



2018 IMPACT REPORT

BREAKING DOWN EDUCATIONAL BARRIERS

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“*First Book Canada has helped to bring a sense of excitement over books and reading to our school. I am very, very happy to have found an organization that we can partner with in the years to come to continue the “buzz” for reading at Inuksuit School!*

Amalia Slobogian, Qikiqtarjuaq, Nunavut

Education is a child's best path out of poverty, but almost 25% of Canadian households do not have a single book. Providing children and youth with books to read, especially at home, has proven to help to improve literacy, education outcomes and social and emotional skills. Since 2009, First Book Canada has distributed more than 7 million new books and educational resources to programs and schools serving children in need.

With all the research showing the importance of books in the home, we know that evaluating our own work is necessary to staying relevant and planning for the future. I want to take this opportunity to highlight one of our key programs that has shown enormous growth this year: the First Book Canada Marketplace (FBCMP). The FBCMP has begun to have a profound and positive effect in Canada. Not only is it a path for First Book Canada to set a sustainable model, but it also builds a new market for Canadian authors and illustrators and impacts the lives of its primary customers by providing low-cost, quality materials for educators and community leaders serving Canadian children in need throughout the country.

The FBCMP gives educators access to resources on an on-going basis, allowing them to remove barriers to learning by addressing the unique situations facing the kids they serve.

Result: the FBCMP delivers books and resources that the traditional market has failed to deliver, dramatically impacting the cultural and educational resource landscape.

The FBCMP offers high value resources at a fraction of the cost. Educators can make their budgets stretch farther, bringing more resources to more children.

Result: More than a quarter of a million books and resources are distributed annually through the FBCMP to high-needs communities.

The FBCMP offers funding support to members through our corporate partnership "gift certificate" opportunities.

Result: These gift certificates allow schools and programs with little or no budget to access and select brand new, high-quality resources for their kids.

The FBCMP is a powerful force for social change, and an innovation that is empowering educators by increasing support for children who need access to educational resources and opportunities.

First Book Canada is working to be a "trusted ally" to educators and community leaders serving kids in need. We have spent the past decade building a strong and dependable relationship with our members (now numbering over 10,000 groups across the country). These members have seen the organization respond to their needs quickly and with substance. Due to this connection, the response to surveys and focus groups has been robust and insightful. In survey after survey, educators have said that they check First Book Canada and the FBCMP for resources before other sources because they support our mission and our organization. They know we are working for them.

We can't do it without you, champions for children in need. Together we can bring the power of reading to millions of Canadian children. Thank you for your support.

Cheers,



Tom Best
Executive Director
First Book Canada



LETTER FROM TOM BEST
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

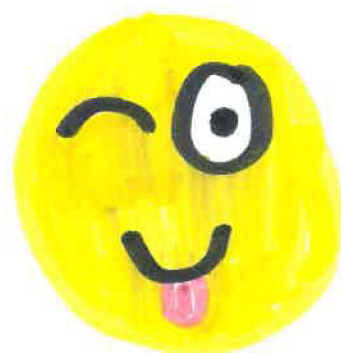


THANK-YOU

SOOOOO much!

for the AWESOME

First BOOK
CANADA. Books.



THE NEED: Access to Quality Education is Not Equal

Why does having new, high-quality books **at home** matter?

Providing children and youth with books to read, especially at home, has proven to help to improve literacy, education outcomes and social and emotional competencies. Equal access to quality education is a child's best route out of poverty. Books in the home are more important than a parent's education level in determining a child's education attainment. With fewer than 10 books in the home, a child can fall up to 18 months behind in school and may never catch up. Furthermore, children's literature is an accepted vehicle with which to support social and emotional learning and is found to be more effective than behaviour-based interventions.

“Regardless of who you are, where you come from, what you wear or what you earn, the confines of your reality are no match for the boundless possibilities that emerge from the pages of a good children's book.”

Alec Morley, Senior Vice President,
Digital Channels, TD Bank Group



First Book Canada believes that education is a child's best path out of poverty, but access to quality education is far from equal.



1.2 million Canadian children live in poverty, representing about **17%** of all Canadian children.



Almost **25%** of Canadian households **don't** own a single book.



Among [Canadian] individuals in the lowest category of literacy proficiency in 2012, **29%** were in a low-income household.



High-quality, age-appropriate books and the stories within provide windows to possibility and mirrors to reflect the legitimacy and power of lived experience.



The children and youth served by our member network throughout Canada face a number of barriers to alleviating poverty, including:

- ▶ housing and food insecurity
- ▶ natural disasters
- ▶ refugee and immigrant transition
- ▶ mental health challenges



Nearly all immigrant and refugee families come to Canada without books.

