

# Annual Report 2023



Literacy transforms communities

# Our Mission

Our mission is to provide adults with effective programs in reading, writing, and communication skills necessary for them to achieve their personal and professional goals.

With the support of trained volunteer tutors, our adult learners achieve goals such as getting a better job, passing a driver's test, becoming a US citizen, earning a GED, and playing an active role in their children's education.



# Statements From Our Leaders

As I began my tenure as Board President of the Ulster Literacy Association, I committed to do all I could to advance the mission of ULA and work to improve the lives of the over 25,000 functionally illiterate adults in Ulster County.

Our impact on the community is only possible because of the partnerships we have developed and strengthened over the last 42 years. Despite a global pandemic, we made significant progress in keeping our staff and programs intact and can now envision a stronger ULA. The current Board owes a debt of gratitude to Merle Cosgrove, who stepped down from the presidency last June and whose leadership got us through the pandemic.

ULA cannot exist without its volunteers and donors. I am in awe of the generosity of our donors, as I am proud of our tireless volunteers. Together, they make it possible for us to advance the mission of Ulster Literacy. I applaud the bravery and self-determination of our learners.

This year, we created a framework that will continue to strengthen in the next year. We added new board members, held our second Ulster Literacy Day at seven bookstores across the county, five more than the previous year, cultivated relationships with our supporters and donors, and renewed and expanded past partnerships. The work in the year ahead involves several ambitious projects - a long-range planning process to create a path for the next several years, events to build awareness of ULA in the greater community, and expansion of our programs to answer the needs of our neighbors throughout the county.

I wish to express my deep gratitude to our valued donors, advisors, and partners. We are grateful for all that you do. I also want to thank my fellow board members for their passion and dedication to strengthening the Ulster Literacy Association. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to thank ULA's staff and leadership for their outstanding work in building a more literate and empowered Ulster County.

**Kristin Wenger**  
Board President

This has been a year of transition, renewal, and growth for Ulster Literacy Association. As I begin my second year as Executive Director and my 14th year at ULA, I want to express my gratitude to our founders and previous leaders whose hard work, determination, and commitment to Literacy has had a lasting impact on our community. Their legacy, as well as the dedication of our Board of Directors, the devotion of our volunteer tutors and staff, and the generous support of our community, have enabled ULA to navigate through the challenges of the pandemic era and continue to serve our adult learners successfully.

We restarted programs that were suspended during the pandemic, including classes at the Ulster County Jail and our English for Parents classes at the Kingston Library. We also formed new partnerships. We began offering English classes at the Broadway Bubble Community Hub in Kingston, participated in the current oral storytelling exhibit at the Reher Center for Immigrant Culture and History, and welcomed an AmeriCorps VISTA Digital Literacy Leader to our staff. We value these and the many other partnerships that have helped us to forward our mission and increase our impact.

Every day at ULA we are fortunate to witness how literacy transforms communities. Adult learners in our program gain the literacy skills they need to advocate for their personal and professional success. We congratulate all of the ULA learners on their accomplishments last year, which include:

- 54 learners completed at least 30 hours of instruction.
- 14 learners obtained their driver's licenses.
- 10 learners became US citizens.
- 5 learners read their first novel.
- 3 learners enrolled in community college classes.
- 2 learners voted for the first time.

These accomplishments, along with numerous others, were attained with the support of the remarkable volunteer tutors who drive our mission. We thank them for their time, passion and commitment. And we take pride in knowing how their service with ULA has enriched their own lives.

As we begin our 43th year, I am excited for the many opportunities that lie ahead.

**Amy Lenard**  
Executive Director

## One-to-One Tutoring

We offer **Basic Literacy** instruction to adults who speak English but wish to improve their reading and writing skills, and **English Literacy** instruction to adults who want to learn English.

Our program is one-of-a-kind. It matches a learner with a trained volunteer tutor. Together, they create a personalized plan for their sessions that is tailored to the learner's personal and professional objectives. Meetings are arranged at a mutually convenient time and location, enabling us to support learners who have work schedules, transportation limitations, or other barriers that prevent them from attending classes elsewhere.



