



# **BERNIE'S BOOK BANK**

2024 Annual Report

# OUR STORY

## 2024 Was Filled With Monumental Milestones And Sizable Steps Forward In Our Mission.

In 2024, Bernie's Book Bank celebrated fifteen years since our founding in a small garage on Cod Fish Alley. Driven by a passionate collective of volunteers and partners, over the past fifteen years we have delivered over 28 million free, high-quality books into the hands and homes of children who need them.

This year we celebrated our 10-millionth book distributed in partnership with Chicago Public Schools (CPS). This key milestone was celebrated with a special distribution at Armstrong Elementary, a twelve-year distribution partner. Members from our newly formed National Board, Pedro Martinez, the CEO of CPS, Jane Fleming, CPS Literacy Director, and local news outlets were on-hand to celebrate this long-standing partnership and commitment to children's literacy.

Outside of Chicagoland we marked our official expansion into the Greater Milwaukee area - the first of what we hope will be many metropolitan-based Chapters across America. A five-year Randomized Control Trial in partnership with the Milwaukee Public Schools helped launch our Milwaukee expansion. The results? Statistically significant impact on student reading achievement, as well as positive impacts on related outcomes. Even better, the effect appears to grow over time. The results are impressive and reaffirm our commitment to why book ownership matters. We believe more books in more homes equals more reading, more dreaming, more doing, and this is proof.

Our people-powered mission of children's book ownership is growing stronger every day. In 2024, thanks to the Bernie's Book Bank community, we delivered 2,568,079 free, high-quality books to over 315,000 children.

**Illiteracy is a preventable American crisis, and with your help, we're just getting started.**



2009: The Garage



2024: Chicagoland Processing Center



# STORIES OF 2024

## National Expansion

- **April 25** - Marked the official kickoff of the Bernie's Book Bank Greater Milwaukee Chapter!
- In our first official year, we served 20,000 children across 60 schools with over 160,000 free, high-quality books to children who need them the most. We plan to serve all qualifying students in the following counties: Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Washington, and Waukesha.
- In true Bernie's Book Bank fashion, we set bold goals. We aspire to build a local operational facility with dedicated volunteers by the end of 2025, and ensure book distribution to all estimated 96,000 qualifying children in the Greater Milwaukee Area by the end of 2026.
- In October, Jenna Renno joined the team as Executive Director of Bernie's Book Bank Greater Milwaukee.
- This is a big step forward for Bernie's Book Bank as it looks to build upon its success in Chicagoland and expand nationally.

## Measured Impact

- Generously funded by the Arnold Ventures, Dr. Geoffry Borman conducted a five-year Randomized Control Trial (RCT) from 2019-2023 to measure the efficacy of our program.
- The RCT was conducted in partnership with Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), where 30 schools received free books from Bernie's Book Bank and 30 schools did not, acting as the control group.
- We are thrilled to share top-level results which concluded statistically significant impact on student achievement, as well as positive impact on related outcomes.
- Even better, the effect appears to grow over time.
- We look forward to sharing more results from this impactful study!

## 10,000,000 Books To CPS

- **September 30** - Bernie's Book Bank distributed its 10-millionth book to Chicago Public Schools since 2009. CPS CEO Pedro Martinez, Founder Brian Floriani, Principal Otis Dunson, and Alderman Debra Silverstein spoke about the importance of early literacy and the significance of this milestone, which coincided with the final day of National Literacy Month.
- Principal Dunson showed his appreciation for Bernie's Book Bank in his opening remark: "There's nothing quite like the excitement of a child coming home with a new book, eager to read and share what they've learned. Bernie's Book Bank has truly enhanced the Armstrong community and we are deeply grateful for their ongoing support and partnership."
- Bernie's Book Bank has delivered books to more than 300,000 CPS students.

# OUR FUNDRAISERS

## Events: Driving Local Impact & Engagement

### SIGNATURE EVENTS



**Book Lovers' Lunch** - After a four-year hiatus, Book Lovers' Lunch is back! This signature luncheon featured 272 guests and New York Times bestselling author, Lisa Barr.



**The Bernie Cup Series** is a spring and summertime staple. We hosted five casual days of golf and fellowship for a total of 228 golfers at exceptional courses across Chicagoland and Milwaukee.



**Birdies & Books** did not disappoint. We welcomed two full waves for our annual charity golf classic at the prestigious Shoreacres. Together, we raised \$561,600, celebrating our most successful fundraising event to date.



The 6th annual **Patrick Mannelly Award** crowned the top collegiate long snapper and featured a star-powered panel with Chicago Bears legend Robbie Gould, Northwestern Football coach David Braun, and host Laurence Holmes from 670 The Score Chicago.

### NEW THIS YEAR



**Now growing: The Giving Tree Society.** In honor of our recurring supporters, who have given us so much, we are growing our own Giving Tree in our Welcome Centers.



**Introducing Booksgiving**, a family fundraiser wrapped up in a meaningful day of giving, featuring volunteering, kid-friendly activities, entertainment, and refreshments.



# OUR VOLUNTEER FORCE

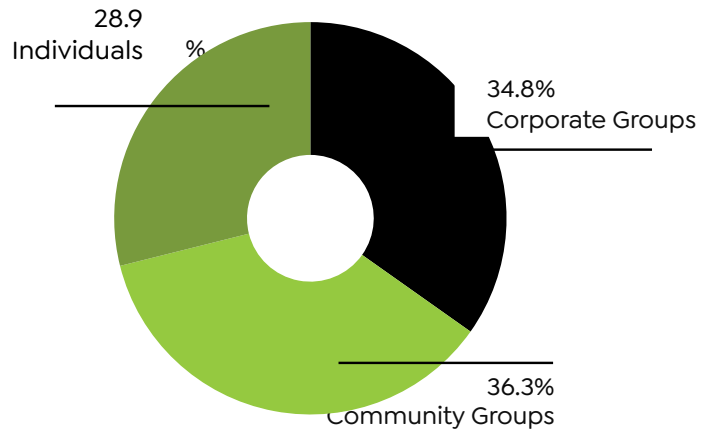
**The Difference Our Bernie's Book Bank Volunteers Make Is Immediate, Invaluable, And 100% Local.**



**46,801**  
VOLUNTEER  
HOURS



**17,700+**  
DEDICATED  
VOLUNTEERS



## Volunteer Highlights



Audra, a Barrington local, collected a total of 6,480 books, making it the largest individual book drive to date!



