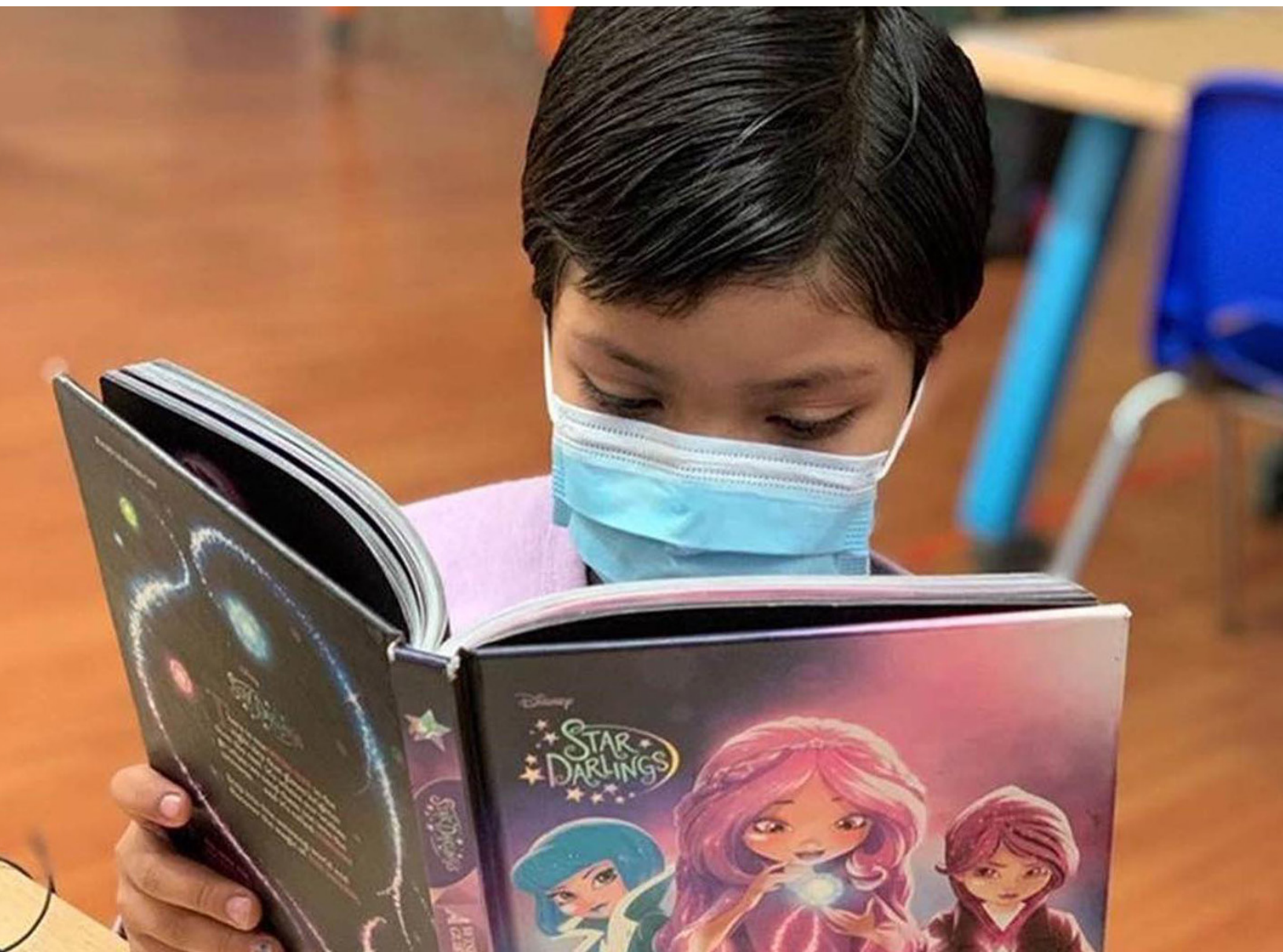




2021 Impact Report

ROAD TO READING RECOVERY



From our Executive Director

“When books are read as both windows and mirrors, they become sliding glass doors between two worlds celebrating similarities and differences of the common human experience... literature provides readers with opportunities to interact with “characters they have yet to meet in real life, but with whom they have much in common”¹

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The pandemic challenges of 2021 served to lay bare, the great gap in equitable access to quality education throughout the country, as kids with myriad differences in family resources were pulled out of the formal school system and forced to learn from home under very different conditions.

