

## 2021 Year in Review

The Literacy Cooperative (TLC) celebrated its 15<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary in 2021. In 2006, TLC was formed as a joint initiative of the Cleveland, Martha Holden Jennings, and George Gund Foundations with a goal of addressing literacy levels, determining need, identifying solutions, and implementing a collaborative literacy plan to create an effective, seamless pathway for lifelong learning. Since its inception, TLC has been bringing the community, agencies, and stakeholders together to maximize shared outcomes, and deliver greater return on investment. In 2021, the challenges of the pandemic remained but The Literacy Cooperative team came together for another successful year.

## Early Literacy Initiatives

### Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL)



This unique book gifting program is available to all children in Ohio under the age of 5. Children enrolled in DPIL receive a brand new, high-quality, age-appropriate book in the mail each month until they turn 5 years old. TLC manages DPIL for all of Cuyahoga County and Wickliffe. Over 760,000 books have been mailed to more than 43,000 children since 2014.

We're able to provide additional support to families through email, text, and our social media channels with information about helpful tips, resources, and events through directed emails and a quarterly newsletter. [Learn more and enroll here.](#)



### Book Donations



At the start of the pandemic in 2020, TLC began donating Imagination Library books to our partners to distribute to the families they serve throughout the county. We continued this practice in 2021 and have donated more than 6,000 books to 29 partner organizations including [NEON](#), [Laura's Home](#), [SPARK](#), [PRE4CLE](#), [Providence House](#), [University Settlement](#), and many others. Imagination Library also participated in 35 events across Cuyahoga where books and enrollment information were given to families in attendance.



## Family Engagement

With funding from the Ohio Collaborative for Educating Remotely, TLC provided 17 virtual family early literacy workshops along with specially selected books and learning materials to 104 East Cleveland and Maple Heights school districts' preschoolers. The sessions enabled caregivers to provide more enriching learning experiences and environments at home. With teachers knowing that all children in their classes possessed the same materials, they encouraged families to explore the materials outside of class, thus building deeper mastery and supporting the children's overall development.



TLC also provided 3 virtual programs for kindergarteners and distributed related books and learning materials for each child and classroom.

In a survey of participants, 95% of respondents reported tuning in and taking turns (in conversation) with their children more often. 90% reported reading more often with their children and 80% reported reading dialogically more often. 90% reported



rhyming or playing with language more and 95% reported learning something new after attending a program. Survey respondents reported that they enjoyed the programs:

- "We try to ask open-ended questions instead of yes/no ones to promote conversation. We notice that B's vocabulary has expanded significantly by doing this"
- "I learned just how important it is to read to my son and expose him to things"
- "They were interactive and fun for the kids, kept him busy and interested. The tips were helpful. We loved going through the activity packages and my son loved those"



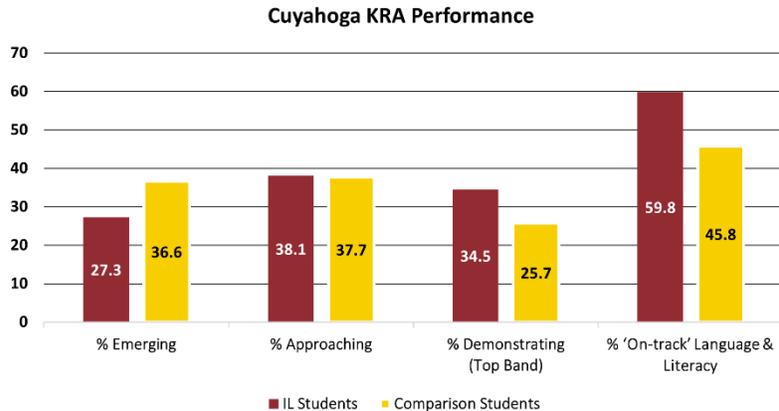
## Jill's Literacy League

Twenty-two members of [Jill's Literacy League](#) (Imagination Library's volunteer corps) and ten volunteers from [Overdrive](#) committed over 425 hours of assistance. We are grateful to all! [Click here to volunteer.](#)



## Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Impact Report 2021

This report, prepared by [The Center for Community Solutions](#), highlights the transformational and measurable impacts of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL) on family reading habits and kindergarten readiness. It includes an analysis done by Case Western Reserve University and the results of a recent survey sent to families enrolled in the program.