**50-Hour Club** - Our dedicated coalition of volunteers who pledge to give 50+ hours of service a year; 62 strong and growing!



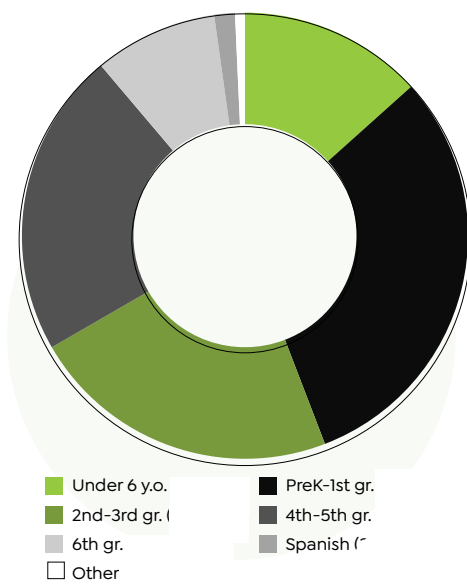
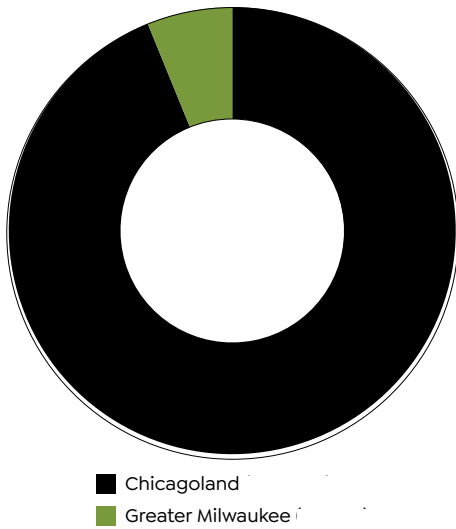
33% of volunteers are under the age of 17. We believe a childhood habit of service becomes a lifetime habit of service.



791,606 gently used books collected through community book drives in 2024.

# OUR IMPACT

**2,568,079** Free, Quality  
Children's Books  
Distributed.





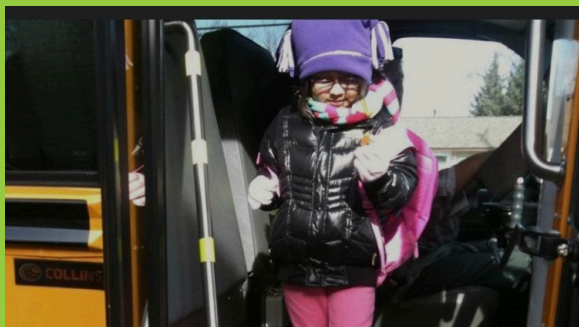
## MEET KIM

When I was 10 years old, I moved to a new school in North Chicago called AJ Katzenmaier Academy. Our school received books from an organization called Bernie's Book Bank. All I really knew at the time was that these books were free for us to grab if we were interested. I waited my turn in line to receive my very own bag filled with books.

When we got back to our classroom, students were trading with each other and even donating books to the classroom library. I had never owned a book before this moment.

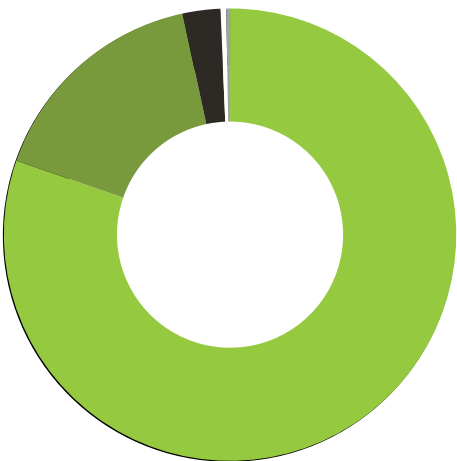
It was like tasting a new flavor of ice cream for the first time, my new favorite flavor. It was both unfamiliar and stunning to know people cared enough to get these books into our hands.

Kim R.



# OUR FINANCIALS

Together we have raised over \$4.7 million dollars in support of local book ownership for children.



2024 Fundraising  
By Chapter

Chicagoland	\$3,799,121
Greater Milwaukee	\$772,275
Florida Suncoast	\$19,417
National	\$127,500
Endowment	\$12,500



2024 Fundraising  
By Type

Individual	\$2,960,037
Corporate	\$892,069
Foundation	\$878,707

Nearly 30% of donors are also volunteers, amplifying their impact in the community.



Bernard

Thank  
you  
for  
your

# 2024 INVESTORS

**Thank You For Putting Your Trust In Us As A Partner.  
Every Dollar You Invest Is Used Wisely.**

## **\$100,000 and above**

- AbbVie Foundation
- Anonymous
- Greg and Dana Gliniecki
- Hunter Family Foundation
- KoHop Community Impact Fund
- Natalie A. Black in honor of her husband, Herbert V. Kohler Jr.
- Ruth DeYoung Kohler Community Impact Fund

## **\$50,000 to \$99,999**

- Alvin H. Baum Family Fund
- Edward Jones
- KPMG
- Thomas C. Liebman
- Reed Construction
- Steans Family Foundation
- Zebra Technologies

## **\$25,000 to \$49,999**

- AbbVie
- Dominique Raccah and Raymond Bennett
- Nat and Danielle Caputo
- David and Karen Della Penta
- Elkes Foundation III
- First Bank Chicago Foundation
- Mark and Allyse Harger
- Kathleen Walsh Husman Foundation
- Kemper Educational & Charitable Fund

