



# Annual Report

## 2023



**POWER!**  
**BOOK BAGS**  
Empowering children to  
Play, Write & Read!

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# Letter from the Founder

**Dear Friends,**

In 2023, we worked to further explain the need and impact of our work: the **challenges** children and families face; research-based **solutions** that we intentionally offer; **outcomes** that occur as a result of our work; and **lasting impacts** that our work together can offer children, families, and the community. The work we do together truly makes a difference.

The result is the following manifesto: Our PoWeR!ful Commitment to Children and Families. We are grateful for the support of the community and our volunteers, donors, and grantors as we continue to fulfill this commitment.

## **CHALLENGES CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FACE**

- *90% of the brain is developed by age 5.* The early years are the critical years.
- More than 50% of children ages 0-5 in the state of Michigan are living in low income homes, struggling to meet basic needs, and are without resources and literacy materials necessary to stimulate and develop learning skills.
- More than 59% of children in the state of Michigan are not performing well academically or reading at grade level at the end of 3rd grade, and 71% are not ready to receive post secondary education and career training.

## **SOLUTIONS WE OFFER**

- Families who consistently receive language & literacy materials are more likely to routinely engage in playing, writing, and reading with their children - activities essential to children's social, emotional, physical, and academic development.
- PoWeR! Book Bags' developmental resources and tools are directly distributed to children and their families by our community partners who engage with families to explain, demonstrate, and give feedback on the use of the materials with children.
- Providing opportunities for children to experience language and literacy materials at home enables them to grow their knowledge, skills, dispositions, and positive attitudes towards reading and writing for greater success in life.
- Children who select their own books and grow their home libraries are more likely to read them over and over again!



## **OUTCOMES OF OUR WORK**

*Surrounded by added language and literacy, children are more likely to:*

- Grow up with confidence and the ability to engage in meaningful social interactions.
- Experience early language and literacy necessary to experience success in academics.
- Graduate and go on to further education (trade school or college).
- Contribute to the economy through gainful employment and community engagement.

## **PoWeR! Book Bags creates a lasting impact by:**

- Following the research findings, best practices, and the essential literacy skills for the State of Michigan.
- Providing ON-GOING age-appropriate resources to support playing, writing and reading interactions at home.
- Providing guidance and assistance to community partners and families with how to use the developmental resources.
- Working with established community partners and agencies such as Health Department Programs (MIHP, WIC, Immunization Clinics), Food & Baby Pantries, Sites for family assistance, Early Head Start, and Elementary Schools.
- Working with community partners in 25 counties at 116 sites, reaching over 20,000 children multiple times each year.

We are thrilled to be able to continue our work with children and families. Over the past seven and a half years, we have delivered nearly 500,000 books and 80,000 PoWeR! Literacy Bags to children and their families. We remain committed to making a difference.

Thank YOU for your support!

Gratefully,

Kara Murphy Gregory, Ph.D.  
Founder & Executive Director

# 2023

## By the Numbers!

**98,144 books delivered to children**

**14,565 PoWeR Literacy Bags delivered to children**

**Nearly 500,000 books and 80,000 PoWeR Literacy Bags delivered to children since 2016**

**\$375,137 revenue from donations and grants**

**12,000 + volunteer hours**

**20,000 + children served**

**25 counties served**



# Grantors

Amar-Fox Family Fund of the Otsego Community Foundation  
Baiardi Family Foundation  
Beaver Island Elks Lodge 2886  
Benzie Sunrise Rotary  
Birth to Five Literacy Network - Northeast  
Bui Family Foundation  
Cadillac Elks Lodge  
Campbell Endowment of the GTRCF  
Charlevoix County Community Foundation  
Cheboygan County Health and Education Fund  
Cheboygan, Otsego, Presque Isle Great Start Collaborative and Family Coalition  
Church Women United of Mason County  
Community Financial Credit Union  
Community Foundation for Northeast Michigan Community Impact Fund  
Community Foundation for Northeast Michigan Women's Giving Fund  
COOR/Iosco Great Start Collaborative  
Tom and Julie Carruthers Fund of the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Community Foundation  
The Divas Quilting Club  
DTE  
Edson Farms Market & Deli  
Elk Rapids Area Educational Endowment of the GTRCF  
Ted and Brenda Frey Donor Advised Fund of the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Community Foundation  
Friends of the Otsego Library  
GFL Environmental  
Gaylord Chamber of Commerce  
Genuine Leelanau Charitable Endowment of the GTRCF  
Glen Lake Women's Club  
Grand Traverse Band Economic Development Corporation  
Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation – DEI Fund  
Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation Rotary Endowment  
GTRCF: Antrim YAC  
GTRCF: Kalkaska YAC  
GTRCF: Leelanau YAC  
Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians  
Great Start Collaborative Mason, Lake, and Oceana

