



Embargoed until Sept. 10, 2020, at 10 a.m. ET

Media Contact: Brett Zongker (202) 707-1639, [bzongker@loc.gov](mailto:bzongker@loc.gov)

Public Contact: Dawn Stitzel (202) 707-0798, [dsti@loc.gov](mailto:dsti@loc.gov)

**Library of Congress Announces Winners of the 2020 Literacy Awards**  
*Top Prizes Awarded to The Immigrant Learning Center, The International Rescue Committee, Inc. – Pakistan Reading Project, National Center for Families Learning, Pratham Books and Room to Read*

Five organizations working to expand literacy and promote reading will be awarded the 2020 Library of Congress Literacy Awards, Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden announced today.

Top prizes are being awarded to **The Immigrant Learning Center, The International Rescue Committee, Inc. – Pakistan Reading Project, the National Center for Families Learning, Pratham Books and Room to Read.**

The Literacy Awards, originated by David M. Rubenstein in 2013, honor organizations doing exemplary, innovative and replicable work. Collectively, all of these awards spotlight the great efforts underway to promote literacy and respond to the needs of our time.

Three of this year's winners are being recognized for a second time due to their responsiveness to the unique needs presented by the current, unprecedented times. They have done especially outstanding work addressing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and recent social unrest. Only the previous major award recipients (2013-2019) were eligible to apply for these three awards.

"Literacy powers the pursuit of learning, knowledge and opportunity around the world, and now we are challenged to find new ways to teach and learn due to the COVID-19 pandemic," said Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden.

“The Library of Congress is proud to work with David Rubenstein in honoring the innovative achievements of these organizations in advancing reading in the United States and worldwide.”

### **Prizes and Recipients**

#### **American Prize (\$50,000): The Immigrant Learning Center, Malden, Massachusetts**

The Immigrant Learning Center (ILC) addresses the needs of low-income immigrants and refugee adults in the greater Boston area. Begun in 1992, the center serves 425 students at any given time, over 800 annually, with a waitlist of 700. The center provides English for Speakers of Other Languages classes emphasizing a range of literacy skills (including civic and financial) along with language proficiency. They also help immigrants learn how to navigate American educational, business and general social systems. The center has served over 10,500 immigrants from 92 greater Boston communities since its inception. A staff of 32 credentialed and experienced teachers teach at the center with the assistance of 60 volunteers. Programs are year-round and free of cost to learners. For more information about the center see [www.ilctr.org](http://www.ilctr.org)

#### **International Prize (\$50,000): The International Rescue Committee, Inc. – Pakistan Reading Project, New York City**

The International Rescue Committee’s Pakistan Reading Project (PRP) supports regional and provincial education departments to improve literacy and reading skills of public school children in grades one and two throughout Pakistan. The three key components of the project are: teacher training and development of materials for students and their educators in local languages; policy reform (such as introducing policies that support reading); and community-based support for reading. This is a 7-year project (started in 2013) working in 69 districts. As of December 2019, the project’s services had reached more than 1.7 million students and trained more than 27,000 teachers in reading instruction. For more information on the project see [www.pakreading.org.pk/en](http://www.pakreading.org.pk/en)

#### **2020 David M. Rubenstein Special Response Awards (\$50,000 each):**

##### **National Center for Families Learning, Louisville, Kentucky**

The National Center for Families Learning (NCFL) works to eliminate poverty through educational solutions for families. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the center has focused on the digital divide by partnering with school districts and other community-based organizations to provide technology and Wi-Fi access, including mobile bus hotspots. The organization has also addressed issues such as food insecurity and social isolation. In Kentucky, Texas and Colorado, the center packaged and delivered food bundles with backpacks full of engaging

educational books and materials to families. In Louisville, Kentucky, the organization's hometown, it partnered with a local nonprofit to produce public service announcements about the virus that feature families as trusted community messengers. The center's hometown of Louisville has been at the forefront of social unrest due to the fatal shootings of Breonna Taylor and David McAtee. They have condemned these acts of violence and are taking actionable steps to use their platforms for social justice. For more information on the center and its activities, see [www.familieslearning.org](http://www.familieslearning.org).

