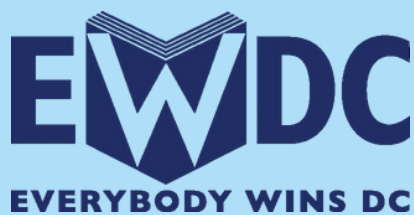




2022-2023

# Annual Report







Dear Friends:

What an amazing year! More than 1,300 one-on-one mentoring hours delivered, almost 1,000 students joining StoryTime activities, and 13,000 free books given away to kids and classrooms. Even better were the thousands of smiles on our students' faces as they once again sat side-by-side with their mentors.

When COVID closed schools in March 2020, we thought it would be just a few weeks until our mentors and students could resume their weekly reading sessions. Instead, it took 2.5 years to get our volunteers back in the classroom. And while EWDC successfully launched new programs that kept kids remotely engaged through reading, we all missed the quality time spent supporting our students in person.

That's why the 2022-23 program year was so special for EWDC. Not only did we continue to grow some of the new programs launched during the pandemic, but we also relaunched in-person mentoring sessions at 7 locations across the DC region. All the hard work and incredible support – support from people like you – gave us the gift to start again. We didn't waste a minute.

As you will see in this report, Power Readers helped our students become stronger readers and more confident individuals, all while finding joy in books. At the same time, we used books to create greater representation for all young readers and used stories to show kids that there is an amazing world beyond their own communities. The year was also filled with new partnerships that brought the joy of reading to kids and rekindled relationships that had been with EWDC since our launch in 1995. Like we said, what an amazing year it's been.

We are incredibly grateful to all our volunteers, partners, sponsors and friends who helped us get to where we are today. Together, we are engaging children's minds, empowering their growth, and inspiring their futures. Thank you all for being part of this incredible journey and for giving our students the tools they need to succeed.

With gratitude,

**Jill Sommers**  
Chair, Board of Directors

**Jordi Hutchinson**  
Executive Director

# Our Story

EWDC got its start in 1995, matching Senators and Senate staff with elementary students at Brent Elementary School (DCPS) to read together for one hour a week. No assignments, no exams. Just quality time spent reading, laughing, and learning. The success of these early reading sessions helped EWDC become who we are today: a regional non-profit that brings the benefits of books to thousands of children each year. Through one-on-one mentoring, group reading activities, and free book distributions, our students become stronger readers, enthusiastic learners, and more confident individuals. We are helping children build the foundation they need to succeed.



With 28 years of continuous service to families, EWDC has had a positive impact on a generation of readers across the Washington Metro Area. Major organizational milestones and accomplishments include:

- An estimated 90,000 children served.
- More than 36,000 books given away since the launch of The Book Project in 2019.
- Keeping programs 100% free for families and schools – nobody has to pay to benefit from our reading activities.
- Launching new focus areas that help address racial justice and elevate diversity, empathy, and inclusion through reading.
- Integrating new themes into EWDC programs to help students better develop their social-emotional skills and expand their horizons, including using StoryTime to support career exploration and social justice issues.

## OUR MISSION

Everybody Wins DC harnesses the power of reading to help kids thrive at school and in life. Our programs support students' academic and social-emotional development, expand their horizons, and foster a love of reading and learning. But that's not all. By creating opportunities for kids to read or be read to, EWDC is connecting volunteers with their communities, providing schools with needed resources, and promoting empathy, understanding, and inclusion.

