



2021 Annual Report

10 Years of Wise Readers
to Leaders



thank you from our CEO and Co-Founder



Dear Friends,

It's hard to believe how far we have come in **ten years!** I am so proud of our program's growth over the past decade. And I am grateful for the steadfast support of our donors who make it possible for us to **improve the lives** of underserved children.

Readers to Leaders started in the summer of 2012 with a group of 50 K-5th grade scholars, 7 staff and 10 Junior Literacy Leaders (JLLs). Since then we have **expanded** to reach hundreds of scholars each summer, extended our program to include **middle schoolers**, created **year-round** literacy support programs, engaged hundreds of new high school students in our **Junior Literacy Leader** program and just recently launched a **College Access program**.

Our work is a partnership with our Board, our volunteers, our teachers, our management staff and, of course, our contributors. Take a look at the impressive impact we have made in 10 years:

- Served over **2,500 K-8th grade scholars**
- Taught over 14,000 hours of high-quality **literacy instruction**
- Distributed over 25,000 **first-rate books** to grow scholars' at-home libraries
- Served nearly **150,000 meals**
- Engaged high school JLLs in over 53,000 hours of **community service**

Our numbers and statistics are impressive, but through this annual report you will see the **real impact** our programs have through stories from our scholars, staff and volunteers. This year marks the first year that several former scholars have become program volunteers and have joined our Teen Board, offering their unique perspective while also serving their community.

We are now supporting our **scholar JLLs** through the college application process to help them reach their academic goals. Celebrating ten years with the addition of our college access program is a true testament to our program's **growth**, the **dedication** of our staff and volunteers, and the **life-changing work** we do.

We **thank you** for your investment in our work. Together we can close the achievement gap for these children and help them enjoy the bright future they deserve.



In partnership and
with appreciation,

Andrea Sonnenberg
CEO and Co-Founder



new college access program



new partnership

Through an exciting new partnership with the Fulfillment Fund, Readers to Leaders is pleased to offer a new College Access Program. Once scholars graduate from our K-8th grade programs, high school-aged scholars will join us as Junior Literacy Leaders and serve on our Teen Leadership Board. Through our program, these scholars gain valuable leadership skills, volunteer experience, and serve their community by acting as mentors to hundreds of scholars. The Fulfillment Fund also offers an innovative curriculum from which scholars will learn about the college application process, refine writing skills, explore the many post-graduation options available to them, college acceptance requirements, financial literacy and more! When scholars are seniors in high school they will be paired with a college advisor to receive one-on-one college counseling. With the help of the counselor, scholars will create college lists, work through applications and financial aid and have support in making a college decision. This new program completes our full programmatic arc that supports students from Kindergarten to college, truly providing life-changing opportunities for our scholars.



"My daughter looks forward for summer camp every year and we hope that later on she can volunteer so she can give back a little something."
- Scholar Parent



scholar junior literacy leaders

This summer we welcomed eight former scholars as JLLs. These scholar JLLs returned to Wise Readers to Leaders to give back to the community, serving as excellent mentors. Our scholars look up so much to our scholar JLLs and the scholar JLLs love serving in this new role. Many of our scholar JLLs said they decided to come back to volunteer as JLLs because the JLLs were their favorite part of our program when they were scholars. They are very excited to bring the same service and excitement to the next generation of scholars.

"I really like how the Fulfillment Fund gives us a course of action and talks us through everything step by step. I have applied to a bunch of Cal States, UC schools and private universities, plus a lot of scholarships! I'm feeling really good about college because I now have a set plan for it!"
- Scholar JLL



Wise Readers to Leaders through the years

Readers to Leaders has grown and changed over 10 years. Check out some of our accomplishments and hear from our scholars, staff and Junior Literacy Leaders!

2012

- first summer
- 1 site
- 50 summer scholars
- 10 JLLs

2013

- 2 sites
- 150 summer scholars
- 25 JLLs

2014

- 2 sites
- 150 summer scholars
- 30 JLLs

2015

- 3 sites
- 225 summer scholars
- 60 JLLs

2016

- 3 sites
- First Middle School program
- 300 summer scholars
- 70 JLLs
- Remote Reading begins: 25 scholars

WRTL is so special to me because of the community it has created. The program is able to bring together college students who care about education and inequality, high school students looking to give back, and students who don't have access to the education they deserve. This creates one of the most special communities I have ever encountered, allowing mentorship, bonding, and an environment where everyone involved is constantly learning and growing. I've felt so lucky to get the opportunity to get to know so many incredible scholars who have taught me so much, and hopefully I was able to teach them as well! - Ms. Liesel