### **Pratham Books, Bengaluru, India**

Established in 2004, Pratham Books is a children's book publisher that has helped millions of children gain access to engaging, affordable books in multiple languages. To further its mission, Pratham Books launched StoryWeaver, an online, digital repository of multilingual children's stories that are openly licensed, giving users free access to the stories. The platform also enables the creation, translation, downloading and printing of stories through embedded tools. The repository has over 23,000 stories in 259 languages and continues to grow.

As demand surged during the pandemic for digital learning resources, Pratham Books created programs that can be used in low-resource environments, including a Learn at Home program, thematic reading lists, audio-visual books and a phone-based dial-a-story program that allows a child to locate a story in a chosen language by dialing a toll-free number.

In addition, in just four months, StoryWeaver translated 3,000 books in 28 new languages, including books about the coronavirus, health and hygiene and social and emotional issues. UNESCO and the World Bank have listed StoryWeaver as a resource for the homebound child during the pandemic. For more information on Pratham Books and activities during this period of Covid-19 and social unrest see [www.prathambooks.org](http://www.prathambooks.org).

### **Room to Read, San Francisco, California**

Room to Read seeks to transform the lives of millions of children in low-income communities by focusing on literacy and gender equality in education. Room to Read's digital platform — Literacy Cloud— originally developed for educators and book creators in Indonesia, was expanded exponentially in response to COVID-19. It now includes over 1,000 original Room to Read children's book titles in 19 languages. The titles are available as a free resource for students, parents and teachers in the U.S. and around the world.

Simultaneously, the organization is working to harness the power of education to end systemic inequality and to build a more inclusive view of the human experience. Room to Read's 1,600 culturally diverse book titles teach children how to relate to others with empathy, tolerance and justice. For more information on Room to Read and activities during this period of Covid-19 and social unrest see [www.roomtoread.org](http://www.roomtoread.org).

The Library of Congress Literacy Awards Program is also honoring 15 additional organizations for their implementation of best practices in literacy promotion. These best practice honorees, recipients of \$5,000 each, are:

- Adelante Mujeres, Forest Grove, Oregon
- Book Dash, Cape Town, South Africa
- Book Harvest, Durham, North Carolina
- Briya Public Charter School, Washington, DC
- Child Aid, Portland, Oregon
- Cooperative for Education (CoEd) – The Spark Program, Cincinnati, Ohio
- Get-Lit - Words Ignite, Los Angeles
- Island Readers & Writers: An Initiative for Maine Children, Mount Desert, Maine
- Keren Grinspoon Israel, Ramat Gan, Israel
- Literacy for Life, Williamsburg, Virginia
- Mighty Writers, Philadelphia
- The Literacy Center, Attleboro, Massachusetts
- The Reading League, Inc., Syracuse, New York
- Universidad Iberoamericana (UNIBE) – Project READ, Santa Domingo, Dominican Republic
- Writers in the Schools, Houston

A Literacy Awards Program Interactive map and additional information on the awards and previous winners is available at [read.gov/literacyawards](http://read.gov/literacyawards).

David M. Rubenstein is the co-founder and co-executive chairman of The Carlyle Group. He is a major benefactor of the Library of Congress and the chairman of the Library's lead donor group, the James Madison Council.

The Library of Congress is the world's largest library, offering access to the creative record of the United States — and extensive materials from around the world — both on-site and online. It is the main research arm of the U.S. Congress and the home of the U.S. Copyright Office. Explore collections, reference services and other programs and plan a visit at [loc.gov](http://loc.gov); access the official site for U.S. federal legislative information at [congress.gov](http://congress.gov); and register creative works of authorship at [copyright.gov](http://copyright.gov).

# # #