- Wes and Margie Matthias
- TAWANI Foundation
- Trustmark Foundation
- David and Pamela Waud
- Wintrust

## **\$10,000 to \$24,999**

- Adams Street Partners
- Anonymous
- Backstop Solutions
- Bears Care
- Bowman Lingle Foundation
- Robert and Cynthia Broten
- Jeff and Abby Burtelow
- Capital Group
- Marty Cappelle
- CDW
- Continental Electrical Construction
- Cooley LLP
- Patricia Crawford
- D&R Legacy Fund
- Damico Family Foundation
- Dr. Scholl Foundation
- Egerter Family Foundation
- ELCO Mutual Life & Annuity
- Helen Gallagher
- Brian and Coleen Gelber
- GEM Realty Capital
- Gorter Family Foundation
- Anders and Donna Gustafsson
- Kyle and Mary Ellen Hanson
- Kelso-Burnett Co.
- Kenilworth Union Church
- Rick and Julie Levitz

- Greg and Margaret Linder
- Linder Family Foundation
- May River Capital
- Miller Cooper
- NFP
- Nicholas & Eleanor Chabraja Foundation
- Chuck and Julie Parsons
- Tad and Christine Render
- RJ Levitz Family Fund
- Schreiber Philanthropy
- SW Family Fund
- Graham and Beth Cook
- Gerard Toohey
- Trend Holdings Foundation
- Rich Valin
- Venture One Real Estate
- VSP Vision
- W.W. Grainger, Inc.
- Tim Walbert
- William Blair

## **\$5,000 to \$9,999**

- Academic Approach
- Anonymous
- Rob Armstrong
- Michael and Christine Berkson
- Book Depot
- Bridge Alternatives
- Laura and John Brinckerhoff Sr
- Brunswick Group
- Craig and Caryn Caffarelli
- Rich and Jill Caffarelli
- Nick and Julie Campbell

## **2024 Strategic Partners:**

abbvie

KPMG

Reed  
CONSTRUCTION

ZEBRA



# 2024 INVESTORS

- Alan Chapman
- Cherry Lake Publishing
- Chicago Bears
- Christ Church Lake Forest
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
- CIBC
- Clune & Associates
- Sarah Cook
- Brian and Lisa Cornell
- Aaron Cox and Tara Marazita
- Susie Cummings
- William Dahut
- Brooke and Rob Davis
- DLA Piper
- Peter and Jennifer Dunne
- Bob Eisiminger
- Executive Construction
- Fairway Metals
- Federal Savings Bank
- Freedom LLC
- Joel and Dana Freedman
- Joel Friedman
- Golub Family Foundation
- H & S Falk Foundation
- Tracie and Jeff Haas
- Steve Hammersmith
- Nancy and Jack Hartung
- Mike and Marry Herr
- Hinsdale Junior Woman's Club
- Hirsch Brick & Stone
- Hoplamazian Family
- Jack Miller Family Foundation
- Nick and Dana Jones
- Kemper
- Kelaico Foundation
- Rich Levine
- Ryan and Monica Levy
- Long Grove Confectionery Co.
- Jay and Elvira Mannelly
- Mary McCarthy
- Mighty Hook
- Milne Family Foundation
- Tom Minoff
- MoLo Solutions
- Morris Capital Management
- Raymond and Janice Nelson

- Northpond Partners
- Courtney and Jill Nottage
- NXT Capital
- Ozinga
- Scott and Alisa Patterson
- PNC Foundation
- Polsinelli
- Prairie Management Group
- Michael and Nora Rice
- Grace and Jason Ries
- Phil and Cathy Rosborough
- Rosborough Partners
- Rose Pest Solutions
- RSM
- Regina and Alberto Ruocco
- Segal Family Foundation
- Samuel Sider
- Special People in Need
- Kristie and Matt Stegen
- Straus Family Foundation
- Mark and Andrea Taylor
- Michael and Patricia Terzich
- Stacia Thorson
- Uline
- Chris and Diana Webb
- Barbara Weiner
- Wesco
- Winston & Strawn
- Zurich North America

## **\$1,000 to \$4,999**

- 3branch Product Design Solutions
- Abbott Fund
- AbeTech
- Allstate Insurance Company
- American Book Company
- American Eagle Outfitters
- Anonymous
- Anonymous
- Nick and Kristin Anson
- Connie Antoniou
- Celeste and Glenn Arnold
- Scott Arnold
- Grant and Laurie Bagan
- Mary Beck
- Denny Belcastro
- Randi and Jonathan Blume
- Jeanne Brassil
- John and Peggy Brayman

- Bruce and Ann Bachmann Family Foundation
- Chris Byrne
- Caroline and Nick Ceisel
- Richard and Jill Chaifetz
- Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc
- The Christopher L. & M. Susan Gust Foundation
- Thomas Cheriyan
- David Chorley
- Classic Dealer Group
- CME Group
- Steve and Carol Collier
- Chris and Kimberly Collins
- Christine Collins and Russell Kohnken
- Craig and Kirsten Collister
- Connexion
- The Cynthia Elkins Foundation
- Jody Costa
- Mark Cukier
- Anthony Czulczewski
- Andy and Kristen Daniels
- Andrew and Marla Dembitz
- Andrew and Joanne Denenberg
- Roger and Sandra Deromedi
- Brian Dinsmore
- Divine Word Missionaries
- DKG Alpha Nu Chapter
- Dollar General Literacy Foundation
- David and Juli Dreifuss
- Danielle DuMerer and Robert MacArthur
- Ryan Duncan
- Charles and Patti Edwards
- Tim Finnegan
- Joseph Fioretto
- Daniel Fishbein
- James and Kathy Forshey
- Heath Frey
- Doug Fulton
- Steve and Elene Gadomski
- Curtis Gardner
- Daniel and Marni Ginnetti
- Joe Girardi
- Anne and Tito Girod

