"The mind is not a vessel that needs filling, but wood that needs igniting."

Plutarch

Books@Work

SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT

April 2014

Dear Friends of Books@Work,

Welcome to our first Social Impact Report. Your support has delivered significant results in our inaugural year. During 2013, Books@Work migrated from an interesting pilot program to, at year-end, 17 programs with participants in five companies and professors from six colleges in Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Wisconsin.

These programs bring our mission to life. Our dual mission — to help develop lifelong learners while creating direct tangible benefits for companies — makes Books@Work unique. By developing critical thinkers and readers, Books@Work benefits everyone: companies, families and communities.

Books@Work partners with colleges and companies to bring professor-led literature seminars to the workplace to build confidence, critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity. Our tailored programs usually meet weekly in the workplace, and engage cross-functional and cross-hierarchical groups, regardless of educational background.

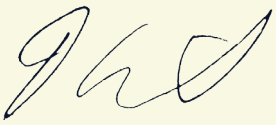
This past year brought us our 501(c)(3) designation, a charming new website, new members to our merry band, and a first foray into fundraising. We worked with participants in hospitality, healthcare, manufacturing and distribution. We read books of many genres (fiction, non-fiction, short stories and poems), ranging from Shakespeare to Fannie Flagg.

We continue to be humbled by what we have learned, about people and their capacity to engage, contribute and reflect. We hold dear our view that sharing challenging and interesting literature is the deepest form of respect we can accord learners of all ages and backgrounds. The magic that happens at the intersection of professor expertise and participant experience is rich and varied – with enthusiastic and touching stories. Early evidence shows that we are building critical thinking and collaboration through meaningful, text-based seminar discussions, and starting to engage communities outside the "walls" of the seminar through book sharing and extended conversations with family members, neighbors and co-workers.

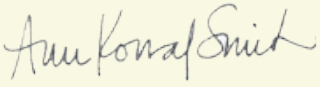
We have a long way to go. We are actively seeking companies to partner with us to engage their employees. We continue to work on robust measures to assess our progress – at the individual, company and community levels. And we continue to need philanthropic donations to support our growth, and ultimately our community-based programs. We are working now to begin to get the word out, to share the program more broadly and deeply.

Thank you for your support and your confidence in Books@Work. We believe that the program can make a meaningful contribution to overcoming the increasing educational and income disparity in the country. We will continue to work as hard as we can to grow our reach and to excite learners with books, ideas and good discussion.

Cheers,



Felix Brueck, *Chairman of the Board*



Ann Kowal Smith, *Founder & Executive Director*

P.S. As we write, we have grown further still – adding new employers, including our first community-based program with the Maple Heights City Schools.

Ann Kowal Smith
Founder & Executive Director

Felix M. Brueck
Chairman of the Board

Measuring our Social Impact

In this Social Impact Report, we share the program and our initial milestones, through numbers and stories. In a few short pages, we want you – our stakeholders and supporters – to see the progress we've made, the lessons we've learned and our aspirations. We want you to hear from us, but interspersed throughout, we share snippets and reactions from our participants, where possible through the lens of the particular book that inspired them. We hope to share with you the sheer joy and excitement that propels us to continue to pursue our mission – one reader at a time!

We aspire to engage 100,000 participants a year by 2023 in Books@Work, fundamentally changing the national dialogue on learning and critical thinking.

Why Books@Work?

We live in a society where those with more education prosper and those with less see shrinking incomes and fewer opportunities. Closing the gap requires many initiatives. Few, however, are focused on the overwhelming majority of American adults without a college degree. Books@Work is designed primarily for this target group: the backbone of our society and economy and the parents of the next generation of learners.

Employers report being increasingly concerned about the lack of critical thinking, problem solving and communication skills in the workplace. Books@Work makes learning accessible and inspiring, while providing an opportunity for participants to build these very skills. When participants gain the tools and confidence to step up in the workplace, new opportunities open up for them. Beyond the workplace, our diverse participants make up a vibrant and measurable learning community.

