

ARCO

Activating Reading Communities Organization



2025 Annual Report



Activating Reading Communities Organization

Activating Reading Communities Organization (ARCO) is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing book access and fostering a vibrant reading culture within our community. Contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. EIN:93-4104956



Table Of Contents

Mission, Vision, and Approach 04

Letter From Our Executive Director 05

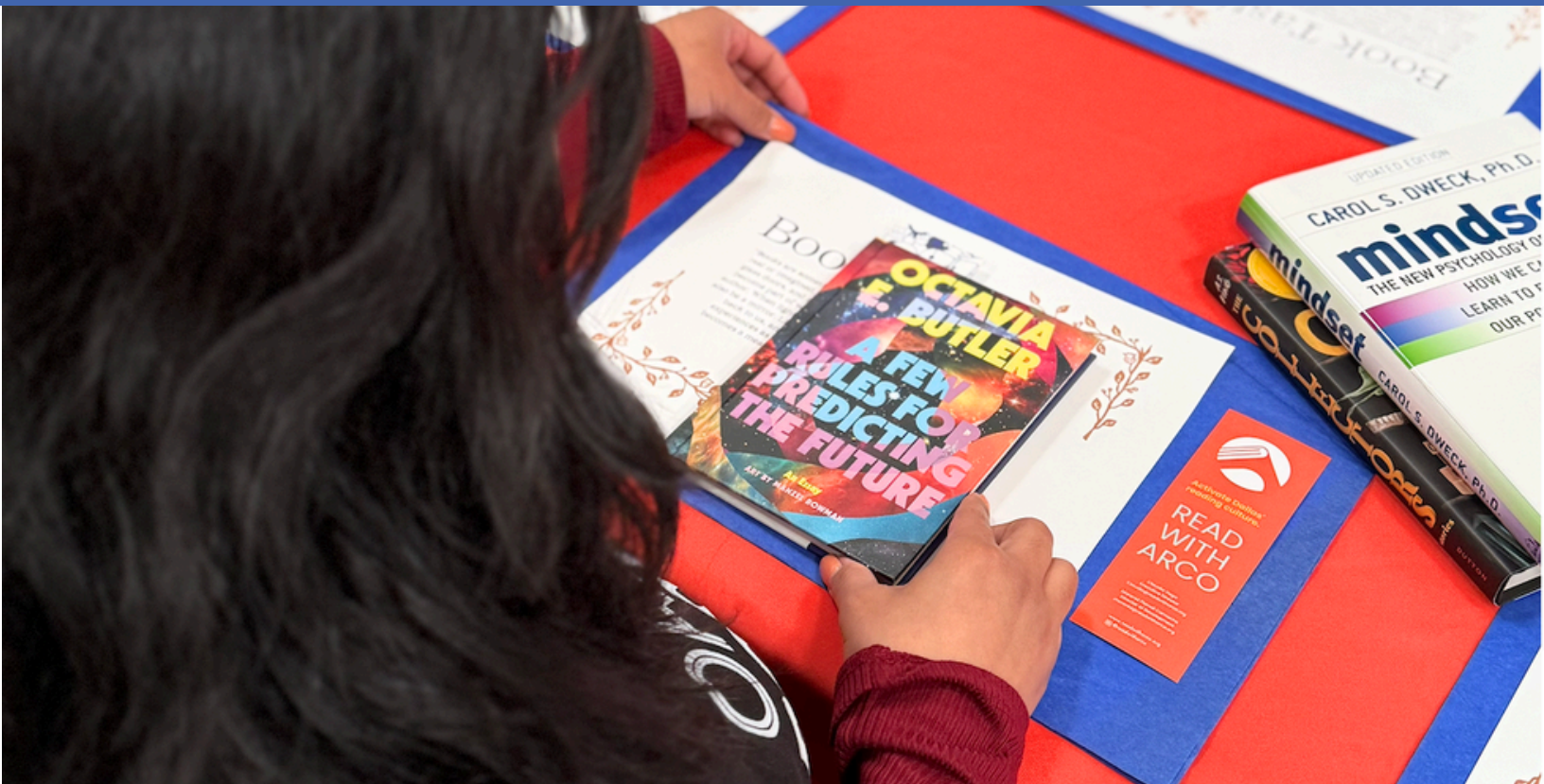
Impact 06

Program Updates 07

Financials 10

Community Partners & Supporters 12

Get Involved 15



Mission

Activate Dallas' reading culture.

