

2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT



LEARNING
Buddies
NETWORK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1-2	MESSAGES, BOARD, SPONSORS
3	ABOUT LBN
4-7	TIMELINE
8-11	PROGRAMS, DATA, & FEEDBACK
12-13	PARTNERSHIPS
14-15	FEATURE: VOLUNTEER TEAMS
16-17	2022-2023 EVENTS
18	FINANCIAL REPORT
19	TESTIMONIALS
20	CONTACT US

MESSAGE FROM FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT



ALISA LIPSON
FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT

Greetings to Learning Buddies Network supporters and friends!

Learning Buddies Network (LBN) is there for elementary school kids who are slipping through the cracks of our school system, and who otherwise would not get the support they need.

Our Executive Director and his team recently hosted our Anniversary Gala, celebrating 15 years of LBN. It was an opportunity to reflect on the changes through the years: from a group of 10 idealistic young people sitting around my dining room table; to six group leaders, each with 10 volunteers under them, conducting their own programs two years later; to becoming a charity with a board of directors, producing an LBN tutor manual and having a budget and paid staff two years after that; then surviving and even flourishing as we quickly adapted to the pandemic, and now having served 350 individual children with up to 70 mentoring sessions each over the last year—we know we have come a long way!

We are a grassroots organization, powered by idealistic and talented volunteers who do all of the important work with our Little Buddies. We have stayed steadfast to our mission through the years, which is to give a boost to children who would benefit from mentorship in their academics, and provide a meaningful volunteer experience for youth. We find that our simple intervention can have a profound effect on a child's self-esteem, empowering children to feel they are capable, like their peers, and ready to take on learning challenges. We also hear from many volunteers that their experience with LBN has had a profound effect on their personal growth, and their educational and vocational opportunities.

This last year has seen significant growth. We have moved all our training online and have streamlined and automated enrollment of Little Buddies and volunteers, improving efficiency and accessibility. We have hired more staff with specialized roles for IT, communications, and recruitment. Owen Fan was promoted to Executive Director last summer, one of the youngest EDs in the province. We resumed our in-person programs and maintain all our online groups. We have new partnerships with other community organizations that enhance our volunteer experience.

And most importantly, we are reaching more kids who need our help! We are excited to embark upon a new phase with a very generous grant from the Ronald S. Roadburg Foundation to bring LBN programs to Indigenous kids. Over the next three years, we expect to reach 200 such children who live in rural and urban settings throughout B.C. It is a wonderful opportunity to address inequality and empower Little Buddies.

Thank you to our many volunteers, be they mentors, coordinators, sponsor teachers, or members of our board and various committees. And thank you to our supporters and funders, without whom we could not do our work!

MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



OWEN FAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This past year has been very eventful and exciting for Learning Buddies Network. It has been a year of growth both for myself and for the organization, as has been highlighted by Alisa.

With significant growth, there is excitement but also growing pains. We are learning from organizations that have gone through similar journeys. We are also fortunate to be learning from professionals in this sector with specialized fundraising and IT infrastructure knowledge, which has benefitted us greatly.

Working with such a fantastic group of volunteers and staff is a great privilege. We all keep our mission in mind, which keeps us motivated. This next year, we will strive for excellence in everything we do so that our program participants receive the best experience possible.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Dr. Alisa Lipson

VP: Margaret Kalaski

Treasurer: Travis MacDonald

Secretary: Tina Leung

Director: Joshua Millard

Director: Dr. Kenneth Cole

Director: Dr. Ian Johnson

Director: Peter Schuurman

JUNE 2021-MAY 2023 SPONSORS

- Ronald S. Roadburg Foundation
- CKNW Kids' Fund
- Government of British Columbia
- Anonymous Donor
- Michelle Yu Corp
- Chris Spencer Foundation
- RR Smith Memorial Fund Foundation
- Mel and Geri Davis Charitable Foundation
- Telus Community Foundation
- Trottier Family Foundation
- Google
- Face the World Foundation
- Loyal Protestant Association
- TD Bank
- Phyllis and Irving Snider Foundation
- Chapman and Innovation Grant (UBC)
- Diamond Foundation
- Chan Family Foundation
- Senft Family Foundation
- Lochmaddy Foundation
- Ingenius Prep
- GMR Foundation
- Djavad Mowafaghian Foundation
- YVR for Kids
- Arnold and Anita Silber Family Foundation
- Richmond Chinatown Lions Club
- Kiwanis Club of Vancouver
- Dayhu
- Rosengarten Foundation
- Little Flower Academy