The learning-loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic has been significant, especially for kids from low-income families already facing barriers to online learning infrastructure, food, housing and employment insecurity etc. In addition, the SickKids ongoing study, of the mental health effects, notes that throughout the pandemic waves, “heightened depression and anxiety among children and youth have stayed consistent.”

This increased need reinforced our resolve along with that of our partner teachers, program leaders, healthcare specialists, social workers, foodbank & breakfast program volunteers, shelter counselors, new-immigrant transition guides, Indigenous community-leaders, parents & other caregivers. We must work even smarter, to support them – to help them to help us all in our mission to provide agency through access to books.

Operating with community champions from coast to coast to coast, we innovated our program delivery to continue to get millions of new, high-quality books and supporting educational resources into the hands of hundreds of thousands of kids. While working creatively to get books to kids outside of the school systems, we also continued to increase the diversity of lived-experience in the powerful stories and illustrations that inspire kids through books. In 2021, we significantly increased the number of available Indigenous authored content, in multiple languages; and, increased the variety of books available for very young children, knowing that the first few years are crucial to brain development through reading to and with kids.

The books, we put into the hands of kids in need, provide windows to a wider world beyond the confines of mental and physical isolation; mirrors to reflect empowered, diverse experiences; and open doors to lifelong learning, inspiration, and ambition.

None of this would be possible without our corporate and publishing partners, or without the thousands of individual donors, who know the power of reading. You are all changemakers.

Thank you. Merci. Miigwetch
Heather Farquharson

¹ “Reading to Make a Difference” –
Lester L. Laminack and Katie Kelly

FIRST BOOK Canada: BUILDING a PATH out of POVERTY THROUGH Educational Equity

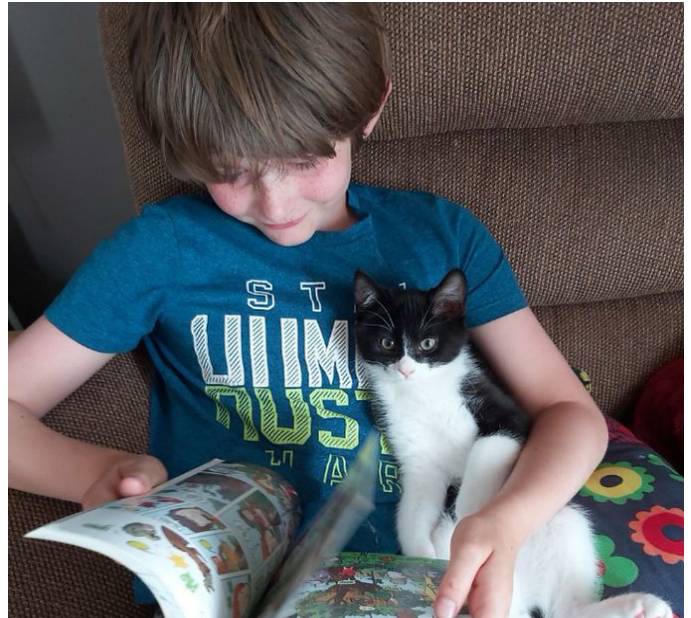
Our mission is to transform the lives of children in need by improving access to quality education for kids in need.

By providing new, high-quality books to children who would otherwise have no books of their own. A child's "first book" is not necessarily their first reading experience – it is the first book that they love, that they can call their own, and that sets them on a lifelong path of learning and inspiration.

Using a market-driven model, First Book Canada is creating equal access to quality education, making everything - from brand new, high-quality books and educational resources, to winter coats and backpacks - more affordable.

Through our network of over 14,000 members, our work reaches schools, shelters, social service organizations, new-immigrant transition centres and many other programs across Canada that serve kids in need.

Our programming is consistently evaluated in order to measure the difference we make in kids' lives. By showing our impact, we stay accountable to our funding partners, continually learn to do better, and ensure we meet the needs of our essential stakeholders (publishers, members, and partners).