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

LITERACY ALBERNI SOCIETY IS GRATEFUL TO

FIRST BOOK CANADA

For your support of literacy initiatives in the Alberni Valley through your generous donation on Raise a Reader day 2018.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Teresa Bird'.

Teresa Bird, Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Graham Hughes'.

Graham Hughes, Executive Director

THE FIRST BOOK CANADA NETWORK: Providing the Solution

The First Book Canada Network is our registered national community of educators and program leaders exclusively serving children and youth in need. Our members access books, educational materials, and basic resources from our programs. First Book Canada members work in classrooms, early childhood, after school and summer programs, shelters, health clinics, and community-based organizations throughout the country.



THE FIRST BOOK CANADA NATIONAL BOOK BANK

A centralized distribution system which offers large quantities of publisher donated inventory for only the cost of shipping.

POP UP BOOK DISTRIBUTIONS

In-community distribution events that allow local educators and program leaders to select from thousands of age- and theme-appropriate books for their kids.



THE FIRST BOOK CANADA MARKETPLACE

A member-only, online store offering thousands of curated, high-quality, award-winning children's books and educational materials at 50-90% off retail prices - allowing educators to stretch their budgets as much as possible.

FIRST BOOK CANADA READING CELEBRATIONS

An event for students across the country to have a visit and inspiring presentation by a children's author or illustrator. Students receive a brand-new signed copy of the author of illustrator's book to take home.



With our partners, we work to overcome significant barriers to improving literacy, educational outcomes and social and emotional skills of socio-economically disadvantaged children who have few or no books at home.

We are grateful to our generous funding partners and committed volunteers. We couldn't do any of this without you.

**Amazon | Bank of Montreal | Bison Transport | BlackRock Gives | Burlington Foundation | CIBC Children's Foundation
CIBC Wood Gundy | CompuCom | Domtar | Harbinger Foundation | Indigo Love of Reading Foundation
J. P. Bickell Foundation | KPMG | Love Child Organics | Penguin Random House Canada | Pizza Hut Canada
Poverty Reduction Strategy Office | PwC Canada Foundation | RBC Capital Markets | RBC Foundation
RBC Wealth Management | Rogers | Tata Consultancy Services | TD Bank Group**

Thank You! I Love my Books!

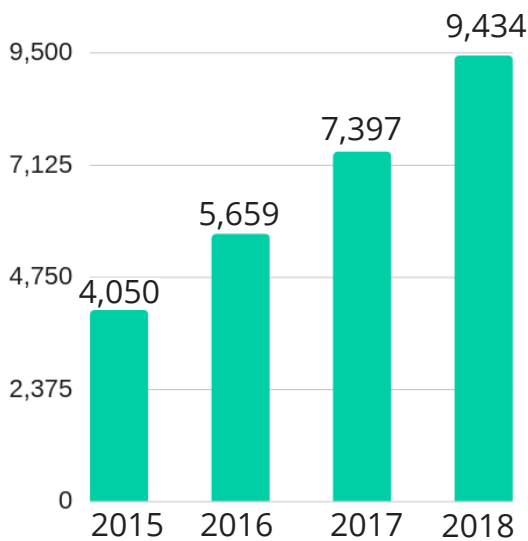
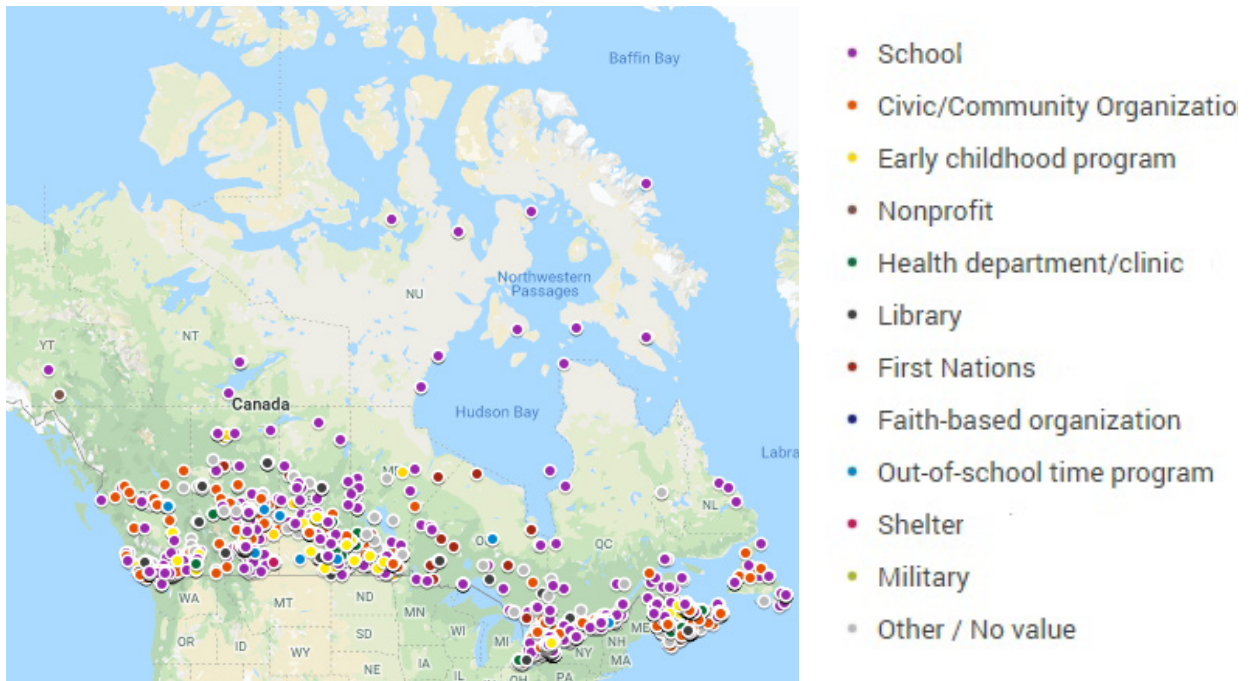
Thank You For The Books



