

Annual Report 2020



President's Message

When we started Twice Upon a Time in May 2014, on a sunny day outside Heartwood House, I doubt any of us (visitors or volunteers!) could have envisioned a day when it would be difficult or even perhaps dangerous to share a book with a few friends while sitting on a foam mat outside a community organization.

This has been an understandably difficult year for all of us not just due to the pandemic but also because of increasing calls for racial justice in the wake of several deaths of Black and Indigenous people at the hands of the police. We continue to say your names: George Floyd. Breonna Taylor. Regis Korchinski-Paquet. Chantel Moore. Tony McDade. Abdirahman Abdi. Sheffield Matthews. Ejaz Choudry. Rodney Levi. Daunte Wright. These crises have been top of mind not just for those of us involved in Twice Upon a Time, and they have shaped the way we provide our services. Equity and diversity have always been core to our values, but in light of the events of the past year, we have renewed our commitment to providing children with books that can inspire understanding, compassion, and growth, and in which they can see themselves represented. Our 2017 and 2018 project to purchase books by and about Indigenous peoples was a start, but we must and will do better. We are committing to increasing our spending on new book acquisitions for books by and about the BIPOC communities, particularly those with Black characters and by Black authors.

The pandemic also changed things for us in 2020. Just recently, I responded to an email from a mum who used to visit us at Overbrook Community Centre, but who hasn't been able to since all our locations closed in March 2020. We arranged for a volunteer to meet her at our storage unit and provide her with some books for her four children. While we have helped kids find great books to read in new and different ways this year, that spark of excitement at sharing wonderful stories with those we love remains the same! We gave away 3569 books this year, which is a decrease from previous years, but given the nature of our work, I think it's a number to be very proud of.

President's Message

I have to share a heartfelt thank you here to our Acquisitions Committee (read more about their work on page 11), who continued to receive and process donations, purchase material to supplement our offerings when necessary, and work with the Fundraising Committee to meet our obligations for reporting on grants received. In the pandemic, their work grew exponentially: with our locations closed, Acquisitions volunteers became the main point of contact with our community partners, who distributed books on our behalf to their clients. Rather than seeing families directly at our locations, a tenet that is core to our values and our service model, we worked closely with new and existing partners to provide them with boxes of books for their clients. We developed a questionnaire to ensure that the books provided met the needs and interests of the children they were serving, and arranged for pick-up or delivery while respecting and appreciating necessary health measures.

Thanks also to the hardworking folks on the Fundraising Committee, we received more support from local grant agencies than ever before, more than doubling our donations over last year. An enthusiastic thank you to all our donors, who believe, as we do, in the importance of having books in the home to support early literacy skills and a love of reading.

Reading has been my solace during the pandemic (as during many times of stress), as has being outdoors. I was thrilled to meet with several of our volunteers and supporters in the Emerald Plaza neighbourhood last fall to celebrate Sarah Simpkin's "Tour de branch" bike tour of all 33 branches of the Ottawa Public Library, a fundraiser for Twice Upon a Time. It was wonderful to see other people in person, and combine my love of cycling and reading to support a friend in a noble goal.

President's Message

We experienced some turnover on our Board in the last year (read more about that on page 11), and there is more to come! It has been almost a decade since our first planning meeting in October 2012, and I will be stepping down as president this summer. This is an exciting opportunity for a new president to take Twice Upon a Time to the next level. Recruiting during a pandemic may be challenging, and we are currently exploring an Interim President role, supported by a core team of Board members, and advertising for a new president later in 2021. We value the diversity of our Board of Directors, and are excited to add a new perspective to our team. We are committed to recognising, respecting and appreciating individual differences, and we welcome the unique contributions a new president can offer to make our Board, and our organization, stronger.