# 2024 INVESTORS

- Julie and Ryan Gish
- Glencoe Gray Charitable Fund
- The Goddard School - Third Lake
- Ryan Golding
- Steven and Lynette Goldsberry
- Matt and Jamie Goode
- Chip and Emily Grace
- Eric and Nicole Graham
- Robin Gran
- Francis and David Griffin
- Roy and Robin Grossman
- Guarantee Trust Life Insurance Co.
- Brian Hack
- Michael and Lori Harris
- David Hirsch
- Doug and Jill Hirsh
- Steve and Julie Hupp
- Insight 2 Profit
- IT Supplies
- Penny Jack
- Nicole Jagielski
- Joan and Norman Chapman Foundation
- Dianne Johnson
- Melanie Johnson
- George and Patricia Kashou Fund at the Greater Milwaukee Foundation
- KemperSports Management
- Ryan Kennedy
- Josh Khoshbin
- Erin Kirchner
- The Kirk Players
- Shirley Kliner
- Alecia Kohorst
- Shelley Kuehneman
- Joe and Marisue Lacher

- Sharon Lau
- JBS Foundation
- Todd and Erica LeBlanc
- Lee Family Foundation
- Madison and Susan L. Lees Foundation
- Lenox Advisors
- Craig Leva
- Levata
- Craig Levin
- Josh Lieberman
- Barbara and Herbert Linn
- Kevin Logterman
- The Malnati Organization
- Marc and Jeanne Malnati
- The Pinnacle Book Club of Chicago
- Jessica Marschall
- Kristin Marsden
- Chuck and Lynnaea Martin
- McKinsey & Company, Inc.
- Phil Menzel and Ellen Debus
- Christina Metzger
- Zak and Lesley Mirkowski
- Brad Morehead
- Tim and Susan Morris
- MRI Software Foundation
- Mundelein High School
- Scott and Rachel Munkvold
- Newcastle Systems, Inc.
- Roger and Vicki Newell
- Bob and Wendy Noonan
- Eric Olson and Laura Bermudez
- ORIX
- Pajeau Children's Foundation
- Kathleen Paroubek
- Andy and Susan Pasternak
- Jake and Eileen Peters
- Pfizer

- Bruce Ponsaran
- Presbyterian Church of Western Springs
- Purse Strings LLC
- Mark and Amy Rakoczy
- Nancy and Ben Randall
- Kip and Melissa Read
- Cheri and Al Reid
- Andy Reimink
- rf IDEAS, Inc.
- Loan Tran and Norbert Riedel
- Kurt Riesenberger
- RL Canning, Inc.
- Margaret Robertson
- Joe and Sarah Rock
- Mike Rolfs
- Harvey Rose
- Gayle Rosemann and Paul McElwee
- Barb and Al Ross
- Carolyn Rowland
- Sasser Family Companies
- Jocelyn Saxon
- Jeff Schmitz
- Michael Schneider
- Scott Simpson Design + Build
- Sheffield Foundation
- William Shiner
- Lawrence and Mary Slight
- St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
- John and Lisa Staton
- Jordan Stobaugh
- Tim Suter
- Linda Swanson
- Gary and Leslie Swenson
- Rich Sykes
- Sue Talbert
- Janet and Kevin Terry

**The Average Retail Price Of A Children's Book Is \$13.30.**

**We Source, Process, And Distribute Children's Books For Less Than \$2.00 A Book.**

**Smallest Gift: \$1**

**Largest Gift: \$500,000**

**Total Gifts: 40,912**

**Every Gift Is Valued And Impactful.**



# 2024 INVESTORS

- Tom Thibodeau
- Andy Timmerwilke
- The Trade Desk
- Britt and Allison Truckenbrod
- Patrick and Pamela Tyrell
- Marko Vajda
- Robert Voss
- Wagner Foundation
- Jim and Lindsay Wexler
- Dieter Wiedmayer
- William Meyer & Sons, Inc.
- Jim and Tina Young

## \$500 to \$999

- Alera Group
- Elisa Allan
- Lindsey Allen
- Amgen Foundation
- Sam Ankin
- Anonymous
- Anonymous
- Anonymous
- Anonymous
- Artisan Partners
- Barcoding, Inc.
- Baxter Healthcare
- Beach Reads & Bubbly
- Christina and Matt Beer
- Breeanna Bergman
- Sue Bettman
- Mark and Christine Betz
- Vijay Bhagavan
- Rebecca Bobroff
- Julia Boss
- Kevin Brown
- Jason and Kate Burian
- Jack and Anne Burtelow
- Chad Buttell
- Matthew and Kathryn Caccamo
- Patrick Carey
- Brooke and David Carlson
- CDK Global
- Cedar Roofing Company
- Genius Chaudhry
- Pete Clifford
- Nancy Columbia
- Mike and Kara Curran
- Paul Darley
- Sasha and Stan Diskin
- Heather Dow

- Jason Dreifuss and Samara Schwartz
- Michael Duffy
- James Duggan
- Harris Eisenberg
- Emersive, Inc.
- Derek England
- Enterprise Fleet
- David Fawley
- First United Methodist Church of Arlington Heights
- Christy Floriani
- Russell Foszcz
- Carol and Don Gaines
- Gallagher
- Grant Galloway
- Seema Ganatra
- GAP Inc.
- Vacys Garbonkus and Laima Nainys
- Aimee Gilroy
- The Goddard School - Cary
- The Goddard School - Skokie
- The Goddard School - Vernon Hills
- Goldman Sachs
- Andrew and Melissa Goltra
- David and Emily Gonzalez
- Andrew Gordon
- Mike Grubich
- Mary and David Grumhaus
- Anne Gualano
- Jackie and Mark Guptz
- Laura and James Hardy
- Eric Hassel
- Leslie Hauser and Karl Wuesthoff
- Ryan Hesch
- Dave Hogaboom and Colleen Gaughan
- T B Horek
- Steve and Meghan Hoxmeier
- Nicole Hughes Friestad
- IMC Trading
- Danish and Sonia Ismail
- Tim and Meg Jagielski
- Brian Jannusch
- Mark Jensen
- Joseph H. Goldberg Family Foundation