ARCO is committed to championing a robust reading culture by addressing barriers to book access and ownership, and by providing reading experiences that uplift Dallas' reading culture.

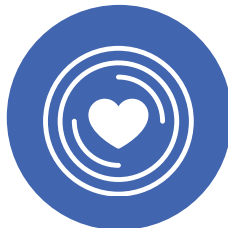
Vision

Our vision is to cultivate a vibrant, inclusive reading culture in Dallas where every individual has access to books and opportunities for literary engagement.

Our Objectives



Create and sustain book access and ownership by removing barriers to quality books and reading resources.



Create positive reading experiences that engage and inspire the community.



Activate third spaces where community members can engage with books, authors, and others in an exchange of ideas.

Letter from our Executive Director



In 2025, the National Assessment of Educational Progress reported that more than 60% of Texas 4th-grade students scored below proficient. While ARCO does not provide direct intervention services, this data highlights a critical need. As a former educator and parent, I know cultivating a culture of reading is just as important as developing specific reading skills. A strong reading culture sparks curiosity, encourages engagement, and builds a lifelong connection to books and learning. ARCO nurtures this culture through our community programming.

This year we gifted 15,000 books into the community and hosted over 250 events that uplifted the literary arts. Attendees consistently shared their appreciation for these spaces and the opportunity to engage with reading, books, and community members in environments that felt both welcoming and affirming.

Our experiences reinforce that community story times and book-gifting events are powerful entry points for families. These gatherings foster shared reading experiences while helping families connect with children's literature and build their home libraries. At the same time, our programmed author readings, campus visits, book clubs, and discussion groups deepen engagement, providing multiple entry points for people of all ages to connect with literature.

We now support more than 10 community-led book clubs spanning a range of genres and topics from classics to thrillers, that emphasize BIPOC and females voices. This year we also launched Grupo de Lectura, a Spanish book club where native speakers and second language learners can come together to discuss literature in Spanish.

We engaged with community members from more than 17 zip codes who shared a consistent message: families want access to high-quality books and programming close to home. This feedback has shaped our vision for the coming year. We are committed to expanding our outreach and bringing even more ARCO programming directly into communities with limited book access.

In 2026 we are launching the ARCO Bookmobile, which will travel across identified book deserts throughout the DFW area, partnering with local communities to bring ARCO's programming and increased access to books directly to them.

A strong reading culture begins with access to books, but extends far beyond it. It requires creating inclusive spaces where reading is shared, valued across generations, and woven into everyday life. This culture is sustained through community-driven efforts—book clubs, public libraries, local bookstores, community organizations, and schools—that actively engage families and foster a lasting connection to literature.

As we move into our next year of community outreach and programming we aim to make this possible with our community partners. Together, we can build book access and activate the culture of reading, laying the foundation with communities and cultivating readers.

ARCO's Community Impact

Thanks to your support, ARCO not only met but exceeded all of its goals this year, activating communities of readers throughout the city to help cultivate Dallas' reading culture. From expanding programs to reaching new communities, every milestone was achieved because of YOU. Your commitment has fueled our success and allowed us to make a significant impact into our third year. We are deeply grateful for your partnership in this journey. Thank you for making it all possible!

