



Aspire Education

2020-2021 Impact Report



Educational
Mentorship
for All Bay Area
Students



Custom-Built
Programs with Schools,
Fellow Nonprofits,
and Community
Organizations



Impact 100
East Bay

2021 first-place
award recipient
among 211
organizations



Students Mobilized
to Mentor Young
Readers
in Literacy



ONE OF MANY SUCCESS STORIES: SHIVANI & NZUBE



COMMUNITY
READING BUDDIES

I've never seen her in a class where she was this excited."

2021 COMMUNITY READING BUDDIES PARENT



Imagine having your future dictated by how well your earliest education inspired a joy of reading. Coming into this year, Nzube was an energetic, creative 3rd grader with a love for drawing but who hadn't yet felt confident or excited about reading. Despite excelling in other areas, Nzube was reading below grade level. His graduation is nine years away, but statistically that already made him 4 times less likely to graduate high school.

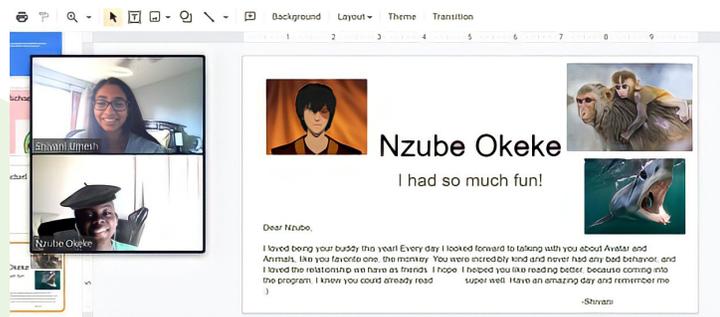


Enter Community Reading Buddies (CRB) and Nzube's Youth Mentor this summer, Shivani Umesh. A freshman at Seneca Valley, Shivani worked with Nzube twice a week using award-winning digital literacy platform BookNook. Nzube quickly trusted Shivani through her immediate encouragement and enthusiasm.

Shivani found that Nzube had never been introduced to nonfiction books. And she saw him come alive when they worked through stories of history and real-life figures.

And the results were astounding. Not only did Nzube work with Shivani for one 8-week cycle, Nzube asked to stay on for a second (8 week) cycle of CRB and is now reading on a 4th grade level. **Nzube grew by more than a full grade level in literacy!** That injection of confidence has made Nzube genuinely enthusiastic about reading. "For the first time, he started reading on his own outside the program," his Mom Jane said. **"He even asked me to go to the library. He's never done that!"**

But it's not only Nzube who benefited from the program. Trained along with over 300 other Youth Mentors in social-emotional skills, Shivani demonstrated growth in Connection, Confidence, and Communication. Through the program, Shivani said, "I really improved my listening and communication skills!"



Shivani and Nzube's story embodies the mission of Aspire: to provide access to a transformative educational mentor to every child in the Bay Area.

PROBLEM & VISION FOR THE BAY AREA

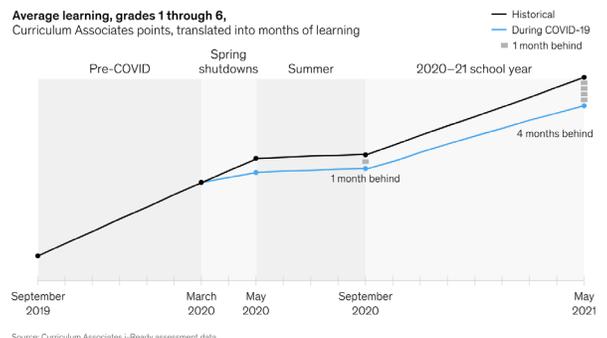
Potential is equally distributed across lines of race and class, but opportunity is not. That is even more true after COVID than it was before.

The circumstances Bay Area children are born into predict the opportunities they will have in life.



While school segregation and the resource gap between school systems establish that divide, outside resources exacerbate it. Over the course of the pandemic, affluent students have had resources to help make up for the lack of in-person instruction, but tens of thousands of Bay Area students have not. In fact, in the first year of the pandemic low-income students who were already behind fell a full six months further behind in learning.

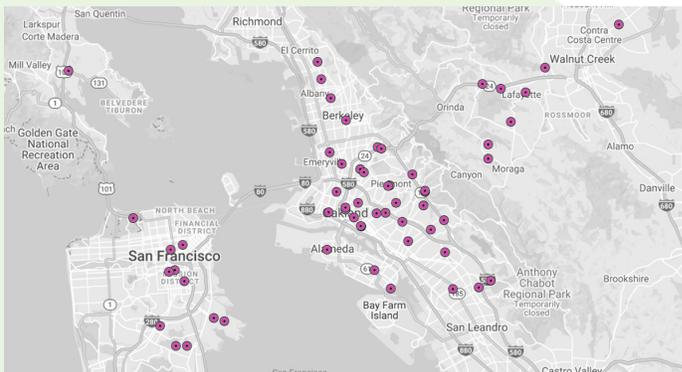
The initial shock was less severe in reading, but losses continued to build up over the 2020–21 school year.