- Vipra Kamdar-Collins
- Carol and Ronald Kaplan
- Daniel and Taylor Kehoe
- Kal Kilgast
- Jonathan Kingery
- Janice and Melvin Kupperman
- Chris Larson
- Caryl Lasko
- Stefanie Lavelle
- Jonathan Leiman
- David and Cynthia LeMieux
- Cecil Levy
- Nelson and Louisa Levy
- Dan and Lauren Litchfield
- Elizabeth Lloyd
- Lynne Beyer and Ryc Loope
- Renee and JT Lundy
- Charles Mahan
- Victornia Mahoney
- Lauren Mandel
- Daniel and Marie Marks
- Mathematica
- David and Patty Mattingly
- Tim McCarren
- Justin McCarthy
- Anne and Rob Metzger
- Amanda and David Meyer
- Marlene Mihalsky
- Tanu Misra
- Sarah Mitial
- Frank Modruson
- Motorola
- Ted Moudis
- Erin and Matt Movall
- Mowery & Schoenfeld
- Michael Mughetto
- Ian Murphy
- Jeremy Murphy
- John O'Kelly
- Burks and Loretta Oakley
- Joan and Frank O'Connell
- Jonathan O'Dea
- Cyrus and Molly Oelerich
- Richard Ozinga
- Michael and Ann Patterson
- David Pendleton
- Amanda Pictor
- Sam and Susan Piro
- Jim Placio
- Ryan Poles

# 2024 INVESTORS

- Bunny and Robert Polovin
- Jason Price
- Prudential
- Paul Reaumont
- Michael and Shannon Richardson
- Larry and Michele Rivkin
- Mike Rogalevich
- Mark Rogers
- Rosalind Franklin University
- Anothony and Jane Rothschild
- Sue Rowlands
- Kenneth and Andrea Saffir
- James and Suzanne Santos
- Barbara Sayre
- Kathleen Scheidt
- Christine Schellhaass
- Ryan Seager
- Marion Searle
- Virginia Seggerman
- Ted Shepherd
- Terry and Cindy Simmons
- Debbie and Scott Springgate
- Michael Stent
- Andrew and Amy Stevens
- Tricia Stewart
- Mike Strauss
- Laura and David Sturuss
- Geoff Surkamer
- Kristina and Mark Suter
- Ron and Anne Taylor
- Grant Thies
- Michael and Michele Thompson
- Linda and Joseph Toops
- Dylan Treutelaar
- Judy Underwood
- Joseph and Allison Villinski
- Melissa Wagner
- Michelle Wagner
- Kevin Walsh
- Thomas Walton
- Waukegan Emblem Club #88
- We Take IT for Charity, Inc.
- Andrew and Betsy Weil
- Mary Sue and Jeff Welch

- Chris Wesolowski
- Carla Westcotta/Hedberg Foundation, Inc.
- Wolters Kluwer
- Brett Woodward
- Marc and Deb Yarbrough
- Michael Zachman
- Jill Zmaczynski

## **\$100 to \$499**

- Christina and Marc Abbagnaro
- David and Heather Abels
- Erin Abzug
- ADK Beta Pi Chapter
- Susan Agate
- Christopher Aksland
- Laura Albright
- Alight
- Michael Allen
- Tina Allen
- Pim Alley
- Armando Almendarez
- Charles and Ricki Alva
- Sarah and Mike Alzamora
- American Family Mutual Insurance
- Ande Andersen
- Jason and Cindy Anderson
- Kendall Anderson
- Trisha and Jim Anderson
- Dirk and Marybeth Anderson
- Chris Anderson
- Peggy Anderson
- Nicole Anderson
- Paul Andrulis
- Anonymous
- Anonymous
- Ansel Brainerd Cook Chapter, NSDAR
- Patricia Antonik
- Aon
- Kim and Troy Appel
- Apple
- Arlington Heights Alumnae Club of Pi Beta Phi
- Janice and Jeffrey Aronoff
- Sharon Artman
- Jan Ashley

- Paul Aspan
- Matthew Ausman
- Kenzie Babbs
- Stuart and Nancy Babendir
- Luke and Meredith Back
- Susan and Stephen Baird
- Susan Baker
- Greg Baker
- Chris Baker
- Christel Ballog
- Susan Banks
- Shari Barich
- Michelle Baron
- Lisa Barr
- Kim Bart
- Elizabeth Bart
- Douglas Bateksy
- Janis and Gilbert Bathgate
- Anna Bauschke
- John Bayalis
- Becton Dickinson & Company
- Jonathan Behm
- Debra Behrman
- Dean and Mary Bekas
- Herbert and Jane Beller
- Richard Belzer
- John Bender
- Kirk Benedict
- Gwen Bennett
- Tom Berarducci
- James and Anne Berger
- Janet Bergman
- Sheila Bhagavan
- Rob Bice
- Christopher Biesboer
- Joan and John Blasko
- Mary Beth Blauwet
- Adam and Erin Blitz
- Edward and Carole Block
- Lawrence Bloom
- Andrew and Kate Bluestein
- Stacy Blum
- John Bode
- Jack Bodman
- Boeing
- Meghan and Ryan Boland
- Tim Bolton
- Luciana Bonifazi



# 2024 INVESTORS

- William and Linda Borst
- Gail and Kevin Bosman
- Darcy Bowe
- Charlie and Calvin Bowen
- Patrick Boyle
- Demetra Brand
- Dan Brandt
- Enda and Rachel Brennan
- Martha Bronersky
- Mary Ann Bronersky
- Natalie Brottman
- Alaina Brown
- Meredith Bruner
- Denise Bryant
- Lydia Bueschel
- Ben Buetell
- Tom Buhrmann
- Lillian Bui
- David and Kristy Burden
- Betsey Burkhart
- Ian Burkland
- Kevin and Elaine Burns
- Ashley Bynum
- Parris Caffey
- Terrence Cahill
- Anne Cahill
- John and Victoria Cairns
- Donna Calandra
- Jim and Marcy Calaway
- Kelli and John Calzaretta
- Patricia Campbell
- Robert Campos
- Patrick and Betsy Canning
- Chad Capista
- Matt Cappelletti
- Martha Carlos
- Brian and Carol Carlson
- Mary Carpenter
- Robert Carr
- Kimberly Carris
- Jared Carter
- Meredith Castro
- Candace and Spencer Cattell
- Timothy Caya
- Gerald Cecchin
- Paul Cecchin
- David and Mary Joan Cepla
- Lindsey and Michael Chabraja
- Alison and Adam Chalom
- Samantha Chan

