



**hands**<sup>®</sup>  
across  
the **sea**

# 2020-2021 Annual Report



# Hands Across the Sea Team

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Executive Director

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Development Manager

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Literacy Link, Saint Kitts and Nevis

**Eleanor Phillip**  
Literacy Link, Saint Kitts and Nevis

**Vernest Mack**  
Literacy Link, Antigua and Barbuda

**Hyacinth Gonsalves-Barriero**  
Literacy Link, Antigua and Barbuda

**Sheila Serville**  
Literacy Link, Saint Lucia

**Mary-Anna Antoine**  
Literacy Link, Saint Lucia

**Lize Bardouille**  
Literacy Link, Dominica

**Gizelle Laurent**  
Literacy Link, Dominica

**Yvette Pompey**  
Literacy Link, St. Vincent and The Grenadines

**Enna Bullock**  
Literacy Link, St. Vincent and The Grenadines

**Bernadette John**  
Literacy Link, Grenada

**Gloria Bonaparte**  
Literacy Link, Grenada

## Board of Directors

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**More than 100 million children** will fall below the minimum proficiency level in reading due to the impact of the global pandemic.\* A 2021 report from World Bank anticipates that **2 of every 3 students in the Eastern Caribbean** and Latin America will not be able to read at age-level due to the impact of school closures. Chronic, non-communicable diseases and the effects brought on by climate disasters threaten the education and wellbeing of our youngest, and especially the most vulnerable.

\*UNESCO 2021

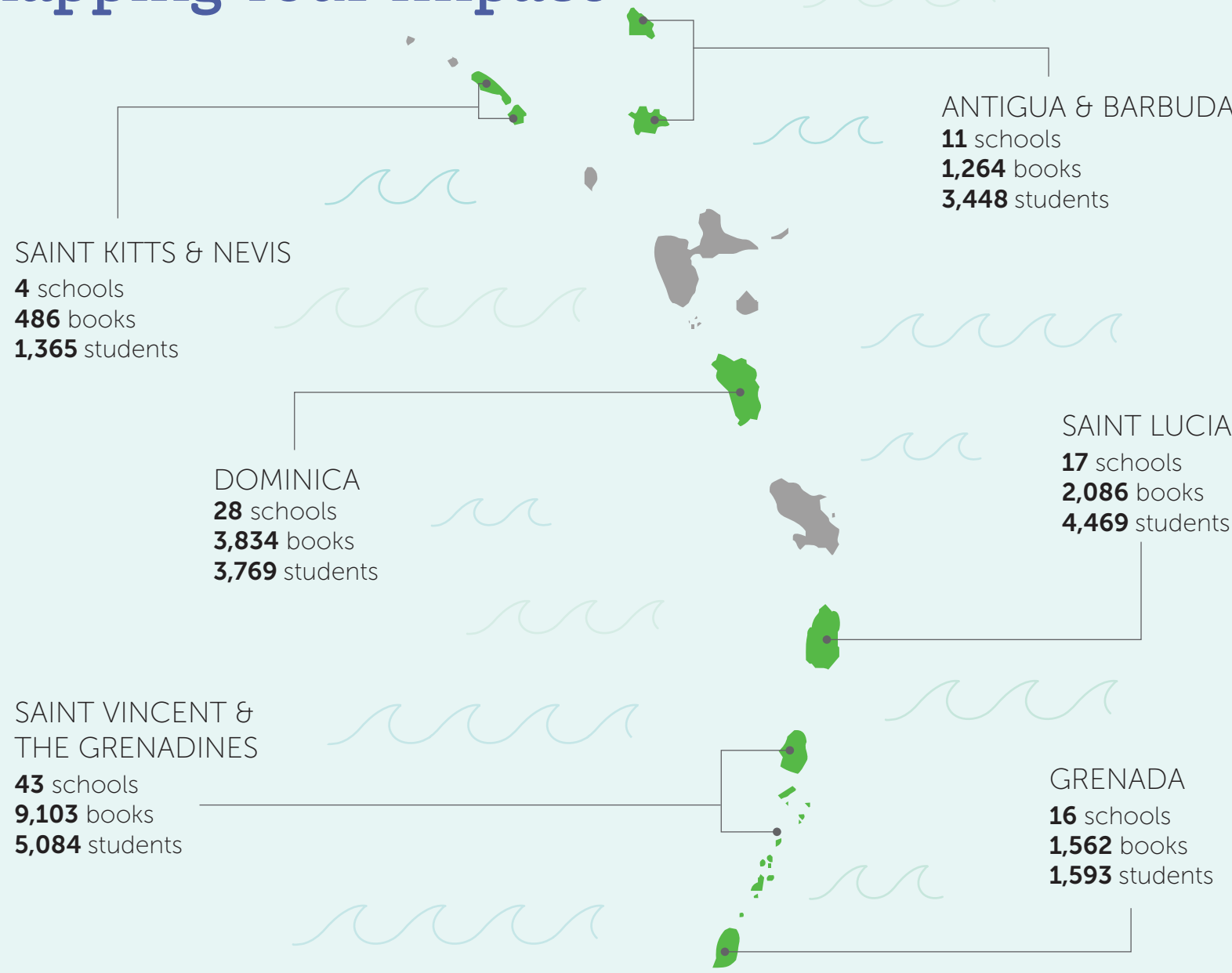
**Hands Across the Sea is on a mission** to ensure children in the Eastern Caribbean are growing up with access to the literacy resources and support they need to succeed at a future of their own creation. Our work has always been vital, but we are doubling our efforts to combat challenges facing our young students during this historic crisis.