It has been an honour and a true gift to see Twice Upon a Time grow from an idea to a thriving organization that was able to weather an unprecedented year with commitment, flexibility, and creativity. I often tell people that as a non-native Ottawan, my involvement in this project has provided me with innumerable opportunities to see how caring, empathetic, and thoughtful Ottawans are. Thank you to all our community partners, tireless volunteers, and the families who share a love of reading and remind us regularly how much the work we do means to them.

alexandra yarrow

President & Founder

Board of Directors



Alexandra Yarrow
President



Stéphanie Plante
Vice President (Acting)



Aswanth Ravindran
Treasurer



Adrianna Hislop
Secretary



Adya Afanou
Fundraising



Barbara Clubb
Fundraising



Karen Perras
Acquisitions



Helena Merriam
Volunteers



Jennifer Walker
Communications

Our Mission

We give books to children!

We give new and nearly-new books to children from birth to twelve years of age, to support literacy and foster a love of reading at home.

Our Vision

We create welcoming places and opportunities for children to have books of their own, for free, in order to improve their literacy skills, nurture their imaginations, and bring a love of reading to their homes.

Our Values

Book Ownership

Equity

Diversity

Child-Focused

Literacy

Accountability

Social & Emotional
Development

Building Relationships In &
With the Community

Kids Today!

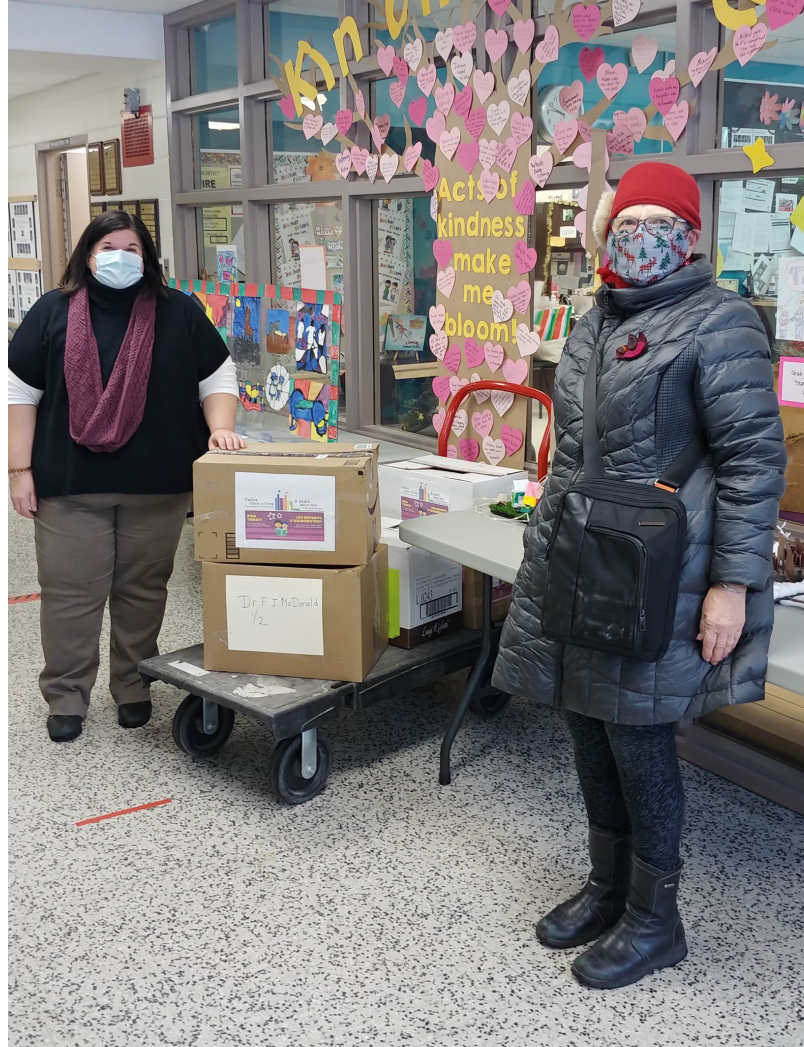
Special COVID-19 Project

Our biggest undertaking this year was sparked by the pandemic of the COVID-19 virus. In late 2019, we decided that our focus for 2020 was going to be "Kids Today! The Most Popular New Children's Books." When the pandemic hit, however, the needs of "Kids Today!" took on a dramatically different tone. Since our traditional free bookstore sites were closed and we were no longer able to meet with children and families in our usual way, we had to come up with an innovative solution to deliver books into the homes of Ottawa kids. The "Kids Today! Special COVID-19 Project" was launched.