2021 at a Glance

500,000 children served

1.6 million books distributed

14,800 registered members

1,347 new members in 2021

9 Pop-up events

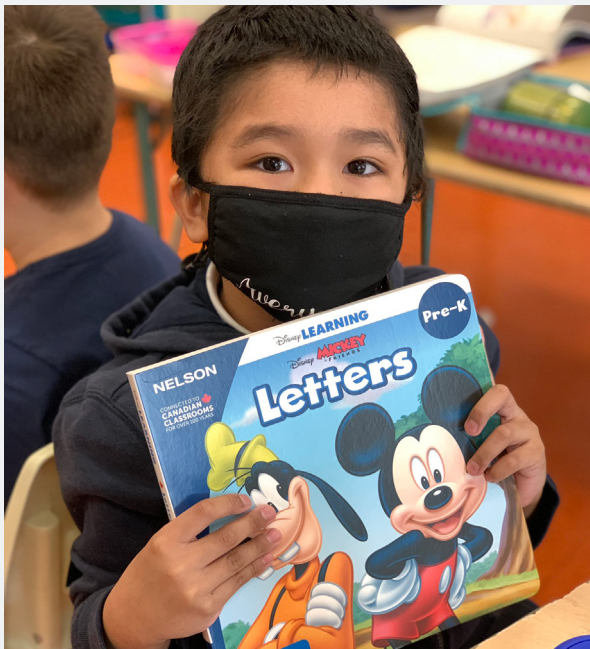
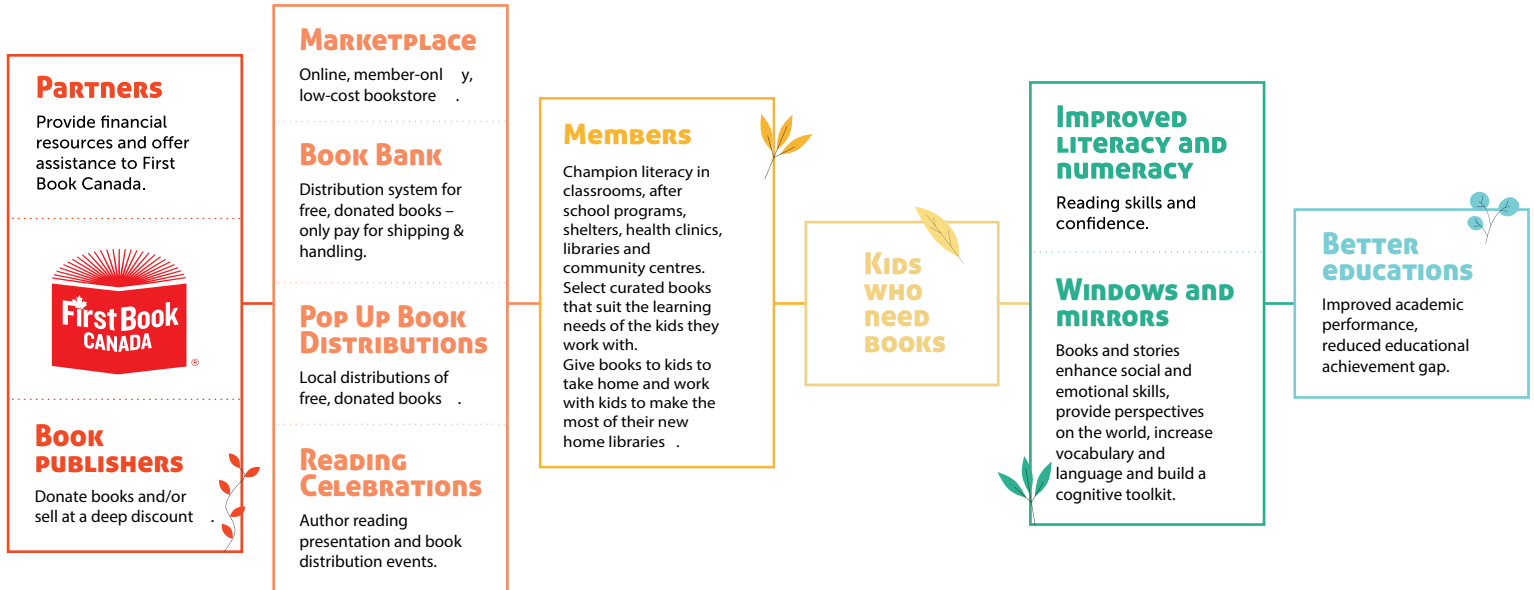
2 Featured distributions

40 reading celebrations



The Theory of Change

How we work with our network of partners, publishers, and members to change kids' lives.



