

# 2025 Annual Report



**Make Way** for **Books**

# A Letter from our Leadership

Dear Friends and Partners,

2025 was an important year for Make Way for Books - one defined by intentional change, growth, and a deepening of our roots in the Arizona community. Our mission to give all children the chance to read and succeed is our north star. To serve more families effectively, we strengthened our foundation. We made great strides in refining our internal systems to ensure Make Way for Books is more sustainable, efficient, and ready to meet the growing needs of our community. These stronger systems mean our programs are more impactful.

Early literacy is the cornerstone of a child's success, and by empowering parents and educators today, we are building brighter futures for tomorrow. This year, we saw firsthand how a love of reading can transform a household, giving children the confidence and tools they need to thrive.

Of course, none of this growth would be possible without you. Whether you are a long-time donor, a dedicated volunteer, or a community partner, you are the heartbeat of this organization. Your belief in our mission provided the resources and the inspiration for us to reach new heights this year.

Your impact is reflected in the stories of the families we serve. We are more than just a nonprofit; we are a community united by the belief that literacy lights the path to a better future for families and children everywhere.

Thank you for being part of our journey during this pivotal year. Together, we are shaping a brighter future for Arizona's children.

With gratitude,  
Fernando González, Chief Operating Officer

*On behalf of the Make Way for Books Board of Directors and leadership team, including our new CEO Marc Acuña, who joins us in 2026.*



# 2025

## Our Impact

Creating access to early literacy opportunities & books

**31,576**

Children, Parents, & Educators impacted through proven early literacy programs

**57,827**

Books provided to children's classrooms and homes

Building skills in the classroom and at home

**94%**

Parents gained skills, knowledge, and tools to support their children's early literacy skills at home.

**98%**

Educators gained skills and knowledge to support the emergent literacy and language skills of children in their classrooms and home-based care environments.

**We are honored to work with children and families throughout Pima and Maricopa counties, as well as to provide coaching to educators statewide.**



# Neighborhood School Readiness

Our Neighborhood School Readiness model provides comprehensive early literacy programming to meet the diverse needs of young children (ages birth to five), families, and educators.

Our strategies focus on high-need neighborhoods surrounding elementary schools, including proven family literacy programs like Story School, comprehensive professional development through The Story Project, and providing books and resources through the Make Way for Books App.

Together, we achieve success for children through strategies that engage and empower families, support educators, and develop children's emergent literacy and language skills.

## Meeting Families Where They Are: Story School

A two-generation approach to build parents and caregivers' skills and confidence while children develop a love of reading and early literacy and language skills to start school ready to read.



### Building parents' skills and confidence

When Camila enrolled her daughter in Story School, she faced transportation challenges and economic challenges that made attendance difficult. But she showed up every week with her daughter, rain or shine.

Over the 12-session cycle, Camila transformed from hesitant to confident. She discovered reading could be joyful, not intimidating. She learned to use expressive voices, songs, and rhyming games with her daughter Sara. And, she grew more confident as she expanded literacy into everyday moments, from pointing out environmental print around the community center to turning reading into a family routine her older children joined.

As Camila's confidence grew, so did her daughter's engagement. She became more curious about books, more responsive to songs, and more eager to learn. Camila's growth extended beyond literacy, She began asking about continuing her own education and accessing resources to support her family's long-term stability. Camila's journey demonstrates the heart of our model; when adults build literacy skills and confidence, children thrive.

**“I love the knowledge I am gaining to help my child in early literacy. I feel more prepared to make the most of our interactions with books...”**



### Opening the door to literacy skills and a love of reading

Emily always valued books but didn't feel she had the strategies to make reading truly interactive for her daughter. Story School changed that for Emily and her family. She learned to emphasize new vocabulary and turn books into interactive experiences. Emily also began building bonds and friendships with a welcoming community of parents. With those supports, tools, and confidence, reading became intentional, frequent, and joyful.

Her daughter Hanna now demonstrates emergent literacy and language skills, selecting books independently, inviting family members to read with her, and is beginning to retell stories. For Emily, Story School opened a door to guide her daughter toward a lifelong love of reading.

**Click to hear directly from families about the impact of Make Way for Books programs like Story School!**

# Empowering Educators: The Story Project

Providing early literacy support to educators, parents, and children at preschools, child care centers, and home providers through proven coaching, access to books, and professional development.