In June 2020, we made our first deliveries to our community partners. We teamed up with community health centres, literacy groups, and other organizations who could distribute or mail books directly to their clients. Both Twice Upon a Time and all these partner groups employed strict health and safety protocols and procedures. Through the enthusiasm, hard work and efforts of all the volunteers involved in this initiative over the course of the summer, we were able to select and deliver 1050 books to Ottawa children. The assistance of these partner groups was truly invaluable in providing information on the number of children they serve and what sort of books the children might want. We cannot thank them enough for their help.

As the first round of the project came to a close, we were unfortunately no closer to re-opening any of our free bookstore locations. With that in mind, the Board approved a second round of the project, which brought us to the end 2020. The full list of partner agencies we were able to work with to distribute children's books in Ottawa's most vulnerable communities can be found on page 7.





Kids Today!

Special COVID-19 Project

Twice Upon a Time was proud to work with the following community organizations to distribute free books to kids:

- ALSO – Adult and Family Literacy
- Carlington Community Health Centre
- Confederation Court Community House
- Dr. F.J. McDonald Catholic School
- Minwaashin Lodge
- Overbrook Community Association – Backpack Program
- People Words & Change
- Robert E. Wilson Public School
- Somerset West Community Health Centre Projects
 - Rosemount Branch Well Baby and Child Clinics
 - Ottawa Newcomer Health Centre
 - Rochester Heights Community House
- South-East Ottawa Community Health Centre
- St. Elizabeth Catholic School
- St. Luke Catholic School (Ottawa)
- Van Lang Field House Projects (Westboro Beach Community Association)
 - After the Bell
 - Community Kitchen
 - Taiga Building
 - Outreach Project



Kids Today!

Special COVID-19 Project

We gratefully acknowledge funding from the following organizations, which helped to make this project a success:



Book Acquisitions

Despite COVID, 2,575 books were donated to Twice Upon a Time in 2020. These books were carefully sorted by the Acquisitions team for suitability for our program. Book donations do not always meet our selection criteria, so in those instances we donate the books to local thrift stores.

Due to the pandemic, the Acquisitions committee created protocols and guidelines to follow when at the Twice Upon a Time storage locker at Dymon and when making deliveries to our partner organizations. These protocols require that all books are now quarantined for the time recommended by public health guidelines, and that our volunteers also follow the strict Ottawa Public Health guidelines at all times. Our community partners also advise us of their COVID-19 protocols and guidelines.

Special Donations

For the third time, Twice Upon a Time friend Sophia Ballafini held her birthday book drive and donated 556 books. This year, Sophia and her family met with us at our storage locker to deliver her donation, where she was excited to learn about how we store and sort books into colour-coded boxes based on type and language of book.

Marni Squire, site lead for our Taggart Y free bookstore location, organized a neighbourhood book drive in Old Ottawa South. She received over 200 donations.

We'd also like to acknowledge the Marchwood Early Learning Centre book drive, and a very generous \$1000 store credit donation by an anonymous Octopus Books customer.

Other book donations were received from :

- Leslie Toope
- Randy Orr
- Sue Cole
- Nancy Lamarche
- Mariam Bloom
- Lauren Reeve
- Bonnie Campbell
- Bev Grostern

Book Acquisitions

Book Purchases

Our book purchases this year affirmed our commitment to selecting books that reflect the diversity of our community. We strive to buy books that reflect, and are by and about, differing cultural groups, ethnic backgrounds, abilities, indigenous peoples, and the LGBTQ2+ community. We'd like to share a special thank you to our bookstore partners (see right) for their help in book selection.

Thank You!

Books on Beechwood
Octopus Books
Le coin du livre
Singing Pebble

Special Projects

This March, we partnered with Nathalie Blanchard, Librarian at the Ottawa Public Library Alta Vista Branch. We provided 50 books to her, to give to the children who visit the OPL Kiosk at the Ottawa Employment and Social Services with their parents and guardians.