“Thank you for all you do especially the amazing efforts you do to help my students have what so many other students don’t have to worry about.”

-Jennifer N. FBC Member

Our Road to Learning Recovery

An overview of the three ways we reach as many kids as possible across Canada.

First Book Canada Marketplace

The First Book Canada Marketplace, a non-profit e-Commerce site provides FBC members with access to low-cost books, award-winning resources, activity kits, school supplies and more. The Marketplace features professionally curated diverse/inclusive books and resources to address the needs and lived experience of children in underserved communities.

In 2021, the First Book Canada Marketplace had over \$500,000 in books sales with the First Book Canada Book Bank had almost \$25,000 in sales to provide low cost books and educational materials to kids across Canada.

This year, we focused on expanding the First Book Canada Marketplace in two main categories- Indigenous Characters and Cultures with a focus on Indigenous Authors and Bilingual books; and an Early Childhood Education Portal, in partnership with the Canadian Children's Literacy Foundation, highlighting Canadian books for the youngest readers.

Pop Up Events

Pop-up events are local events run by champion members across Canada, providing access to high quality and diverse books to members for free. Pop-ups provide an experience for members across Canada to hand pick books and distribute them across their programs, serving kids outside of metropolitan areas.

We were able to hold nine Pop-up events across Canada in 2021, almost doubling the number hosted in 2020. They were held in Winnipeg, Richmond, Regina, Montreal, Edmonton, Calgary, Kingston, Niagara, and Toronto. These Pop-ups provide members an opportunity to pick up free books for the kids they serve. The Pop-Up events provided a total of 333,382 books to 961 member groups.

Featured Distributions

The Featured Distribution is a large scale book distribution to provide members with access to carton quantities of new books for only the cost of shipping.

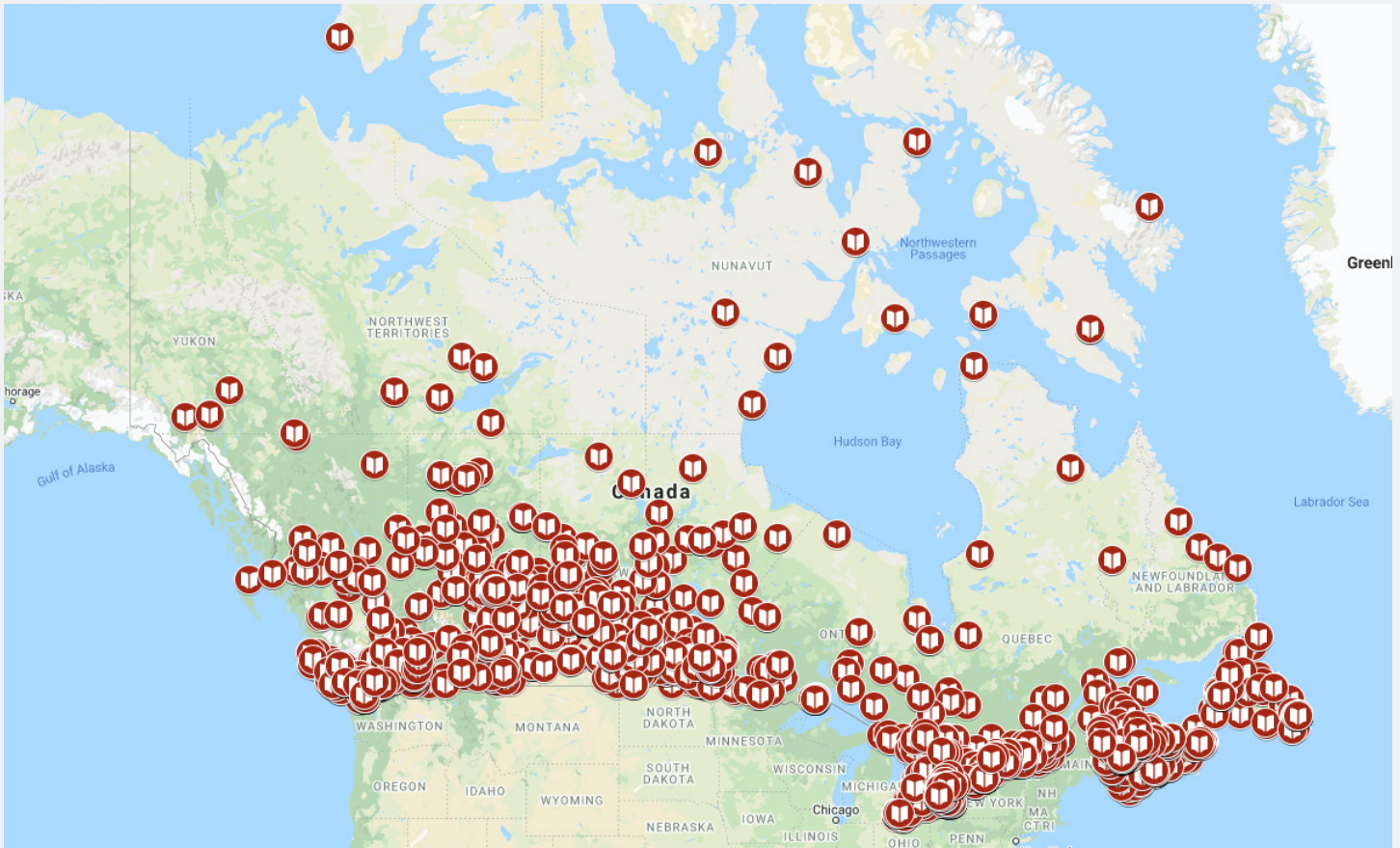
FBC offered two Featured distributions in 2021. The first was held through our warehouse partners at JD Smith, providing members across Canada with 10, 647 books from Nelson Canada for only the cost of shipping.