Great Lakes Energy People Fund  
HELP Ministries  
Hestia Women's Giving Circle  
Kiwanis Club of Traverse City  
Koro Family Charitable Fund of the Community Foundation for South East Michigan  
Lake County Community Foundation  
Lampert Family Fund of the Otsego Community Foundation  
Leland Schools  
Leland Women's Civic Club  
Livonia Elks Lodge 2246  
Ludington Schools  
Manistee Rotary Education Fund of the Manistee County Community Foundation  
Mawby Green Giving  
Mission Graphics of Ludington  
Muskegon Lodge 247 B.P.O. Elks  
Northeast Michigan Women's Giving Circle Fund  
Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency  
Oryana Natural Foods Market  
Parenting Communities (Leelanau County)  
Patchwork Ministries  
Petoskey-Harbor Springs Community Foundation - Youth Endowment  
PIE&G Communities First Fund  
PNC Foundation  
Robet Foundation  
Barbara and Frank Rock Family Fund  
Rotary Club of Cheboygan  
Rotary Club of Traverse City Sunrise Foundation  
The Art and Mary Schmuckal Family Foundation  
Doug Schlaff Youth Fund of the Manistee County Community Foundation  
Sisters of Beta Sigma Phi Sorority Preceptor Kappa Chapter of Ludington  
St. Christophers Episcopal Church  
Straits Areas Community Foundation  
Suttons Bay Bingham Endowment of the GTRCF  
Traverse City Elks Lodge 323  
Westshore ISD Great Start Collaborative  
Wexford-Missaukee ISD  
Wexford-Manistee-Missaukee Great Start Collaborative  
VMware  
Zonta Club of Traverse City

# A Few Kind Words from Our Volunteers:

*"I am a retired speech/language pathologist and love volunteering at PoWeR! Book Bags. My entire career was working with children ages birth to age 5 years and their caregivers in the home or child care environment. My passions are literacy, language development and empowering caregivers to read to their children, therefore, building play, reading, writing, communication, and social skills. PoWeR! Book Bag's mission to distribute free, new books to children supports an important need in under-served communities. By providing books to children and their caregivers, this non-profit is helping parents and children to connect and have healthy, interactive relationships. It also provides children with books of their own with wonderful pictures and stories. This builds their imagination, language skills, and joy for the written word and the stories they convey. I hope PoWeR! Book Bags continues to be an important resource in our communities, counties and school districts we serve."*

JBanta



*"PoWeR! Book Bags is a wonderful organization! From the books to the finger puppets to the writing supplies, the materials that they give to children are high-quality and intentionally-selected to help support great brain development. Kids really come first, and I love that about this program! I've been volunteering since the beginning!"*

GFH





*"As a former children's librarian and elementary teacher, I was excited to get involved with Power Book Bags following my retirement. I couldn't believe there was an organization that provided beautiful, high quality books and literacy materials to children of all ages! And not just once but multiple times during the year. I have seen the children's faces as they self select a book to keep, take home, and read over and over again. The joy and excitement is contagious! My husband and I have "adopted" a food pantry and deliver 500 Power books every month to grateful parents and children. We love the small part we play in this fabulous organization and can't say enough good things about Power Book Bags. Children and books-it doesn't get much better than that!"*

Dawn



*"I am so thrilled to work with PoWeR! Book Bags. The people are fun no matter what the project of the day is: putting PoWeR! stickers on each book, filling bags, or gathering books for classrooms. The kids love getting new books; the squeals are free. The literacy bags are filled with a composition book, 2 handmade booklets, 24-count Crayola crayons, a finger puppet and a bookmark."*

PennyCP

**Read more at our  
GreatNonprofits.org  
webpage!**

[greatnonprofits.org/org/power-book-bags](https://greatnonprofits.org/org/power-book-bags)