love NEKYLE

THE FIRST BOOK CANADA NETWORK: Serving Kids In Need

In 2018, First Book Canada distributed over 1 million new books and resources and reached over 300,000 children and youth throughout Canada.



Members

Our network of over 9,000 educators, program leaders, health service providers, and professionals serve kids in need and their families.

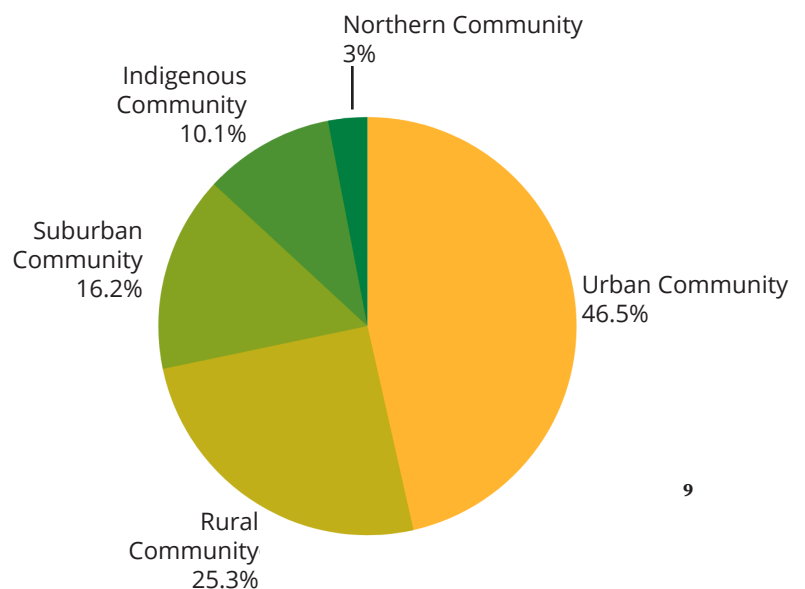
94% report serving single parent families

92% report the families they serve have difficulty meeting basic needs

82% report serving families with children with behavioural challenges

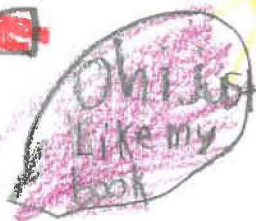
75% report serving families with children who have learning disabilities

