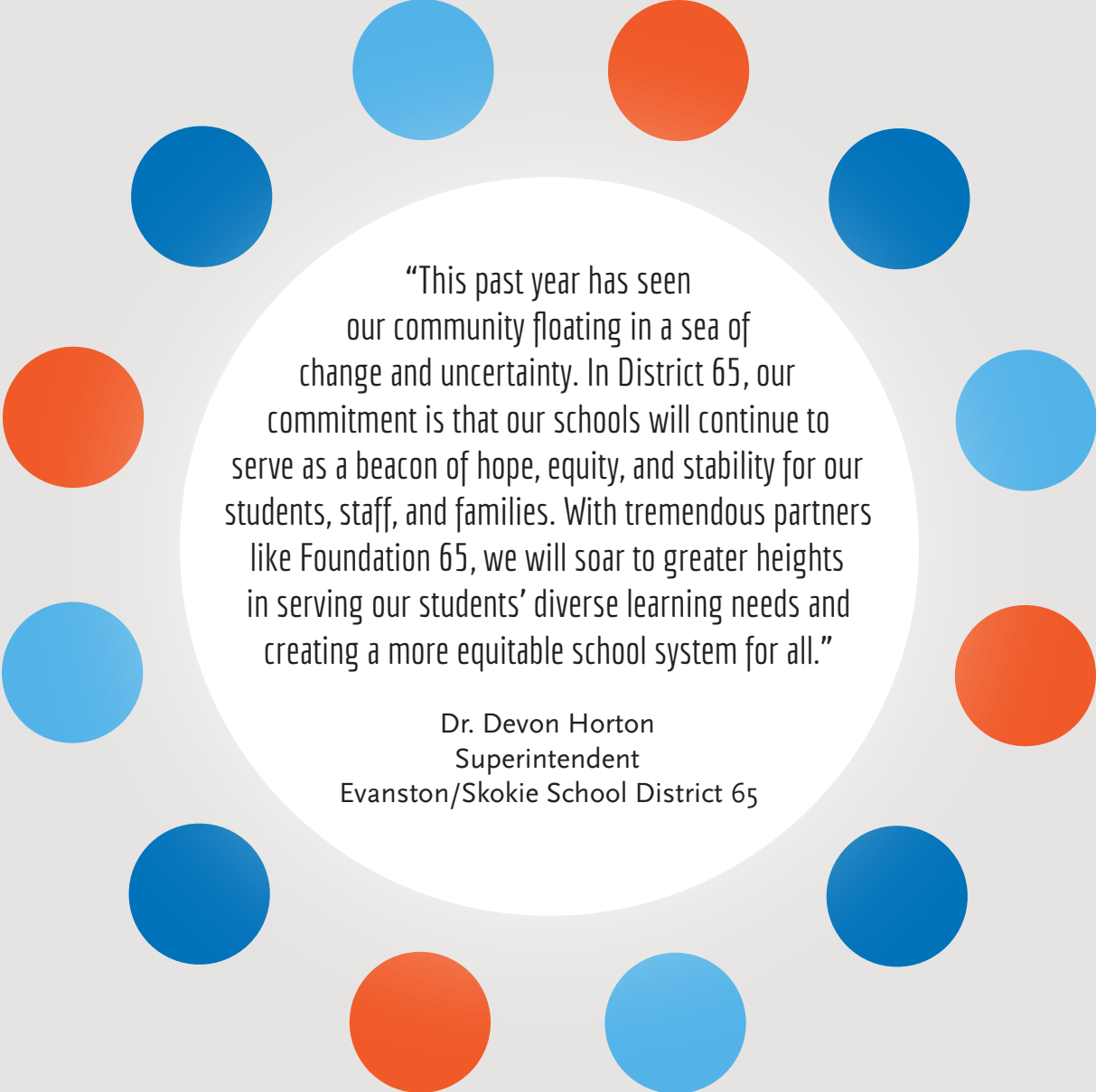




Finding **HOPE**



“This past year has seen our community floating in a sea of change and uncertainty. In District 65, our commitment is that our schools will continue to serve as a beacon of hope, equity, and stability for our students, staff, and families. With tremendous partners like Foundation 65, we will soar to greater heights in serving our students’ diverse learning needs and creating a more equitable school system for all.”

Dr. Devon Horton
Superintendent
Evanston/Skokie School District 65



Dear Friends:

This past year was an extraordinary one for public education. While District 65 continually faced unprecedented circumstances navigating the impact of COVID-19, Foundation 65 stayed steadfastly committed to supporting the needs of our educators and children. From addressing urgent resource requests, to building a powerful literacy workforce, to elevating and humanizing Black and Brown voices, Foundation 65 provided funding and support to seed hope.