Catherine Burgos, a volunteer tutor since 2023, meeting her learner. One hundred twelve one-to-one tutors volunteered 2,715 hours last year.

*In Ulster County, NY, 20% of adults are not able to read instructions on a job application.*

Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)

## English Classes for Parents

We provide classroom instruction for parents and caregivers, with on-site childcare available for young children. Classes take place in public schools, libraries, churches, and community centers in Ulster County.

Learners work with a lead teacher and a team of volunteer tutors to develop their English skills, empowering them to engage more actively in their children's education and communities.



Linda Greenow, a volunteer tutor since 2014, teaching one of our English classes at the Broadway Bubble in Kingston, NY. Learners from 27 different countries attended our classes last year.

*A parent's literacy is the number one predictor of a child's future academic success.*

US Department of Health and Human Services

## Correctional Education Program

Incarcerated individuals who take part in correctional education programs are 43% less likely to recidivate than inmates who do not.\*

ULA's relationship with the Ulster County Jail started 20 years ago. Our classes resumed in April 2023 after being suspended during the pandemic. Ulster Literacy's lead teachers, assisted by volunteer tutors, now offer writing classes twice weekly to four small groups of inmates. The classes are designed to help inmates express their ideas and converse on meaningful topics through memoir writing.

In the future, we plan to expand our classes to include one-to-one tutoring in reading comprehension and math.

\* From a study conducted by The Rand Corporation

I have been teaching a Writing Workshop at the Ulster County Jail since April 2023. The format of the class encourages and supports both oral and written literacy by engaging students in critical thinking and self-reflection.

The class begins with a lively discussion as students respond to a quotation by interpreting it, agreeing or disagreeing with it and discussing the historical and biographical context of the speaker. A mini lesson on vocabulary or literary elements follows. Once the writing prompt is given, heads drop in deep thought, pencils touch papers, the room becomes a quiet sanctuary, and the writing begins. Finally, students read their papers, and the class is invited to comment or ask questions of the writer. The comments have always been affirming and supportive.

I believe the Writing Workshop fosters a safe space where a community of writers searching for meaning and belonging in their lives have found a haven. They are grateful for this opportunity, and I am grateful to be a witness.

Margo McLoone  
Writing Class Teacher

**“If you don’t like something, change it.  
If you can’t change it, change your attitude.”**

Maya Angelou

## Our Learners Say

*"I need English for everything,  
for jobs, for more opportunities."*

Damaris

*"I like to learn."*

Carlos

*"They make you lose  
the fear of talking"*

Nancy

*"I like English because I can  
talk to my family, my friends."*

Anahit

*"English is an international language."*

Syed

*"I am happy because I found  
a good teacher and group of  
friends from different countries"*

Rosa

*"I like to help my  
kids with school."*

Karla

## A conversation with a Learner

**Tutor:** So what does literacy mean to you?

**Learner:** Ulster Literacy means for me an open door to help me understand the language and help me to improve my conversation in English, my understanding and my writing. This give me new opportunities to work and to go around with confidence in the community.

**T:** How has being tutored changed your life?

**L:** It's changed my life because they helped me to keep going, learning the language, and to improve in my writing, reading, and comprehension of English. I am motivated to come to each class.

**T:** What do you find most valuable about working with Ulster Literacy?

**L:** The most valuable is they show me how kind are the people who work with the Ulster Literacy Association. My tutors and the people who organize, they help to each person who come and say I need to learn the language.

**T:** What do you feel most proud of?

**L:** I'm proud of how I can improve my English language, from nothing. I will take time and will improve because I come here every Thursday and work with my tutor, and stay motivated.





# Our Tutors

Our programs would not be possible without our volunteer tutors. Each learner who comes to ULA has a unique set of goals, and our volunteers offer both classroom instruction and one-on-one, individualized attention.

Our tutors come from a wide range of backgrounds but are united by a common desire to lift up their neighbors. Tutors and learners build strong bonds by sharing skills, talents, and stories. As a result, many of our tutors report they feel less isolated and more engaged in their community.

We offer free training and ongoing support to prospective tutors. No prior teaching experience is necessary. If you have a passion for reading and writing and are interested in sharing it with an eager and motivated learner, we would love to have you aboard.

