

Once you learn to read, you will be forever free. —Frederick Douglass

Momentum.

If you have been reading the papers you know that literacy – increasing literacy – is gaining momentum nationally.

Pre-COVID 36% of 3rd graders nationally were reading at grade-level and the rest were not. In Sacramento, 46% of 3rd graders were at grade-level. A closer look at education and the failures of our education system is happening and evidence-based approaches are finding their way into schools. (See *Literacy Success* inside).

The Foundation and the broader literacy community are also gaining momentum. We announced our Summer Reading grant cycle mid-February, made possible by the Children's Literacy Endowment, and look forward to funding as many summer reading initiatives as possible.

We know that not reading in the summer remains a top reason why kids fall behind. Our interest in supporting evidence-based approaches in kindergarten through 3rd grade classrooms is in the relationship building stage as schools are overwhelmed by the ambiguous demands of COVID. Our focus on putting diverse books into children's hands is center stage. At our annual *Authors on the Move*, we successfully kicked off a three-month effort that begins with fundraising and ends with bags of books in children's homes. We have identified 20 elementary schools in the Sacramento Promise Zone and nearly all of them need help. Reading rates in Sacramento Promise Zone schools is, on average, 10% below reading rates in Sacramento County. These are the children that need to get excited about reading, these are the children that need to see themselves in the pages of the books they read, and they need those books in their homes. If this momentum continues, we will be able to give out at

mo·men·tum

/mō-'men-təm/

noun

1. forward or onward movement toward a destination.

verb

1. to develop, advance, or improve

least 20,000 books this spring so that our youngest readers (kindergarten through 2nd grade) will have five books to read this summer.

The broader literacy community is already planning for the Walk 4 Literacy and Walk 4 Literacy Family Festival. We are also connecting with affordable housing groups to add additional support to children living in affordable and public housing communities. If you would like to help us give books to kids or build the Walk 4 Literacy, let us know! We would love (and need) your help. **The prospects for Sacramento children reading at grade-level are getting better because we are all coming together to make it happen.**

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From left, author Leticia Ordaz, Councilmember Eric Guerra, and California AG Director Amy Alley at *Authors on the Move 2022* (see pg. 2)

SACRAMENTO LITERACY FOUNDATION



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MISSION

The Sacramento Literacy Foundation's mission is to improve lives by collaborating with organizations in our community to advance literacy skills.

VISION

Our vision is to have all children and all adults develop the literacy skills they need to fully participate in our economy and in our democracy.

OUR GOALS

- Increase philanthropic literacy funding toward the goal of all children reading at grade-level
- Insert reading sciences into the community literacy and education systems
- Advocate for a fully literate community

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NEWSLETTER LAYOUT
T.Dogg Studios

Sacramento Literacy Foundation READER • April—May 2022



Authors on the Move! 2022

A DEBUT YEAR

Our twentieth anniversary of hosting Authors on the Move was indeed a debut year and a tremendous success!

The night started with a champagne reception hosted by Fizz Champagne and Bubbles Bar at our new venue, Kimpton, the Sawyer. Twenty-three California authors, and one New York author, circulated the room while a gourmet four-course meal was served with specialty wines from the Sobon Estate. Auctioneer Pat Hume helped us raise more funds than ever before, allowing us to purchase 14,000 diverse children's books which will find their way into children's home this spring. Emcee

Beth Ruyak then led the room in a captivating conversation with New York Times bestselling debut author Zakiya Dalila Harris who authored *The Other Black Girl*.



Everyone seemed to enjoy the opportunity to be out-and-about and connect with old and new friends. A special thank you to our talented authors, incredible volunteers, and board of directors who all helped make this night spectacular.

A huge thank you to all of our literacy philanthropists who took part in Authors on the Move this year, we truly appreciate your support.