- Muriel Chandler
- Alyson Chapman
- Dave Charman
- Kesha Chau
- Hui-Ju Chen
- Byung and Sung Cheon
- Tom and Kara Chlebek
- Steve Christ
- Ryan Cialdella
- Craig Clark
- Josh Clark
- Gretchen Clemens
- Rhonda and Russell Cohen
- Frank and Sherry Cohen
- Andrew and Jenna Cohen
- College of Lake County
- Christine Collins
- Constellation Brands
- Lori Cook
- Elizabeth and David Copeland
- Jennifer Cordova
- Robert Cordova
- Patrick Corlaci
- Christine Coulombe
- Maureen Cox McKenna
- Carolyn Crimi
- Tom Crowley
- Elizabeth Cucci
- Sara and Nicholas Curran
- Karen Cushing
- Morgan Czerwinski
- Chris Daglish
- Kerry Davi
- Toby and Sylvia Davis
- David and Deborah Deal
- Garrett DeCwikiel
- Steve Delfavero
- Terry DeMarco and Rose Campasano
- Christine DeMasi
- Patricia Denman
- Ryan Dent
- Cecelia Deslauriers
- Gita Deva
- Lee Dickinson
- Jeffrey and Julia Diermeier
- Layne Dinnell
- Antonio Dipaolo
- Discover Financial Services

- Annalisa DiVito
- Jonathan Dixon
- Amanda Doblin
- Jason Domash
- Tom and Katherine Donovan
- Eric and Paula Doty
- Ciara Downey
- Marjorie DuBrow
- Michelle Dufault
- Deborah Duffy
- Jill Duffy
- Jane Duncan
- Kurt Duncan
- Lois and Morris Dyner
- Dom Dziurgot
- Eric Eager
- Kellyann Easley
- Zak Ehrmantraut
- Joseph Eisenhut and Amber Emken
- Steve Lightbourn and Jill Ellefson
- Marc and Sallie Elman
- Jan Elman Stout
- Leeann Enright
- Diana Epstein
- Maarin Erbacher
- Mark Estes
- Stacy Etheredge
- Sandra and Ken Falkinham
- Kaplan Rosenow Family Foundation
- Kevin Fanning
- Elliot Farkas
- Lisa Featherer
- Matt Feetterer
- Lisa Feichter
- Jessica Feiler
- Steve and Debbie Felsenthal
- Roger and Nancy Ferch
- Nathan Fey
- Christina Filip
- Sanford and Fern Finkel
- Patrick Finn
- Mike Finnin
- First Horizon Foundation
- Spence and Ashley Fischer
- David Fishman and Julie Rosner
- Jennifer Fissel

# 2024 INVESTORS

- Kristen Fitzpatrick
- Janine Fletcher-Thomas
- Cathy Floriani
- Virginia Follmer-Stafman
- Mary Forester
- Jason Fowler
- Jason Fox
- Peter Frac
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**Special thanks to all those community and publishing partners who made gifts in kind during 2024.**



## 50-HOUR CLUB

**At Bernie's Book Bank, the joy of empowering more children to read is only matched by the joy of being part of a community of like-minded people committed to the same cause.**

- Ande Andersen
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- Lisa Schurgin
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- Judy Siegal
- Yujeung Song
- Jonah Swanson
- Nancy Tassler
- John Venson



Dear Bernys books, Thank You for all of the books you have sent us. We are so excited to read them. Every year since 3rd grade I have enjoyed reading the books you sent us. We are really grateful. Sincerely, Julia Negrych



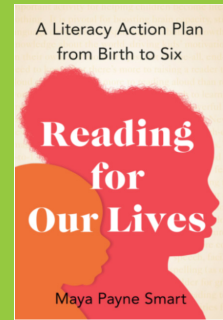
**OUR WORK**  
IS JUST GETTING STARTED.



# 2024 NAEP RESULTS

## With Author And Early Literacy Advocate, Maya Smart

The nation's report card is in for 2024, and the results aren't pretty.



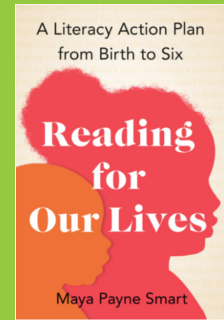
The latest National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading scores are deeply concerning. Too many students across the U.S. are struggling to read, and learning has not rebounded since the pandemic. Even more troubling, the gap between the strongest and weakest readers is growing.

### **Here are five things you need to know about the 2024 U.S. reading scores.**

1. The NAEP Test Offers a National Snapshot of Reading Achievement
  - National reading scores remain below pre-pandemic levels across all tested grades.
  - Fourth- and eighth-grade scores dropped by two points from 2022.
  - Less than a third of students nationwide can read grade-level texts with understanding.
  - One-third of eighth graders scored “below basic” on reading skills—the greatest percentage to date. This means they struggle to identify main ideas or sequence events in a passage—skills critical for high school success.
2. If A Child Is Selected to Take NAEP, It Matters
  - The goal is to test a small, nationally representative group of students.
  - The results provide insight into how students in your district and state compare nationally. They also inform educational policy and resource allocation at the state and national levels.
  - NAEP scores don't just reflect what happens at a child's school and other local schools. Many external factors also play a role. Things like parents' education levels, reading and literacy practices at home, outside tutoring, and the experiences kids have that build their vocabularies all affect reading performance, not just classroom instruction.
3. NAEP Is the Only Apples-to-Apples Comparison Across States
  - Each state sets its own standards for what qualifies as “proficient” on state reading tests, which means results vary widely. NAEP provides the only national benchmark.
  - For Example:
    - In Wisconsin, recent state tests showed 51% of fourth graders were proficient in reading.
    - But NAEP told a different story. Only about 30% were deemed proficient by that nationally standardized measure.