**Through reading, everybody wins.**

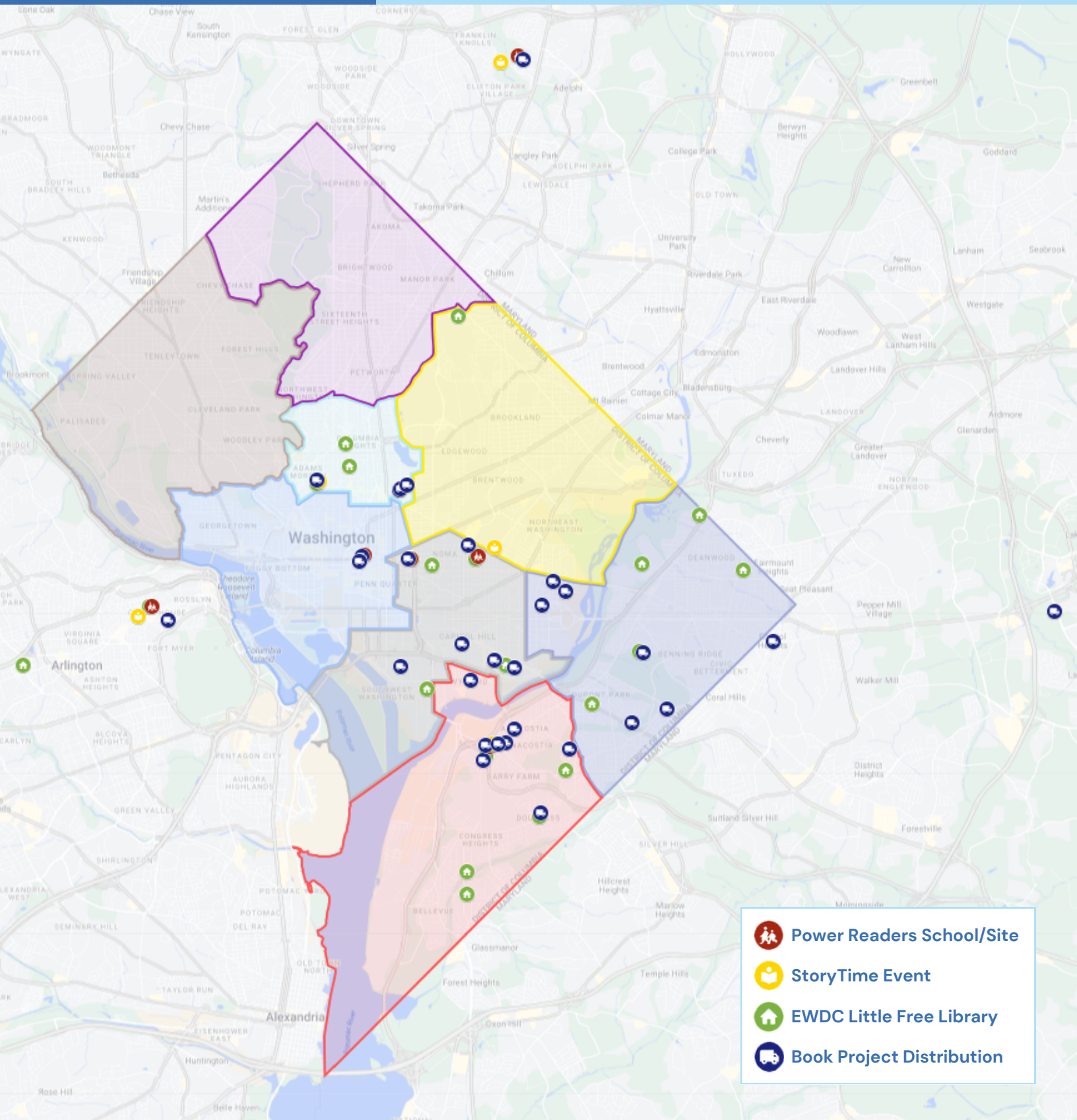


# 33

## SERVICE SITES

# 6,076

## CHILDREN SERVED



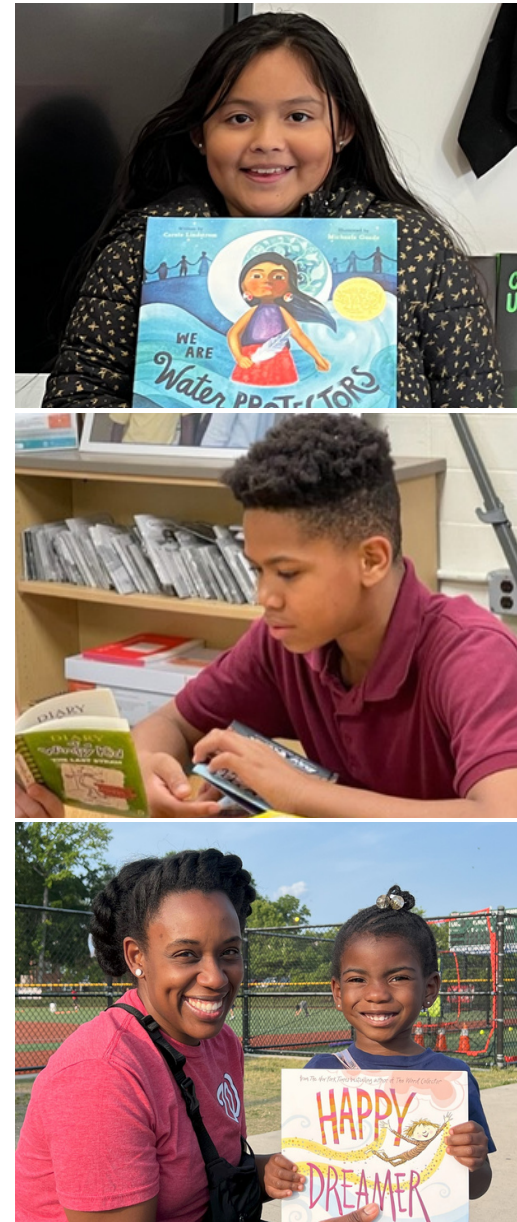


# The Need

When children read, they succeed. Reading proficiency at the elementary school level is linked to increased high school and college graduation rates, stronger performance in future careers, and better health outcomes. But reading alone isn't the answer. Children also need the social-emotional competencies that will help them overcome obstacles and achieve their dreams.

These skills, reading and social-emotional learning, are interconnected, each affecting the development of the other. Yet too many children aren't getting the support they need to truly thrive. And with COVID-19 exacerbating educational and economic disparities, the success gap among our children is widening each and every day.

- In 2022, 82% of white 4th grade students in DC were at or above reading proficiency compared to 21% of Hispanic and 13% of Black students.
- In 2022, Black and Hispanic elementary school students and English Learners responded less favorably than peers on several social-emotional scales, including self-efficacy, self-management, and social-awareness.
- Low-income families have fewer books in the home than their middle and upper-class peers, leading to fewer opportunities to read for pleasure, a key indicator of future success.



**Education officials estimate it will take years to fill the academic and social-emotional gaps created by the pandemic. That is time our kids don't have. Without additional support now, these vulnerable students will lose a critical chance at success later in life. *That's where EWDC steps in.***

# Our Approach

Reading skills and social-emotional learning are key to a child's future success at school and in life. Also important is having a positive attitude about reading. Children with positive reading attitudes are more willing to read, have greater proficiency, and can learn more about the world around them through the stories presented.