The core of Aspire is to transform an engine of inequity into an engine for equity and meet the challenge of unfinished learning.

For every hour of tutoring or educational mentorship, we provide a full hour to an underserved student through our scholarship program, collaborative partnerships, and Community Reading Buddies. Further, students we tutor and mentor are then invited to be trained in social-emotional skills and mobilized to mentor a younger student in literacy.

While there have been countless amazing stories like Nzube’s, we still have a very long way to go if we wish to tip the scales of equity in the Bay. **Our vision is that in 10 years, every Bay Area student will have access to an educational mentor.**



Aspire’s presence in 2019-20.



16,699

Students served since 2005



8,244

Program hours in 2020-2021

I would not have been able to graduate without (Rachel's) help!"

LANYZAH, WHO IMPROVED HER GRADE IN MATH FROM AN F TO A C+ WITH ASPIRE

For 16 years, the organizational foundation of Aspire has been our transformative tutoring program. Our diverse team of tutors ensure all learning is student-driven, beginning with an authentic relationship and empowering them to become active, lifelong learners. We measure our success not on how long students need us, but on how quickly and successfully they are able to move forward without support. The pandemic did not stop Aspire from making a deep impact, as **LaNyzah's story is only**

one of many after we pivoted quickly to 100% virtual tutoring, supporting students who had both fallen deeply behind during the pandemic or who were at risk of not graduating.



By the Numbers



1,824
Hours



85
Students



\$18,135
in Scholarships

I cannot imagine how I could have improved my SAT score so fast without Percy's help."

SOK ENG, WHO INCREASED HER SAT SCORE FROM 800 TO 1260 THIS SUMMER!

Collaborative Partnerships

As Aspire builds our reputation across the Bay Area, we create more and more opportunities to partner with other organizations fighting for the same educational equity. This past year, we worked with nine partners. Through the Boys & Girls Club of San Francisco, we worked with students at 11 different clubhouses, empowering them to new levels of achievement. Through the Rising Sun Center for Opportunity, our custom-designed courses enabled young adults to pass qualifying tests to enter construction careers. One of our favorite stories comes from our work with SHE-CAN. After we designed a custom SAT workshop for their high school girls this summer, they **increased their SAT scores by an average of more than 220 points!**



At a Glance



256
Students



8
Tutoring Programs During COVID

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS - COMMUNITY READING BUDDIES

"I love reading now!"
*RICHARD,
 A 2021 CRB 2ND GRADER*

Of all the success stories of '20-21, there was probably no greater success than that of our Community Reading Buddies (CRB) program. This year marked the first time in its 26 years our flagship program Community Reading Buddies has gone year round, growing from 137 pairs in '19-20 to 309 in '20-21. And the results were astounding.

For 25 years, CRB has been connecting youth volunteers in the Bay Area with low-income preK-3rd graders for a summer of one-on-one reading. Mentors not only work to close the early literacy gap, they receive the type of social-emotional training, experience, and support they need to be successful, independent adults.

Thanks to a new partnership with award-winning digital literacy platform BookNook, COVID-19 didn't interrupt our plans. In fact, it opened the door to new possibilities. Youth Mentors were able to use a dynamic platform that regularly assessed Buddies' growth and quickly adjusted to their areas for growth. Through that new virtual programming, **our 309 Buddies grew by an average of more than four months in literacy in only eight weeks.** Over a full year, that would be more than two years of literacy growth! Meanwhile, 96% of our Youth Mentors demonstrated growth as leaders and communicators.

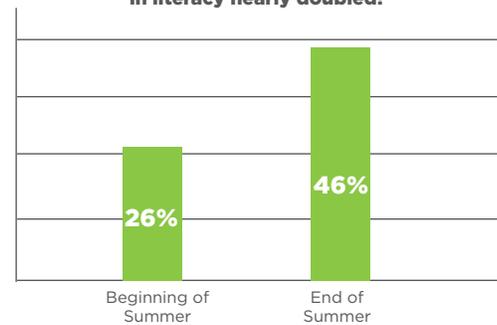
But this is not only exciting for these students. It's exciting for the potential of CRB's future. For years, in-person logistics have made it impossible to expand beyond a summer program. Now equipped with a proven virtual program, CRB can go year-round. And the community is asking for it. Though we accepted 309 Buddies, over 600 Oakland families expressed interest.