**All children have the basic right to read. Together, we can empower the next generation of leaders, thinkers, and creators in the Eastern Caribbean.**





# Mapping Your Impact



Above numbers reflect 2021-2022 school year only

# Bridging the Gaps

Since March 2020, the Ministry of Education in Antigua has been alternating between remote, hybrid, and in-person learning for their students in response to the dynamic nature of the pandemic.

To address the resulting learning gaps, the Ministry decided to embark on a curriculum recovery intervention where students who were identified as most vulnerable would be taught for three weeks during the summer to accelerate their learning.

Hands Across the Sea’s partnership was requested specifically by principals and the Ministry to support the program’s goal of providing additional instruction for 560 students from kindergarten through third grade to improve the literacy and numeracy of the children.

Antigua Literacy Links, Hyacinth Gonsalves-Barriero and Vernest Mack, provided support

by increasing book lending, leading Read Alouds, and developing activities to enhance reading comprehension. The Literacy Links were also invited to provide a school training on whole-student learning.

The program was so successful, Hands has continued ongoing recovery program support for several additional schools. Plans for the Summer 2022 program are already underway with strong requests for Hands’ presence in schools.







## Global Action, Local Response

In April 2021, St. Vincent was hit with the catastrophic eruption of La Soufriere volcano. The disaster came on the heels of a school year already marked by back-to-back outbreaks of Dengue Fever and the region's most infectious wave of Covid-19 yet.

The devastation forced more than 16,000 people to evacuate off the island, while thousands of others relocated with relatives or headed south into shelters.

For weeks, Saint Vincent would remain covered in volcanic ash that contaminated the water, made grounds unsafe, and sent toxic air as far as sister countries of Barbados and Saint Lucia.

By summer of 2021, the intense flow of lava and the destruction of Hurricane Elsa left a once familiar landscape in North Windward and Leeward Mainland entirely anew.

***Devastation forced more than 16,000 people to leave the island***

After this tumultuous period, children in Saint Vincent needed additional support to combat learning loss and to address social and emotional impacts. Hands Across the Sea responded quickly with a plan designed to meet children and

families where they were to provide critical resources to meet their needs.

**Hands purchased 6,995 books and created relief packets which we personally delivered to a total of 1,962 K-6 students in 14 Red Zone schools.**

The US Peace Corps Saint Vincent served as a mobilization partner, and the Mustique Charitable Foundation, NorCal PCA, and hundreds of RPCVs in the United States provided vital support for this tremendous endeavor.

**Hands committed an additional 2,108 books to education relief to reach 3,089 vulnerable students** who suffered learning losses due to lack of resources amidst

school closures in the Green and Yellow Zones. Additional books were donated to the Saint Vincent National Public Library in support of the Library Caravan outreach program, "Connecting Families and Communities through Reading," which took three separate journeys to Windward side, Leeward side, and Bequia, respectively. Donated books were marked with Hands stickers carrying the message: "Reading Unlocks the Door to Success."