EWDC programs focus on these three, interconnected areas with the goal of improving outcomes for our students. Here are just a few ways we incorporate this approach into our program activities:

## Reading Skills

- *Power Readers*: Weekly sessions with a mentor provide regular reading practice in a judgement-free setting.
- *The Book Project*: Book distributions build families' home libraries and the more books kids have at home, the stronger readers they become.
- *StoryTime*: Reading aloud to children models positive reading behavior, builds vocabulary skills, and increases reading motivation.

## Social-Emotional Learning

- *Power Readers*: Regular time spent with a mentor helps children build confidence, self-value, and interpersonal skills.
- *The Book Project*: Books distributed promote key social-emotional competencies, including perseverance, empathy, and confidence.
- *StoryTime*: Books selected for read aloud events highlight themes that support social-emotional learning, helping children build self- and social-awareness and see their own pathways to success.

## Attitudes About Reading

- *Power Readers*: Weekly sessions are rooted in the joy of reading rather than the stress of learning, helping promote and maintain positive reading experiences.
- *The Book Project*: Book distributions help children access new and engaging books that they enjoy, creating reading motivation and excitement.
- *StoryTime*: Volunteer readers show kids how books can have a positive impact on their life, improving how children relate to reading.





## Power Readers: One-on-One Mentoring

Power Readers is a reading-based mentoring program that matches volunteers from the community with elementary school students to read together for an hour a week during the school year. There are no lesson plans and our volunteers aren't teaching kids to read. Instead, Power Readers gives children a safe and judgement-free space to practice their reading and find joy in books. At the same time, the personal attention from a mentor helps students build core social-emotional competencies, something critical to success in the classroom and beyond.