We encourage each tutor to commit to a year of service.



Margo McCloone tutors in the Correctional Education Program.

*"I'm inspired when I come here. This is a place where good people help good people. And in a world where things are a little upside down, this is quite extraordinary and wonderful."*

Erin S.

*"My learners have gained US citizenship, RN certifications, ESL language skills."*

Marie B.



Antoine Hepkins is a Board Member and a tutor in the One-to-One Program.



Linda Greenow tutors the English Classes for Parents.

We have **262** adult learners

75% enrolled in **English Literacy** classes  
(from 27 different countries)

25% enrolled in **Basic Literacy** classes

There are **115 learners** enrolled in  
**One-to-One Tutoring classes**

There are **100 learners** enrolled in  
**English for Parents** classes

There are **47 learners** enrolled in  
**The Correctional Education Program**

We have **112 active tutors**

Our volunteers donated **3,595 hours**

# Ulster Literacy Association Highlights



## Robert Burke Warren

In November 2022, The Golden Notebook hosted a fundraising event at Nancy's of Woodstock featuring musician and writer Robert Burke Warren.



Sarah Mecklem and Antoine Hepkins, volunteers representing ULA.



## Ulster Literacy Day

September 23 was Ulster Literacy Day. The event raised awareness of how Literacy transforms lives. Seven bookstores from across the county participated in the event and each donated 10% of their sales to ULA.



## Tutor Appreciation Day

We celebrated the contributions of our tutors at a luncheon and thanked Merle Cosgrove for her leadership as Board President.



## Gabriela's Story

Livia Gabriela Vilma Cirila Aliaga Rios, one of our learners, shared her story in *Taking Root*, an exhibition at the Reher Center for Immigrant Culture and History in Kingston, NY.



## Citizenship ceremony

Diana Bryan, one of our learners, at her citizenship ceremony. Ten learners became US citizens last year.

# Our Financial Information

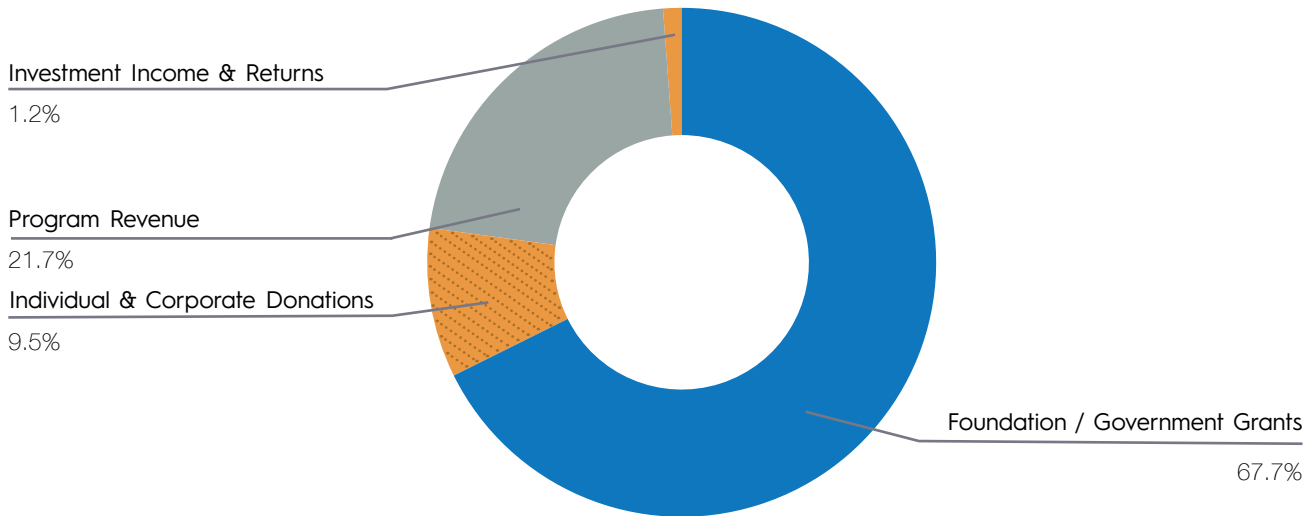
## Revenue

Foundation / Government Grants	\$197,932
Individual & Corporate Donations	\$ 27,791
Program Revenue	\$ 63,397
Investment Income & Returns	\$ 3,422
<b>Total Revenue &amp; Support</b>	<b>\$292,542</b>