12K+

Participants

attended our events

250+

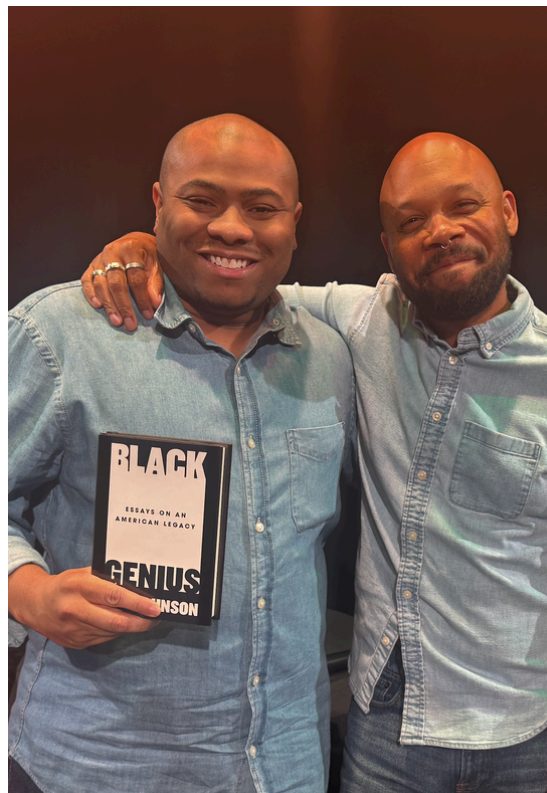
Literary Events

hosted for community members of all ages

15k+

Books Distributed

Helping to build home libraries



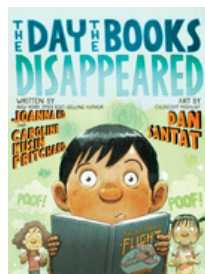
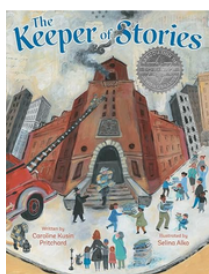
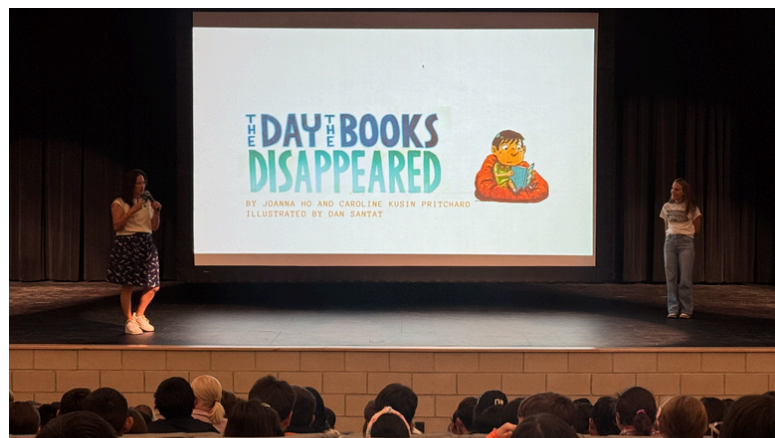
ARCO Gets Authors In Schools

ARCO partnered with Rosemont PTA to bring authors to visit with students and teachers at the Title I campuses, which had not had an author visit in over 20 years.

This initiative created meaningful opportunities for both teachers and students to connect with authors in a personal and engaging way. During these visits, authors shared their personal journeys into writing, discussed their books, and answered students' questions. Authors included Pedro Martin, Caroline Kusin Pritchard and Joanna Ho.

In addition, ARCO partnered with United to Learn to bring in author and illustrator Rachel Más and author Brad Davidson to help celebrate the organization's iconic Book Bash event. At this event, students are gifted a free book and encouraged to celebrate their love of reading. Through ARCO's collaboration, students had the unique opportunity to meet and interact directly with both an author and an illustrator, making the experience even more impactful.

Events like these help to build the culture of reading and create positive reading experiences with books for students that are not tied to assessments, but enhance learning and the love for reading.



Author Visits



Positive reading experiences, like this story time with the author, help prime the brain for lifelong learning, critical thinking, and emotional development.

This past year, we were able to connect readers with over 15 authors through our programming. In conjunction with our community partners, we were able to hold book signings, author talks, and meet-and-greets. We prioritized authors and stories that reflect the diverse backgrounds of our community, allowing readers to see themselves in the narratives while also inviting them to explore other cultures and perspectives. This focus on representation has resonated deeply with participants, many of whom expressed feeling more connected to literature than ever before. These opportunities also provided inspiration to kids and adults who are passionate about the power of storytelling and the literary arts.

