



It's hard to believe another academic year is approaching. Teachers may already be readying their classrooms for a new group of young minds to arrive and lesson plans are being prepped. The school season, while predictable in nature in many ways, always carries such renewed hope and promise this time of year. The same can go for the Dirigo Reads program as we work with our book vendor to prepare our book selections for the next year and ensure adequate quantities are in place. It absolutely fills us with excitement to know that an approximate 2,800 first graders will be enjoying Dirigo Reads books this next year.

This past year, a teacher at Trenton Elementary School (as you will see inside this report) calls Dirigo Reads books her students' "forever books" – and we just love this! Not only are the Dirigo Reads selections new books that can be taken home, but they are also a pathway towards a love of literacy—no matter if the child reads them independently, with a family member, or a beloved pet. While they may not keep the book forever, hopefully the joy of receiving a brand new book ignites a passion for reading forever into the future.

These "forever books" would not be possible, however, without the generous contributions by our community partners. Our Dirigo Star Founding Partner, Machias Savings Bank, has stood alongside us since we began in 2019 and many other amazing organizations have followed their lead: Bangor Savings Bank, Changing Seasons Federal Credit Union, Cross Insurance, Hannaford, First National Bank, Northern Light Health, PCHC, Woodlands Senior Living, and Acadia Federal Credit Union. We remain inspired by their commitment to fostering a love of reading in their own communities—thank you! In addition, earlier this year, we were exceptionally pleased and grateful for a donation of 1,600 books by Disney. This book, Disney Junior's Mickey Campy Camper Day, became our June selection and we heard from several schools that it quickly became a class favorite.

This next year, we look forward to welcoming 36 additional Maine schools into the Dirigo Reads program, bringing our total to 87 schools served and includes both Portland and Augusta. In addition, new counties joining the program for the first time include York, Cumberland, and Oxford Counties, meaning that Dirigo Reads will be distributing free books to first graders every month of the school year in every one of Maine's 16 counties.



Karen reads September's Dirigo Reads book, *Cows Can't Jump*, with her own first grade daughter, Brianna. It was a joy to experience Dirigo Reads from the first-hand perspective of a parent this past year.

We hope you will enjoy the information provided in this annual report, and please take time to read some of the comments from our schools. It is without a doubt that the teachers, administrators, and staff of each school served are one hundred percent committed to making sure their students have the best chance for a bright future. We see this monthly with their steadfast dedication to incorporating Dirigo Reads into their students' first-grade experience. This dedication and commitment are the soul of our program and we are so grateful for each and every one of them.

In Service,

Karen & Dan

East Auburn Community School	Auburn
Fairview Elementary School	Auburn
Park Avenue Elementary School	Auburn
Sherwood Heights Elementary School	Auburn
Walton Elementary School	Auburn
Washburn Elementary School	Auburn
Abraham Lincoln School	Bangor
Downeast School	Bangor
Fourteenth Street School	Bangor
Fruit Street School	Bangor
Vine Street School	Bangor
Bowdoinham Community School	Bowdoinham
Brewer Community School	Brewer
Caribou Community School (formerly Teague Park Elementary School)	Caribou
Adams School	Castine
Cushing Community School	Cushing
Bay Ridge School	Cutler
SeDoMoCha	Dover-Foxcroft
Easton Elementary School	Easton
Dr. Levesque Elementary School	Frenchville
Friendship Village School	Friendship
Greenville Consolodated School	Greenville
Piscataquis Community Elementary School	Guilford
Harmony Elementary School	Harmony
Harrington Elementary School	Harrington
Patricia A. Duran School	Hermion
Indian Island School	Indian Island
Jefferson Village School	Jefferson

Lamoine Consolodated School	Lamoine
Rose M. Gaffney Elementary School	Machias
Madison Elementary	Madison
Elm St. School	Mechanic Falls
Milbridge Elementary	Milbridge
Lewis S. Libby School	Milford
Moscow Elementary School	Moscow
Mt. Vernon Elementary School	Mt. Vernon
Asa Adams Elementary	Orono
Center Drive School	Orrington
Princeton Elementary School	Princeton
Rangeley Lakes Regional School	Rangeley
Searsport Elementary School	Searsport
Solon Elementary School	Solon
Mountain View School	Sullivan
Swans Island Elementary School	Swans Island
Trenton Elementary School	Trenton
Union Elementary	Union
Miller Elementary School	Waldoboro
Warren Community School	Warren
Prescott Memorial School	Washington
Whiting Village School	Whiting
Leroy H Smith School	Winterport

51
Schools
Served



1,577*
Average number of
students served

2,707*
Average number of
students served since
the start of the program,
September 2019

27,702
Number of books given
out since the start of the
program, September 2019

15,772
Number of books given
out between September
2021 and June 2022

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



Featured Books

September

Cows Can't Jump
by Dave Reisman

October

Ready to Read Level 1: Moon
by Marion Dane Bauer

November

Ready to Read: Kiwi Cannot Reach
by Jason Tharp

December

A Loud Winter's Nap
by Katy Hudson

January

***The Bug in Teacher's Coffee
(And Other School Poems)***
by Kalli Dakos

February

Ripley Readers Level 2: Caves

March

Giggle, Giggle Quack
by Doreen Cronin

April

Bunny Money
by Rosemary Wells

May

Diary of a Worm: Nat the Gnat
by Doreen Cronin

June

***World of Reading Level 1: Disney
Junior Mickey Campy Camper Day***

A special thank you to our Book Advisory Council, a council made up of teachers, literacy specialists, school administrators, and volunteers who review and rate possible selections each year to help ensure we not only provide a wide variety of texts but that each Dirigo Reads book is developmentally appropriate and engaging.



Mt. Vernon Elementary School first graders enjoyed listening to author Jason Tharp read his entertaining book "Kiwi Cannot Reach!" He then taught them how to draw their very own Kiwi. Their artwork is awesome!



First graders at Fairview Elementary School in Auburn take their first peek at their November Dirigo Reads book, ***Kiwi Cannot Reach***, a silly and interactive tale about a Kiwi bird who looks for many creative ways to pull a rope that is just too far to reach.

"There are a lot of enthusiastic readers at Trenton Elementary School. I am lucky enough to have a well stocked library to supply them with books. This year our first graders got another book source, Dirigo Reads. What we came to call Forever Book Day was their favorite library day of the month. They loved reading and following along with me as I read their new book each month. It was a great resource for all the students to build their libraries, and to create shared experience around books."

- Autumn Demaine
Trenton Elementary School

"This program removes barriers between socioeconomic classes of students and provides a leveled (and successful!) playing field for all students in first grade. The familial literacy is also a bonus, with families often talking about the monthly book selection. It's an absolutely wonderful program and we are so honored to be a part of it."

- Miranda Engstrom
Lamoine Consolidated School



When we received a very generous donation from Disney, two members of the Kohl's Cares team came and helped count quantities and package up the books for each of our 51 schools. Thank you, Kohl's!

"The idea of getting a new book in the hands of every first grader is so important. Many of my students don't have books at home and were so excited to receive a new book each month!"

- Jennifer St. Cyr
Jefferson Village 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.