71% report that the families they serve are facing housing insecurity



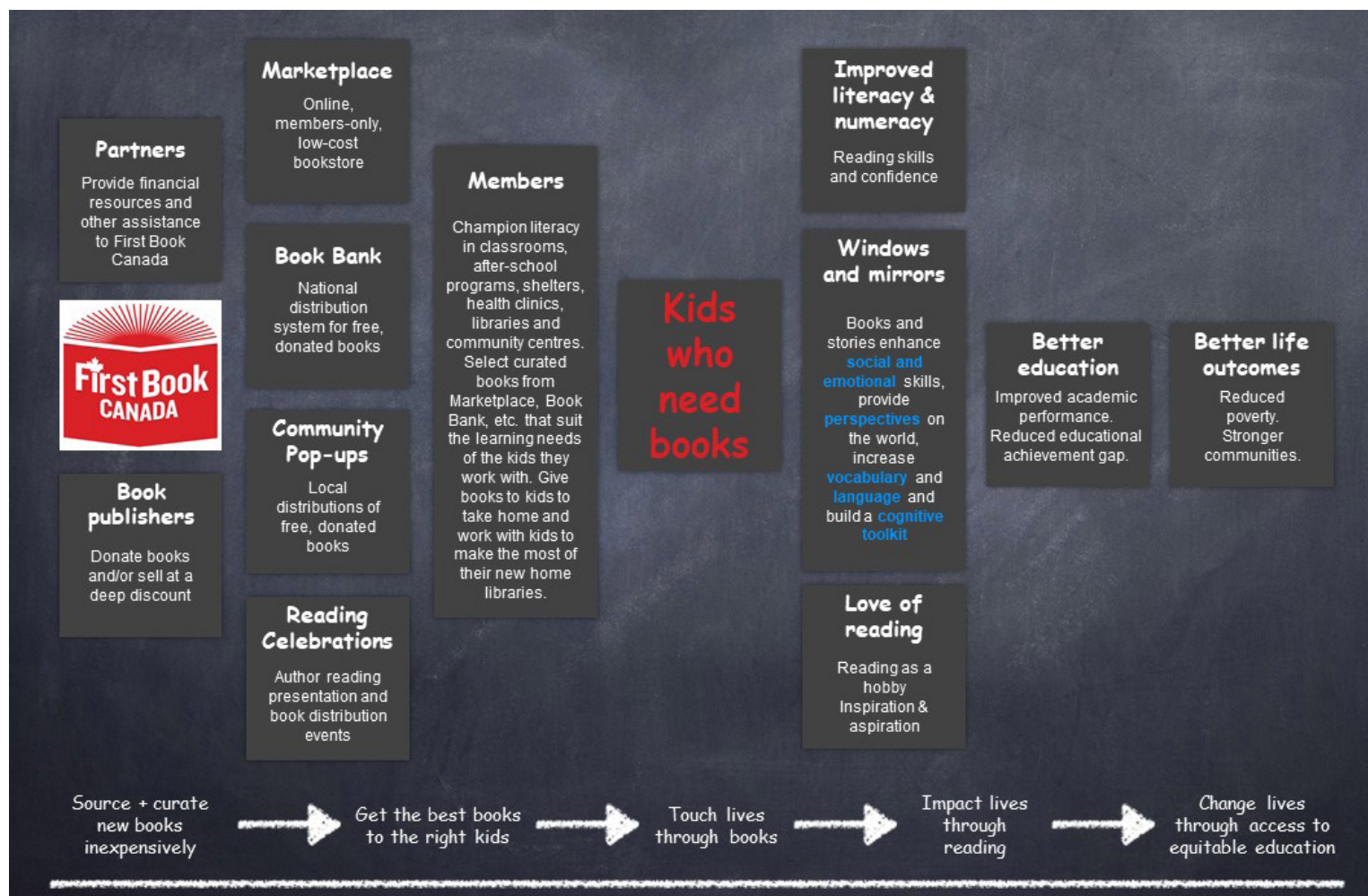
Rameen ☆

Rameen



THE THEORY OF CHANGE: What We Do

This Theory of Change shows how we work with our network of partners, publishers, and members to change kids' lives. It communicates both what we do and what we are working to achieve, and serves as a focal point for our efforts to continually improve.



“Thank you so much for this service. Not only can I afford to purchase interesting reading materials for our program, but the kids love the books that we give away three times a year. Reading is part of the culture of our school.
Shauna Murdain, Pearson Road Elementary School, B.C.



We You guys
all Love
you guys the
best



you guys

me



Regardless of who you are, where you come from, what you wear or what you earn, the confines of your reality are no match for the boundless possibilities that emerge from the pages of a good children's book.