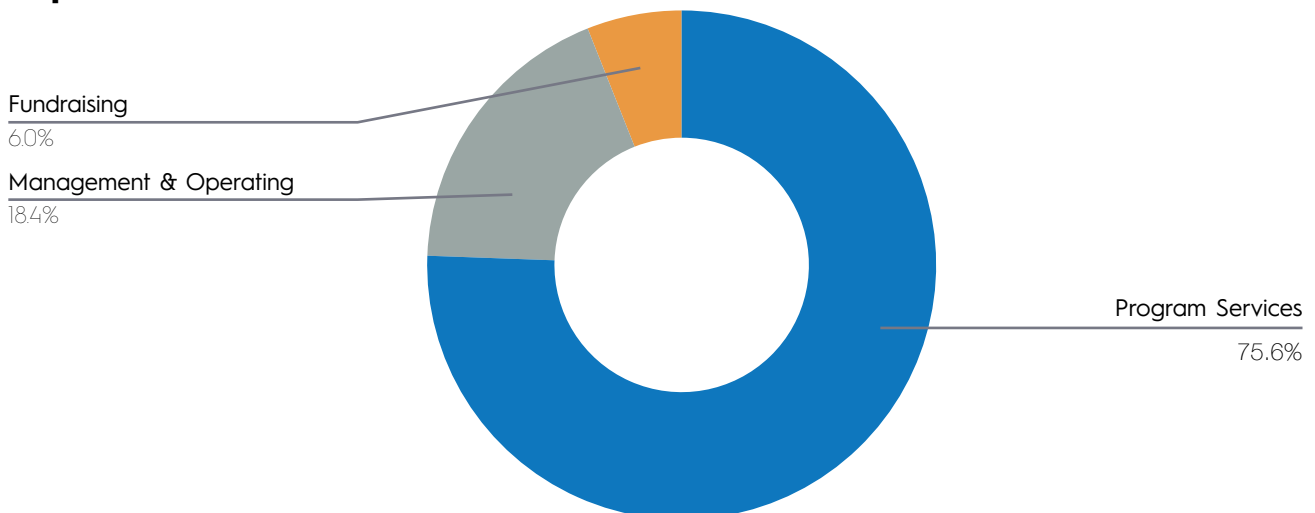
## Expenses

Program Services	\$205,593
Management & Operating	\$ 50,054
Fundraising	\$ 16,389
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$272,036</b>

## Revenue



## Expenses



# Our Supporters



AmeriCorps  
Seniors



# Our Individual & Business Donors

## Book Level

Anonymous  
Eli Basch  
Marianne Berry  
Merle Cosgrove  
Timothy & Susan Delaney  
The Golden Notebook  
Elizabeth Jordan & Thomas Polk  
Janice M. Leas  
Jane & Thomas Struzziari

## Chapter Level

Susan Books  
P. Gail Bradney & Lowell Miller  
Carolyn Ferolito  
Richard Goldman  
Robin Guenther & Perry Gunther  
Robert Hlavaty  
Bruce & Rachel Jackson  
Maureen Keegan  
Gary & Diane Kvistad  
Amy Lenard  
Stephen MacDonald  
Dominick Mercurio  
Rough Draft Bar & Books  
Saugerties Lions Club  
Eileen Sweeny  
Ulster Savings Bank  
Joseph Alan Walker  
Kristin & Kenneth Wenger

## Paragraph Level

Barbara Bash  
Chris & Sheila Beall  
Patricia J. Berlanga  
Somsak Bhitiyakul  
Tom Bullard  
Margaret Carey  
Kathleen & William Cloonan  
Linda Diamond  
Robert & Kathleen Dittus  
Tory Ettlinger  
Ellen Fine  
Jennie W. Fleck  
Marsha Franklin  
Sam Freed  
Rachel Gans  
Patricia Goodwin  
Mitchell & Susan Gordon  
Linda Greenow  
Hannaford Community Bag Program  
Deborah & Richard Heppner  
Daniel Hoffman  
H. Houst & Son, Inc.