We are thankful for Julie Cutter's leadership as Board President during this challenging year, and we are excited to embrace a new co-president leadership model that began with our new fiscal year. By sharing leadership responsibilities, diversifying the talents of our board, and growing a powerful vision for the future, we are confident that Foundation 65 will increasingly expand its impact.

We continue to embrace the humanity of educators and children as we work to build a more just and equitable school system. We believe that together we can work to eradicate the racialized disparities in education, and in doing so, we can build a system where all of our children can thrive.

As Foundation 65 embarks on another year of unknowns, we are inspired by our educators, humbled by your generosity, and truly hopeful about what is to come.

Thank you for continuing to support our hope and the hopes of our community.

With gratitude,



Alison Finkel



Katie Gillies

Foundation 65 Board Co-Presidents



GIVING 20,000 BOOKS TO LOW-INCOME STUDENTS

There is power that comes with having books in your own home. A study of 31 countries found that people who grew up in homes filled with books have higher reading and math scores. That was before the COVID-19 pandemic forced people all over the world to shelter at home for months on end.

Once it became clear the pandemic would have profound impacts on the 2020-21 school year, Foundation 65 sprung into action. We focused on getting books into the hands of kids in need who were isolated at home. Since the beginning of the pandemic we helped bridge the resource gap by distributing 20,000 books to low-income District 65 students. We owe an enormous “Thank You” to Young, Black and Lit, to Bernie’s Book Bank, and to District 65 for partnering with us on this initiative.

40%
of the books came from a city-wide children's book drive

A THANK YOU TO LINDA SHUSTERMAN

District 65 Reading Specialist Linda Shusterman received an Educator Incentive Grant from Foundation 65 in 2004 to expand a program she developed over the previous few years. When second graders were assessed in the fall, their reading skills were worse than their first grade spring assessment. To address this summer slide, Linda created a summer reading program to help emergent readers maintain their growth and progress heading into second grade.

This program became Foundation 65’s Summer Reading Program and it allowed Reading Specialists to handpick 24 books for each child they worked with who was entering second grade. Students and educators wrote letters to one another over the summer as educators sent monthly packets of books.

More than 1,000 students have participated in the program since its inception, and more than 90% of participating students maintained or improved their reading levels. As COVID-19 forced us to re-think our delivery model and District 65 evolved its reading support, we decided to end this program this spring with a mass distribution of 8,000 books.

We are so thankful to Linda for her ongoing and steadfast commitment to the children of District 65, her strong relationships with educators, and her passion for helping students learn to read.





PRIORITIZING BLACK AND BROWN CHILDREN'S LIVES AND EXPERIENCES

Each year Foundation 65 awards Strategic Impact Grants at the district level, Engagement Grants targeted at individual schools or communities, and Change Agent Grants supporting teacher innovation. In light of the ongoing pandemic and racial reckoning facing our country, this year's grants prioritized the lives and experiences of Black and Brown children to provide safe haven for Black boys, offer support for Latinx families, and create opportunities to talk and grow across identities in multiracial groups.

BLACK GIRL MAGIC BOOK CLUB

This year, the Black Girl Magic Book Club expanded to serve children at three schools: Walker Elementary School, Lincolnwood Elementary School, and Oakton Elementary School. This club allows a multiracial and multi-gendered group of children to read books focused on Black girls and women while aligning the themes of those books to the Black Lives Matter principles. Students are given a chance to reflect upon their own identities and find connection and difference across identity.



BLACK SONRISE



Created by a group of Black male fathers concerned about the achievement trajectory of Black boys in District 65 schools, this program focuses on building a sense of belonging as Black boys and engagement with Black male role models. After participation in the program, parents noted that the boys had an increased desire to read in front of others, increased confidence in public speaking, and increased curiosity about math and science.