We also donated 500 books to the sharing and Caring Exchange "Sharing in Student Success" backpack program for kindergarten-aged children. Our thanks to Sue Cole for contributing and delivering books to this annual project.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to everyone on the Acquisitions Committee for their continued support, time, and effort, ensuring free books get into the hands of Ottawa kids. It is much appreciated and we recognize that it takes a great team effort working together especially during these strange and challenging COVID times. Thank you to Acquisitions Chair Karen Perras for her immense dedication, and to the rest of the team: Kris Banarjee, Sue Cole, Julie Rancourt, Kim Ferguson, and Leslie Toohey.

Volunteers

As with most things during this pandemic, our volunteer operations came to an abrupt suspension of service in March of 2020. We were unable to operate out of our various partner locations. However, we were able to distribute books through our current and new partners. Thanks to our Fundraising Team and Acquisitions team, we were able to provide over 2,500 books to children, in addition to the approximately 1000 we distributed prior to the start of the pandemic.

During our COVID-19 special project, two of our volunteers - Sue Cole and Julie Raincourt - have been instrumental in sorting, selecting and delivering new and gently used books to Ottawa children via our Community partners. They also assisted in purchasing new books in both English and French. Their passion for this project and the time and effort they have contributed are greatly appreciated. We could not have done it without them, and we send a special thank you to them. See page 12 for more on one of these special volunteers.

On our Board of Directors, it was a year of new beginnings. Ranya Tantawy stepped down as our Treasurer after the sudden early arrival of her new son. Laura George Fernandes, our Vice-President, stepped down temporarily to welcome her new daughter. We send congratulations to them both, and a thank you for their work with Twice Upon a Time. We welcomed new board members, Ash Ravindran as our new Treasurer, and Stéphanie Plante took on the Acting Vice President role.

We would also like to recognize and thank Chantal Renaud, our volunteer translator, who allows us to provide our written materials in both official languages. Merci beaucoup, Chantal!

And finally, a big thank you to all of our volunteers, who help us serve children and families in the Ottawa area. We look forward to a safe return to our regular operations.



Volunteer Spotlight: Sue Cole

I was driving home on the last day of school in June 2018 when I heard about Twice Upon a Time on the radio. I knew I was retiring from teaching the next year and I was excited to hear about an organization that combined two things I loved – children and books. I called the next day and by August I was trained to work at the Overbrook Community Centre. It was very rewarding to see the children's eyes light up when they walked in and could see the books to choose from. Parents frequently expressed gratitude for this opportunity.

Once I was retired, I had more time and joined the acquisition team. In the past year our team took on a new role of purchasing, sorting and delivering books to communities across Ottawa. If they couldn't come to us, we'd go to them. Choosing books for children you don't know can be challenging but I believe that our team did an excellent job providing quality literature to hundreds, if not thousands, of children. During Covid, I believe these books have provided joy to many as they self isolate. I am grateful to my fellow volunteers and to the organization for providing me this opportunity. It has truly been a pleasure.

Twice Upon a Time is regularly recruiting new volunteers. We post volunteer opportunities with Volunteer Ottawa, and would invite you to visit their website for information on any current vacancies.

**VOLUNTEER
OTTAWA**



**BÉNÉVOLES
OTTAWA**

Our Supporters

The year 2020 was very unusual for everyone. However, individuals, organizations and corporations were more generous than ever, helping us to bring the joy of reading and the gift of strengthened literacy to hundreds of Ottawa's children.

In 2020, as Twice Upon a Time pivoted to a new service model, we received \$38,115 in financial contributions, an increase of 156% over 2019 (\$14,883). In addition to encouraging and receiving donations all year round, our organization mounted two targeted campaigns and received grants from foundations and the Government of Canada. The focus on all fundraising initiatives was to support our 2020 campaign Kids Today! The Most Popular New Children's Books, which will continue as our 2021 development and fundraising theme.