ABOUT LBN

Research shows that well-implemented mentoring programs can result in significant improvement in standardized measures of reading and math achievement. Such programs not only improve test scores but have a positive impact on student attitudes toward academic skills as well as on learning in general. The strong relationships formed with volunteer mentors enhance self-esteem and suggest that the mentoring program contributes to long-term success in school. Our approach at Learning Buddies Network is to initiate early intervention into the lives of students who would otherwise not receive the help they need.

Equal to the learning outcomes, a second impact of our program is to promote and build volunteerism in young adults around the lower mainland. Every year, we train and support over 500 young people as reading and math mentors, many of whom stay with us for multiple terms. LBN encourages our volunteers to use their own talents and creativity. Many seek leadership positions and learn valuable personal skills. We are proud that our volunteers become leaders and active global citizens.

OUR IMPACT

Last year, we ran a total of 48 programs with 10 partnership schools and centers, servicing more than 30 schools and organizations in B.C.

This year, LBN offered both online and in-person programs for the first time during our Fall 2022 term. We ran **67 programs during the school year** and **10 in the summer** with **13 partnership schools** and centers, servicing over **50 schools and organizations** in B.C.

- Our programs served **550 buddies over three terms**, each with their own block of sessions. **350 of these buddies were unique**, meaning 350 different students enrolled in our programs throughout the year.
- **741 volunteers each stayed a block of mentoring sessions**, with **323 more volunteers as on-call mentors**. Out of these volunteers, **518 of them were unique**—nearly doubling the 330 unique volunteers in our programs in the previous fiscal year.
- In total, our volunteers contributed **over 9,000 hours of mentoring to buddies**, and **approximately 20,000 hours overall** for training, recruitment, administration, and other areas.

FROM A BUDDY: "LBN helped me a lot with my reading and I feel that I can read a lot better. I really like reading now!"

OUR TIMELINE



Learning Buddies Network celebrates 15 years of growth, impact, and creating change in the community. Our timeline demonstrates a momentous journey from a small idea at a single elementary school to a large-scale initiative providing education and confidence to students across B.C. and Canada.



Jan 2008
First Program

LBN delivered its first reading program to 10 children at David Lloyd George Elementary School

May 25th, 2011
Registered Society Incorporated

LBN officially drafted and registered its bylaws and constitution and formulated the organization's board of directors

June 2014
Program Expansion

Following the success of its programs, LBN undergoes its first major expansion to host 15 reading and math programs for over 150 buddies at local elementary schools and community centers



July 2019
First Teacher Liaison

LBN hires its first Teacher Liaison to assist with the quality and delivery of its programs

Jan 2008
Founding of LBN

LBN was founded by Dr. Alisa Lipson, her daughters Dena and Samantha, and their friend, Alison Lee

July 2010
First Math Program

LBN piloted its first math program to 10 children at Sunset Community Center

Feb 24th, 2012
Charity Status Received

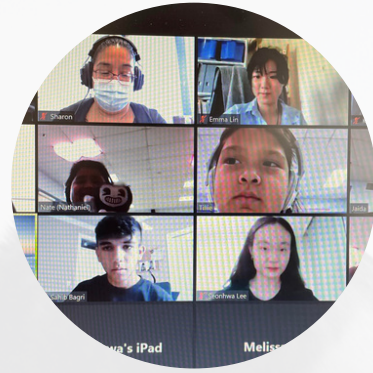
LBN became an official charitable organization of Canada, with 13 programs running across Vancouver, Burnaby, and Richmond

Jan 2017
Program Committee
Our key first committee of LBN educators, who supervise programs and create resources



“LBN is a wonderful platform for young mentors to connect with buddies throughout Canada, creating a bond and support system. Not only does it provide young students struggling with their math or reading skills an area to improve their skills, but it creates a community of wonderful, dedicated people. It provides young people an environment to progress in their leadership skills moving from mentor to Program Coordinator to Executive Coordinator.”