# 1,349

MENTORING HOURS

# 7

SERVICE SITES

# 106

WEEKLY SESSIONS



***"Self-confidence has been the biggest area of impact for students! They love going to their session and feel great when they return!"***

**-EWDC Partner School Teacher**

# Power Readers Results

93% | **STRONGER READERS**

93% of students reported that Power Readers made them stronger readers

95% | **READING ENJOYMENT**

95% of students said Power Readers made reading more fun

85% | **READING DEVELOPMENT**

85% of mentors saw growth in their mentee's reading development

91% | **SELF-CONFIDENCE**

91% of students said having a Power Readers mentor helped them feel more confident

83% | **SEL DEVELOPMENT**

83% of mentors saw growth in their mentee's social-emotional development

86% | **EXPANDED HORIZONS**

86% of students learned something, such as a new subject or career, from their mentor

*"It was wonderful to see [my mentee]'s confidence grow as her reading improved. We built a fun, trusting relationship and enjoyed learning together each week."*

**-Power Readers Mentor**



*"Power Readers lets me have a stronger voice and more motivation in reading."*

**-Power Readers Student**







## The Book Project: Free Distributions

The Book Project, EWDC's free distribution program, surrounds kids with books that engage their minds, encourage their growth, and inspire their futures. The program hosts direct distributions to children participating in EWDC's Power Readers and StoryTime programs as well as hosting schoolwide and community-based giveaway events. EWDC also manages 21 Little Free Libraries, almost all of which are in "book deserts," so that children can have immediate access to new books in their own communities. Combined, these efforts put thousands of free books into kids' hands each year. Even more important is that the majority of books distributed elevate characters, communities, and perspectives often underrepresented in children's literature. All children should get a chance to see themselves and their dreams represented on the page and The Book Project is working to make that a reality.

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# 13,061

BOOKS DISTRIBUTED

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# 73%

READ IN COLOR

---

# 173

DISTRIBUTION  
EVENTS

---

# 33

SERVICE SITES

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## 7,186 IMPACT MOMENTS

*"The book distributions have been highlights of our year. We're grateful and our community is grateful!"*

**—JoAnn Leleck ES Staff**

# 5,030

CHILDREN SERVED

# Read in Color Initiative

When children's books celebrate the diversity that exists within and across communities, all young readers get the chance to see that their stories matter. Diverse books also provide children with windows into communities other than their own, promoting empathy, understanding, and inclusion.

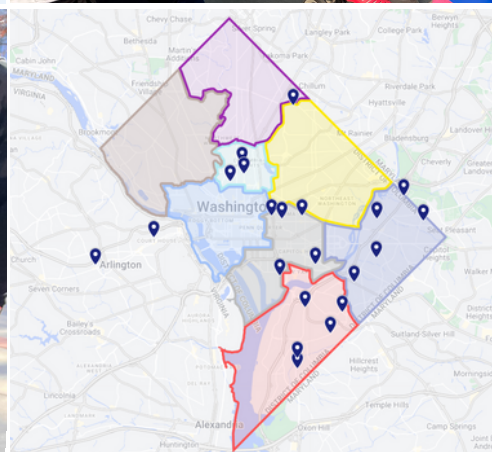
Unfortunately, many kids who would benefit most from diverse books live in neighborhoods that are considered "book deserts" or have other challenges in accessing new books on a regular basis. That is why EWDC partners with Little Free Library for their Read in Color initiative, an effort designed to increase access to books that elevate BIPOC voices, LGBTQIA+ stories, and other perspectives often left off the page. Through this partnership, EWDC hosts 21 Read in Color Little Free Libraries across the Washington Metro Area.

To make an even greater impact, EWDC has expanded our commitment to Read in Color to all Book Project distributions. During the 2022-23 program year, EWDC distributed 9,568 Read in Color books, helping thousands of children see themselves – and their dreams – represented on the page.



*"The books that EWDC distributes in our communities help kids build awareness of what's possible!"*

– EWDC Program Partner







# StoryTime: Group Reading

EWDC's read aloud program, StoryTime, brings together small groups of students to connect with a special guest over a book and guided discussion. For younger students, StoryTime follows a traditional read aloud format, with volunteers modeling positive literacy behaviors and introducing themes and concepts through the selected texts. For older students, volunteers present books, stories, or other written texts that align with their personal experiences, such as highlighting their career path and overcoming adversity, or addressing important topics like social justice. These reading experiences open students' minds to new ideas and opportunities while reinforcing core literacy skills.

