

THANKS TO **YOU** WE ARE



MAKING  
—IT—  
BETTER

TRANSFORMING LIVES  
THROUGH LITERACY

2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT



## A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The 2017-18 school year started with the devastation of Hurricane Harvey – it seems like a lifetime ago yet also as if it happened just yesterday. Harvey proved something we as Houstonians already knew; we are a great city filled with diverse, generous, friendly, and resilient people. After all, we are Houston

Strong! No, we are not perfect, and we definitely have our challenges, but we know how to love and help one another especially in times of crisis. As a native myself, I couldn't be more proud of our city!

Despite all of the great things about our city, we continue to have a looming crisis - illiteracy. There is a large gap in opportunity for 20% of our fellow Houstonians due to illiteracy which is the fundamental cause of most social ills including high school dropout rates, joblessness, homelessness, and criminal behavior. These issues not only affect the individual but have a far reaching impact including generational poverty and strains placed on our social service systems. When I was a young mother, my mother-in-law would often say to me, "When you have little people, you have little problems. When you have big people, you have big problems." Wiser words have never been spoken. At Making It Better, we believe in **early** intervention before the problems are big, before children are so far behind in reading that they have missed years of learning, before their lack of reading proficiency has caused their behavior to spiral downward, and before they end up entangled in the juvenile justice system where 85% of those youth are functionally illiterate.

Our programs offer proven solutions to solve our literacy crisis, and as you will see in this Annual Report, we start young and believe that developing strong literacy skills is a family affair. Thank you for your generous support, partnership, and encouragement. Together, we are *transforming lives through literacy!*

*Jacque*

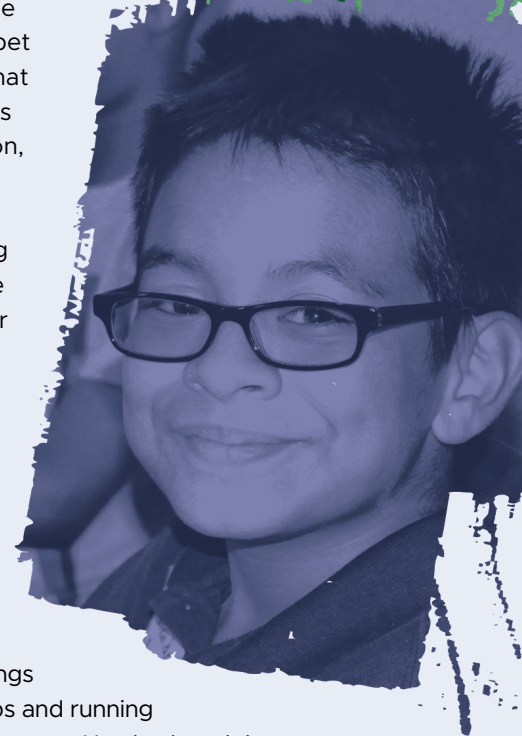
## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

### MAKING GREAT READERS

Dylan was a kindergarten student in our Reading Intervention program at Piney Point Elementary. At the start of the program, he lacked the foundational skills required to begin learning how to read and would barely speak to his Reading Interventionist. He recognized less than half of the alphabet and did not know any of the sounds that the letters make. After only nine weeks of individualized small-group instruction, Dylan made great strides and began reading his first books. By the end of the 23-week program, he was initiating conversations and exuding confidence in his abilities. He is definitely ready for first grade!

### MAKING GREAT STRIDES

Orlando was a student in our Steps 2 Success (S2S) program from 3rd – 5th grade. He began the program so he would have something to do after school, but stayed in the program because he loved it. His two favorite things about the program were taking field trips and running a lemonade stand on Lemonade Day Houston. He also loved the camera, frequently asking if we would film him pretending to be a reporter for Making It Better, ultimately leading to his desire to grow up and be a news reporter. This program provides so many different opportunities for children like Orlando to experience new things, learn important life skills, and grow in an environment where they are continually supported and celebrated for their talents and gifts.



## MAKING GREAT CHOICES

Chane was a 5th grader in our Lunch Bunch program at Walnut Bend Elementary School. When asked what advice he would give another student who is thinking about joining the program, he said, "You should definitely do it. The program helps your mental self, and they give you good advice about what you should do in life." Chane was mentored last year by Ann Green who has been volunteering in the program for two years, continuously pouring herself into the lives and hearts of her students. Chane said he will never forget Ms. Ann because she helped him deal with his anger, and every week at the end of their session she would tell his group, "Be good, remember you are great, and I love you all."

"GIVING CHILDREN THE TOOLS OF EMPOWERMENT AND CONFIDENCE HAS BEEN SO MUCH MORE THAN I EVER IMAGINED."

- ANN GREEN

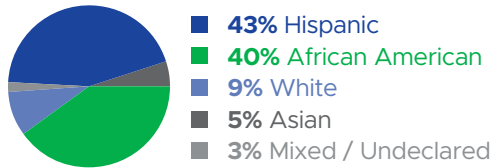
## ON TRACK TO READING

As we closed out our 2017-2018 Fiscal Year, a dream that was over two years in the making came to life! Thanks to an outpouring of community support, we are proud to introduce to you - *The Reading Express* mobile classroom.

*The Reading Express* delivers reading readiness programming to young children (2 months to 4 years old) and their parents/caregivers in low-income areas. The overall goal of this innovative program is to level the playing field for these children, provide an opportunity for them to rise above their circumstances, and most importantly, have them ready to read before they enter kindergarten. *The Reading Express* serves as a core tool for improving school readiness, enhancing social skills, and combating the negative realities of poverty.