EMPOWERING LATINX FAMILIES

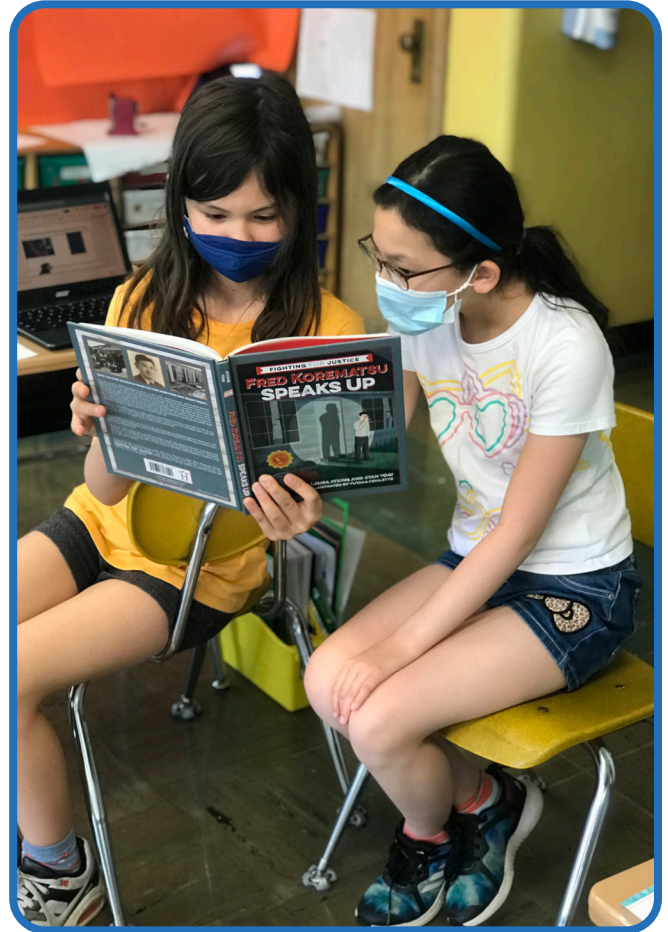
COVID-19 and remote learning created urgent needs for families to obtain additional support for emerging bilingual children. Washington Elementary School addressed this challenge by meeting with Latinx families and creating a remote academic support program that was grounded in the needs of the families. This after-school tutoring program helped strengthen students' academic skills and build greater confidence in their writing and math abilities.

"Foundation 65 allowed me to balance the effect that a white system has on my students of color with the opportunity to create and implement a program that directly benefits them."

*Marcos Alcaine Soto,
Kindergarten TWI Teacher,
Washington Elementary School*

3RD GRADE SOCIAL JUSTICE RESEARCH CLUBS

As the end of the school year approached, Lincolnwood Elementary School educators reimagined their Research Clubs' unit to focus on social justice movements of the past and present. The Social Justice unit provided students both a mirror into their own culture and windows into cultures that faced discrimination. It also helped teach important histories of various marginalized communities. Students were intrinsically motivated to continue their research because of their deepened interest in what they were reading.



REPRESENT: BOOK CLUB AND MENTORSHIP PROGRAM FOR BLACK BOYS

Educators at Dewey Elementary School knew that Black boys needed a space for support and mentorship from Black role models. Over the course of eight weeks, Black boys were guided by lead mentor Emeric Mazibuko to read *New Kid* by Jerry Craft and connect with six different Black male mentors and community leaders, including District 65 Superintendent Dr. Devon Horton and ETHS swim captain Colton Lane. Children were able to connect themes of the book to the lived experiences of each week's mentor and were empowered to volunteer to read aloud in class more often. Parents reported that the club was transformational for their sons.

"Foundation 65 funding allowed us to put meaningful books in students' hands and bring together a community of mentors who want them to be successful."

*Ashley Stanley, 5th Grade Teacher,
Dewey Elementary School*



RESPONDING TO CRITICAL NEEDS

In the spring of 2020, we didn't know how long the COVID-19 pandemic would last nor what the upcoming academic year would look like. We did know, however, it would be an experience unlike anything our students had lived through before and that, along the way, District 65 educators would identify new challenges facing their students caused by the pandemic. That is why we deployed our Critical Response Grants to provide funding to educators who would work to offset the disparities created or exacerbated by COVID-19.

We placed a particular focus on proposals that centered on racial justice practices or addressed anti-Black racism. We proudly supported 12 unique grants this past year that provided the innovation our students needed. We will continue this type of critical response support in the coming year. Visit our website to learn more about all of the 2020-2021 Critical Response Grants.

SHINING A LIGHT ON TWO PROGRAMS

Armor Down Girls

Armor Down Girls builds confidence and self-esteem in young girls through literacy. This remote after-school program served girls across District 65 schools through rich discourse around confidence by using book characterizations. When girls are more confident and empowered, they self-advocate, handle obstacles with resiliency, and believe their goals are attainable. This power grows from within, eventually impacts and enriches a community, and can work to dismantle institutionalized racism.

Reading Matters: Kindergarten at Home Literacy Kits

Lincoln Elementary School educators knew they needed to get additional resources and manipulatives to their kindergartners most impacted by the pandemic, so they designed a program to provide high quality, culturally relevant materials to teach literacy skills at home for families who needed them most. The impact was immediate. Literacy performance improved for the lowest 30% of the population, assessment achievements increased, and students had an increased interest and engagement in reading.