# 2024 NAEP RESULTS

## With Author And Early Literacy Advocate, Maya Smart



4. Covid Learning Loss Lingers—But Gaps Were Widening Before
  - The 2024 NAEP results confirm what many educators feared: Learning hasn't recovered from school and home disruptions during the pandemic.
  - The biggest declines were among the lowest-performing students—those who were already struggling before Covid-19 hit.
  - The result? The reading gap is growing. In 2024, the difference in reading between the lowest- and highest-performing students widened to 100 points on NAEP's 500-point scale. This reading skill gap has been increasing for over a decade.
  - This is sometimes called the Matthew Effect: The (literacy) rich get richer, and the (literacy) poor get poorer.
5. Demographics Aren't Destiny—But Support Matters
  - NAEP scores show disparities by race and income level—but they don't prove that certain students are doomed to struggle.
  - Instead, they highlight opportunities for action. These gaps signal a lack of early literacy support and systemic interventions long before children start school.
  - Kids from lower-income backgrounds often have fewer books at home, less exposure to rich vocabulary in their daily lives, and less access to high-quality early education. All of this contributes to the gap, but they aren't inevitable. And all of it can be changed for individual children, and—with collective action—for all children.

Too many kids are struggling to read—and the gap is widening. But reading outcomes aren't set in stone. With family literacy practices, early intervention, high-quality instruction, and strong literacy advocacy, we can change the story.

**Want to see NAEP results for your state?**

**Visit [nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/](https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/) to see results and more.**

**Maya Smart is an author and early literacy advocate who helps parents nurture, teach, and advocate for children on the road to reading. Her book *Reading for Our Lives* is out now! [Get your copy here.](#)**

**[mayasmart.com](https://mayasmart.com)**

## OUR COMMITMENT REMAINS STRONG

For fifteen years, we have dedicated ourselves to putting free, high-quality books into the hands and homes of children who need them most. Today, thanks to our passionate community of corporate partners, investors, and volunteers, we have provided over 28 million books.

28 million books is commendable, but it is not enough. Literacy is not a luxury. The need is great and ever increasing. The urgency is pressing.

We take this personally, and will not stop until every child has books of their own at home.

Together we can work towards solving the children's literacy crisis in America.

**Are you in?**



# SAVE THE DATE

## Getting Books Into Children's Homes Changes Their Lives. And Ours.

Please consider volunteering, donating books or dollars, sponsoring, or attending an event.

[Schedule A Volunteer Session >](#)

[Organize A Book Drive >](#)

[Make A Gift >](#)

### 2025 Events:

#### Chicagoland

[Book Lovers' Lunch](#) - 5/30/25

Bernie Cup Series

- [Kemper Lakes](#) - 6/30/25

- [Wynstone](#) - 7/28/25

- [Hawthorn Woods](#) - 9/15/25

[Birdies & Books](#) - 8/26/25

[Booksgiving](#) - 11/8/25

[Patrick Mannelly Award](#) - 12/13/25

#### Greater Milwaukee Area

[Book Lovers' Lunch](#) - 5/22/25

Bernie Cup Series

- [Strawberry Creek](#) - 8/18/25

- [North Shore](#) - 9/8/25

[Booksgiving](#) - 11/19/25 - 11/20/25

#### Florida's Suncoast

[Bernie Cup Harbourside](#) - 3/26/25

[Sarasota Launch Event](#) - 3/31/25

For more information and ways to get involved visit [berniesbookbank.org](https://berniesbookbank.org).

# 2025 BOARD

## Together, We Move Mountains Of Books And Reshape Our Communities In Momentous Ways.

### National Board

- Bill Birck (Chair), President & CEO of Reed Construction
- Chris Beer, Co-founder & Integrator at BuildYourOrg
- Craig Caffarelli, Chief Operating Officer at GEM Realty Capital Inc
- Mike Herr, Former Corporate Finance Executive at SRAM LLC
- Nick Jones (Finance Chair), Former Chief Financial Officer and Senior Executive at Teletrac Navman
- Erin Kirchner, Partner at Cooley LLP
- Phil Menzel, Partner at JM Search
- Eric Olson, Senior Executive and P&L Owner
- Regina Ruocco (Secretary), Former Preschool Services Librarian at Glenview Public Library
- Geoff Surkamer (Vice Chair), Chief Executive Officer at MSI Data
- Kristie Vainikos Stegen, Chief Marketing & Communications Officer at CoreLogic
- Todd Wyman, Co-founder/CEO of Identifyn, retired executive at GE & Ingersoll Rand

### Greater Milwaukee Advisory Board

- Geoff Surkamer (Chair), Chief Executive Officer at MSI Data
- Brian Adamson, Managing Partner at ICAP Development
- Elissa Bowlin, Partner at Habush Habush & Rottier (Secretary)
- Megan Cerbins, Director of ENL and Student Services at Seton Catholic Schools
- Warren Corrado, Market Development Manager at Hellerman Tyton North American
- Kevin Duffey, Director at Baird (Treasurer)
- Edward DeShazer, Owner, Teachers Ed Consulting and Executive Director, Greater Holy Temple Christian Academy (Vice Chair)
- Meena Held, Regional Industry Consultant Manager at Rockwell Automation
- Joe Rock, Managing Partner at KPMG Milwaukee
- Steven Stupiec-Hernandez, VP-Regional Manager at Town Bank

### Chicagoland Advisory Board

- Jeff Burtelow (Chair), Managing Director at William Blair & Company
- Rob Armstrong (Vice Chair), Chief Marketing Officer at Zebra Technologies Corporation
- Aaron Cox, Former CFO Horizon Therapeutics
- Nicole Jagielski (Secretary), Senior Corporate Counsel at Zurich North America
- Nick Jones (Finance), Former Chief Financial Officer and Senior Executive at Teletrac Navman
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- Lynn Van Cleave, Executive Vice President at Wintrust Financial
- Andrew Weil, Corporate Partner at DLA Piper LLP
- Laura Wood, VP, Associate General Counsel, W.W. Grainger, Inc.