The relief projects have garnered participation and support from local, national, and international leaders. Hands Across the Sea remains committed to building capacity and continuing to meet children and families where they are to provide ongoing literacy support.



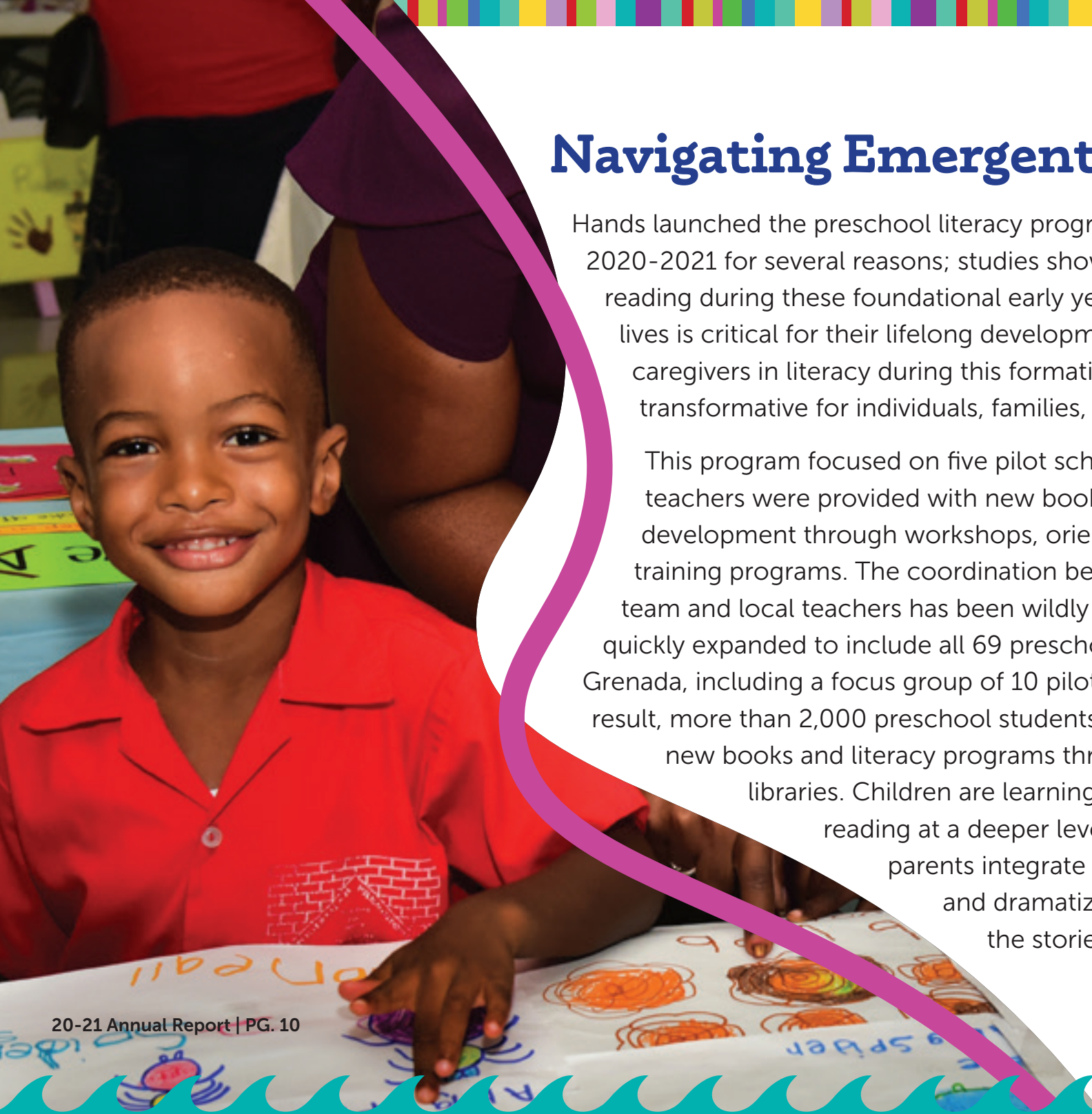
## House of Ellis Partnership

In July 2021, Hands Across the Sea and US-based NGO House of Ellis launched a relief project to support families displaced by La Soufriere's April 2021 eruptions.