The second was an annual event with our partners at Amazon.ca. Over 100,000 books were available for order for the cost of shipping, including a \$250 credit provided for each member courtesy of Amazon.ca. 393 member groups from all across Canada ordered books across the two distributions.



Innovate and Invest

We are always working to grow our membership base and reach children in need in every corner of the country. Over the past 12 years, FBC has gotten books to kids in every province and territory in Canada., as well as a prescence in the largest school board in the country.



Map of Canadian Members 2021

In 2021, FBC's total member count was 14,843, this can be broken down further into 6,715 schools or school related members, 3,582 Not-for-Profit members, 13 For-Profit members, and 4,533 Unspecified or uncategorized members

Our goal for 2022 is to continue to grow our prescence in every school board across Canada, as well as reach kids through wrap-around services such as food banks, after-school programs and community centres.

Racial Equity and Cultural Inclusion

Racial representation and cultural inclusion are central to educational equity and have been deeply embedded in First Book Canada's mission and models throughout our history. In 2021, First Book Canada launched new and expanding initiatives, including:

- Deepening our curated collection of diverse and inclusive titles in First Book Canada's Stories for All Project. Diverse books are critical to enable children to see themselves and their experiences in the stories they read. In 2021, First Book Canada invested \$42,000 to add over 7,000 Indigenous titles to the First Book Canada Marketplace, including books in Cree, Plains Cree, Ojibway, and Inuktitut.
- In 2021, we also partnered with RBC for the RBC Stories of Empowerment series. The program brought virtual reading events to grade 12 students in 8 schools across Canada. The program highlights the life experiences and background of each speaker, to mentor students as they leave highschool. Speakers included Hon. David Johnston, David Ash, Ronald Caplan, and Jordin Tootoo.
- First Book Canada continues to work with Raptors 905 and Penguin Random House Canada on the Raptors 905 Spring Book Club. 400 students in Peel Region received *Peter Lee's Notes from the Field* by Angela Ahn. Students were then invited to participate in a reading event with the author and then coach of the Raptors 905, Patrick Mutombo.



Program Highlight: Raptors 905 Summer Reading Challenge

For the second year, the Raptors 905 Summer reading challenge was organized in collaboration with Raptors 905, Penguin Random House Canada and Tangerine Bank. 385 students in grades 4 to 6 took part, reading 5 books over 5 weeks from July 16- August 13.

At the end of each week, the students were invited to meet with the author of each book, as well as community leaders, Raptors 905 staff, and other special guests. They had the opportunity to ask questions and find out more about each author's experiences. Each student was also asked to write a book report each week, connecting the stories they read with life experiences.

The Reading Challenge focuses on diverse representation in middle grade books. Students are encouraged to read books that reflect and celebrate BIPOC voices and stories. The five books read in 2021 were: *Take Back the Block* by Chrystal D. Giles, *The Barren Grounds* by David A. Robertson, J.D. and the *Great Barber Battle* by J. Dillard, *When Stars are Scattered* by Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed, and *The Watsons go to Birmingham- 1963* by Christopher Paul Curtis.