FROM A VOLUNTEER



Dec 2020

Technology Expansion

With the support of a grant, LBN undergoes a pivotal technology expansion to allow for more accessible participation in its programs

June 2022

Full-Time Employees

LBN begins to hire full-time staff to spearhead the rapid expansion of its programs

Oct 2022

Expansion of Online Programs & Return to In-Person Programming

LBN underwent its greatest expansion to successfully run online and in-person programs for over 300 students across more than 50 schools

Present Day

LBN is currently undergoing its greatest expansion in the organization's history, with nearly 30 hired staff and board members to support over 500 volunteers and 350 buddies each year

Sept 2020

Pilot Online Reading Programs

The challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic brought about innovative change as LBN piloted its first online reading programs. The online format allowed the organization to expand to children in remote communities and extend volunteer opportunities to youth across Canada

June 2021

Pilot Online Math Programs

Following the success of LBN's online reading programs, LBN piloted its first online math programs

Sept 2022

Moodle Platform Launch

The organization officially launches an asynchronous online training platform as a valuable resource for its volunteers

Oct 2022

Partnership with Bella Bella

LBN establishes a partnership with the Indigenous community of Bella Bella to host hybrid reading and math programs, with mentors connecting online and buddies present in-person



“My child’s tutors and all staff at Learning Buddies have been so kind, patient, and encouraging, they have worked with her in ways that she is now beginning to see the fun in her school work, and the improvement academically has given her self-confidence. I would like to thank all the staff and tutors who volunteer their own time to support our children.”

FROM A PARENT



OUR PROGRAMS

OVERVIEW

Learning Buddies Network operates reading and math mentoring programs after school.

OUR MISSION

1. To provide free extracurricular tutoring through mentoring to elementary school children who are struggling with basic academics;
2. To improve academic skills, self-esteem, and attitude to learning in these children through teaching, one-on-one mentoring, and group activities;
3. To provide young adults a meaningful and rewarding volunteer experience with an opportunity to act as a role model to children and develop leadership and communication skills.

- Since the 2022-2023 school year, we are back **in person in schools once or twice a week**, and are maintaining our **online programs twice weekly** that were started during the pandemic. During the **summer**, we mentor **three times weekly** in community centres or online.
- Each mentoring session typically involves **8-12 pairs of mentors and children**, where **each child has their own mentor**. Group activities are included. Supervision is by our volunteer leaders and also experienced teachers where possible. **Our programs are free**.
- The population served is **elementary school-aged children who are falling behind in basic academics in reading or math**. These kids are selected by school staff as suitable for our program. Many of our students come from families who are not able to provide the extra boost that their child needs to crack the reading code or grasp basic numeracy.

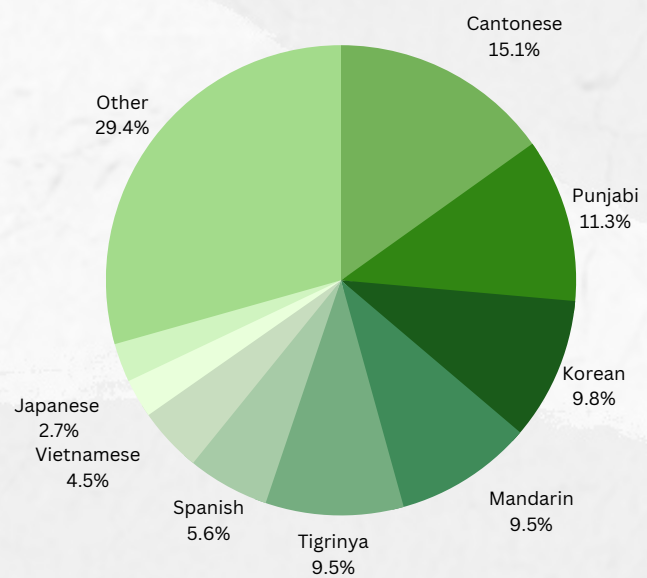
Through the relationship that builds with their mentor, the child discovers they can do the hard work that they had previously found defeating. We aim to help these children realize their academic potential and restore their self-esteem.