**Together, we provided 33 children living in homeless shelters with books and educational resources.**

Literacy Links Enna Bullock and Yvette Pompey were joined by House of Ellis Founder McGregor Ellis and his on-island partner Tamara Barrow for this two-week direct response project.





# Navigating Emergent Literacy

Hands launched the preschool literacy program initiative in 2020-2021 for several reasons; studies show that introducing reading during these foundational early years in children’s lives is critical for their lifelong development, and engaging caregivers in literacy during this formative time can be transformative for individuals, families, and communities.

This program focused on five pilot schools; preschool teachers were provided with new books and professional development through workshops, orientations, summer training programs. The coordination between the Hands team and local teachers has been wildly successful and quickly expanded to include all 69 preschools throughout Grenada, including a focus group of 10 pilot schools. As a result, more than 2,000 preschool students are accessing new books and literacy programs through Hands libraries. Children are learning to engage with reading at a deeper level as teachers and parents integrate songs, activities, and dramatization to enhance the stories shared at

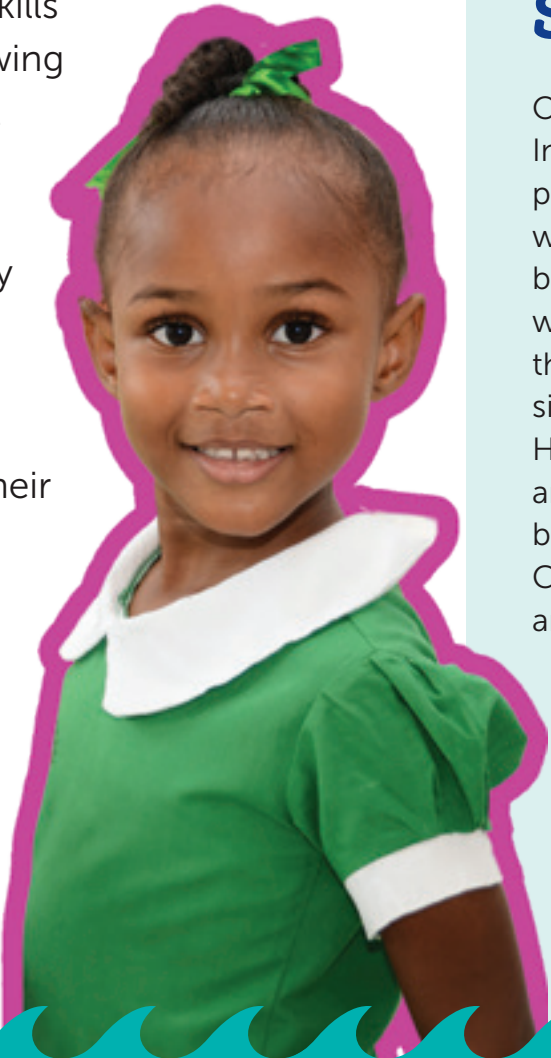
school. These new teaching methods, resources, and ongoing supports have led to communities hosting popular educational events that foster a love of reading among families.

*Books and programs have been made possible through our partnership with Republic Bank Grenada*

The budding excitement for reading was clear at our Summer Literacy Extravaganza, which focused on students of the emergent literacy programs and highlighted the work and success of the five original pilot schools. The momentum continued into year two with

renewed enthusiasm for classroom and community programming such as the Riverview School’s now weekly Friday Night Read-a-Thon for families.

These new skills and the growing engagement with reading will change the trajectory for children and their families as they begin their educational journey.



# Pre-School Starter Kits

Ongoing plans for the Preschool Initiative include creating a best practice resource from our work with the pilot schools to be utilized as a part of the work we do to scale and replicate the program throughout all six OECS countries where Hands works. Our presence and relationships have already been established with the Early Childhood Unit in each country, and we look forward to bringing in formal programming, preschool starter kits, and programmatic support alongside the ECE Unit in the years to come.



## BECAUSE OF YOU

# Christian is building a passion for literacy

Your donations to Hands Across the Sea provide new opportunities to children like Christian. He is a Grade 6 student at the Laborie RC Boys' Primary School in Saint Lucia, and a self-professed avid reader.

