

Dirigo Reads



Annual Report 2020

During the last year, we have witnessed the spirit of perseverance, innovation, and partnership guide our communities through the darkest days of the COVID-19 pandemic, and today, we are seeing hope. We see this on the smiles of kids' faces as they prepare for a summer of new adventures, in the opening of storefronts that have been closed for months, and in the welcoming back of time-honored community traditions and festivals. It is true that what we have been through together has changed us, but as Mainers do, we are moving forward with a renewed sense of optimism.

We also saw this spirit of resilience in the 26 schools that we were so fortunate to have as part of our Dirigo Reads family this last year. At the start, there were many unknowns to be answered about what the year might look like for Maine kids. Many schools were managing new hybrid models of teaching as well as finding innovative ways to safely allow students to learn together. The amazing staff and teachers in these schools made it all happen while providing their students with a fun, vibrant, and nurturing learning environment. And, even when they had to think differently about how to distribute Dirigo Reads books to their first graders, they made it happen in the classrooms, through their lunch programs, and in collaboration with parents. Their effort to go above and beyond and dedication to their students this past year has been extraordinary.

Looking ahead, we are so excited to welcome an additional 24 schools to the Dirigo Reads program, including five schools in both Bangor and Auburn. Dirigo Reads will now serve a total of 50 schools, located in 13 of Maine's 16 counties. We've been humbled by the outpouring of support from so many individuals in these communities who have shared in our vision of providing all kids with an equal chance of achieving literacy success and the promise of a bright future.

In addition to our partnering organizations, this program would not have the opportunity to thrive and expand in additional Maine communities without your support. Our Dirigo Star Founding Partner, Machias Savings Bank, has been an unwavering champion, helping to make a very ambitious vision of two parents a reality. And, this foundation of support has further been strengthened by additional partners listed in this report. Through their generosity and commitment to Maine communities, Dirigo Reads will be able to serve more than 1,600 first graders in this coming year, equating to 13.5% of the public school first graders in Maine.

We hope you enjoy our second year report. From the two of us, **we sincerely thank you all!**



Dan and Karen Cashman
Co-Founders, Dirigo Reads



These first graders at Dr. Levesque Elementary school in Frenchville couldn't wait to dig into their first Dirigo Reads book, "Can a Cat Do That?" by Eric Carle.



26 Schools Served

Bowdoinham Community School	Bowdoinham
Brewer Community School	Brewer
Caribou Community School (formerly Teague Park Elementary School)	Caribou
Adams School	Castine
SeDoMoCha	Dover-Foxcroft
Easton Elementary School	Easton
Dr. Levesque Elementary School	Frenchville
Friendship Village School	Friendship
Greenville Consolidated School	Greenville
Piscataquis Community Elementary School	Guilford
Harmony Elementary School	Harmony
Indian Island School	Indian Island
Rose M. Gaffney Elementary School	Machias
Madison Elementary	Madison
Milbridge Elementary	Milbridge
Lewis S. Libby School	Milford
Moscow Elementary School	Moscow
Asa Adams Elementary	Orono
Searsport Elementary School	Searsport
Swans Island Elementary School	Swans Island
Union Elementary	Union
Miller Elementary School	Waldoboro
Warren Community School	Warren
Prescott Memorial School	Washington
Whiting Village School	Whiting
Leroy H. Smith School	Winterport

Featured Books

September

Ready to Read: Can a Cat Do That?
by Eric Carle

October

Ready to Read Level 1: Max and Mo Go Apple Picking
by Patricia Lakin

November

National Geographic Readers: Planets
by Elizabeth Carney

December

Splat the Cat and the Duck with No Quack
by Rob Scotton

January

Dogs Don't Wear Sneakers
by Laura Numeroff

February

Little Critter: Just Saving My Money
by Mercer Mayer

March

Frederick (Step Into Reading, Step 3)
by Leo Lionni

April

Why Do Rainbows Have So Many Colors?
by Jennifer Shand

May

Ready to Read Level 1: Ralph and the Rocket Ship
by Alyssa Satin Capucilli

June

Henry and Mudge and the Forever Sea
by Cynthia Rylant



800*

Average number of
students served

1,130*

Average number of
students served since
the start of the program,
September 2019

*This is an average taken over 10 months.
Student numbers fluctuated per month.

7,998

Number of books given
out between September
2020 and June 2021

11,300

Number of books given
out since the start of the
program, September 2019





Our friends at Milbridge Elementary proudly show off their new April Dirigo Reads book, *"Why Do Rainbows Have So Many Colors?"*

"My first graders look forward to receiving their Dirigo Reads books each month and enjoy growing their personal libraries at home. For many of my students, these books are all they have in their libraries. Dirigo Reads makes a huge impact on the student's reading and literacy and most importantly, their love of books and the joy of reading!"

- Judith Hanscom
Rose M. Gaffney Elementary School

"This program allows our students to be exposed to many different titles during the school year. They are able to enjoy high quality fiction and non-fiction selections and best of all, the books are free to families! Our students look forward to the box of books each month; they cheer when I walk through the classroom door with them. It does my heart good to see the smiles over books!"

- Erin Ireland
Easton Elementary School





We love seeing photos of our first graders sharing their books with their family and pets. Here, Brewer first grader, Owen, practices reading his new Dirigo Reads book, *"Dogs Don't Wear Sneakers,"* with his big sister, Lydia.



We were overjoyed to have the opportunity to share extra copies of sample books we received with children at Northern Light Acadia Hospital this past fall. Here, Karen Cashman stands with Amy Singer, LCSW, clinician in the Pediatric Day Treatment program.

"The Dirigo Reads program has opened up equal access doors to many grade one students in my small rural town. All of my students were able to take their books home. In doing so, they could read THEIR books to caregivers, siblings, pets, and others ... We appreciate this program, and we feel privileged that we were selected to be involved in such a fun and positive reading experience."

- Kathleen Bishop
Greenville Consolidated School

Partnering Organizations

Dirigo Reads would not be possible without the generous support of these companies. Together, they are providing the gift of opportunity for Maine children—a foundational benefit that will last into adulthood.

Dirigo Star Founding Partner



Honor Roll



State Scholar

Northern Light Health
Changing Seasons
Federal Credit Union
PCHC
Woodlands
Senior Living
United Way of
Eastern Maine

Early Readers

First National Bank
Cross Insurance
Acadia Federal
Credit Union
Hannaford
WS Emerson

We'd also like to give a heartfelt thank you to the many individual donors in our communities who reached out this year to support Dirigo Reads' mission to build a brighter future for Maine's youth one book at a time.