Program Highlight: Turn The Page

To close out the year, First Book Canada and JaysCare Foundation partnered for the biggest Pop-up of the year, Turn the Page. This distribution was the first offered in Toronto in over two years. 420 educators across the GTA were invited to the Rogers Centre to pick from over 100,000 books for all ages. As a thank you, teachers were also able to pick a few books for themselves. Each member was able to go home with 250 hand picked books for their students.

This event was held in partnership with JaysCare Foundation, to provide Educators across the GTA with an event to show our appreciation for their hardwork over the last few years due to the pandemic.

***Thanks @
FirstBookCanada and
@JaysCare
for the amazing
opportunity to select
books for our students
@TDSB_Firgrove! Loving
it!***

-Jennifer M., FBC Member





“My students are always appreciative when they receive books. They comment on everything; the smell, the fact that it’s new, the fact that they can keep it, that they don’t have to do an assignment around it.”

-Sarah C., FBC Member



Our Amazing Donors

First Book Canada is grateful for the support of donors and partners who share our belief in the power of literacy. Here we highlight our main fundraising campaign, Hope Love Give.

Hope Love Give is First Book Canada's annual year-end campaign to provide brand-new books and resources to kids in need. In its third year, the campaign kicked off FBC's goal to hit 10 million books given to kids in need in 2022.

The end of year campaign was also aided by two other campaigns by our donation partners. The First Book Canada x Excelovate campaign raised funds to provide diverse books to BIPOC kids in need.

With the help of partners at RBC, employees came together for a holiday donation campaign to raise funds to support the Hope Love Give campaign.

Program Highlight: Best Home Library

The Best Home Library Fund was created in honour of Executive Director, Tom Best's retirement. The goal of the fund is to award major grants to selected grassroots groups, non-profit programs and community hubs across the country to provide the kids they serve with a 10 book personal home library of books specifically chosen for them. This fund was created as a grant to maximize the impact of these events. Champion members from across Canada will be given the opportunity to apply to the BHL fund, and one member from each province/territory will be given a \$10,000 grant to support the kids in their communities.

This program was created to support communities across Canada in 2022 and beyond, with 11 Best Home Library events happening in Fall of 2022 and continuing for years to come.



Events and Partners

With the help of our wonderful partners, we have been able to provide books and experiences to kids across Canada through other programs and events, including:

Mothers Matter

Adopt a Reader

Collaboration to challenge families across Canada to read together for 15 minutes each day for two weeks straight. Each family that participated received books to add to their home libraries.

Horizons Program

100 students participated in the Horizons summer program in 2021. The program served students in grades 7 to 9, and culminated in a virtual visit from author Aisha Saeed, sponsored by TD Bank.

BCFI

21 organizations received 3,500 books to volunteer-run book clubs across Canada.

CCBC Book Week

First Book Canada took part in the Canadian Children's Book Centre Book Week tour. Over the week, ten schools were visited virtually by children's authors, illustrators and storytellers. FBC provided each participant with their own copy of the author's book to take home. Featured authors included Debbie Ridpath Ohi, J. Torres, and Paul Covello.

Domtar Adopt an Agency

Our partners at Domtar donated funds to FBC to distribute as Gift Certificates to member organizations to purchase books for the students they serve.

TATA Reading Celebration

With our partners at TATA Consultancy Services, we were able to provide a reading celebration with author Vikki Van Sickle to grade three students at Royal Vale Elementary School. Each student received a copy of her new book, Anonymouse!.



Program Highlight: Read On Canada!

The Read on Canada! initiative brought together literacy partners across Canada to distribute 150,000 books to kids in need through food banks and resources online. In its second year, the main goals of the Read on Canada! coalition were to gift books and reading resources to families who accessed food banks in the summer of 2021 and curated and shared resources online for all families across Canada to access.

The coalition included: First Book Canada, ABC Life Literacy Canada, Calgary Reads, Canadian Children's Literacy Foundation, Centre for Family Literacy, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, Frontier College, Let's Talk Science, NWT Literacy Council, The Children's Book Bank, The Indigo Love of Reading Foundation, and The Reading Partnership.

Food Bank advisory partners included: Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank, Harvest Manitoba, Solidarite Families, and Surrey Food Bank.