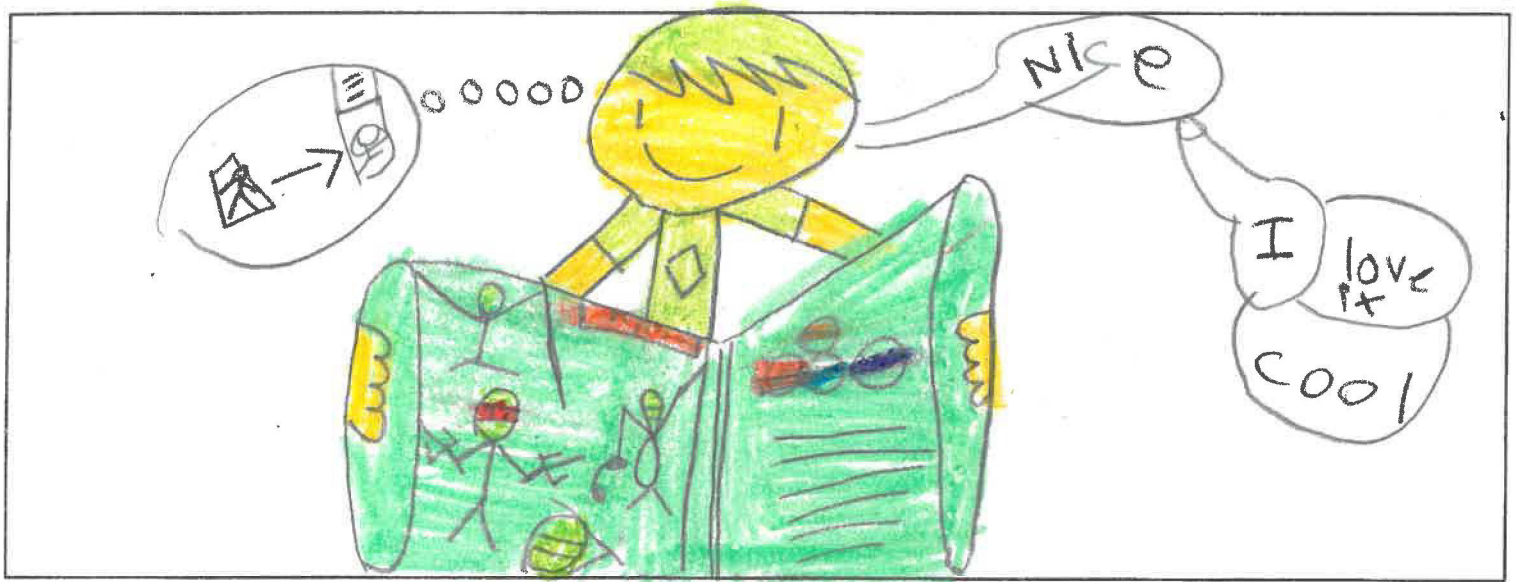
OUR IMPACT

Breaking down educational barriers

“*I want to thank First Book Canada, ... for helping us to ensure children have access to books. You can see by their faces in the pictures that they are thrilled to receive this gift of reading. Thank you again for your support and commitment to providing children with resources to continue their journey as readers.*

Deban Brunette, Neighbour 2 Neighbour Tutoring Program, Hamilton-Wentworth

Thank You!



Thank You for the free new books.

I liked the teenage mutant ninja turtle book.

The book was very awesome.

And there was a little bite of funny parts.

BOOKS FOR A BETTER LIFE

Lord Dufferin Public School, Toronto, ON

Elizabeth Baltazar is a teacher at Lord Dufferin, and said that many of her students are living with stressors that adults would have difficulty managing. The majority of students are living in subsidized housing, and the average income for families is around \$15,000. They are dealing with many issues that are associated with living in poverty, and often require support to meet the basic needs of their families. When the students receive books, they share with their siblings and peers.

THE SITUATION

Located in the Regent Park community of Downtown Toronto, many students are newcomers to Canada. There are families that are refugees and who are also involved with the correctional system. Some students are homeless or living in shelters, and have to rely on local food banks and community services to survive.

THE RESPONSE

Lord Dufferin is surrounded by more than 20 different agencies that specialize in support for domestic abuse victims, drug addiction, anti-gang violence, etc. Active community programs give students an opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities and leadership programs. Lord Dufferin offers Adult ESL and Parenting classes for parents and guardians who are not fluent in English.

PROGRESS AND RESULTS

Teachers have noticed that reading levels have increased since students received books from First Book Canada. Students who have received new books often share their books with siblings, or practice reading to them. Students have been inspired to read more, and can often be found discussing their books with fellow classmates around the school.

FUTURE STEPS

First Book Canada works with Lord Dufferin to ensure that students have the opportunity to use education as a way to obtain a different and better life through books. The ongoing support of staff, community members, and involved parents has given students the opportunity to imagine a different life, free of poverty and suffering.

“If families require support to feed their families breakfast... buying new books is not a priority. I am grateful that our relationship with First Book Canada is only growing and I know my school community appreciates more opportunities to read and build their literacy skills... plus that there is another organization that cares about them.”
Elizabeth Baltazar

A Safe Space For Girls To Learn

A Room Of Your Own Book Club, Toronto Public Library, Toronto, ON

Founder and meeting leader, Tanya Lee, grew up in a very challenging family setting. Sometimes her only reprieve was books, where she could dive into compelling characters and be a part of their world instead of her own. Books saved her. As she got older she came to see how many challenges girls face, from mental health and abuse to sexualization and victimization, girls don't have a safe space to be themselves. That's why she started A Room of Your Own Book Club, that has girls age 13 to 18 read and then discuss the book with the author in-person once a month. She's seen the girls shine and empower themselves through reading and meaningful discussion.