"I get excited to take my little one on Saturday mornings. the atmosphere, it feels like family reading together for a purpose. I never did anything like this as a child myself, so I'm happy to start this tradition with mine and grow his own collection of books." – ARCO Participant/Community Member

Thank you to all the authors who came to visit us:

- Pedro Martin
- Kwame Alexander
- Jerry Craft
- Reagan Revord
- Tre Johnson
- Luisa Navarro
- Dora Ramirez
- Prisca Dorcas Mojica Rodríguez
- Julian Winters
- Mia Sosa
- Eliza Kinkz
- Kim Guerra
- Erika L Jones
- Natalie Guerrero
- Dr. Daniel Black
- Rachel Más Davidson
- Brad Davidson



ARCO Book Clubs

In 2025, we expanded our number of ARCO volunteer-led book clubs. Featuring an array of diverse themes, voices, and authors, our bookclubs provided a safe space for readers to come together and discuss works of literature that appealed to their interests. Thank you to all our bookclub facilitators for planning and hosting these wonderful events!

- Leslie Chatman: Plot Twist
- Dr. Lance Bennett: Better Society
- Rita Castillo-Vela: Oak Cliff is for Lovers
- Camilla Nuñez Benítez: Grupo de Lectura
- Rene Garcia: Rethinking Masculinity
- Dr. Joy Woods Bennett: Literary Libations
- Dr. Jay D. Guillory: Beyond the Margins
- Sean Woodard: Bookends Classic Literature
- Claudia Vega: Let's Read Together
- Leila Lester: Curio Reads
- Giovanna Chevez & Emma Saving: Dallas Girls