### Florida Suncoast Task Force

- Todd Wyman (National Board, Local Lead), Co-founder/CEO of Identifyn, retired executive at GE & Ingersoll Rand
- Karen Della Penta, Local philanthropist
- Anne Girod, Philanthropist and community organizer
- Dana Gliniecki, Philanthropist and community organizer
- Todd Kontny, Q & Q Inc., President



# OUR TEAM

## Get To Know Our Passionate And Driven Team.

### Chicagoland

- Kristen Daniels, Executive Director, Chicagoland
- Amber Emken, Human Resources Director

### Development & Marketing

- Megan Leahy, Director of Development and Brand
- Adrian Ayala, Marketing Lead
- Christina Holt, Development Events Manager
- Lauren Marquez, Manager of Development Operations
- David Whitlock, Partner Communications Lead

### IT & Supply Chain

- Thomas Lacher, Director of IT and Supply Chain
- Carol Collier, Community Development Lead
- Jean Giardina, Children's Book Leveling Specialist
- William Nixon, Children's Book Leveling Specialist

### Operations

- Megan Lantz, Senior Manager of Operations
- David Hill, Processing Center Training Lead
- Minnie Martinez, Processing Center Administration Lead
- April Ford, Processing Center Specialist
- Jacob Giardina, Processing Center Specialist
- Elliot O'Rourke, Processing Center Specialist
- Maddison Vega, Processing Center Specialist
- Lou Bohon, Visitor Services Specialist
- Sarah Hughes, Visitor Services Specialist
- John Noster, Fleet Team Manager
- Danny Dagis, Fleet Driver
- Dan Morris, Fleet Driver
- Gary Woodley, Fleet Driver
- Matthew Heiser, Facilities Manager
- Davis Grons, Back of House Specialist
- Porcha Weathersby, Facilities Specialist

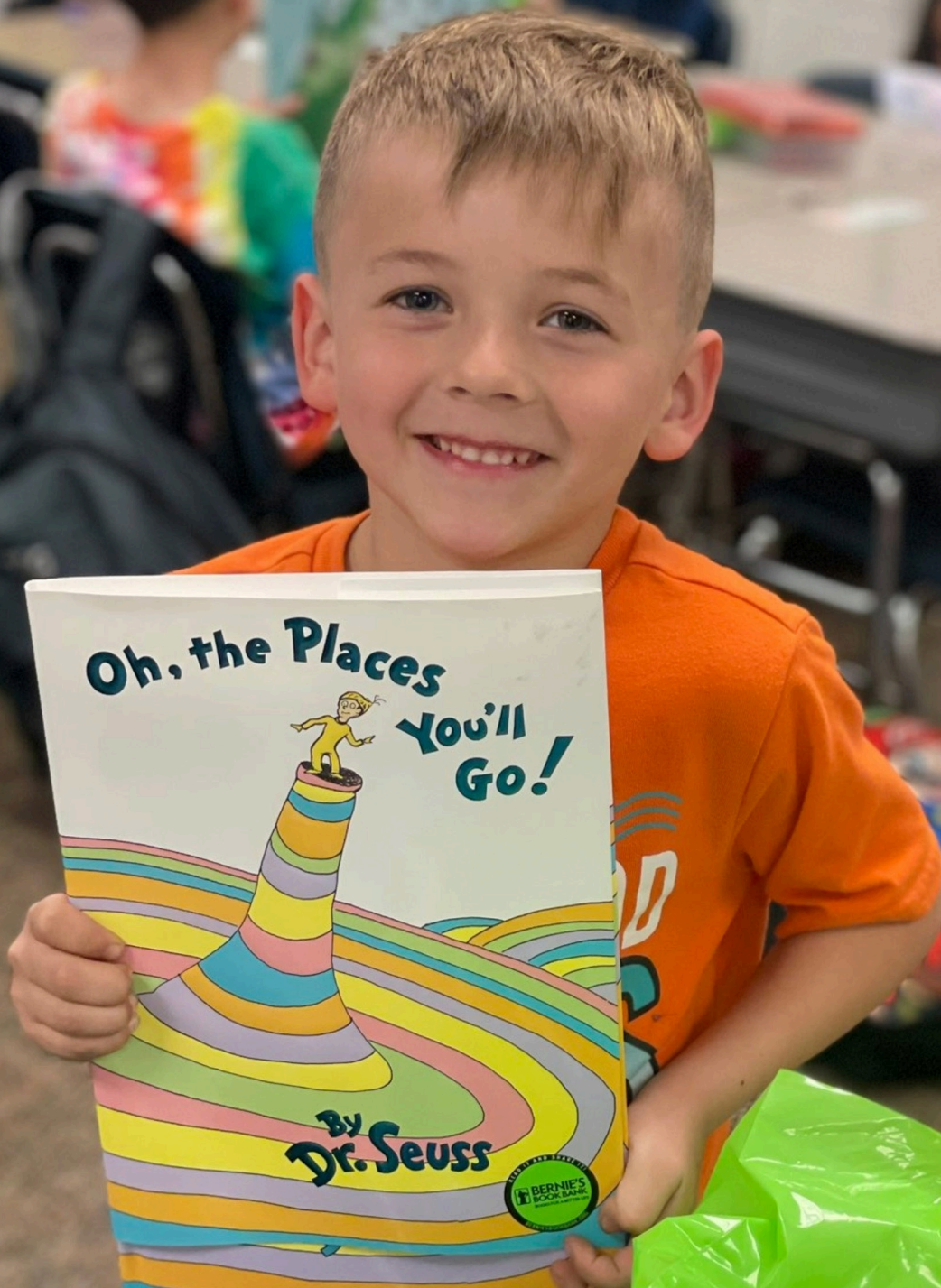
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- Jenna Renno, Executive Director

### Brian Floriani, Founder







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K-1st Grade

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