IMPROVEMENT & FEEDBACK

BUDDY DATA

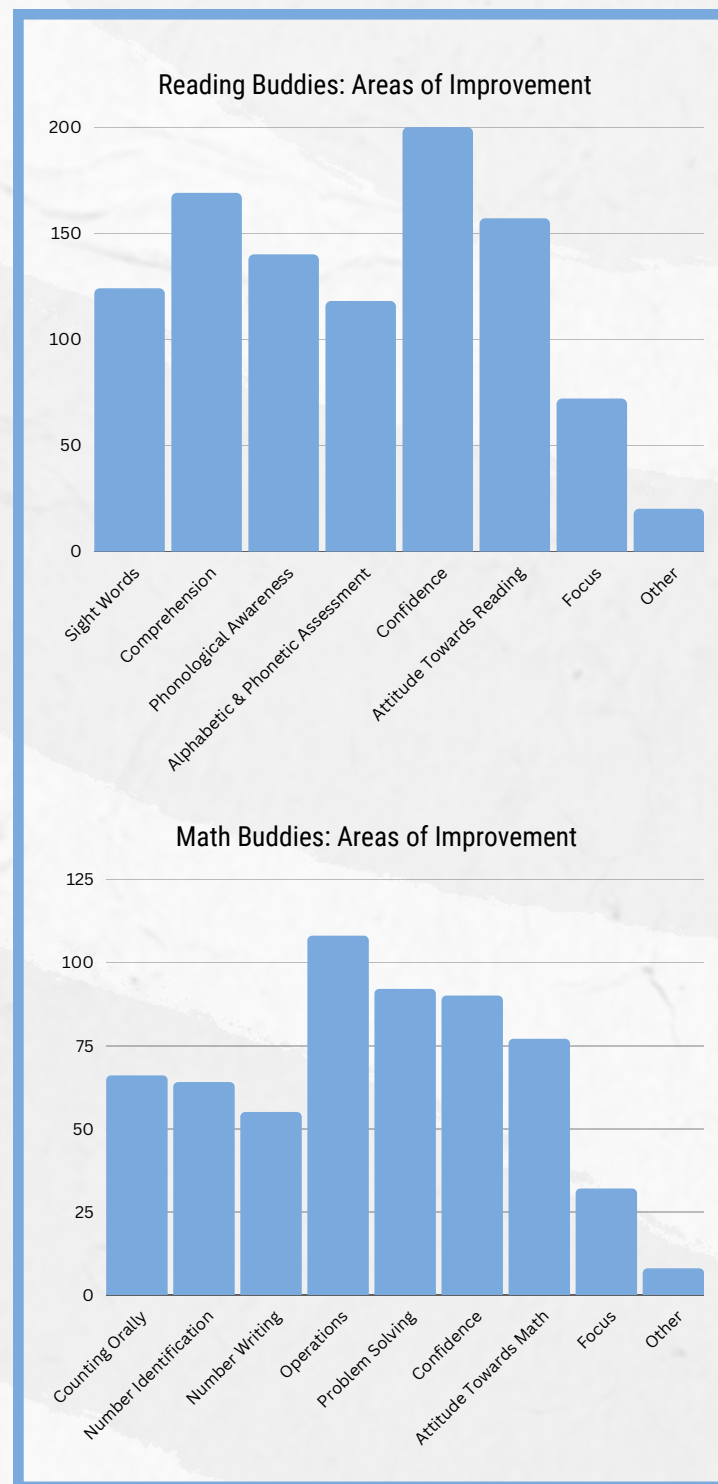
89% of reading buddies showed improvement in our programs

92% of math buddies showed improvement in our programs



Buddy Demographic Breakdown: First Languages
First languages of buddies in LBN's programs, excluding English

- Cantonese (15.1%)
- Punjabi (11.3%)
- Korean (9.8%)
- Mandarin (9.5%)
- Tigrinya (9.5%)
- Spanish (5.6%)
- Vietnamese (4.5%)
- Japanese (2.7%)
- Hebrew (2.7%)
- Other (29.4%)



“LBN is very important for our daughter because she's improved tremendously since she started.”