This year, the Read On Canada! coalition was honoured with a World Literacy Award, for its work to mitigate the effects COVID-19 closures had on children's literacy in Canada.



“Working with your organization has been one of the most rewarding parts of my job. Offering books and enriching literacy programming for these students has an incredible impact.”

-Wendy P., FBC Member

Partners and Publishers

We couldn't do what we do without these publishers, partners and non-profits.

Corporate Partners

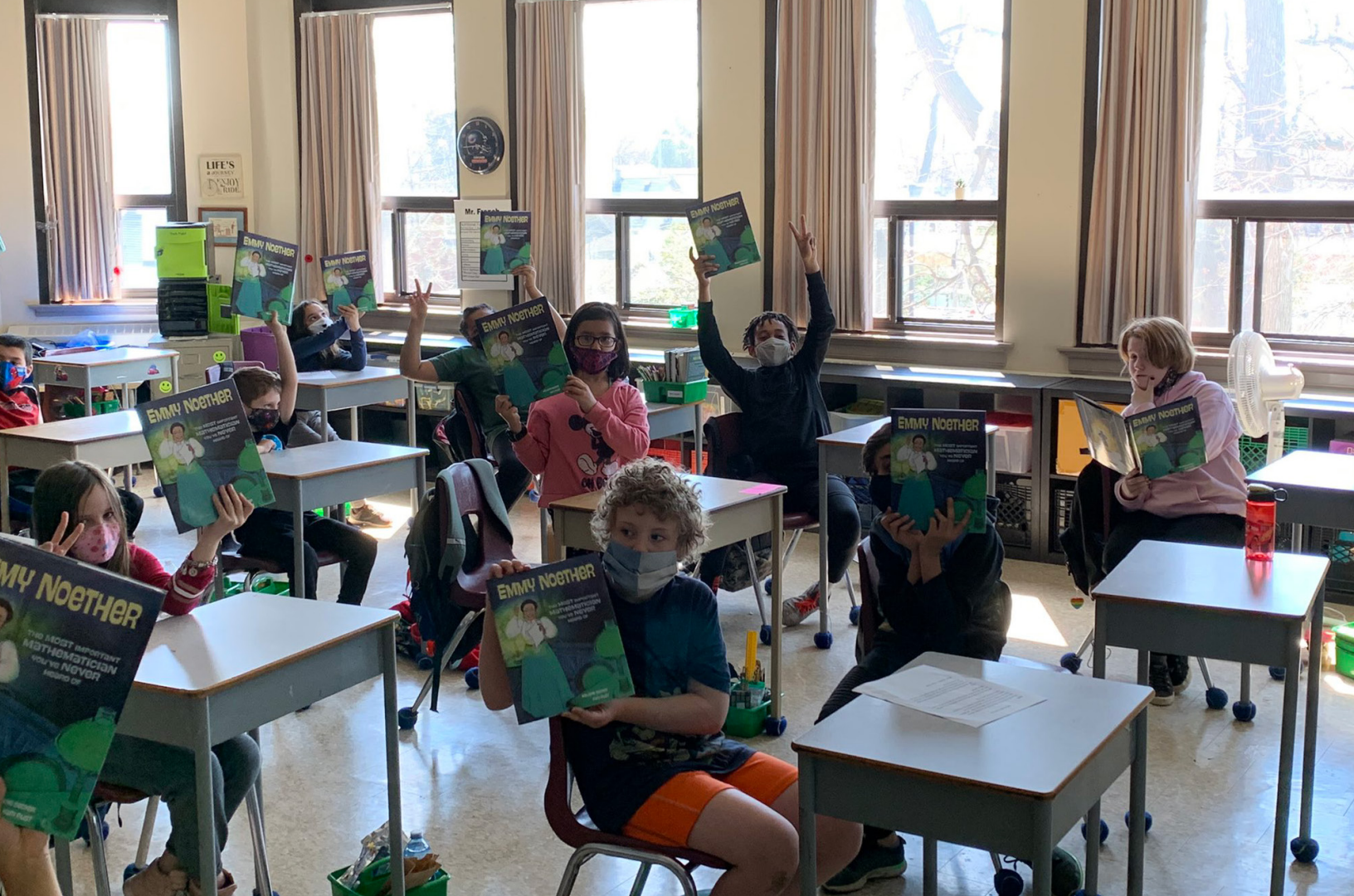


Publishing Partners



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