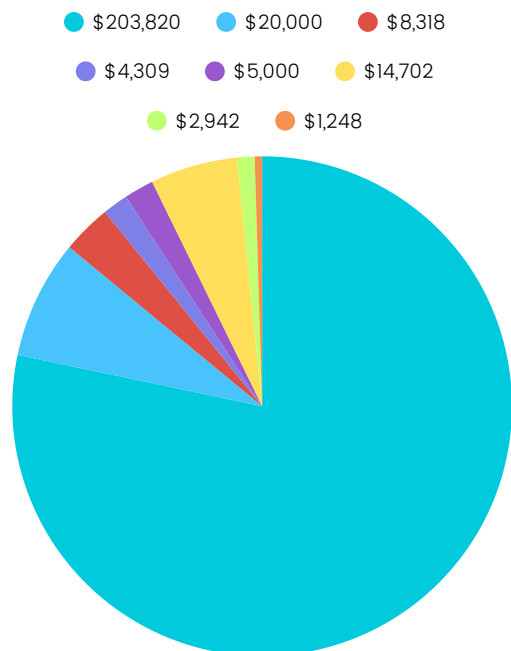


Bookends Classic Literature
Book Club



Photography by
Lauren Allen, Oak Cliff Advocate

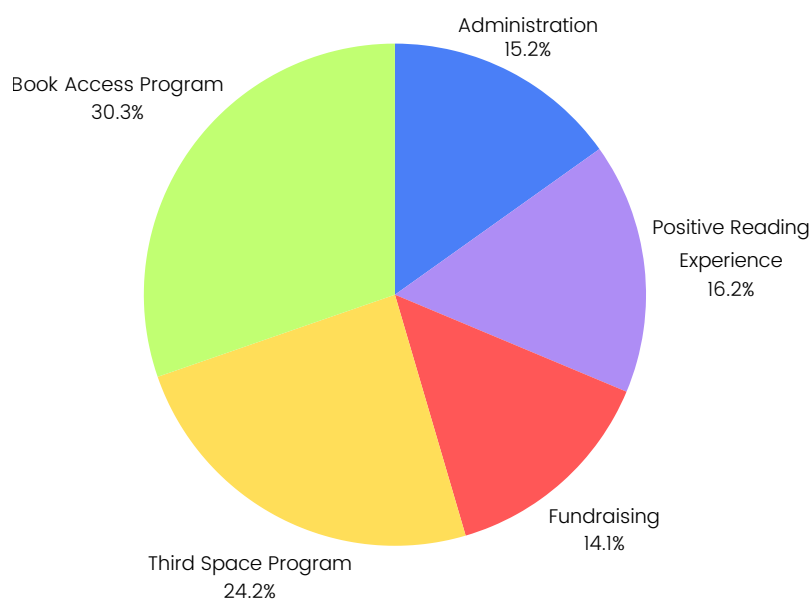
Financials



Revenue

• Anonymous funders	\$203,820
• Major gift donations	\$20,000
• Individual contributions and the ARCO Used Book Access Shelf	\$8,318
• ARCO workshop services	\$4,309
• General operating grant	\$5,000
• Donation-based tickets to our literary events	\$14,702
• Partnership programming	\$2,942
• North Texas Giving Day	\$1,284

Total: **\$260,375**



Expenses

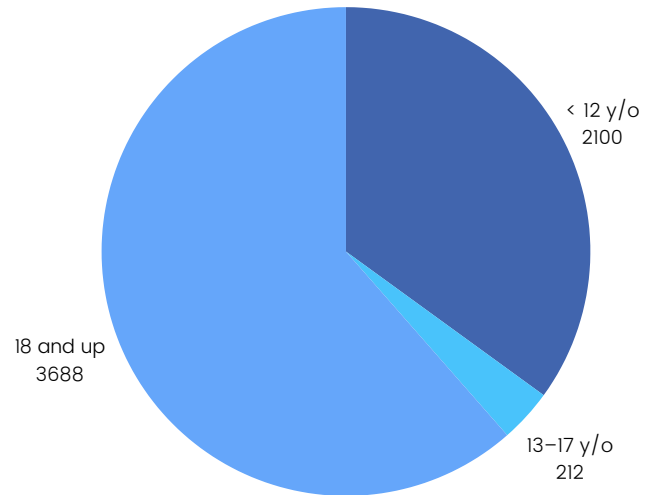
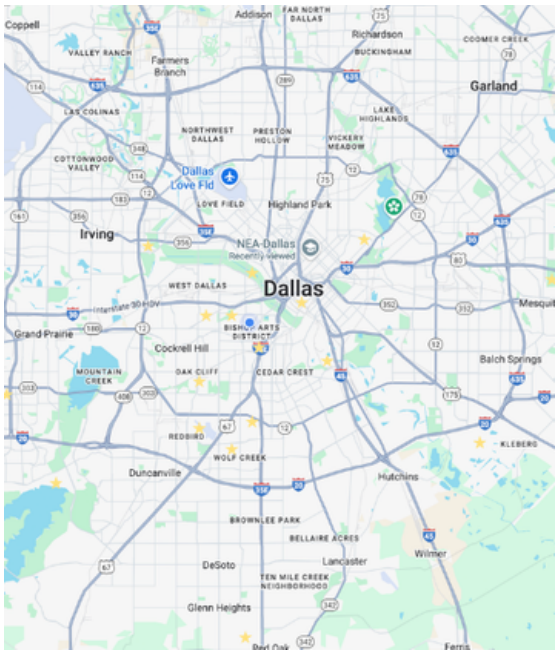
• Administration	15.2%
• Positive Reading Experience	16.2%
• Fundraising	14.1%
• Third Space Program	24.2%
• Book Access Program	30.3%

Demographics

Ages

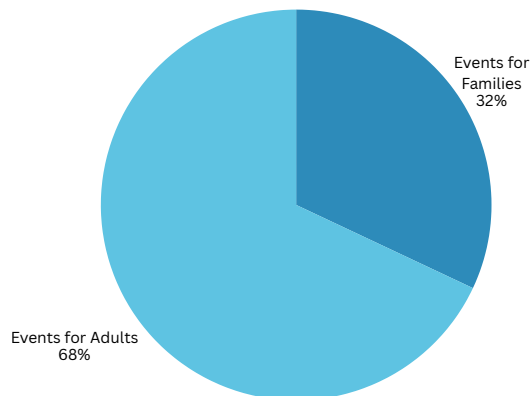
In our second year, ARCO proudly brought readers of all ages together, from young children to seniors, fostering intergenerational connections through the joy of reading.