PARENT FEEDBACK

99% of parents rated Reading Buddies a 4-5/5

15% of parents rated Reading Buddies a 4/5

84% of parents rated Reading Buddies a 5/5

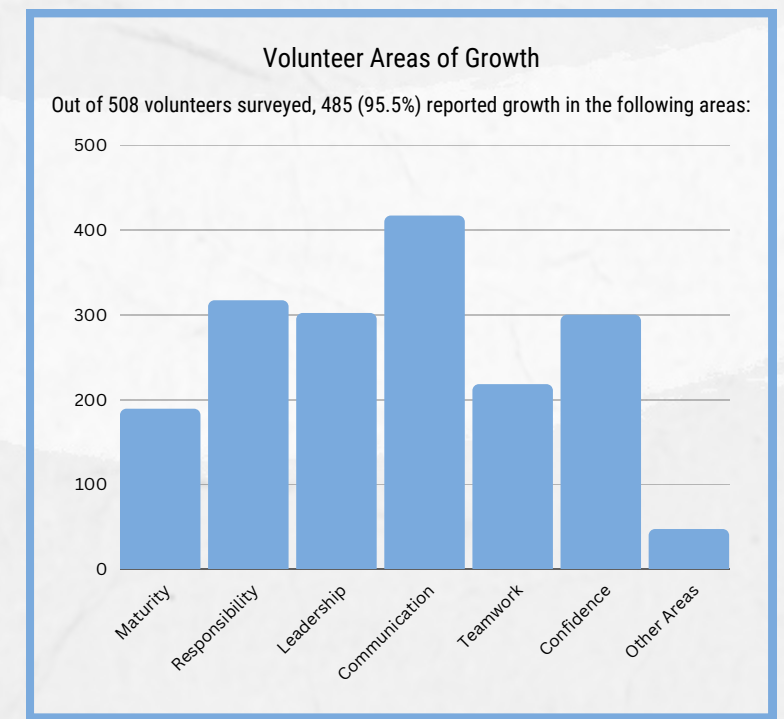
99% of parents rated Math Buddies a 4-5/5

11% of parents rated Math Buddies a 4/5

88.6% of parents rated Math Buddies a 5/5

100% of surveyed parents at Bella Bella rated the value of LBN a 4-5/5

VOLUNTEER GROWTH



In 2022-2023, over 550 mentors provided 9,340 hours of free tutoring to 350 buddies

PARTNERSHIP SITES

- Bella Bella Community School
- Clayton Heights
- David Lloyd George
- École K.B.Woodward
- Kingswood
- Latimer
- Pierre Elliot Trudeau
- Renfrew
- Sunrise Ridge
- Walter Moberly
- Westridge
- Woodward
- wəkwəhəs tə syaqwəm
- Mosaic Family Centre
- Sunset Community Center
- Surrey City Center Library

97% of volunteers felt like part of a team at LBN

99% of volunteers felt connected to LBN's mission

98% of volunteers would recommend volunteering with LBN to others

BELLA BELLA PARTNERSHIP

A NOTE FROM OUR TEACHER LIAISON:

My name is Sharon A. Johansen. I have been the Teacher Liaison for Bella Bella Reading Buddies Pod since July 2022.

For the Little Buddies in our Reading Buddies Pod, I've seen what a difference it makes for our students, and I have heard great feedback from our families. The students become more confident with their reading, and they seem to enjoy their one-to-one time with their Mentors. Some students thrive more with one-to-one so Reading Buddies is perfect for them.

I am also the Indigenous Program Advisor and just started in June 2023. I am looking forward to supporting such amazing opportunities with Indigenous Worldview, and I'm grateful to LBN for being given this opportunity to work with our Bella Bella Reading Buddies.

Ğiáłsiłxa (Thank you)



OUR PROGRESS

- In 2022, LBN received the UBC Chapman and Innovation Grant, which allowed the organization to provide two online reading programs for Indigenous elementary students from Bella Bella.
- In early 2023, LBN was approved a grant from the Ronald S. Roadburg Foundation to strengthen and expand the organization's Indigenous programs. The 3-year project seeks to establish permanent Indigenous programs at LBN, including our recent hiring of an Indigenous Program Advisor to oversee LBN's Indigenous-based programs going forward.
- LBN is currently operating hybrid reading and math programs with Bella Bella, and looks forward to implementing in-person programs in the near future. In addition to supporting elementary students, LBN also hopes to support high school students in Bella Bella.
- One of LBN's next goals is to recruit high school students from Bella Bella to provide them with the opportunity to be a mentor with LBN. By doing so, the organization seeks to address barriers surrounding the lack of access to job/volunteer opportunities in the community and help them develop their leadership skills for post-secondary.