The analysis has shown:

- A positive correlation between enrollment in DPIL and a child's Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) score
- The longer a child is enrolled in DPIL, the higher their KRA score

Furthermore, in a 2021 survey, the majority of families report:

- Reading to their child/children more often since receiving DPIL books
- Their child is asking to be read to more often since receiving DPIL books
- Feeling DPIL is better preparing their child for kindergarten
- Their child using new words they learned in DPIL books more often
- Appreciating the uniqueness, variety, and diversity of characters in DPIL books

The survey results showed an even greater positive impact in zip codes with higher rates of poverty. These findings are consistent with other studies conducted around the nation. Here, in Cuyahoga County, we see the importance of this program and the true impact it is having on our community.

[Read the full report here](#)

## 2Gen Initiatives

In July, our fourth annual 2Gen Summit was attended by 80 professionals working in non-profit, community, education, and workforce development.



Since April, TLC and the Steering Committee participated in racial equity and inclusion training, which addresses system inequities, recommends processes for promoting inclusion, and reduces the burden of care coordination for families.

TLC conducted an assessment focused on the progress of the 2Gen initiatives and recognized the need for capacity-building around data collection, continued caregiver engagement in program design, opportunities for equitable access, and the need for continued collaboration and shared learning. The steering committee responded with a 2021-2022 plan to develop progress indicators, advocate for funding and awareness of 2Gen programming, and formalize a Community of Practice to further develop the social capital of our partners and families.

[Click here to learn more](#)

## Career Pathways

### Contextualized Curriculum

TLC worked with our adult education partners to publish contextualized curriculum for healthcare, manufacturing, IT/digital literacy, construction, and hospitality. In 2021, TLC hosted six sessions focused on the use of the updated contextualized curriculum for adult education and workforce partners. One of the sessions was conducted as part of the Coalition on Adult Basic Education’s (COABE) 2021 National Conference. This session hosted 75 educators and administrators across the United States.

During the past three years, subscribers of the curriculum were surveyed to gain insight on their experiences in the classroom using the curriculum. Of those surveyed, 90% are using the curriculum on a regular basis or as needed. The healthcare and manufacturing curriculum have been downloaded and used most. When asked what they valued about the curriculum, 3 out of 4 of the subscribers regularly using the curriculum indicated the following:

- The curriculum enables the instructor to create and maintain a positive atmosphere for learning
- Instructors use the curriculum to tailor the programs to the needs of the students
- The curriculum builds on students’ strengths and skills (not deficiencies)

[Click here to access the contextualized curriculum.](#)



Healthcare  
Contextualized  
Curriculum



Manufacturing  
Contextualized  
Curriculum



Digital Literacy  
Contextualized  
Curriculum



Construction  
Contextualized  
Curriculum



Hospitality  
Contextualized  
Curriculum

## **P16 Employment Committee**

TLC and the [Fund for Our Economic Future](#) co-chair the committee to build a network of adult education and workforce development providers for the residents of Slavic Village. Partners involved in the Slavic Village P16 Employment Committee worked with McGregor Earn and Learn and recruited adults interested in STNA employment. In partnership with NEO Skill Corps, the partners assisted with the recruitment of employers, participants and community resources for a fall Job and Resource Fair on October 14, 2021. Twenty-nine employers and community resources participated in the event with 40 job seekers in attendance. The event showcased the need for workers and the lack of individuals seeking employment. [Click here to read Cleveland 19 News – WOIO’s report on the event.](#)

## **NEO Skill Corps**

For eight years, TLC has partnered with University Settlement on the [NEO Skill Corps AmeriCorps program](#). TLC provides technical assistance, professional development for the members, and assists with host site recruitment.



Two full-time and four half-time AmeriCorps members provided financial literacy sessions to 387 adults and assisted 48 adults with adult education and workforce development activities. In addition, the members worked to convert all the financial literacy, adult education, and workforce development workshops to online or virtual formats. The 2021-22 service year started in August with the goal to recruit a full team of 11 members at 10 host sites. Members started their service year with training on the use of TLC’s contextualized curriculum.

# Professional Development

TLC uses its professional development platform to share promising practices. In 2021, we served 800 educators, administrators, volunteers, and other literacy stakeholders through our 21 professional development sessions, a 2Gen Literacy Summit, a national adult education conference presentation, and our Literacy Dashboard data share event. Our online program enabled us to extend our reach beyond Cleveland to statewide and several out of state participants from Arkansas, California, Indiana, Louisiana, Missouri, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. High-interest topics with excellent content and experienced trainers continue to be the reasons instructors, administrators, tutors, and others across the literacy spectrum come to our sessions. Overall, 96% would recommend the session to a colleague; 70%, ranked “receiving instruction on how to use a practical strategy” as the greatest benefit of the session, and 66% implemented what they learned into a training at their workplace.

