Books for All— The Urgent Need to Support Our Philadelphia Public School Libraries:

The Impact at John B. Kelly Elementary School

2020-2021 Report

## Background

- John B. Kelly (JBK) School is an elementary school (K-5) located in the Germantown area of Philadelphia.
- Roughly 7 years ago, the school library, like most of the libraries in Philadelphia schools, was shuttered due to budget cuts.
- In 2015, volunteers came together to re-open the library, led by educator Penny Colgan Davis.

## Where We Were Before Covid

- We had more than 25 volunteers who worked in the school library each week.
- We welcomed four classes a day to the library Monday through Thursday.
- We provided one-on-one reading buddy volunteers on Fridays.
- We opened "Penny's Place," a special section of the library where students can work together and read quietly.
- We had a Student Library Volunteers program.
- We started computerization of our book catalog.

# Keeping Students Reading During Covid . . .

# Summer 2020–Present

- 1. Books on the Go
- 2. Video Story Time
- 3. E-books
- 4. Virtual Reading Buddies

# Books on the Go

#### Summer

- We began book drives to collect new and gently used children's books.
- We then bagged the books by grade level.
- Because students were not in school, we distributed the books through non-profit partners such as the Boys & Girls Club of Philadelphia.
- In total, we distributed some 1,000 books to elementary-school aged students in the Germantown area.

#### • Fall

• We transitioned from distributing books through nonprofit partners to distributing books directly to JBK students at special school events.

• We have distributed some 400 books to date.

#### Distributing Books Through Community Partners







# Distributing Books to Students at JBK



### Distributing Books at JBK's "Trunk or Treat" Halloween Party





We created a series of videos featuring our very own volunteers reading books aloud.
65 videos so far!



# 3 E-Books

• JBK students can select from a wide range of fiction and graphic-novel e-books to read on their Chrome books. So far, 275!

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# 4 Virtual Reading Buddies

- 17 reading buddy volunteers.
- Working with three 2<sup>nd</sup>-grade classes.
- One volunteer and one student go into a video break-out room and read together.
- 45-minute sessions, once per week.
- The teacher selects students to participate based on their need for extra reading support.

# Goals

- Budget for annual book purchase for books that better reflect our student population.
- Upgrade and improve existing library furnishings to create a more inviting and comfortable learning environment.
- Engage the community and have greater diversity among our volunteer staff.
- Expand and continue networking with other volunteer-run libraries.