The potential of this new year-round Community Reading Buddies program is the biggest opportunity to rapidly reach Bay Area students since the program began. In fact, when the organization Impact 100 of

the East Bay had the opportunity to award one six-figure grant in 2021 to expand a program, among more than 70 applicants, they chose Aspire specifically to expand Community Reading Buddies. Our flagship program is truly on the verge of something special, and the communities around us are beginning to join in.



Over the summer CRB program, the number of students on grade level in literacy nearly doubled!



**COMMUNITY
 READING BUDDIES**



of Youth Mentors said they now feel empowered as a leader and contributor.



6

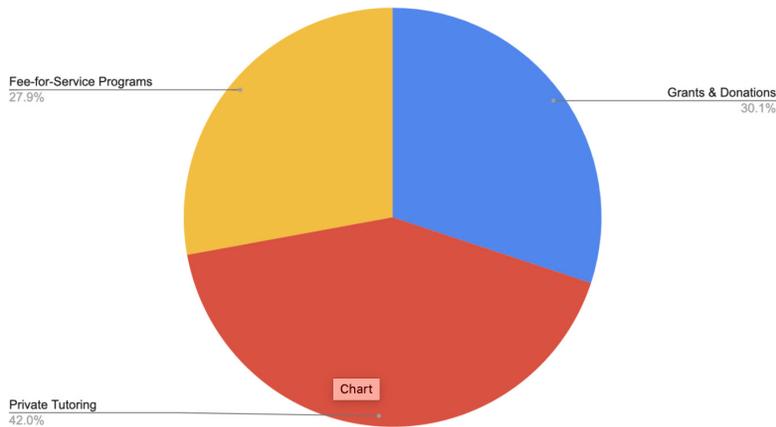
2nd graders made six months of reading progress in only 8 weeks

FINANCES & THE FUTURE

'20-21 Revenue: \$400,450

The most exciting part of Aspire's position is the future. There are many impactful literacy programs across the Bay, but none that reach students as efficiently as Community Reading Buddies. In fact, what it costs other literacy programs to reach one student, we can reach 6 or 7. And it will take efficient programs to reach an overwhelming need.

'20-21 Revenue



Before COVID, there were over 210,000 K-3rd graders across the Bay who were behind grade level in literacy. Undoubtedly, that number will be higher after the pandemic, and according to studies that makes those students four times as likely not to graduate high school. Because of that need, Aspire's #1 strategy is identifying partners to help us scale Community Reading Buddies as quickly as possible. We have the infrastructure. We have the Mentors. All we need now are the right partners.

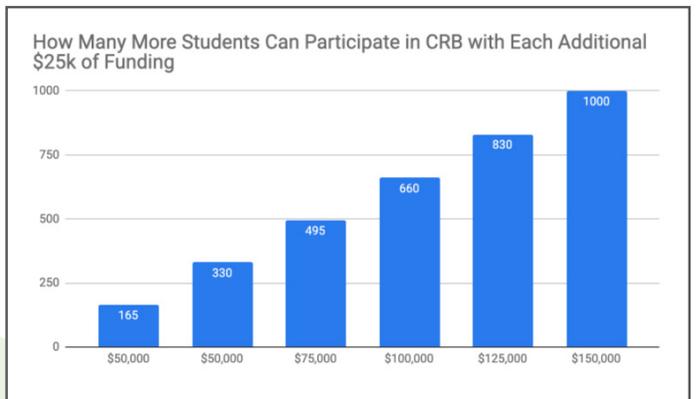
What's Next



Continue to provide an hour of educational mentorship for an underserved student for every year of fee-for-service tutoring.



Rapidly expand Community Reading Buddies and offer it year-round for the first time.



That's nearly 6 students for every \$1,000

THANK YOU

Key Community Partners

Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco
Construction Trades Workforce Initiative (CTWI)
Department of Rehabilitation
Girls Inc.
Head Royce School
LifeLaunchr
OUSD's Exploring College, Career, and Community Options Internship Program
Parker School
Ready, Set, Excel!
Rising Sun Center for Opportunity
SHE-CAN
Tandem, Partners in Early Learning
TEL-HI
West Oakland Middle School



Grantors

Bernard and Alba Witkin Foundation
Clorox Company Foundation
Lois Lenski Covey Foundation
Mechanics Bank Community Giving
Oakland Literacy Coalition
Quest Foundation
West Davis and Bergard Foundation
Witkin Foundation



Donors

Mindy Rogers
Gil Schwartz
And more than 70 additional individual donors

In-kind Donors

Galactic Fed
Matt Rife





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