OUR PARTNERSHIPS

LBN collaborates with the following organizations to further our mission in the community



RONALD S ROADBURG
FOUNDATION

LBN expresses sincere gratitude toward the Ronald S. Roadburg Foundation for their significant contributions that enable a new chapter of our organization's programs in reaching Indigenous children, both within the Lower Mainland and in rural and remote communities.



uOttawa

LBN recognizes its partnership with the University of Ottawa in providing students with volunteer opportunities at LBN as part of their uOttawa Community Service Learning (CSL) placement program.



LBN appreciates TD Bank's charitable donations to our programs, and welcomes its financial literacy workshops hosted for volunteers online and in-person through the TD Bank Oakridge Branch.



**SFU SURREY-TD COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT CENTRE**

LBN acknowledges our partnership with the Simon Fraser University Surrey – TD Community Engagement Centre, which supports volunteer recruitment efforts for our online programs and KB Woodward and Surrey Libraries sites, as well as space for summer programming and connection to SFU research and evaluation capacity.



ALTRUITION

LBN values its partnership with Altruition in providing Gr.10-12 LBN volunteers with scholarship opportunities and encouraging youth in the community to partake in volunteerism.



LBN acknowledges UBC's Centre for Community Engaged Learning (CCEL) for their contributions to our social media and connecting the organization with UBC faculty and students through their newsletter. As well, LBN recognizes its partnership with UBC CCEL through the INFO-300 course.



LBN welcomes its collaboration with The Debtless Students (TDS) in providing scholarship mentorship, & essay editing services for LBN volunteers and youth in the community.

FEATURE: VOLUNTEER TEAMS

Learning Buddies Network offers many opportunities for volunteer leadership and skill development beyond its core programs. The organization is made up of a variety of teams across all fields, allowing volunteers to pursue and gain experience in different areas of interest.

HUMAN RESOURCES ASSISTANTS

The Human Resources Assistants (HRA) consist of 4 members, who are a core part of helping the organization expand and grow to reach more buddies. They work as liaisons between volunteers and staff, ensuring clear communication and responding to requests and questions. Additionally, HRAs get the opportunity to work in recruitment, administration, policy-making, and other HR duties of the organization.

RECRUITMENT & ENGAGEMENT TEAM

The Recruitment & Engagement Team is made up of 38 volunteers, who act in a leadership capacity for LBN recruitment in their respective secondary/post-secondary schools. Members participate in a variety of activities, such as hosting information booths at volunteer fairs. They gain skills in workshop facilitation, event planning, marketing, and communications.

PROGRAM TEAM

The LBN Program Team consists of 9 volunteers who work directly with LBN staff to assist with program, operations, and administrative tasks. Members of this team learn more about staff and non-profit organization structure, develop skills in administrative and operational roles, and have the opportunity to network with different stakeholders within LBN. From organizing spreadsheets to supporting outreach and resource creation, this team aids in keeping LBN running day-to-day.

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

The LBN Communications Team is made up of 15 volunteers who seek to educate and grow our external audience and local community. Members work to create and push content across all social channels, so that our mission and initiative may reach and inspire more individuals. Volunteers in this team gain experience in a variety of areas, including: marketing & communications, graphic design & branding, content creation & video editing, and public relations.

In 2022-2023, nearly 1000 volunteers dedicated over 26,000 hours to LBN's programs, recruitment, communications, and more



SYSTEMS SUPPORT ASSISTANTS

The LBN System Support Assistants (SSAs) work alongside LBN's IT Managers and IT Committee to develop the organization's technical infrastructure and workflow, from improving algorithms and creating dashboards to maintaining current platforms and systems. Our SSAs ensure LBN can scale sustainably and create a greater impact, as IT lets us automate, simplify, and optimize current processes. These volunteers gain technical experience in programming, data science and analytics, and debugging, while developing their teamwork and collaboration skills.

LANGUAGE SUPPORT TEAM

The Language Support Team is a group of over 20 volunteers who assist with inquiries and program registration in the following languages: Cantonese, French, Gujarati, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Punjabi, Urdu, Vietnamese.