THE SITUATION

Tanya Lee knows the struggles that young girls face. The shocking amount of sexual harassment that is still so prevalent, at just 13 years old people begin openly commenting on girls' bodies including adult males. The inequality that girls face in their own families, where boys are allowed more freedom and are visibly revered more. She sees that most of the time, girls don't feel they have anyone to turn to. For Tanya, her saving grace from these harsh realities, and her own troubled home life, came in books. Yet in school she would put forward original ideas as to what the authors meant, only be shut down by teachers claiming authority over the text's interpretations. Despite that, books continued to be her safe space. Connecting her experiences, she created a safe space for girls where they can learn to stand up and get advice as well as get inspired through reading. She gives the girls a chance to interact with authors so as to eliminate the possibility of being marginalized by the education system.

THE RESPONSE

On Friday the 13th, 2016 (a good luck day for Lee) at Lillian H Smith public library, 20 girls showed up to participate in the first meeting for A Room of Your Own Book Club. The girls were all in grade 8 at Samuel Hearn PS, based on a proposal that Tanya sent to their principal. They came with their Vice Principal and a TDSB employee. Kelly Armstrong was the first author, the book had been released a month in advance and the girls had stayed up all night before the meeting to finish it. They loved the book and they got the chance to ask Armstrong their own hard-hitting questions, one on one. Tanya also partnered with Dr. Karen Wang at Sunnybrook to give a focus of mental health to all the book club meetings.

PROGRESS AND RESULTS

Since then, over 600 at risk girls from priority areas of the GTA have attended the monthly meetings over the past 2.5 years. The average meeting has 25 to 40 girls attending. Through First Cook Canada Tanya has been able to bring mini-library collections of books for the girls to take home. The meetings usually have the author do a reading from their book and then a Q and A, which can be an impactful experience for all as it brought the author of Paper Hearts, Meg Wiviott, to tears. Lee has seen confidence wane in girls as they get older, but the book club combats that notion and gives them more assurance in their desire for reading, their ability to ask questions the faith they have in themselves.





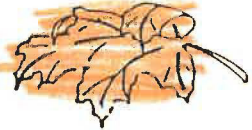

FUTURE STEPS

Lee has big plans for the book club. She is starting to see girls with different reading abilities at the meetings, and wants to get audio books and time to work through chapters with smaller groups before meetings to further encourage them to join in. She wants to start a summer Read-a-thon through North America and has sent in a taped request to Oprah to help her launch this project and receive funding so she can buy hundreds of new books from the First Book Canada Marketplace. As well, she wants to set up a livestream of the meetings across North America to help her spread the message of what a necessity it is that we give girls a safe place to speak.



Photo captured from Michelle Obama's Instagram Story, May 2019

“Just like how a rainbow has no value without its bright colours and a perfume has not value without its fragrance, my life has no value without a friend like you. I believe kindness has the power to change the world. Your kind deed will go a long way. I want you to know how much I appreciate you for giving me the extravagant experience of getting to meet my mentor and inspiration, Ms. Michelle Obama. Gurleen Dablaire, Book Club Member




Dear, First Book Canada,



x

Thank you for the

x




x

Books. I chose Tek, a

x

unicorn book and a lab

x




x

book for kids. I

x

really like these books

x



x

because they are

x

very interesting and funny.


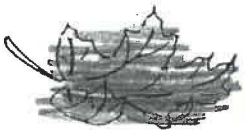





x



x

Sincerely

Hayden



THE FAMILY ROOM: BRINGING FAMILIES TOGETHER

Winnipeg, MB

Parent Resource Coordinators work with the Family Rooms, school budget funded gathering places in community schools, within the inner city and core. These rooms serve as a resource for parents in the communities, supplying access to necessities such as food and telephone lines, and access to books. Parent Resource Coordinators recruit parents of preschoolers to join the events at the Family Room. In the literacy program within the Family Room, there are 50 people (parents with children) at any given time. Parents are encouraged to read in their own language based off a story's pictures if English-language skills are still developing. First Book Canada helps to provide books for kids visiting the Family Room, many of whom may not otherwise have access to new books.

THE SITUATION

The inner city and core of Winnipeg is a diverse community, with many newcomers to Canada who have experienced war-trauma and are navigating language barriers. In addition to dealing with poor housing, health issues, and food instability, newcomer families must also confront the stressor of gangs, who often recruit children right out of the airport. Many Indigenous children have been placed in foster care, and are dealing with the stress and trauma of being pulled from their families.

THE RESPONSE

The Family Room, alongside a network of community programs, is a space for families to access basic needs and spend the quality time that they need to strengthen their family. Parent Resource Coordinators work as a bridge to the community for these families who are new to Canada or are struggling with barriers as a result of low-income.

PROGRESS AND RESULTS

The children and students who receive books from First Book Canada begin to talk about what they can do, careers they didn't realize were possible, and places they want to visit. The books they receive become an open door to what is possible. Staff have seen kids who visited the Family Room as preschoolers with their parents return to their library pop-ups as elementary school students.