Joining WRTL was one of those life choices I have looked back at with such appreciation. Not only did working as a Literacy Leader with WRTL set me on my career path to becoming a teacher, but it also helped me understand my "why" and my purpose for choosing this line of work. WRTL will always have a special place in my heart. - Ms. Sophie

I decided to volunteer as a JLL because my siblings had done it and loved it. I kept coming back because the summer program left such an impact on me. I loved watching the scholars have so much fun whether it was doing snackivity, swimming, or art, and I loved witnessing their growth. It's amazing to see the scholars come back each year and have improved so much. Also, the community of WRTL, from the JLLs to LLs to the scholars, fosters such an enjoyable and memorable experience. The program thrives from the commitment and dedication of the volunteers and staff. The LLs bring such inspiring energy and leadership and the JLLs follow their lead to keep the program running smoothly. - Current JLL



During my time at WRTL, I was in constant awe of my scholars' resiliency and their commitment to their futures and success. I also learned how impactful you could be as a Literacy Leader and how much this program means to the families and scholars who participate. I am still in touch with a scholar and his mother who I taught when he was in 4th grade and now he's going to college! My favorite part about working as a Literacy Leader and Site Coordinator was providing emotional support. This led me to go to social work school and to eventually become a therapist for high-risk, low-income teenagers at a residential treatment facility in Los Angeles. - Ms. Ellie

2017

- 4 sites
- 325 summer scholars
- 90 JLLs
- 50 year-round scholars

2018

- 5 sites
- 400 summer scholars
- 90 JLLs
- 60 year-round scholars

2019

- 6 sites
- 500 summer scholars
- 100 JLLs
- 100 year-round scholars

2020

- Virtual summer program
- 250 summer scholars
- 75 JLLs
- 1st scholar JLL
- Expanded year-round programs: 300 year-round scholars

2021

- In-person and virtual summer programs
- 300 summer scholars
- 80 JLLs
- 8 scholar JLLs
- College access program
- 250 year-round scholars

I feel so grateful for the learning experiences that my three kids have had. They look forward to summer because they get to go to Wise Readers to Leaders. My daughter Jayden was not at grade level when we started with Readers. She has an IEP through LAUSD and has been assigned more than a few resources, but none have compared to the learning and growth she has achieved through Wise Readers. She is now reading on her own. She still struggles, but now I see the love she has for reading. - Scholar Parent



I have worked at Wise Readers to Leaders for 10 years which has shaped the woman I am today. Wise Readers to Leaders has grown a lot throughout my time working there and continues to evolve! In 2017, WRTL crafted its own curriculum tailored to our scholars that is culturally responsive and engaging. When the pandemic started in the beginning of 2020, WRTL made sure to provide scholars and families with resources and adapted to online learning. In the summer of 2021, for the first time ever, WRTL offered an in-person and online program to give families an option that was best for them. Wise Readers to Leaders continues to provide weekly literacy classes, enrichment classes, and one-on-one tutoring to best support scholars throughout the regular school year. I will always be thankful for WRTL for helping me find my purpose in life and helping me grow as a teacher. Wise Readers to Leaders promotes a commitment to lifelong learning, builds self confidence, and instills a love of learning. Readers ignited my passion for teaching and greatly influenced my career path as it gave me the opportunity to teach and mentor so many scholars throughout the years. - Ms. Jacqueline

While the first idea that comes to mind about the summer program is summer school, it is nothing like summer school. Instead, we can make new friends, as well as participate in fun activities and go on field trips. I love being a part of Readers to Leaders because I get to see friends I only see during the summer. The activities we get to do are so special. Some of my favorites are coding, sports, and reading. I like that the activities are educational and informative, but also entertaining. Now as a JLL, I love getting to know more about the scholars and bonding with them. I've also strengthened my communication skills and I've been able to meet a lot of new mentors and friends. - Current Scholar JLL



2021 highlights



return to in-person programming

Readers to Leaders opened two in-person sites this summer at Stephen Wise Temple and the American Jewish University, welcoming nearly 150 students back on campus. Our scholars were so excited to connect with our Literacy Leaders and Junior Literacy Leaders and engage in our literacy curriculum and activities. Scholars read as a class each morning and read independently during Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) time. Scholars also engaged in many literacy based projects throughout the summer including art projects, story maps, board games, and project based learning centered around community development. Many of our scholars also read their first book independently! Additionally, scholars participated in camp-style activities such as swimming, science experiments, team building games, tie dye day, gardening, and our annual end-of-summer celebration!