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## 38

GROUP READING  
EVENTS

---

## 6

PARTNER SCHOOLS

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## 929

CHILDREN SERVED

## 71% OF STORYTIMES PRESENTED SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL THEMES

*"Wonderful support! EWDC has fostered a positive environment around literacy. Our students have been exposed to topics they would not have been during StoryTimes. Students are so excited for book distributions to take home books of their own."*

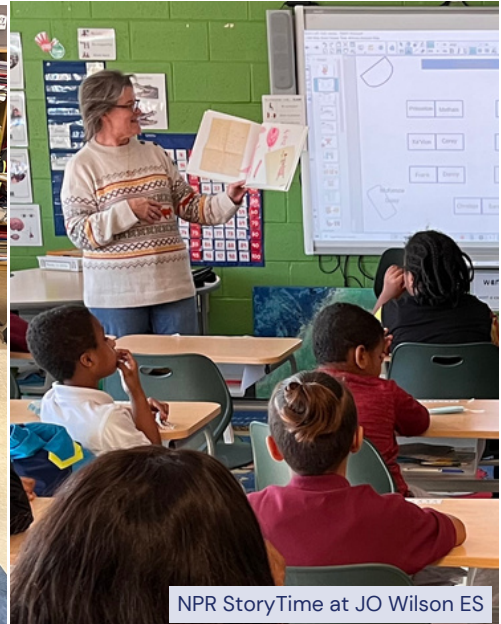
**-J.O. Wilson ES Staff**



# StoryTime Fun!



Literacy Day StoryTime at Tyler ES



NPR StoryTime at JO Wilson ES

*"The students loved hearing from athletes who led the StoryTime and it really made reading seem cool!"*

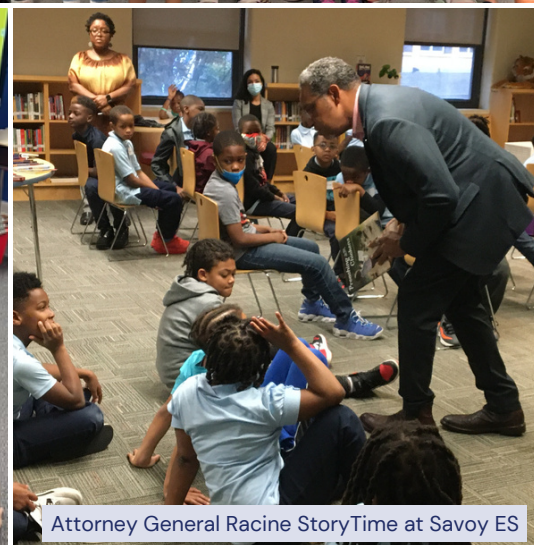
**-JoAnn Leleck ES Staff**



Attorney General Schwalb StoryTime at Marie Reed ES



UMD Football StoryTime at JoAnn Leleck ES



Attorney General Racine StoryTime at Savoy ES



# Special Program Activities

Each year, EWDC is proud to host special program activities that go beyond Power Readers, StoryTime, and The Book Project as a way to help our students thrive. Program year 2022-23 was no exception: these special activities reached more than 600 students, giving them a gift of reading that will last a lifetime.

Highlights included some amazing new Reading Role Models that helped bring the joy of reading to life for students across the Washington Metro Area. Through a new partnership with The Best is Ahead Foundation, student-athletes from the University of Maryland football team visited EWDC schools to read with students, share life lessons, and show kids that reading can help you be a winner on and off the field. EWDC also had 50 young women leaders from around the world who were part of the 2023 Cherry Blossom Princess Program visit two partner schools. These special guests shared books from their home states and countries with some of our youngest students.



EWDC volunteers stepped up to support our students in a new and exciting way.

For the first time, we participated in J.O. Wilson Elementary School's Career Day. Volunteers from EWDC partners, including NPR, Amazon, and Google, gave their time to meet with 4th and 5th grade students to talk about their personal journeys, professional development, and how reading played a role in their success.







*"I want to support others to have the same opportunities and gifts I got from books and reading."*

—EWDC Volunteer

**38**  
PARTNER  
ORGANIZATIONS

**1,405**  
VOLUNTEERS



*"[Volunteering with EWDC] is always a great way to feel connected to the community and share my love for learning and reading!"*

—Power Readers Mentor

**3,983**  
VOLUNTEER HOURS





# EWDC Events

EWDC hosts a number of events that raise funds needed to keep programs 100% free for families, schools, and community partners. EWDC thanks all event sponsors and attendees for their support and the impact they have on children's lives.

## AG OPEN GOLF TOURNAMENT

Thank you to Title Sponsor CoBank and to our top-level sponsors Farm Credit, S3 Group, The American Petroleum Institute, The National Cotton Council, and Ducks Unlimited for their commitment to our students.

Congratulations to S3 Group for the win!



## LAWYERS FOR LITERACY TRIVIA NIGHT

The legal community battles it out in this annual trivia tournament.