COMMUNITY BUILDING CLUB

The Community Building Club is a team of 6 volunteers, who act in a leadership capacity to improve the quality of LBN. They design evidence-based breathing and grounding worksheets for students to engage in before sessions to improve their concentration and mindset toward learning. As well, the team also creates resources to improve the connection between mentors and buddies. Moreover, the Community Building Club organizes events and initiatives to encourage networking within the organization and catalyze youth leadership, for instance through career panels and mentor-mentee pairings.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

The LBN Alumni Association is a growing group of 10 passionate alumni who are eager to share their experiences gained through LBN and their expertise in their respective industries with our secondary/post-secondary volunteers—the next generation of leaders. These alumni members provide guidance and support on a variety of topics, including career and school advice, mental health, and personal development. They also gain networking opportunities with other alumni members through virtual and in-person events.

"LBN is a great volunteer opportunity that allows you to connect with others, develop communication skills and leadership skills! However, to me it is not only such a great opportunity, it is also an experience that allows me to feel a sense of warmth and accomplishment!"

2022/23 EVENTS



SEPTEMBER 2022 TRIVIA NIGHT

On September 21st, 2022, LBN ran its first-ever trivia night fundraiser at the Fable Diner and Bar.

The event was largely successful as guests engaged in trivia rounds, a silent auction, and a raffle prize draw, raising around \$1500 for the organization in total.



JANUARY & MAY 2023 TRIPS TO BELLA BELLA

After the expansion of LBN's Indigenous programs in the summer and fall of 2022, staff embarked on two eye-opening trips to Bella Bella in January and May 2023. The experience was extremely valuable, allowing staff to gain a holistic and informed understanding of the community and enabling the organization to develop long-term plans to reach more Indigenous children in rural and remote communities.



JUNE 2022

VANCOUVER HALF MARATHON

Businesses, friends, and family came together both in-person and virtually to run 5K, 21K, or participate in a Kids Run to raise critical funds for LBN. Through this event, attendees raised over \$10,000 toward Learning Buddies Network!

GIVING TUESDAY

NOVEMBER 2022

GIVING TUESDAY CAMPAIGN

This year, LBN participated in Giving Tuesday, a global day of giving that harnesses the power of social media to raise awareness and funds for important causes. Through the generous support of numerous volunteers and sponsors, LBN raised more than \$7,000 for our programs.



FEBRUARY 2023 UBC READING WEEK

In collaboration with the UBC CCEL, LBN hosted a special after-school program to connect mentors and buddies for an afternoon of fun, educational activities. Participants enjoyed an informative Q&A discussion about university experience, a scavenger hunt, as well as a campus tour around UBC.

JUNE 2023

15TH ANNIVERSARY APPRECIATION GALA

On June 5th, 2023, LBN hosted its 15th Anniversary Appreciation Gala to celebrate our volunteers and local community. Over 150 volunteers, staff, board members, and sponsors joined together for a delightful evening of food, drinks, and music.

We provide free one to one
volunteer mentoring
after school to
students in need.

Help us inspire a love of learning

VOLUNTEER | DONATE

www.learningbuddiesnetwork.org



To see more:

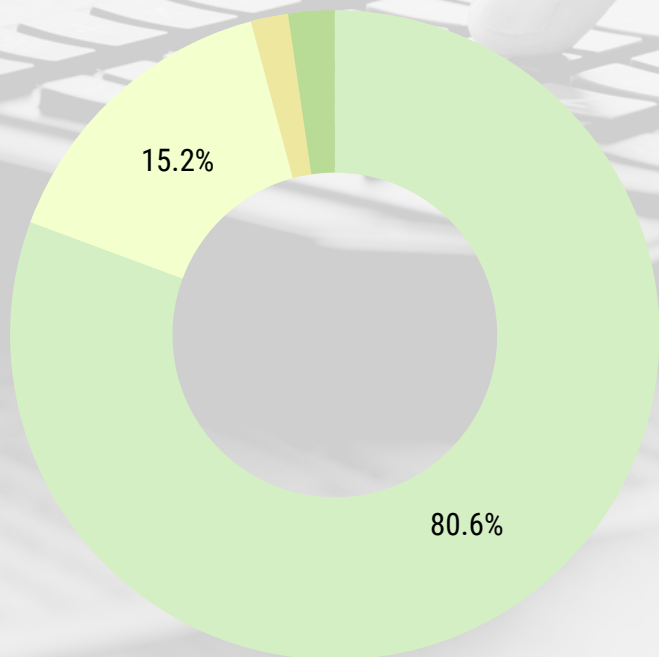
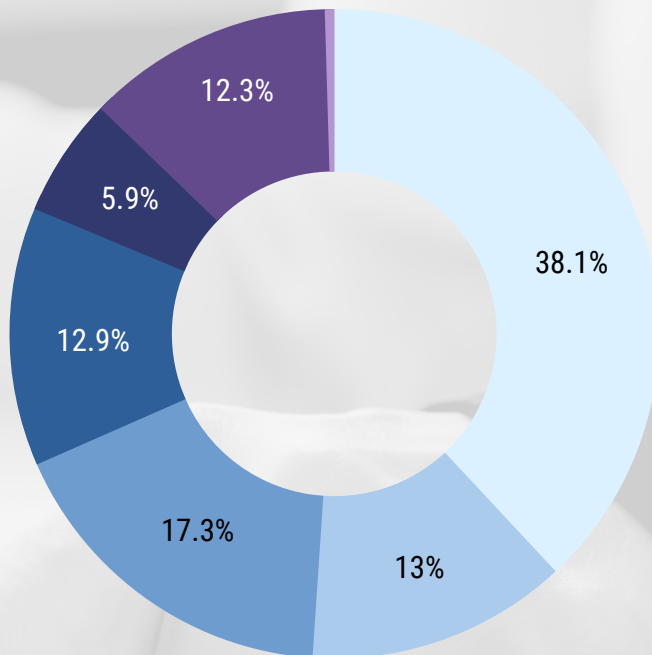


