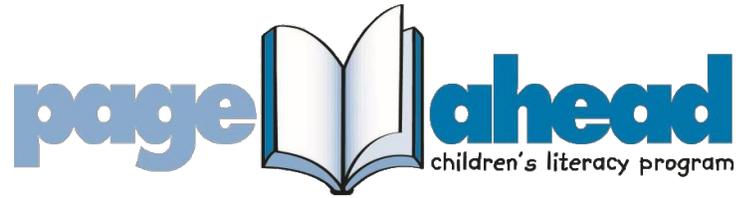


**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

**Page Ahead**  
Rebecca Brinbury  
(206) 461-0123  
rbrinbury@pageahead.org



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## **LIBRARY OF CONGRESS RECOGNIZES LOCAL EFFORTS TO CONNECT KIDS WITH BOOKS DURING THE PANDEMIC**

*Page Ahead is awarded a Library of Congress State Literacy Award for its outstanding contributions to promoting literacy and reading in Washington*

**SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, March 4**—Page Ahead Children's Literacy Program ([pageahead.org](http://pageahead.org)), the leading provider of books and literacy services for children in need in Washington, has been awarded a 2021 Library of Congress State Literacy Award. One of just seven organizations across the country to earn this prestigious recognition, Page Ahead has been building home libraries for kids for 30 years.

The Library of Congress State Literacy Awards Program ([read.gov/literacyawards/state-2021.html](http://read.gov/literacyawards/state-2021.html)) is made possible through the generous support of David M. Rubenstein.

Page Ahead was nominated for the honor by the Washington Center for the Book, a partnership between Washington State Library and The Seattle Public Library. "We immediately thought of Page Ahead for this award because of its ongoing work getting books into the hands of children across Washington state, even when there's a pandemic happening," said Linda Johns, co-manager of the Washington Center for the Book. "We were impressed with how, in addition to quickly adapting their ongoing programs to the realities of remote learning, Page Ahead also responded to the new hardships for school-age and preschool children during COVID-19 by launching its Book Oasis project to install Little Free Libraries to help fight 'book deserts' in low-income urban neighborhoods."



Easy access to books in childhood is the primary indicator of future academic success<sup>1</sup>, so Page Ahead knew it was important get books quickly to neighborhoods hardest hit by school and public library closures during the pandemic. Custom designed for little browsers (including shelves closer to the ground that face book covers out), Page Ahead's Book Oasis Little Free Libraries will increase book access for kids in those communities on an ongoing

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<sup>1</sup> M.D.R. Evans, Jonathan Kelley, Joanna Sikora, Donald J. Treiman, "[Family scholarly culture and educational success: Books and schooling in 27 nations](#)," *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, Volume 28, Issue 2, 2010.

basis, as Page Ahead regularly refills them with brand-new titles for babies through young adults.

The State Literacy Award, which comes with a \$2,225 grant, also recognizes Page Ahead's efforts to adapt its existing programs when the pandemic hit. With two months' notice, Page Ahead took its flagship book fair-based summer reading program, Book Up Summer, entirely remote in spring 2020 when schools shut down. Page Ahead also invested in high-quality video equipment to record virtual story times that are shared with families and classrooms across the state, send story-based craft kits to classrooms, provide remote opportunities for volunteers, and more.

"We are honored to receive this recognition from the Library of Congress," said Page Ahead executive director Susan Dibble. "We share this award with everyone in our community who has worked with us to put books in kids' hands during this difficult time, especially our hardworking school partners and our generous supporters who make this work possible."

### **About Page Ahead**

Guided by the fact that literacy is essential to lifelong success, Page Ahead provides new books and develops reading activities that empower at-risk children. Founded in 1990, Page Ahead Children's Literacy Program has given more than 3.5 million new books to more than 950,000 children through collaborations with schools, social service agencies, preschools, and early childhood programs across Washington. Through their programs, they work to erase the early reading gap for underresourced children before it becomes an "achievement" gap.

Page Ahead has grown from a King County book giveaway project to the leading provider of children's books and literacy services in the state, currently serving more than 20,000 students in eighteen counties, and a top-ranked early childhood education program nationwide on Charity Navigator.

For additional information, please contact Rebecca Brinbury at [rbrinbury@pageahead.org](mailto:rbrinbury@pageahead.org) or visit [pageahead.org](http://pageahead.org).

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