75043
75060
75104
75126
75154
75159
75203
75208
75210
75211
75212
75216
75224
75232
75233
75241
76133



Zip Codes

ARCO proudly reached neighborhoods across multiple zip codes, extending our impact throughout the community.



Events Hosted

- Events for families 80
- Events for adults 170

Total: 250

ARCO Community Partners

Through our community partnerships, ARCO expands its impact, reaching more people and fostering a vibrant reading culture. We are grateful to our partners for supporting our mission-driven work and for their collaboration in uplifting our community and diverse voices and ideas.

- Apprentice Oak Cliff
- Be Project
- Bishop Dunne Catholic School
- Cannenta Foundation
- City of Dallas Office of Arts & Culture
- Coco André
- Conexion Acupuncture & Wellness Center
- Dallas College
- Dallas Is Lit! Literary Festival
- Dallas Girls Book Club
- Dallas Silent Book Club
- DMA Arts & Letters Live
- Educational First Steps
- Garcia Mental Health
- Hay Festival Forum Dallas
- Hope Cottage
- Methodist Dallas Medical Center
- Oak Cliff Cultural Center
- Olmo Market
- Readers 2 Leaders
- Rosemont PTA
- South Dallas Cultural Center
- Sunset High School
- Texas Discovery Garden
- The Family Place
- The Momentous School
- The Writer's Garrett
- Trade Oak Cliff
- Uplift Schools
- United Way
- United to Learn
- University of Texas at Arlington English Dept.
- Viva Brew

Friends of ARCO

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| • Adriana Sianez | • Christine Horstman | • Maina Musa |
| • Alisha Senour | • Eric Billigmeier | • Margaret Redner |
| • Allison Macalik | • Gara Arrant | • Maria Alvarado |
| • Anabel Soto | • Jailynn Graham | • Russell Tibbits |
| • Brinda Shah | • Kanitra Brooks | • Samantha Murphey |
| • Brittny Martinez | • Kristina Berreondo | • Tara Fontana |
| • Cesar Reyna | • Lauren Futch | • Terri Herod |



ARCO Supporters

Our work is only possible through YOUR generosity. We want to thank all the incredible members of our community who went above and beyond to support our mission.

Legacy Builder

- Anonymous Fund

Beacons of Reading Culture

- Mr. & Mrs. Christiansen

Reading Culture Champions

- Anonymous Fund
- Clifford Surber
- Communities Foundation of Texas
- Sara Ainsworth
- Marcus Bellamy

ARCO Ambassadors

Our work is only possible because of YOUR dedication. We want to thank all the amazing board members and volunteers who go above and beyond to support our mission and make a real difference in our community. You have had a positive impact on the areas we serve.

ARCO Board Members

- Claudia Vega
- John Vega
- Eva Creel
- Dr. Amanda Dudley
- Dr. Macario Hernández
- Marenid Planell Camacho
- Haewon Park

ARCO Volunteers

Thank you to all our volunteers who help make our work possible. Our community impact is a reflection of the dedication and care you bring to assisting us with all our programming. We appreciate your service and look forward to working further with you and creating lasting memories in the future.



Fundraising Goal

We want YOU to be part of ARCO's next chapter! With your support, we're aiming to raise

\$75,000

to bring more books and positive reading experiences to our community.

Let's write this chapter together!



Ways to reach our goal together!

Make a Donation

Your generous contributions will enable us to continue offering free literary events, enhance book access, and create positive reading experiences for all ages.

Share Your Story

Share how our programs have impacted you and/or your family.

Tag @readwitharco, so we can spread the word together!

Share ARCO's fundraising link with your friends

Inspire your friends, family, and network to support ARCO by sharing the QR code/link:



www.givebutter.com/supportarco



Get Involved!

This work is only possible with the help and support of individuals like YOU! To learn more about how you can help contribute to our mission and vision, please reach out to us, we'd love to talk to you more!

To collaborate or volunteer:

Claudia Vega

Executive Director

claudia@readwitharco.org

Follow Us:



@readwitharco



@readwitharco



www.readwitharco.org