab

# Annual Report 2017



## From the Director



It's my pleasure to present our Annual Report. Learning Lab's individualized literacy education has changed so many lives. Our unique approach is powered by more than 200 volunteer tutors, professional educators, and progressive technology. Our programs create academic progress and improve students' confidence levels. This report highlights our student demographics, progress indicators, and a few stories of the lives literacy has changed.

The 2016-17 school year saw our impact reach new heights with a record number of students enrolled. New classes were added at the Cole and Ustick Library, and our community outreach efforts introduced literacy lessons to those isolated due to poverty, lack of transportation, or access to adult basic education and family literacy. For many, the inter-generational cycle of illiteracy and poverty has been broken, a permanent, positive change.

The children who attended our family literacy programs no longer have to start school behind their classmates. They are ready to read and know learning can be fun. Parents have overcome their own educational hurdles and now envision their children's future in college. Adults, who moved from one low skill job to another, now have steady work or increased their families' financial stability with promotions, and jobs with benefits. Some are now homeowners. The American Dream is alive and well because of your support.

Whether your involvement was years ago or is active today, thank you for your role in making this success possible. Your involvement made a difference that will not be forgotten.

*Ann Heilman*  
*Executive Director*

**LEARNING LAB STUDENTS** come from 43 countries and range in age from 2 months to 85 years old. Though our students represent many different cultures, their similarities far outweigh their differences. They come to learn and carve a path toward a more prosperous future for themselves and their families. This year, in addition to their academic progress, 5 students became U.S. citizens and 4 earned GEDs.



**On the cover:** Family Literacy students Mirian and Brandon improve their literacy skills, each in their own classrooms first, and then together. Families learn fun ways they can continue their educational activities, while also increasing parents' confidence as their child's first and most important teacher.

# 443 Students Enrolled

317

## ADULTS

235 Female  
82 Male

- 6 Reading, writing and pre-GED studies
- 32 GED prep
- 269 English language

- 11 Passed 20 GED subject area tests
- 4 Earned GED certificates
- 5 Achieved U.S. Citizenship

- 67% Improved reading levels
- 65% Enhanced writing skills
- 78% Expanded English language and communications

88

## FAMILIES

- 62% Not working at time of enrollment
- 90% Very low income
- 6% Low income
- 2% Medium income
- 2% Higher than medium income (paying full tuition)

126

## CHILDREN

- 55 Girls
- 71 Boys
- 40 Infants/Toddlers
- 80 Preschoolers
- 9 Preschoolers "graduated" ready for Kindergarten

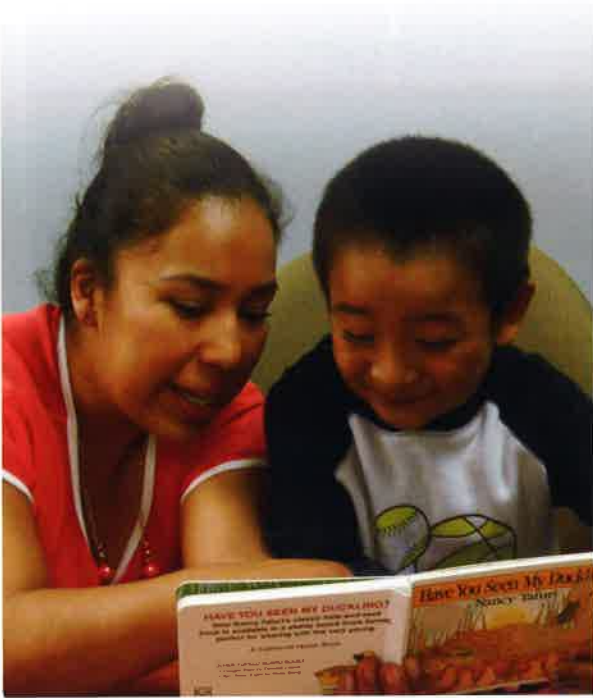


"True joy comes when you inspire, encourage, and guide someone else on a path that benefits him or her."

- Zig Ziglar

**Right:** GED graduate, Keith Williams accepts his Certificate of Success from his teacher, Renee Johns during our Spring GED celebration.

## Preschoolers' Progress



*Above:* The joyful face of this happy preschooler reflects a new love of reading as he and his mom share a book together.