[Click here to learn more](#)

## Public Policy and Advocacy

### **New report release: “Employers: Advancing Literacy is Key to Advancing your Workforce”**

Using data from The Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), TLC released this report that calls for employers to integrate literacy and numeracy education into job training. From 2012-2017 US Adults ages 16-74 participated in the PIAAC survey and according to the results, Cuyahoga is consistent with the national average in that the majority of adults could benefit from additional literacy and numeracy instruction. Furthermore, the assessment revealed that low literacy permeates a wide range of demographics and proxies such as levels of educational attainment, current employment status, and job skill classification.

**Therefore, it may be difficult to determine who, in fact, could benefit from literacy and numeracy skill improvement.** Even though workers at lower literacy and numeracy levels have adapted to be able to perform their current tasks, they may find difficulty advancing in their careers when more complex responsibilities and skill building are required. Therefore, employers should integrate literacy and numeracy instruction into workplace training.

[Click here for more information and to read the full report.](#)

[This report was recently featured in a News 5 Cleveland story, click here for the full story.](#)

## Kurt Karakul Literacy Award

In June of this year, [The Third Federal Foundation](#) announced a \$500,000 gift to The Literacy Cooperative to establish the Kurt Karakul Prize. The gift will allow TLC to grant an award to those who are making positive impacts in their communities and who exemplify Kurt’s dedication as a literacy champion.

[Learn more here](#)



# Annual Events

## CLE Bee VI-rtual

The sixth annual CLE Bee was a thrilling competition hosted by Mike McIntyre and Mike Polk Jr. with appearances from numerous local celebrities. Queen Bee Betsy Kling welcomed 119 audience members to see teams do their best to spell the challenging words read by Mike Snyder and Dr. Monyka Price. The competition was tense down to the last word and Hyland Software was crowned champion for the second year in a row! Congratulations to them and to all the teams who helped raise awareness of the importance of literacy.



We want to thank our sponsors Third Federal Foundation, The Lubrizol Corporation, Cleveland Cliff's, as well as the teams, emcees, word readers, Queen Bee, special guests, Board of Trustees, partners, friends, and Imagination Library families for making CLE Bee VI such a compelling and successful night. We'll see you next year for CLE Bee VII!

[Click here to watch the CLE Bee VI highlight video.](#)

## Read Across America



This year our annual Read Across America event featured a conversation between 14th Librarian of Congress, Dr. Carla Hayden and Cleveland Public Library Director Felton Thomas. They discussed the importance of libraries and answered questions from the audience. Over 140 attendees watched the live event thanks to our sponsors PNC Bank, Third Federal Foundation, The Center for Community Solutions, and The Literacy Cooperative Board of Trustees.

[Click here to watch the full event.](#)

[Learn more about Dr. Hayden here.](#)

# Social Media Engagement

**Twitter:** More than 120K people reached since the beginning of the year

**Facebook:** Audience grew by 34% for TLC page  
Audience grew by 18% on DPIL page

**Instagram:** Audience increased steadily by 3%, engagement increased

**LinkedIn:** Audience grew by 33%  
Number of people reached increased

## International Literacy Day

On September 8th, 2021, we spread awareness of the digital divide through coordinating a mass social media campaign, bringing together 23 of our partners. We asked individuals and organizations to use the hashtags #AccessCLE21 and #ILD2021, and post selfies that answers the question: “What does digital literacy mean to you?” The campaign generated over 4,300 impressions on Twitter and reached over 1,600 people on Facebook. We thank our partners for helping raise awareness of this critical issue!

[Click here to see the tweets from the day](#)



## Media Coverage

The Literacy Cooperative's work and successes were featured by numerous news outlets this year:

- [The "Employers: Advancing Literacy is Key to Advancing your Workforce" report was featured by News 5](#)
- [BusinessWire](#) and [Yahoo News](#) published a story on The Kurt Karakul Literacy Award
- [Imagination Library was featured by Spectrum News One](#)
- [News 5 meteorologist Trent Magill competes in CLE Bee VI](#)
- [WKYC highlighted their team for CLE Bee VI](#)
- [Ideastream interviewed Dr. Carla Hayden for the Read Across America event.](#)

# Thank you for your support!