Laborie RC Boys' Primary School was founded in 1975. The school sits upon Laborie Bay along the southern coast of Saint Lucia. For more than half a decade, Hands Across the Sea has been working with the K-6 students who attend Laborie Boys'. Your support has helped to maintain a steady flow of dynamic and highly engaging books for more than 110 children each year. To date, Hands Across the Sea has placed 1,300 new books in Laborie Boys' library, and has helped sustain the school's engaging literacy programs.

Christian tells his Hands Literacy Link, Sheila Serville, that he likes how organized the library is and notes the special attention that has been taken to providing books that boys love to read. His favorite books are *Diary of Wimpy Kid*, *Goosebumps*, and, of course, *Captain Underpants*.

The teachers, administrators, and librarians work closely with Hands Across the Sea to make sure that the books and services your gifts provide are relevant to the needs of each school, age group, and the culture of the community.

*"Because of Hands Across the Sea, my interest in reading has increased. There are so many books I like that are available to me!"*

Christian is grateful for the wide selection of books and the care the Literacy Links and teachers have put into making the library a fun and inviting place to be; he loves how easy it is to find the perfect book where he can get lost in a story of adventure and mystery.

One of the keys to increasing literacy is getting kids excited about reading. Your support opens the pages of endless adventure for thousands of children in the Eastern Caribbean.

Christian may not know it when he's sitting in a comfy corner reading *Goosebumps*, but someday his ability to read will create opportunities and build pathways beyond his wildest imagination. Literacy truly invites us all into new worlds and new experiences.







# Celebrating a Legacy through Literacy

It was a uniquely warm autumn day on Sunday, September 26, 2021, at the Fairfield Beach Pavilion. The sun shone down on the Long Island Sound offering a loving embrace to the nearly 200 guests who had traveled from around the US to celebrate the life of Jake Monroe Beddoe near his home in Connecticut.

Family members were joined by friends, colleagues, classmates, peers, and the

Beddoe's extensive community. Each person and interaction revealed greater depths of Jake's goodness and humor. Jake's values and love were mirrored back through the diverse group of people who joined together for the momentous occasion.

Wally Beddoe delivered a speech that left not a dry eye as he reflected on his son's life and legacy as a multifaceted and dynamic young man who brought tremendous joy and connection to each of his encounters. A multi-table presentation of Jake's original artwork

**To learn more about Jake and the Jake Beddoe Fund, visit:**  
**[handsacrossthesea.org/jake-beddoe](https://handsacrossthesea.org/jake-beddoe)**

gave a doorway into his soulful depths. Jake's incredible talent was on full display.

Hands Director Amanda Sherlip joined the Beddoe family for the event and in celebration and dedication of the Jake Beddoe Fund. The fund aims to bring support and awareness for children's literacy in the Eastern Caribbean in honor and memory of Jake's transformative experience in Saint Vincent. Jake was an integral member of the Hands Across the Sea library at the Diamond School in Saint Vincent during his Peace Corps deployment.

To date, the Jake Beddoe Fund has raised more than \$20,000. This fund helps to ensure ongoing sustainability for the programs that captured Jake's heart.

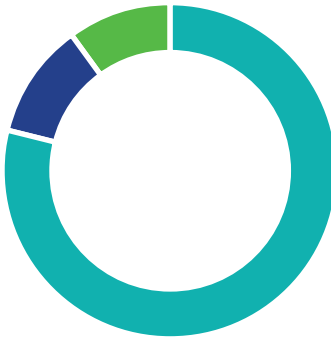
Jake's story continues to carry deep meaning for countless people around the world, and Hands Across the Sea is honored to partner with his family in continuation of his life and legacy.





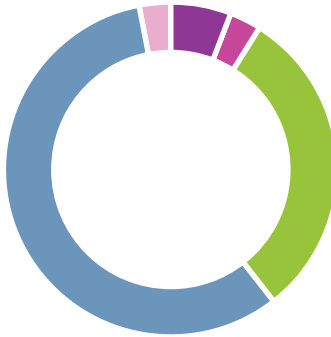
# Financials

Hands Across the Sea continues to be recognized for its accountability and responsibility. Our focus is on transformative programmatic delivery and a healthy organizational model. We hold a Guidestar Platinum Seal of Transparency and have been awarded a Top-Rated Seal from Great Nonprofits for an eleventh consecutive year. Our grassroots NGO is lean, and that means your gift goes far. It costs Hands Across the Sea less than \$30 to provide one child with a year of literacy intervention.