virtual programs

In addition to in-person opportunities, we offered virtual programs for scholars and families who were most comfortable with an online platform. Over 100 K-8th grade scholars met online each day to read, write, and engage with their peers. Our youngest scholars focused on phonics and learning to read, while older students completed novel studies on the books *Holes* and *Ban This Book*. We also loved hearing the stories students wrote and the artwork they created. We are thankful that we could provide this virtual option to our families!

a focus on mental health

We are very proud to continue offering counseling and mental health services through our partnership with the Maple Counseling Center. Coming off a COVID year, we saw the significant need to support our scholars' mental and emotional health. We thank the Maple Counseling Center counselors for their dedication to our scholars and we look forward to continuing these services each year.



scholars make **academic gains**

Our scholars learned so much this summer, strengthening their reading skills, fostering new hobbies, and growing their self-confidence. 94% of parents report seeing improvements in their child's reading level after our summer program, while nearly 90% of parents think their child is more confident because of our program. Additionally, an independent evaluator reviewed our summer program and found that over 75% of our students are meeting or exceeding grade level standards!



"I wish I could stay at camp forever! The class is so much fun. I am proud of being at Wise Readers to Leaders because the program makes us happy and I love the teachers. The activities were very engaging and I learned a lot about life and history. My favorite parts are being with everyone, making friends, and learning how to read and write." - Scholar



year-round **programs**

Our Teen Board and Teen Ambassadors worked throughout the year to run several of our year-round programs, including hosting weekly virtual enrichment classes and planning four year-round events. In addition, 135 teens volunteered as Remote Readers and 70 teens served as math tutors, providing one-on-one literacy and math help to K-8th grade scholars. Readers also continued to offer weekly literacy classes to help our scholars strengthen their literacy skills.

JLL donors a special **thank you** to our dedicated and passionate JLLs and for the **generous support** of their parents and families!

Aria Assil
Brooke Ball
Olivia Bamshad
Kimberly Basilio
Saul Basilio
Briyana Bekhrad
Brandon Brooks
Sophie Brooks
Hayden Brown
Mason Brown
Sophia Calne
Clara Campbell
Max Cohen
Solomon Cohen
Cassandra Corona
Oscar Cruz
Kailey Daneshgar
Davin Donay
Kate DuFine
Emmy Feldman
Annie Feldmar-DeVitre
Arthur Feldmar-DeVitre

Gabriel Freedman
Logan Gabbay
Megan Gaisford
Alex Glickman
Andrew Goetz
Kyra Goldstein
Jake Grodner
Scarlett Hartstein
Avery Hoffman
Anya Karumanchi
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Erin Landis
Lily Lee
Ellie Lieberman
Evan Lublin
Kayla Manavi
Alexandra Martin
Blake Marvin

Jacob Massey
Layla Massin
Hector Medina
Sam Mendizabal
Sophia Musante
Leah Neymark
Ella Nikfar
Ruby Offer
Dani Pill
Nicolas Polio
Valeria Polio
Talia Prins
Madelyn Rahimi
Lily Robinson
Brooke Ruttenberg
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Lily Saada
Zach Samuel
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Daniella Spero
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donor spotlight