2022/23
EVENTS

FINANCIAL REPORT

Income

Community Boards	\$118,480
Family Foundations	\$40,500
Gaming	\$54,000
Direct Fundraising	\$40,094
Individual Donors	\$18,440
Directed Funds	\$38,363
Interest	\$1,450
Total Income	\$311,328



Expenses

Payroll	\$222,167
Direct Program	\$41,837
Administration	\$5,125
Fundraising	\$6,355
Total Expenses	\$287,207

Based on draft financial statements, numbers are subject to change.

“ TESTIMONIALS ”

FROM A PARENT

My daughter finished the reading buddy program last year. When she first started the program, she had a hard time understanding the story's theme. Mainly, it was because of her limited vocabulary, and she didn't know pronunciation very well.

However, after joining the program for a few months, I started noticing her pronunciation was better, her vocabulary had increased, and she could understand the story fully after reading it once or twice. Moreover, she started to show interest in reading. And now, she has no problem reading various types of stories, and her writing has increased as well.

FROM A VOLUNTEER

This experience has allowed me to grow as a person and has allowed me to grow in my communication and leadership skills. I loved seeing my buddy grow and develop in self-confidence and their reading ability, and I know that I played a part in contributing to that. I am very thankful for the valuable experience that Learning Buddies has given me.

FROM A VOLUNTEER

I always learn something new when I enter the door as a mentor in LBN. I learn things about myself, how I work in a team, and how I can handle various challenges. Mentoring at LBN allows for creativity, but not only that, everyone is also there to support each other. It is truly enjoyable and rewarding work.

FROM A BUDDY

I am proud that now I can read long and hard words.

FROM A PARENT

My son has been studying in LBN since grade 2. He has participated in reading and math. My son likes the class very much! The teachers are all knowledgeable and very patient. My son is a special needs kid; he can't concentrate on class for a long time. The teachers changed various methods of teaching from his favourite perspective, which made him happy to learn knowledge in class and look forward to the next class every time. As a parent, I am very grateful to LBN for helping my son. I wish my son could always receive after-school counselling from LBN! Thanks again, LBN!

FROM A BUDDY

I like Math Buddies because they teach me quicker tricks to solve problems! I also like it because my mentor is patient and calm.



LEARNING
Buddies
 NETWORK

Learning Buddies Network would like to sincerely thank all of our amazing volunteers and sponsors for helping us continue to make a difference in young students' lives.

Empowering Kids through Reading & Math.

Executive Director

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(647) 309-7193

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Mailing Address

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 Vancouver, BC, V5Z 4M4

“My son seemed to get more out of Learning Buddies than learning from a classroom because the mentor was close to his age, so he felt more relaxed and open. I think they were able to form a bond.”

FROM A PARENT



Support Our Mission

Visit our website or
<https://www.learningbuddiesnetwork.com/ways-to-give> to learn how you can support the Learning Buddies Network!



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