## Paragraph Level (cont'd)

Harriet Iles  
Indigo Mist Books  
Rose Jambrone & Henry Starr  
JNC Consulting  
Suzanne Jordan  
Mary C. Leslie  
Bruce Levine  
James & Joan Lonergan  
Jeff Lowe Plumbing, Heating & A/C Inc.  
JoAnn Margolis  
Philip Masquelette  
Debra Moskowitz & Elin Menzies  
Elizabeth Miller  
Tamar Nastroshvili  
Mary & Robert Netter  
Ann Patty  
Donald Pollock  
James & Heather Robinson  
Rondout Valley Lion's Club in memory of Joe Petras  
Rotary Club of Kingston  
Luis Rueda & Cindy Sato  
Donna Rutlin  
Sarah Ryan  
Cynthia Saporito  
Toby Schulman  
Erna & David Shahbazian  
Paul & Cynthia Sonnenberg  
Valerie Spreng  
Salvatore Tagliarino & Sonia Ragir  
Judith Turkel & Jennifer Costley  
Susan VanParys  
Carl Weisberg  
Jack Young

## Sentence Level

Kathleen Banks  
Rena Blumenthal  
Darlene Bover  
Patrick & Anne Buonfiglio,  
Richard E. & Dianne T. Craig  
Robert & Lynn Dennison  
Daniel J. Devine  
Joe Fitzpatrick & Kathleen Kluber  
Lynn Formica  
Georgene Gardner  
Virginia & Richard Hlavsa  
Jack Hu & Nicky Huang  
Joseph M. Ingarra, Esq., P.C.,  
Jonathan Kligler  
Elizabeth Lewis  
Sarah Litvin  
Una Maeve Maurer  
Joyce D. & Robert L. Nicol  
Sandra & Matthew John Ostoyich  
Kristine Pedersen

## Sentence Level

Barry Price  
David Rosenblum & Elizabeth Lewis  
Sean Safron  
Elizabeth Schoen-Rene  
Gayle Schumacher  
David Smilow  
Janet Solow  
The Bicycle Rack  
United Health Group  
United Reformed Church of Rosendale  
Christine Van Benschoten

## Word Level

Amazon-smile  
Barbara D. Arrindell  
Jeanette M. Baggot  
Marie Barnes  
Robin Berger  
Pasquale A. & Rae F. Bottino  
Fredda & Timothy Brennan  
Anna M. Brett  
Geraldine Brodsky  
Johanna & Steven Bryant  
Neal Calvin  
Lenore Cane  
David & June Cartmell  
Astrid Cernos  
Lorraine Cranston  
Carol Davis  
Brian Drabkin  
Nancy Emery  
Michael Flamhaft  
Tara Johannessen  
Emily Jones  
Marjorie Leopold  
Julian H. Lines  
Elizabeth Lunn  
Phyllis McCabe  
Sarah Mecklem  
Marie Miller  
Riva Pearson  
Stacey L. Rein  
Maxanne Resnick  
Carol Ricken  
Lorraine Rosen  
Elaine Rylance  
Judy Alexander Samoff  
Roberta Sickler  
Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
Debra Spicehandler  
Puja A. J. Thomson  
Carsten Warnes  
Jamey Wolff  
Lynn Woods

## Thank You!

We are grateful for our donors whose generous support make our work possible, and to those who provided in-kind services totaling over \$8,000.

## Staff

Amy Lenard	Executive Director
Sabrina Joray	Program Manager
Teresa Detweiler	Volunteer Coordinator
Lisa Hantes	RSVP Program Director
Giuditta Tucci	Outreach Coordinator
Joann Dayton-Wolf	Jail Program Coordinator
Margaret Delfino	AmeriCorps VISTA

## Board of Directors

Kristin Wenger	President
Marianne Berry	Vice President
Chrissy Lawlor	Secretary
Robert Jackson	Treasurer
Debra Benn	Director
Luis F. Rueda	Director
Antoine Hepkins	Director
Mike Sayre	Director



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