## Launching The Coaches Institute

In 2025, we launched The Coaches Institute, a specialized professional development program for instructional coaches in early education systems. By training coaches alongside teachers, we created a unified approach to literacy improvement across entire systems—not just individual classrooms. Coaches learned evidence-based practices, hands-on coaching techniques, and how to use quality picture books as tools for meaningful guidance with the teachers they support.

**“The Story Project gave us high-quality professional development, curated booklists, and free books—but more than that, it empowered us to create literacy-rich classrooms for our youngest learners.”**



## Building Literacy Skills through The Story Project

With support from her Make Way for Books Literacy Coach, Osborn School District teacher Victoria learned that relationships are an important foundation of literacy growth. A quiet student in her class rarely spoke during assessments. With support from her Make Way for Books coach, and through patience and relationship-building, Victoria discovered the child felt comfortable whispering. By honoring this form of communication, she uncovered the student’s strong vocabulary and helped her succeed. Now the whole class whispers together, creating an inclusive environment where every child can participate.



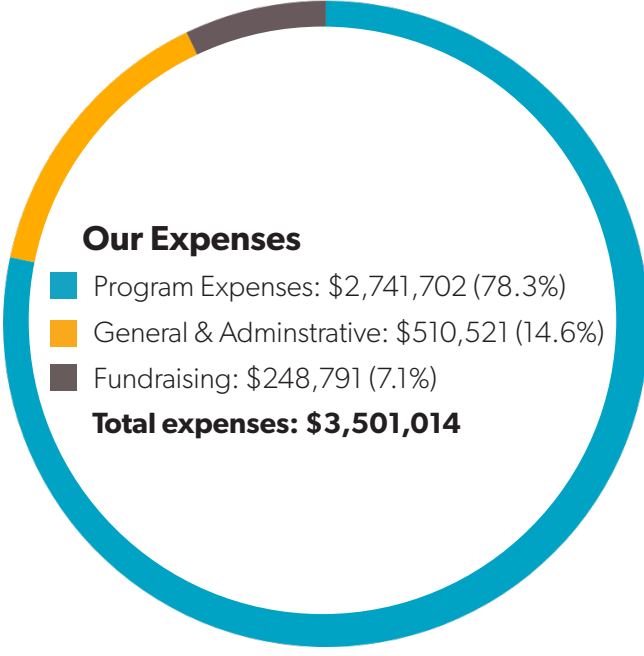
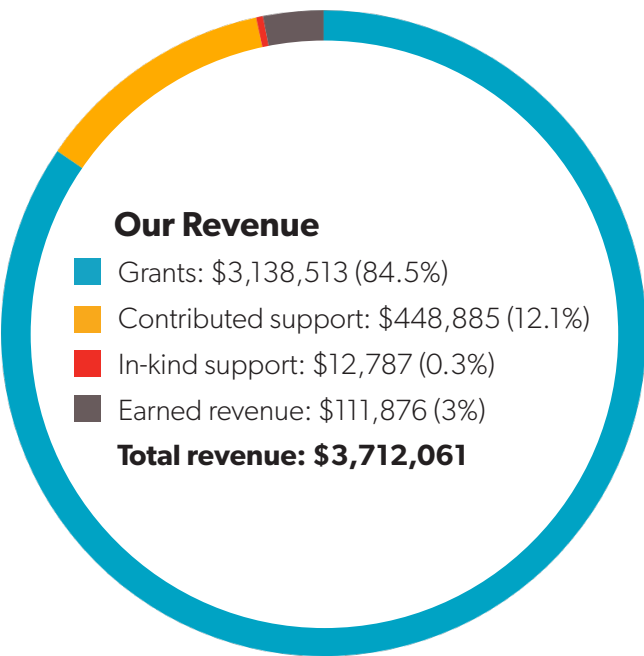
## Expanding Impact to Military Families

Make Way for Books is expanding to support military families and the educators who serve them. In 2025, Story School and Story Project programs launched at Finley Child Development Center, Davis Monthan Child Development Center, and Borman K-8 Elementary School.