We'd also like to highlight one very special fundraising initiative that was undertaken by local academic librarian, Twice Upon a Time supporter, and cycling enthusiast Sarah Simpkin. Sarah explored the city by visiting every one of the Ottawa Public Library's 33 branches (and the bookmobile!) on her bike in what came to be known as the "Tour de branch." From her home near the Experimental Farm, some trips were short while others, like the overnight to Fitzroy Harbour, were more than 50 km. Sarah donated 50 cents/ km to Twice Upon a Time. Other friends and librarians joined or supported her and together they raised almost \$2,000. Thank you Sarah!



Our Supporters

Twice Upon a Time acknowledges with gratitude our individual donors listed below. All attempts have been made to verify the completeness of this list. Please contact us to correct any errors.

\$1000 and greater

Cajole Inn Foundation | Emergency Community Support Fund (*Government of Canada*) | Order of the Eastern Star
Ottawa Community Foundation | Retired Teachers of Ontario | United Way Donors | Anonymous (1)

\$400 to \$999

Jane Beaumont | Barbara Clubb | Terry Cullinan | Marni Linton | Paypal Giving Fund Canada
Public Service Alliance of Canada: Young Workers Committee | Robertson Martin Architects | Maxine Simpkin
Sarah Simpkin | Anonymous (2)

\$100 to \$399

Adya Afanou | Benita Baker | Kenneth Blogg | Miriam Bloom & Victor Rabinovitch
Mme Rachel's Class at Broadview School | Valerie Bryce | Camrose Burdon | Kevin Burns | Cheryl Burwash
Phyllis Clark | Christopher Clarke | Susan Copeland & Denis Lord | Abigail Dionne | Glebe Collegiate Institute
Scott Gordon & Alice Hutton | Margaret Haines | Lynne Hammond | Alexandra Hickey | Stacey Holmes
Gregory John | Joan Kingstone | Barbara Kaye | Susan Lewis | Barb Martin | Laura May | Laura Muldoon
Karen Perras | Caroline Proctor | Elizabeth Reicker | Stephanie Ridell | Marilyn Stuart | Cecilia Tellis
Alexandra Yarrow | Cabot Yu | Anonymous (8)

Up to \$99

Benevity Community Impact Fund | Leslie Bliss | Valerie Bryce | Amber Cauley | Richard Coxford
Margaret Elton | Mark Gelsomino | Alison Hardy-Hlady | Chang Michael-Hong | Tony Horava
Ryan Jarrett | Kathleen Kingsley | Jamie Koeslag | Renee Marshall | Christine McLean | Gillian Misener
Alex Munter | Michael Murphy | Meghan O'Halloran | Justin Paulson | Julie Petersen | Julie Rancourt
Linda Sampson | Joanne Valentine | Ralph Yarrow | Anonymous (23)

Financial Statements

Statement of Financial Position

As at December 31

	2020	2019
Assets		
Cash	\$ 44,096	\$ 21,609
CanadaHelps deposit outstanding	940	1,023
Prepaid expenses	1,125	1,050
Total assets	\$ 46,161	\$ 23,682
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Net assets	\$ 46,161	\$ 23,682
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 46,161	\$ 23,682

On behalf of the Board:



Alexandra Yarrow, President



Ash Ravindran, Treasurer

Financial Statements

Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets

For the year ended December 31

	2020	2019
Revenue		
Donations	\$ 21,381	\$ 14,453
Grants	16,500	
Fundraising initiatives	234	430
	38,115	14,883
Expenses		
Book acquisitions	9,883	5,859
Storage rental	2,625	2,468
Memberships	1,008	960
Marketing and promotion	818	970
Insurance	872	775
Events	-	458
CanadaHelps processing fees	461	283
Supplies and other	570	142
HST recovered	(601)	-
	15,636	11,915
Excess of revenue over expenses	22,479	2,968
Net assets, beginning of year	23,682	20,714
Net assets, end of year	\$ 46,161	\$ 23,682



HOW YOUR DONATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE!



\$25 allows us to buy 3 brand new, unchewed boardbooks for our youngest readers



\$50 allows us to buy 4 books for our Kids Today! COVID-19 Special Project



\$100 helps us to produce professional promotional materials for our outreach efforts



\$200 pays our storage costs for one month



Registered Charity No. 803095777 RR0001

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