SOCIAL JUSTICE LEAGUE

Mudlark Theater's partnership with Oakton Elementary School allowed the creation of a Social Justice League program for remote students this spring. Fourth graders learned about activists, social justice movements, and organizing principles in order to create stories and dramatic spaces. Through creative writing and theater activities, students explored social justice issues they were passionate about, considered how systems of oppression and wrongdoing affected them and their communities, and defined the impact they want to have to improve their world. Over the course of the program, children opened up and contributed more quickly, built on and celebrated each other's ideas, made and took the sharing space, and grew bolder in expressing themselves.



ADAPTIVE ART

Knowing students with special needs faced considerable challenges during remote learning, District 65 visual art educators designed adaptive art unit plans and materials to reach a diverse group of children with special needs from Lincoln Elementary School's STEP program, Park School, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Literacy and Fine Arts School's RISE program. The adaptive art kits made a profound difference. They immediately helped students gain independence and confidence. Students attended class more often, were excited to create with their new supplies, and showed a greater connection to the content.





TEACHERS LOOKING TO TRANSFORM

While Foundation 65 focused on the present situation with the pandemic, it was still important to give teachers the opportunity to build their own capacity and grow as educators now and in the future. We created our Educator Literacy Initiative with District 65 to do just that. This program allows 12 District 65 educators to pursue their reading endorsement or masters in literacy. It was modeled after a successful Chicago Public School program to develop a new generation of leaders who are well versed in reading

instruction. Foundation 65 is committing to fund 50% of tuition for these educators for the two years it will take to complete their program. The first year's cohort is composed of six Black women, three Latina women, and three white women across eight different District 65 schools. We believe that empowering these women to lead is fundamental for our commitment to racial and social justice and has the potential to create a powerful impact within our schools and classrooms.

Educators in the First cohort:

- Jenevieve Arceneaux - Third grade, Walker Elementary School
- Khloe Battle - Third grade, Willard Elementary School
- Charlise Berkel - Instructional Coach, Oakton Elementary School
- Dana Burris - Kindergarten, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Literacy and Fine Arts School
- Melissa Drennan - Third grade, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Literacy and Fine Arts School
- Rosa Felix - Kindergarten, Oakton Elementary School
- Lisa Harries - Instructional Coach, Kingsley Elementary School
- Claire Lawrence - Kindergarten, Lincoln Elementary School
- Jenica Mullins - First grade, Lincoln Elementary School
- Elida Patino - TWI Kindergarten, Dr. Bessie Rhodes School of Global Studies
- Jennifer Tertulien - Third grade, Lincolnwood Elementary School
- Mayra Velazquez - TWI Kindergarten, Oakton Elementary School

"The program is rife with practical suggestions to help me coach teachers in how to respond formatively to student performance and mimics the inquiry process of professional learning communities. It is directly applicable to our work here in District 65!"

*Charlise Berkel,
Oakton Elementary School*



SUPPORTING WOMEN-OWNED LOCAL BUSINESSES

The COVID-19 pandemic forced Foundation 65 to cancel our annual My65 Benefit, but it also gave us an opportunity to reimagine how we as an organization can support local businesses, while also raising money for our teachers and our children.

In February, we held Date Night for D65, a two-night virtual fundraising celebration that featured chocolate tastings from Noir d'Ébène and wine samplings from The Wine Goddess. The events included candid conversations with Journey Shannon, owner of Noir d'Ébène, and Diana Hamann, owner of The Wine Goddess, and featured their personal stories about starting their business and what they love about the Evanston community.



The
WINE GODDESS

RETAIL • CLASSES • EVENTS • WINE BAR



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Our Principal's Circle is comprised of donors who have made an investment in supporting public education by making a gift of \$1,000 or more within the fiscal year 2020-2021. These donors have allowed us the nimbleness and flexibility to respond in times of need, and for that we are forever grateful.