the fishman family

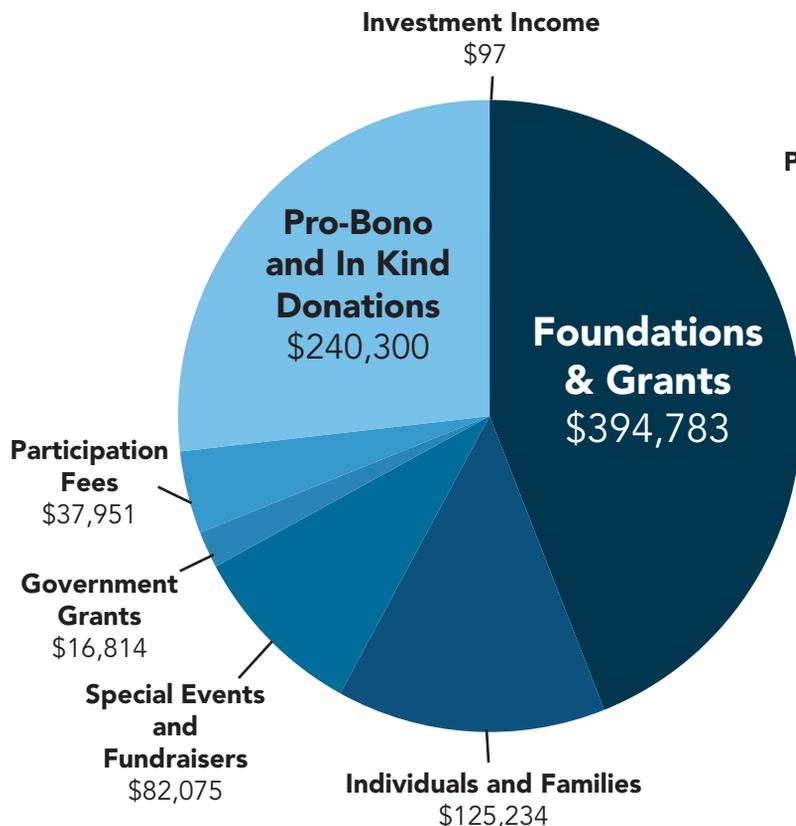


"Wise Leaders to Readers is a wonderful organization that provides summer literacy and enrichment programs to students in grades K through 8th. These children come from low-income communities, in at-risk environments, where opportunities to learn are often compromised. Readers to Leaders exposes its participants to programs in a fun and **positive** camp-like space that can open their eyes to learning in ways they probably never expected. Here, a **love of learning** can occur and will lead to a **lifetime of success**. We know that **education is the key to success** and Readers to Leaders is a building block to help pave that way. We support Readers to Leaders because we believe this program helps children **realize their potential** and enables them to establish a love of learning in a fun, creative and healthy place."