Our **Family Literacy Program** includes Early Childhood Education. Parental involvement is emphasized. 126 children participated in high quality literacy activities developed and delivered by professional educators. Progress indicators below reflect children present for assessments at the start and end of the school year, and, initially had shown deficits or need for growth in these areas.

### Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers

- 93% Increased language & emergent literacy abilities
- 88% Developed cognitively
- 64% Increased social skills
- 64% Increased emotional/self-regulatory behaviors
- 69% Increased fine/gross motor skills
- 95% Preschoolers improved numeric literacy

## New Outreach Programs



*Above:* Early Childhood Assistant, Stephanie Booe, captivates one of our youngest Outreach participants.

*Right:* Volunteer tutor, Sourette Chambreau, works with a dedicated student to improve her literacy skills.

This year, Learning Lab's family literacy team reached beyond the borders of our traditional classrooms and into the neighborhoods of those who need us most – **new Americans**. Separated from family and friends, immersed in a new culture and language, many have had little opportunity to engage, to assimilate, to learn. Partnering with NeighborWorks Boise, Congregation Ahavath Beth Israel, the LDS church and the Library! at Collister, Learning Lab teachers and tutors connected with 30 isolated families in literacy activities designed to benefit every family member, from infant to grandmother!



# Our Students' Stories

*Loveen Angel & Sanchu* Quite often, newly arrived refugees live lives of isolation. As new Americans, reliant on public transportation, they may be overwhelmed learning how to communicate and fit into this new home and culture. This year, Learning Lab began reaching out to Boise's newer residents - where they live. Packing up tables, classroom supplies and snacks, our family literacy team has gone mobile. In these neighborhood classes, preschool children are learning and practicing the important literacy skills they will need in kindergarten. Parents practice their English skills and discover that they are their child's most influential teacher, regardless of language abilities. As part of each class, parents and children come together to give parents the opportunity to meaningfully engage in their child's literacy development. Here, Anjal gets "alphabet coaching" from his mom, Sanchu, and volunteer tutor, Loreen. Moments like these, bring families closer, give parents the confidence to engage in education, and help our community grow stronger.



*Preschool Educator, Katie, with Arine & Samuel* The first thing you notice about Arine is her smile. The second, her laugh. Her humor and good nature light up her classroom. The youngest of her 7 children, Samuel, attends our family literacy program with her. Arine's desire is to instill in him the love of learning that she had while growing up in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Her father, a pastor, spent his life serving others. From his model, Arine's desire to be a doctor was born. However, once married at 16, she could no longer afford an education. Eventually, the relentless and violent civil war, during which two of her very young children were killed, forced the family to seek refuge in a camp in Burundi.

When Arine, her husband, and their surviving children arrived in Boise, she wept tears of joy. They were safe. Thanks to supportive community volunteers, they settled into their new lives. For Arine, this meant learning English and finally continuing her education. Though being a doctor may be a long-shot, she still sees a future in health care and helping others. She attends Learning Lab to help make this dream a reality. And her smile, her laughter - her resilience - make us all want her dream to come true.

*Eric & Ezra* Learning Lab volunteer tutors do many things. They share their time. They help students make sense of an algebraic equation or learn to pronounce an unfamiliar word. They encourage and inspire. Eric is one such tutor. After graduating BSU with honors, he was accepted into University of Washington's Medical School and served his final year in Boise, graduating in May. When Eric worked with Ezra, he truly understood the challenges of passing a GED test. Not so very long ago, Eric was a GED student himself. From a troubled family and on his own at 16, Eric dropped out of school. Years later, motivated by a desire to have a better life, he earned his GED. Ezra's multiple moves between Idaho and California caused him to fall so far behind in school he was overwhelmed and eventually dropped out in 10th grade. He, too, realized education was the path to the future he wanted. The one-on-one instruction provided by his caring tutors and Ezra's diligent work ethic have resulted in his passing all 4 GED tests and earning his GED. Ezra stayed motivated by Eric's example and advice: "Never give up. No matter what. Most importantly, find something that inspires you. It does not matter what it is, just always put that inspiration in front of you. It is more powerful than anything."



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**Lunch for Literacy**

February's snow and cold did not deter a record-breaking crowd at Lunch for Literacy, Learning Lab's annual fundraising event. More than 1000 attendees – community leaders, corporate sponsors and philanthropists - gathered at the Boise Centre to demonstrate their support of Learning Lab programs. Featured student, Arine Nyamitavo, recounted her touching story of resilience after her family's traumatic experiences in Congo. Guest author, Steven Rowley shared humorous insights about his journey as an author. Both reminded the generous audience of the impact and importance of supporting literacy for all.