- Program Expenses **79%**
- Admin Expenses **11%**
- Fundraising Expenses **10%**

On average, 80% of all donations go to directly support programs and frontline services. For our full Audited Financial Statements and IRS Form 990s, visit: <https://handsacrossthesea.org/about>



- Individual Donors **57.61%**
- Foundations **30.55%**
- Government (PPP Loan) **6.01%**
- In Kind/Other **3.04%**
- Corporate Donors **2.79%**

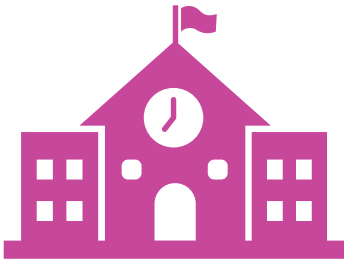
# Hand Across the Sea Lifetime Impact



**167K**  
CHILDREN SERVED



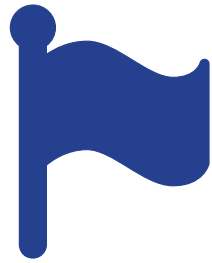
**1,200**  
STUDENT LIBRARIANS  
TRAINED



**927**  
SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY  
LIBRARIES REACHED



**544,607**  
NEW, APPROPRIATE,  
WORLD-CLASS BOOKS DISTRIBUTED



**6**  
COUNTRIES  
SERVED



**100+**  
PEACE CORPS  
VOLUNTEERS PLACED



Thanks to your partnership, Hands continues to serve.

# 2020-2021 Top Donors

## \$25,000+

Benjamin R. Bibler Memorial Fund  
Beverly Foundation  
CIBC First Caribbean ComTrust Foundation  
Mustique Charitable Foundation  
William Ewing Foundation

## \$10,000-\$24,999

Brennan Family  
David & Gretchen Cantor  
Meredith & Whitney George  
Ladera Foundation  
Mill Reef Fund  
Ridgedale Fund  
Sidney and Deanna Wolk Charitable  
Foundation  
Vermont Community Foundation  
Arthur Watson  
Whitehead Foundation

## \$5,000-\$9,999

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Aspen Grove Foundation  
Robert Barrett  
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George Lewis  
Cathey & Don Lynn  
Patricia Rahr Mayer  
Republic Bank (Grenada) Ltd  
Sandals Foundation  
Mark Scott  
Stony Point Foundation  
Tom Davis & Maureen Zent

## \$2,500-4,999

ALPINE PRECISION LLC  
Jacqueline Asplundh  
Benevity Gift Fund  
Robert Brennan

Stacy Gould  
Kelly Construction  
Joseph Malone  
Russell & Jamie Niemie  
Benjamin & Sylvie Resch  
Rotary Club of West Chester  
Ray & Deborah Vargo  
John & Jill Weidman  
Ken & Laura Yagelski

## \$1,000-\$2,499

Jane & Tom Babbitt  
John & Janice Barba  
Geoffrey & Elizabeth Burns  
Mike Chamberlain  
Louis J Crishock  
Ty De Cordova III  
Toni Dennis  
Catherine Gadecki  
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Michael Veprauskas  
Katy & Justin Veprauskas  
Nick & Katherine Verano  
Anna Whitcomb  
Sandy Golden & Karen Wyscaver

## \$500-\$999

Camille Aragon  
Baird Foundation  
Talbot Baker  
Alene Rice & Bruce Balan  
Marty Bash  
Paul & Greta Beatty  
Niki & Wally Beddoe  
Pia Bertelli  
Suzanne Bowker  
Mike Brady  
Jim and Adean Bridges  
Dan & Brenda Brookhart  
Stephen Brown  
Peter Bushman  
Bruce & Mary Campbell  
Caitlin Canetti  
Gail Casher  
Gretchen & Robbie Colby  
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John Craven  
Thomas Crowell  
Edison International  
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## \$200-\$499

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Thank you Very much.  
& I love books.