LITERACY SUCCESSSES:

Mississippi Seeing Grade-level Successes

Mississippi passed a hallmark literacy act in

2013 that has yielded another year of great results for K-12 students. The Literacy-Based Promotion Act, which was implemented in the 2014 school year, focuses on early prevention and intervention to help Mississippi children develop the reading skills required for 4th grade. In addition to providing diagnostic assessments to identify students with reading challenges, the Literacy-Based Promotion Act also requires all 3rd grade students to take an assessment at the

end of their school year to determine if they have the reading skills required to matriculate into the 4th grade. As of 2019, *85.6% of 3rd graders passed the test*, meaning a majority of Mississippi 3rd graders are reading at or above grade-level. As a comparison, approximately 36% of 3rd graders nationally are reading at grade-level versus approximately 46% here in Sacramento. Some students are exempt from the test in Mississippi, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, and two rounds of retests are available as well as plenty of practice test material. Beyond requiring a

year-end test for 3rd graders, the act also acknowledges the importance of parent and family involvement in their child's success. If a K-3 student is identified with a substantial deficit in reading, educators in Mississippi are now required to notify the family, identify supports and services, describe the supplemental instruction needed for remediation, and provide strategies for families to support their child's reading skills at home. Mississippi has highlighted that literacy rates are not just a student or a school's problem, it is a community problem that needs community action.

Big Day of Giving
MAY 5

On the Big Day of Giving, we will be raising funds for diverse books for children in the Promise Zone. Our goal for the Big Day of Giving is to raise \$60,000 which will equal 6,000 books in six elementary schools for their kindergarten through 2nd grade students. **On this year's Big Day of Giving, we're partnering with Fizz Champagne and Bubble Bar for A Toast to Literacy.** Fizz has graciously offered to donate 25% of their proceeds on May 5, 2022 to the Foundation.

Let's raise a glass for literacy together and enjoy a fun day!



walk4literacy.ORG

Walk4Literacy is back!

We're thrilled to announce that the Walk4Literacy is happening Saturday October 1, 2022!

The Walk4Literacy is an annual walk to raise awareness and funds for children's literacy in Sacramento, and after turning virtual in 2020 and pausing in 2021 due to COVID variants, we are so excited to get back together in person this year. Join the community for a four-mile walk starting at McClatchy Park as we call attention to the importance of literacy skills and walk by four public elementary schools that need your help. The walk will end back at McClatchy Park for a family fun festival with music, food, and free books. The Sacramento Literacy Foundation is working alongside community organizations and partners to make this year's Walk 4 Literacy the best yet.

For more information, check out [walk4literacy.org](https://www.walk4literacy.org).

MEET THE BOARD: Abby Lunardini



A Sacramento native and life-long reader, Abby

believes that early access in reading and the arts can

change the trajectory of a child's life – and transform our communities along the way. Abby brings an accomplished background in marketing -- she is currently the Chief Marketing Officer of Truity, which in 2021 was named by INC Magazine as one of top 500 Fastest Growing Private Companies. Prior to Truity, she served as the Chief Communications and Brand Officer for the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative and Vice President for Brand Marketing

and Communications at Virgin America. Abby has also held senior communications roles in academia and politics, including serving the Executive Communications Team for former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and leading advocacy communications for University of California system. She started her career as a staffer for U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein. She was named a "Top 40 PR pro under 40" by PR Week. Abby is also a volunteer for TurnAround Arts: California, the nonprofit organization co-founded by renowned architect Frank Gehry and arts education advocate Malissa Shriver. Abby now lives in Penryn with her husband and three young children – in a house that she claims can have a distinct "Lord of the Flies" vibe.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

We have our work cut out for us. Donate today at www.sacramentoliteracy.org/give-today.

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*Contributions received January 7,
2022 through March 7, 2022.*

MEET THE STAFF: Toyin Spencer



With over 10 years of event management experience, Toyin Spencer is excited to join the team at the Sacramento Literacy

Foundation as the new Fundraising Events Manager. Children having access to books is a passion for Toyin, especially coming from a country where recreational reading was only available to the extremely wealthy. Toyin knows that early exposure

to reading made a big impact in her life as a child. Toyin's love for books has obligated her to make books accessible to all children. Being a part of this Foundation is fulfilling that goal. Toyin most recently helped organize Authors on the Move 2022 and is now working on making this year's Walk4Literacy our best one yet! Toyin's favorite part about planning events is wearing multiple hats and being flexible with changing circumstances. In her free time, she loves to read, spend quality time with her family, and volunteer to make a difference in her community.



E-mail Receipts

The Sacramento Literacy Foundation is shifting to digital receipts! Giving your e-mail address will allow you to stay up to date on community literacy news with an electronic version of the *Reader* and it will allow your charitable receipts to arrive faster and with less environmental impact. **Please share your e-mail address with the return envelope or send it to info@sacramentoliteracy.org today!**