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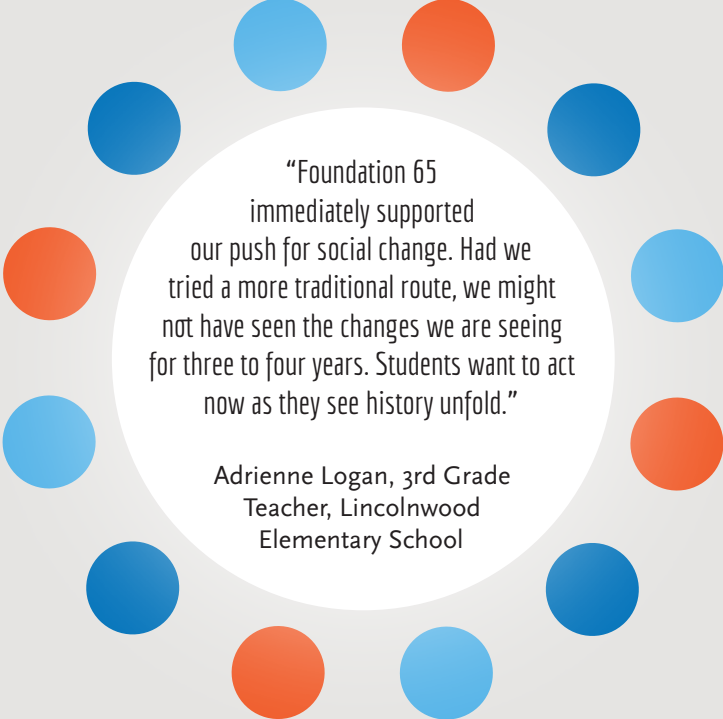
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"Foundation 65
immediately supported
our push for social change. Had we
tried a more traditional route, we might
not have seen the changes we are seeing
for three to four years. Students want to act
now as they see history unfold."

Adrienne Logan, 3rd Grade
Teacher, Lincolnwood
Elementary School

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NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Anita Geevarghese

Anita Geevarghese has more than 15 years of experience in assessment development and math education and is currently a Curriculum-Assessment Developer at Eureka Math. She has led several fundraising and strategic initiatives as President of the Board of Directors at Covenant Nursery Preschool. She and her husband live in Evanston with their three children who attend Walker Elementary School and Chute Middle School.



Hilary Conklin

Hilary Conklin is a former middle and high school social studies teacher, and is now in her twelfth year as a Professor of Education at DePaul University. Her research and teaching focus is on teacher education, social studies education, and civic education through an equity-focused lens. She and her husband live in Evanston with their daughter who attends Haven Middle School.



Emily Zarefsky

Emily Zarefsky grew up in Evanston and is a District 65 and ETHS alumnus. She was a key member of the planning committees of the 2020 and 2021 fundraisers. Emily is the R&D Portfolio Manager at Stepan Co. and has a background in organic chemistry, project management, and change management. She and her husband, Marc (another District 65 / ETHS alum), have a daughter and a son at Willard.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

AS OF JUNE 30, 2021

REVENUE	
<i>Restricted</i>	
Donations and Grants	\$26,600
<i>Unrestricted</i>	
Donations and Grants	\$374,280
Event Income	\$101,299
Investment Income	\$943
Miscellaneous Income	\$8,674
Total	\$511,796
EXPENSES	
Programs and Grants	\$261,829
General and Administrative	\$55,114
Development and Fundraising	\$70,143
Total Expenses	\$387,086
FUND BALANCES	
Assets without Donor Restrictions	\$504,952
Assets with Donor Restrictions	\$187,956
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$692,908
Change in Net Assets	\$264,710



Hope Is

LOOKING FORWARD

As we emerge from one of the most challenging and impactful school years in a generation, we know the work ahead will be difficult. With that challenge comes opportunity for growth and transformation. From expanding our Educator Literacy Initiative to supporting the District-led CREATE Teacher Residency program, we are investing in our educators via long-term and strategic capacity building that impacts our community and our children.

We are also investing in programs and initiatives that drive educational equity by centering and elevating People of Color. For this upcoming year, over 75% of our funding has been allocated to projects and initiatives created by People of Color or multiracial teams. The Maker Learning Lab at Kingsley aspires to engage students in design thinking and improve critical thinking skills, while the Black Girl Magic Book Club allows children to use windows and mirrors to learn about Black girls. Both grants were developed by Black educators and focus our grantmaking on who and how a grant is being developed, as well as which children are being served and how.

As we take on new challenges, we also hope to cultivate curiosity with a justice framework through our first ever Curiosity Professional Development series for educators. While the last year may have been challenging, we know that sparking curiosity can serve as a catalyst for engagement, authentic leadership, and transformation.

We hope that you will join us to further support public education in the coming year. Evanston is an incredible place, but it is not immune to forces that wish to stall progress. We believe that coming together to actively support public education is a way to change the narrative, to work for justice, and to ultimately create a community where all of our children can live and thrive.

Please visit www.foundation65.org, sign up for our newsletter, and follow us on social media to stay engaged. Thank you for your service, your commitment, and your love for our community.