Congratulations to Akin Gump, aka *The Akin Enigmas*, for taking home the trivia trophy! Thank you to Sidley Austin LLP for hosting this year's event.

## READ TO DREAM FUNDRAISER

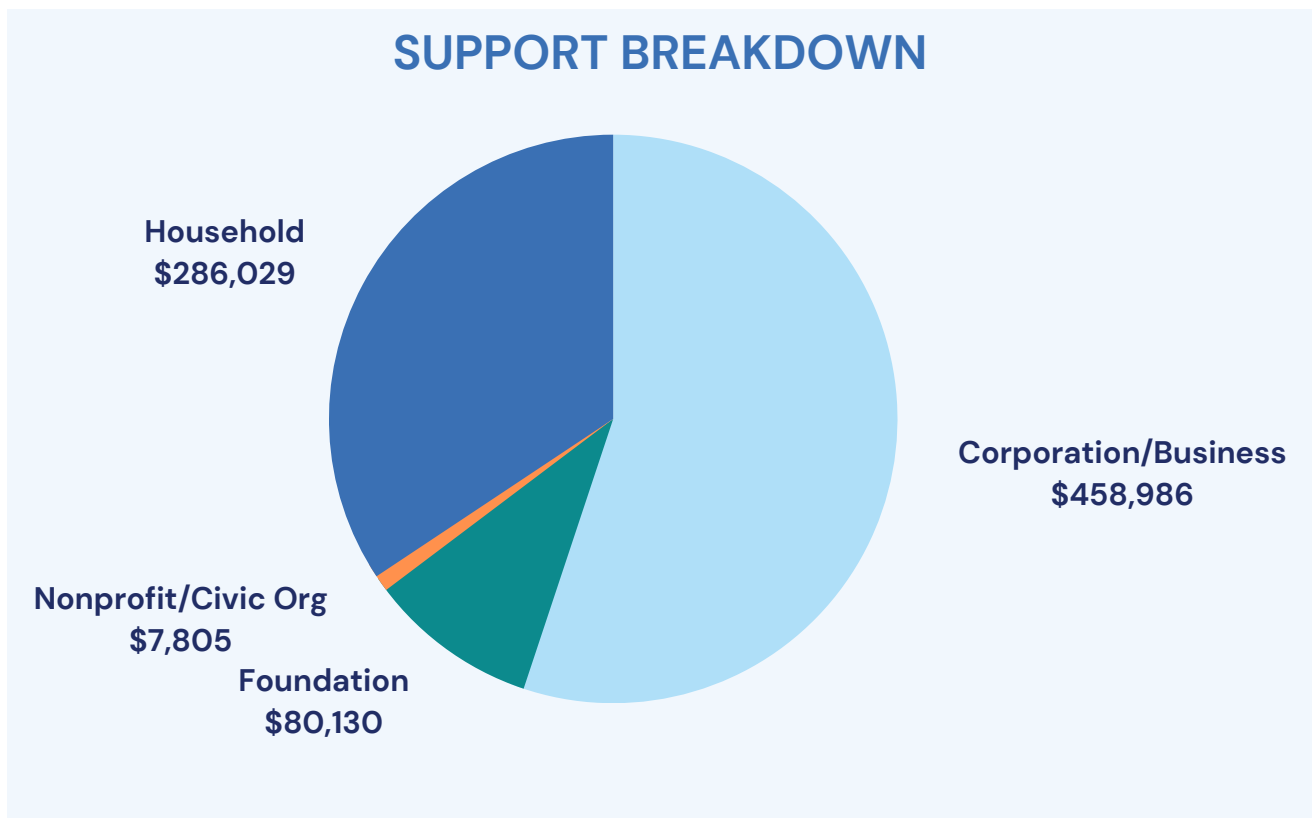
The evening raised over \$270,000 to bring EWDC programs to kids and communities across the DC region.

Thank you to our top-level sponsors: The American Petroleum Institute, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Mark Young & Rachel Carren, CTIA, JBG Smith, JLL, and FGS Global for the generous support.



# Financial Support

Since our launch in 1995, EWDC has never required payment from a family, school, or community partner to participate in our programs. We believe that the ability to pay should not be a barrier to the benefits reading can provide. That is why EWDC relies on the incredible support of individuals, corporate partners, foundations, and others to ensure we have the funds needed to help children thrive.



*Unaudited financials for FY23*





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