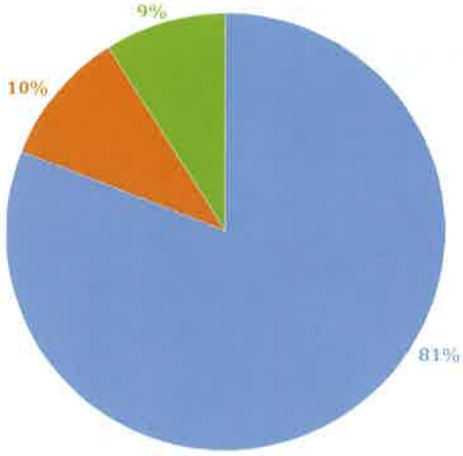
**Volunteers**

Whether providing strategic direction in the boardroom, helping students in a classroom, or maintaining our facilities, 250 Learning Lab volunteers demonstrate the support, tutoring, and dedication to make this small organization a powerhouse of impact. Their experience, energy, and enthusiasm impact every facet of this organization – and ultimately benefit every student. In FY17, our tutors donated more than 10,000 hours of their time to ensure Learning Lab's success.

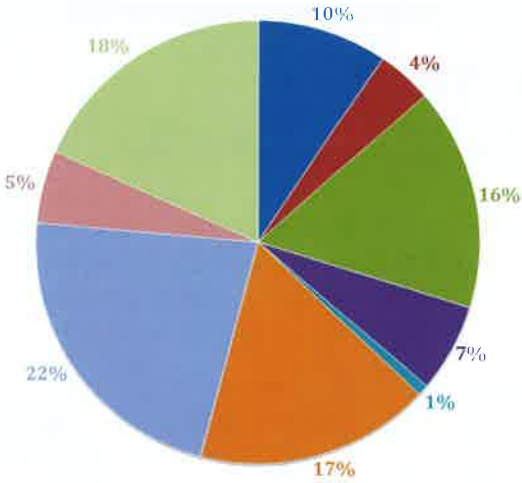


# Your Donations Funded

- Literacy Classes 81%
- Fundraising 10%
- Administration 9%



# FY17 Sources of Income



- Individuals 22%
- In-Kind Volunteer Tutors 18%
- Foundations 17%
- Lunch for Literacy 16%
- In-Kind Leases 10%
- Endowment 7%
- United Way 5%
- Corporations 4%
- Student Fees 1%



### Our Mission

To teach and encourage adults who struggle with literacy, help families discover the joy of learning so all children start kindergarten ready to read, create hope for brighter futures and build a stronger more self-sufficient, and engaged community for all.



# Learning Lab

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Garden City, ID 83714

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## Literacy for All

### Our Partners Help Build a Stronger Community

Our low-income students have the opportunity to improve their education because our community cares. Classes are funded by individuals, families, philanthropists, foundations, corporations, and civic organizations. This group weaves a tapestry of hope, faith in better futures, and the American Dream. Our FY17 sponsors, foundations, and business partners include:

Albertsons	Greater Boise Rotary Foundation, Inc.	KPMG
Jill Aldape	George and Bev Harad	KTVB Idaho's News Channel 7
Anonymous Family Foundation	Harvest Foundation	Laura Moore Cunningham Foundation, Inc.
Ballet Idaho	Hastriter Construction	Lightfoot Foundation
A.J. and Susie Balukoff	Julie Hawkins	McAnaney & Associates PLLC
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Suzi Boyle - Mortgage Loan Originator	Idaho Community Foundation	Rediscovered Books
Capital City Kiwanis Club	Elinor Angelo Fund, Sara Maas Fund, &	Saint Alphonsus
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Cicero Group	John B. and Delores L. Fery Fund	St. Luke's Regional Medical Center
Concordia Law School	Kissler Family Foundation	Brandy Stemmler and Sandy Fery
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Eagle-Garden City Rotary Club	Idaho Statesman	United Way of Treasure Valley
Eide Bailly	Idaho Writers Guild	US Bank
EKC Construction	The Integra Foundation Inc.	Wells Fargo Bank
Elam & Burke	Integrity Audio Visual	WEN Foundation
erstad Architects	Intermountain Gas Company	Whitney Foundation
Fisher's Technology	Intermountain Industries Petroglyph	Whittenberger Foundation
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