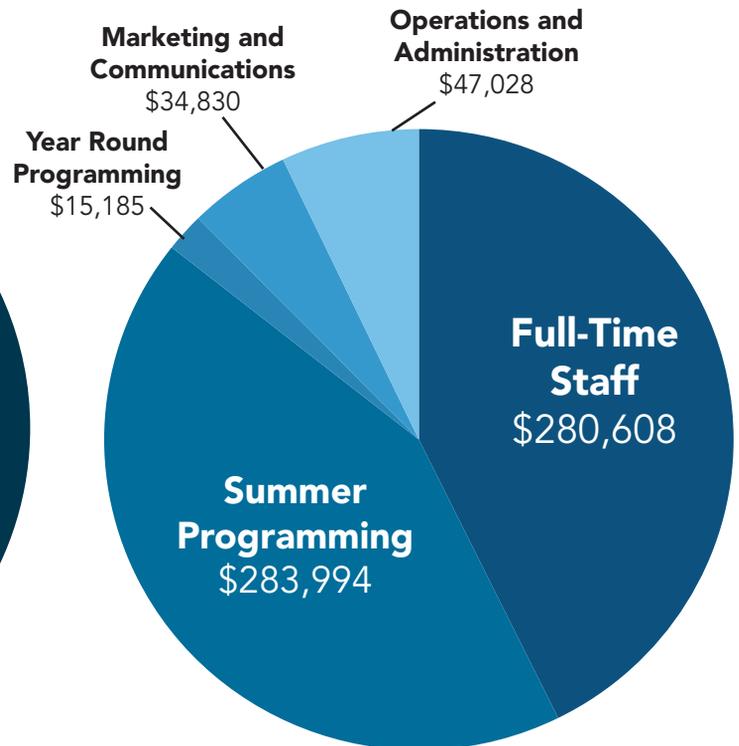
- Jodie and Steve Fishman

revenue & expenses

revenue \$897,254



expenses \$661,645



thank you to our generous donors

\$250,000+

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\$100,000-\$249,999

Andrea and Glenn Sonnenberg

\$25,000-\$49,999

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Teen Advisor and Co-Founder

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Program Coordinator

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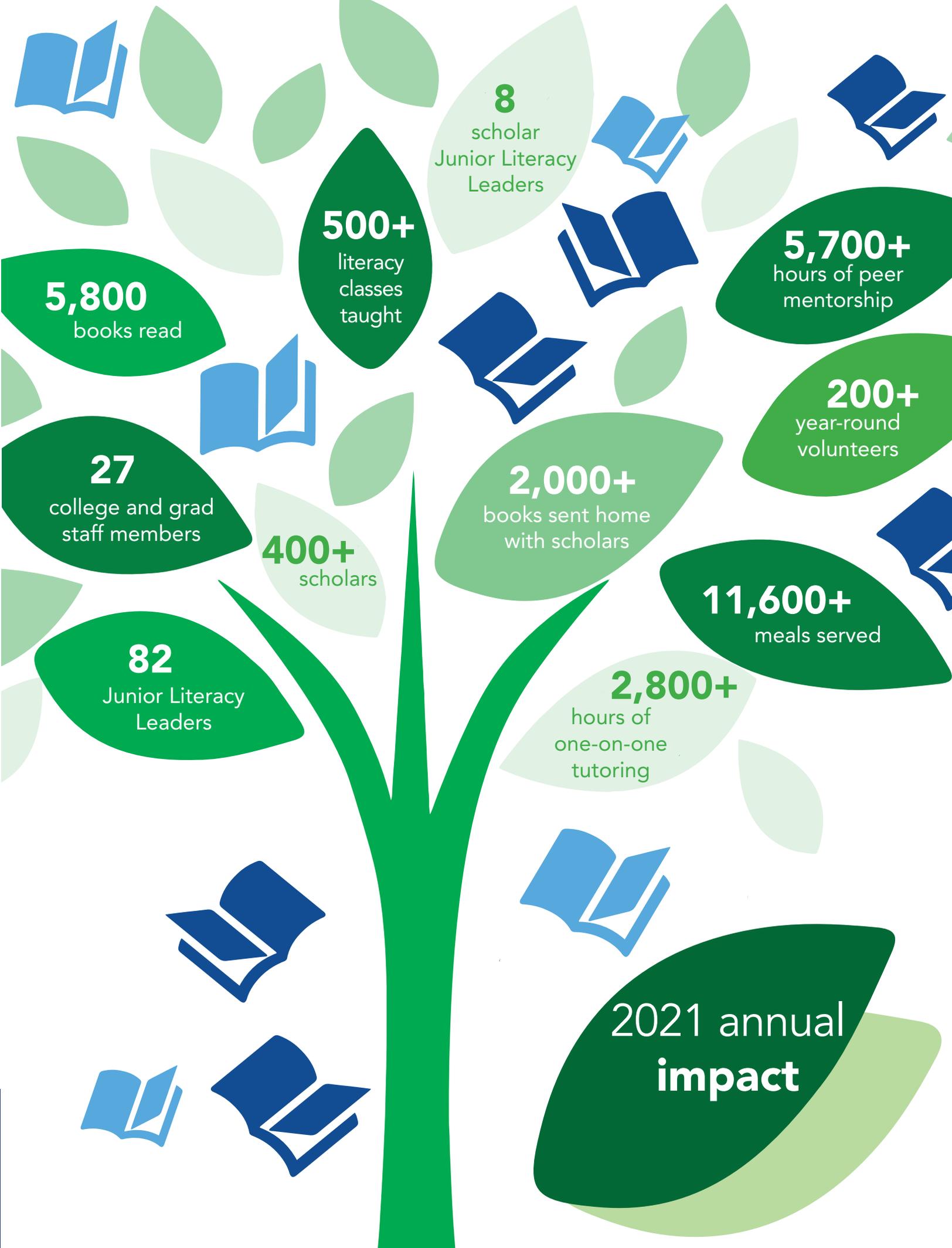
Eliana Svilik

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Audrey Yadegar

A special thank you to Stephen Wise Temple and the American Jewish University for hosting our summer program and supporting our work.





8
scholar
Junior Literacy
Leaders

500+
literacy
classes
taught

5,800
books read

5,700+
hours of peer
mentorship

200+
year-round
volunteers

27
college and grad
staff members

2,000+
books sent home
with scholars

11,600+
meals served

400+
scholars

82
Junior Literacy
Leaders

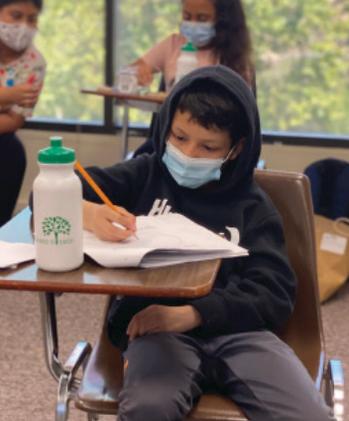
2,800+
hours of
one-on-one
tutoring

**2021 annual
impact**



WISE READERS TO LEADERS

15500 Stephen S Wise Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90077



Summer 2022 Applications Out Now!
Our program will run from June 21st to July 29th. Links are on our website for scholar, JLL, LL, and management applications!

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wrtl@wisela.org
310-889-2251