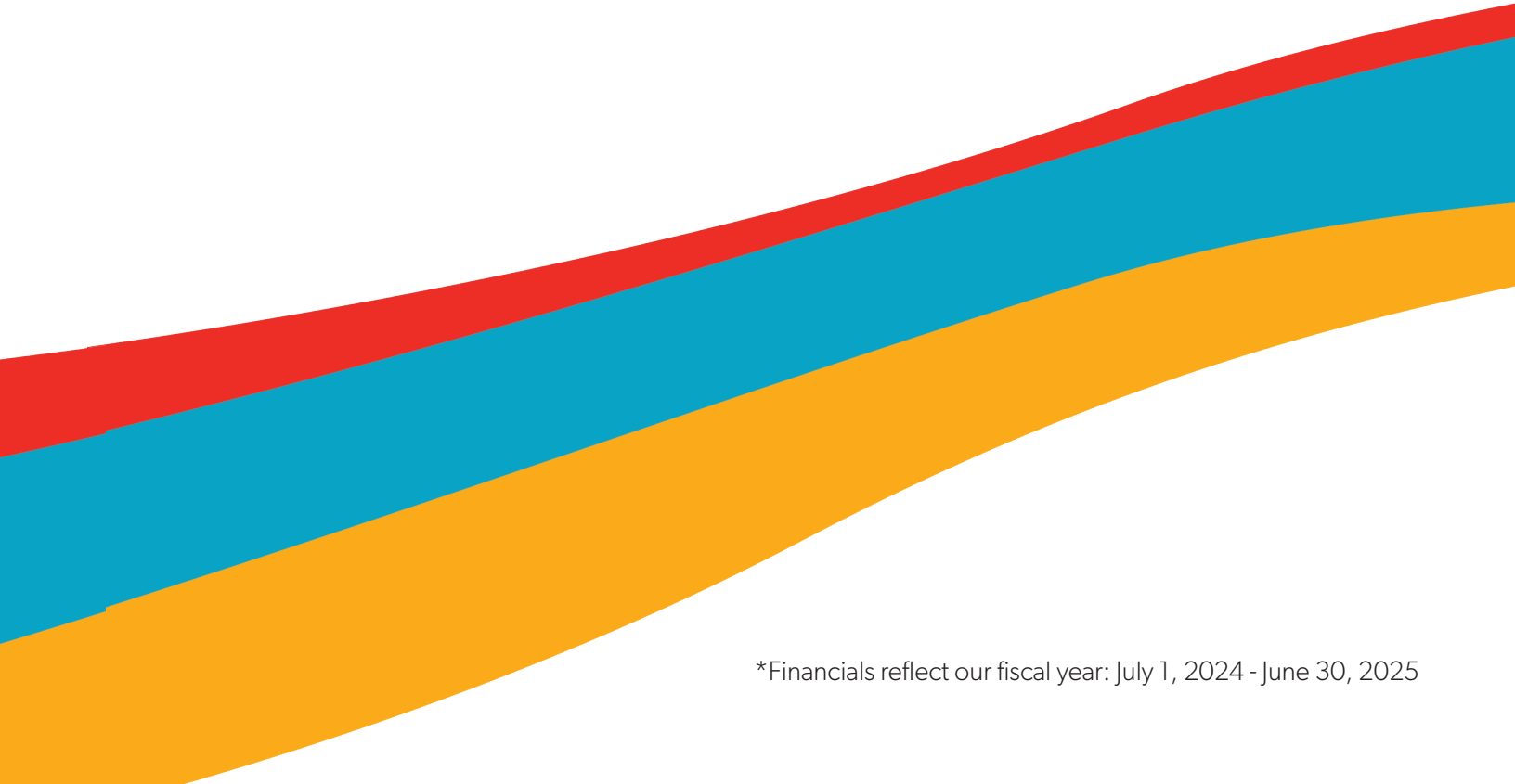
**“Story Project is an investment in yourself and your students. You’ll gain practical strategies you can use immediately and see a tangible difference in how children engage with reading.”**

# Our Financials

Your investment in Make Way for Books directly drives our mission to ensure all children have the chance to read and succeed. Here's how we stewarded your support in 2025.\*



A strong organization means sustainable impact. By investing in our team, systems, and programs, we continue to ensure Make Way for Books can serve children, families, and educators for years to come.



\*Financials reflect our fiscal year: July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

Make Way for Books



**Thank you for  
being part of our story.**

Join us, get involved, and make your gift at  
**[makewayforbooks.org](https://makewayforbooks.org)**