FUTURE STEPS

The continued support of parents in the community, and from the corporate volunteers who come in and read with the students, has been immensely valuable. The Parent Resource Coordinator would like to acknowledge all that First Book Canada has done for kids who visit the Family Rooms. The opportunity that First Book Canada has given to rural areas across Canada is crucial in strengthening families in need.

**“If it weren't for
First Book
Canada, we
wouldn't have a
literacy program.
Parent Resource
Coordinator**

2018 HIGHLIGHTS

JANUARY

01

We started the new year with a Reading Celebration in Toronto, featuring Canadian children's author Vikki Vanisckle and sponsored by KPMG.



FEBRUARY

02

The 2018 Raptors 905 Winter Warm-Up Reading Challenge comes to a close with 12 schools celebrating their hard work at the Hershey Centre in Mississauga.



MARCH

03

Celebrated Canadian authors Yann Martel and Alice Kuipers visit a Saskatoon high school as part of the RBC Speak Up! series.



APRIL

04

We held our first Pop Up Book Distribution in Saint John, New Brunswick. In partnership with Elementary Literacy, we distributed over 30,000 #bookstokids!

MAY

05

The 7th Annual RBC Capital Markets Pongapalooza is a great success, seeing new teams from the Advertising sector and raising over \$50,000!



JUNE

06

In partnership with the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation, we provide 1,500 new books to each of the 30 runner-up schools.



JULY

07

We join the Opening Day for the Jays Care Foundation Rookie League to distribute 1,200 new books to youth from Toronto Community Housing.



AUGUST

08

We hold a high-energy Reading Celebration at the MLSE Launchpad in Toronto with Toronto Maple Leafs player and author Zachary Hyman.



SEPTEMBER

09

Adrienne Kress, Lana Button, Helaine Becker, Marina Cohen, and L. E. Sterling all sign and give away copies of their books at our booth at Word on the Street Toronto.



OCTOBER

10

With support from CompuCom, our first digital Reading Celebration takes place in Brampton with Vancouver-based author Jason Chabot.



NOVEMBER

11

In collaboration with Amazon Canada, we distribute 100,000 books across Canada as part of the "Buy 1, Give 1" campaign on Amazon.ca.



DECEMBER

12

The PwC Holiday Book Lift distributes 35,000 to students at twenty-three different schools across Peel, York, and Toronto regions.



Thank you first
Book Canada.