## BY THE NUMBERS 2017 2018

PEOPLE SERVED **1,475** STUDENTS  
**249** ADULTS



**57%** MALE **43%** FEMALE

**6,656** BOOKS DISTRIBUTED

**49%** SINGLE PARENT HOUSEHOLD

**89%** FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH

**372** K-2ND GRADE STUDENTS SERVED IN READING INTERVENTION IN **9** HISD SCHOOLS

**21** 1ST-5TH GRADERS SERVED IN STEPS 2 SUCCESS AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

**94** 3RD - 5TH GRADERS SERVED IN LUNCH BUNCH PROGRAM ON **6** CAMPUSES

**231** DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS SERVED **1,345** HOURS, HAVING AN ESTIMATED ECONOMIC VALUE OF **\$33,141**.

**7** FIELD TRIPS ATTENDED BY **525** STUDENTS

**326** CHILDREN AND ADULTS SERVED THROUGH **5** FAMILY LITERACY NIGHTS

**10,270** TOTAL HOURS SERVED IN READING INTERVENTION PROGRAM

**15,376** TOTAL HOURS SERVED ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS

**439** BOOK BAGS DISTRIBUTED TO KIDS AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

**142** PARENTS/CAREGIVERS SERVED THROUGH PARENT WORKSHOPS

**45** VOLUNTEERS READ TO **758** STUDENTS DURING READ ALOUD MONTH

OVER THE PAST **11** YEARS

**OVER 15,000** CHILDREN AND PARENTS SERVED

WHEN I LEARNED ABOUT THE LUNCH BUNCH PROGRAM, I JUMPED ALL OVER IT. I HAVE BEEN A MENTOR NOW FOR TWO YEARS, AND I ABSOLUTELY LOVE IT. I KNOW I GET JUST AS MUCH OUT OF IT AS THE GIRLS DO AND I WISH I COULD DO MORE FOR THEM. - REBECCA RAY, LUNCH BUNCH MENTOR

I AM TRULY INSPIRED BY THE WORK THAT MAKING IT BETTER IS DOING. THE CONSISTENCY AND THE EXPERIENCED INTERVENTIONISTS THAT THEY BRING TO OUR SCHOOLS REALLY HELPS OUR STUDENTS FEEL INSPIRED AND CONFIDENT IN THEIR READING. - HOLLY MARIA FLYNN VILASEGA, HISD BOARD MEMBER

# FINANCIALS

FISCAL YEAR SOURCES OF INCOME | AUG '17 - JULY '18



## HOW DONATIONS HELP OUR KIDS

\$25	Provides healthy snacks for one week at a Steps 2 Success after-school program site.
\$50	Provides 50 small stuffed animals to be used as "reading buddies" for children in our programs.
\$100	Provides 35 new books to children in our programs.
\$200	Gives children the gift of expanding their worlds through 4-5 field trips each year.
\$500	Provides materials and supplies needed for one Reading Intervention site.
\$1,000	Provides books and activity supplies for one Family Literacy Night.
\$2,500	Provides materials and supplies for ten Parent Workshops.
\$5,000	Helps cover the cost of one interventionist at one Reading Intervention site.
\$7,500	Provides funds toward our mobile classroom – The Reading Express.
\$10,000	Sponsors thirteen students in our Reading Intervention program.
\$15,000	Covers the annual cost of materials and supplies for our Parent Partnership programs.

## SPECIAL THANKS TO THESE FOUNDATIONS FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE



## MAJOR SUPPORTERS | 2017-2018

Amegy Bank	Holly & Breen Haire	Donna & Paul Reinbolt
Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation	Heitmann Foundation	Monica Roberson
Holly & Jose Bayardo	Albert & Ethel Herzstein Foundation	Laurie & Jeff Schmid
Kimberly & Scott Bayley	Houston Junior Forum	Richard Schmidt
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Dollar General Literacy Foundation	Kyle Pierce	Vinson & Elkins L.L.P.
Jenny & Tom Fitzpatrick	Post Oak Bank	AnnaLee & Andrew Waite
Freudenberg e <sup>2</sup>	The Powell Foundation	Walmart
Mignon & Steve Gill	Poynter Commercial Properties	Stephen Wedemeyer
Goldman Sachs	Rebecca & Dudley Ray	Bret West
Susie & Ira Green		Wiley Foundation
Terri & Joseph Gugenheim Foundation		Clay Williams
		Lori Williams
		Tricia & Lee Zieben

"EMPLOYEES OF LAN HAVE BEEN OVERJOYED WHEN PARTNERING WITH THE MAKING IT BETTER TEAM FOR THEIR FAMILY LITERACY NIGHTS. ENGAGING WITH THE KIDS AND SEEING THE SMILES ON THEIR FACES WHILE WORKING WITH THEM BRINGS US IMMENSE JOY." - VOLANTEERS - LOCKWOOD, ANDREWS AND NEWNAM, INC.

# THE HORTON SOCIETY

There is learning to be done! They need help to make it happen. Will you be the one? Please join our monthly giving program -The Horton Society - as we set our students on their way. For just a dollar a day, your tax-deductible monthly contribution\* will go toward supporting our Reading Intervention program that provides individualized, small-group reading interventions for at-risk students in grades K - 2. Through this program, we are serving 324 students annually in nine HISD Title 1 schools.

As a member of The Horton Society, you will "hear" great things about "who" you are helping. You will receive quarterly updates on the progress of our students and the places they are going. You will also be featured on our Horton Society Members web page. To become a member, please visit our website at [mibt.org/donate/horton-society/](http://mibt.org/donate/horton-society/)

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