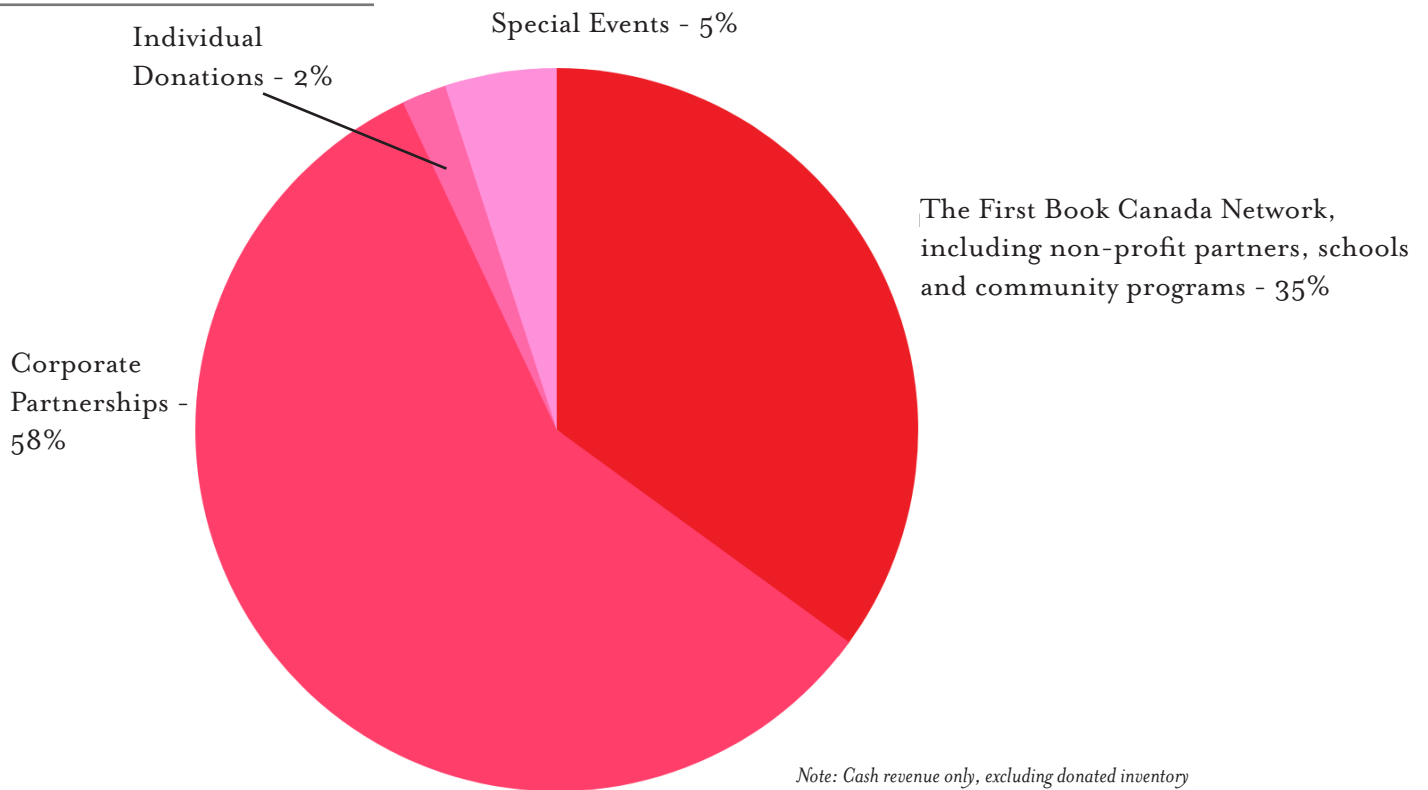


thank you

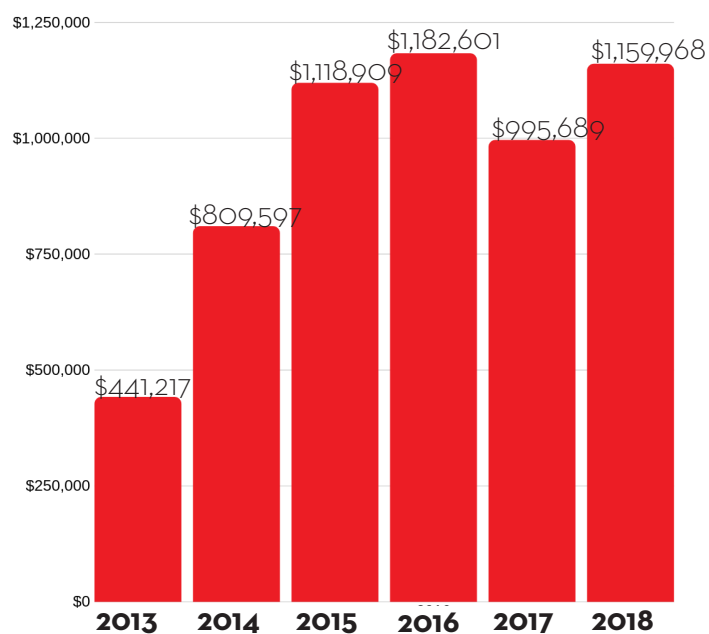
FINANCIALS

In 2018, First Book Canada distributed over 1 million new books to 400,000 kids in need throughout Canada.

Our support comes from:



26%
Average Annual
Growth Over
the Past 5 Years



FOR THE FULL SET OF AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR FY18,
PLEASE VISIT: <https://firstbookcanada.org/about/financials/>.

First Book Canada Leadership

TOM BEST

Executive Director

GURDEEP DHALIWAL

Strategic Alliances Manager

HEATHER FARQUHARSON

Deputy Executive Director

REBECA DELGADO

Programs Coordinator

HANY MEHARI

Finance / IT Coordinator

TESSA EISENBERG

National Engagement Coordinator

CALYSSA ERB

Communications Coordinator

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TIM PINNINGTON

Chairman

LISA APPEGATH

Investment Advisor, CIBC Wood Gundy

TORI NEWALL

PETER GOLD

*Co-founder, First Book USA
President, The Gold Group, Chtd.*

HEATHER PARTRIDGE

President, Newbairn Inc.

SUZANNE LOUNT

Director, Graham C. Lount Family Foundation

ANGUS RIGBY

Managing Director, RBC

CLAUDETTE MCGOWAN

Vice President, Technology Service Engagement; BMO

JANE ROBINSON

CFO, First Book USA

ALEC MORLEY

*CEO, UGO
Senior Vice President, TD Canada Trust*

KYLE ZIMMER

President & CEO, First Book USA



“Since becoming a member of First Book Canada, we have been able to provide high quality books throughout the year to our families. ... I cannot emphasize enough our appreciation for the resources we have access to with First Book Canada and the positive impact it has on the families we serve. *Thank you!*

Geraldine Dandeneau, Blue Water Prenatal Mobile Team, MB



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