Bartleby the Scrivener
-Melville

COLLABORATION

"We go through the same challenge every day, where we don't understand people we don't really know. We are quick to make assumptions."

By addressing these challenges, we believe that Books@Work can make a meaningful contribution to overcoming the increasing educational and economic disparity in the country. With participants gaining the tools and confidence to step up in the workplace, new opportunities open up for them. By becoming lifelong learners, our participants become the role model for the next generation that looks up to them and says: "that can be me."

How do we know that Books@ Work is on the right track?

Since the program's inception, we have tracked participants through surveys both prior to and following the completion of each program. But more importantly, we have talked to as many participants as we can – one on one – to hear about the experience, the books and the discussion. The stories are powerful and continue to underscore an important set of themes. Through high quality literature, discussed together in person, we see the following outcomes over and over: critical thinking, confidence, empathy, curiosity, collaboration, community and engagement. We hear participants tell us that they've gotten to know their colleagues in unprecedented ways, and have renewed their interest in reading - alone and with their kids.

"There are people in this building that I'm more apt to strike up a conversation with, regardless of their more intimidating position."

CONFIDENCE

COLLABORATION

"You connect with others on a different level. Knowing someone in that context shows you that there is more under the surface than you may have thought."

CRITICAL THINKING

"This is an opportunity to think beyond [the task]... It's more than reading another chapter. It's ok to use other parts of your brain at work."

By the Numbers

Inception to 12.31.13

17 PROGRAMS

5 COMPANIES

6 COLLEGES

4 STATES

230 PARTICIPANTS

40 PROFESSORS

58 BOOKS

3 LESSONS LEARNED

Diverse groups are very effective. The book levels the playing field. The conversations are richest in groups that cross functions or hierarchies.

Books@Work builds communities – well beyond the group assembled in the room. The books are passed along to friends and family, while the seminar topics often foster new connections to a place and with other people.

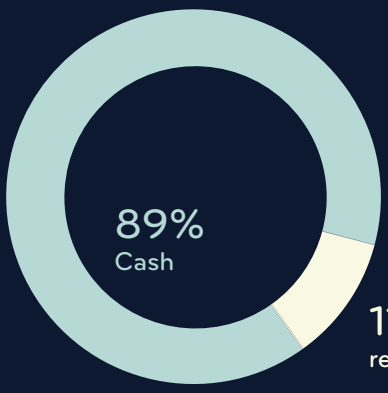
There is a hunger for classic, challenging literature. Left to choose, our participants typically select the most rigorous books.

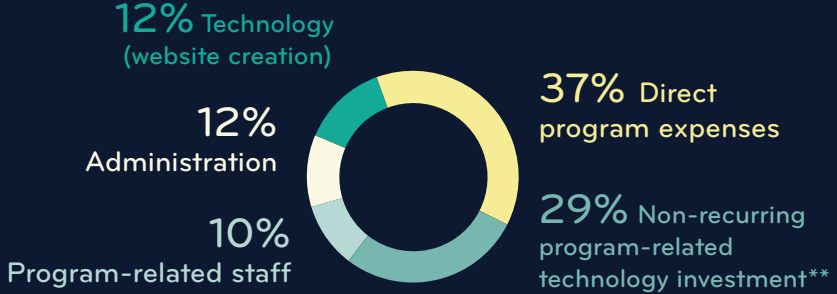
Financial Information

January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2013*

Our funding model means that we partner with companies in more than name only. For each program, our expenses related to professor honoraria, travel and books are reimbursed at our cost. In addition, our partners contribute an administrative fee that covers some of the overhead costs associated with organizing the program, recruiting professors, monitoring quality and capturing the outcomes. At the outset, our operations depend on philanthropic donations to enable us to deliver the programs. At approximately 15,000 participants a year, we will generate sufficient revenue to fund our operations completely, permitting us to use every donated dollar to fund community-based programs or special projects to advance our mission.

ASSET BALANCE
$95,039





EXPENSES
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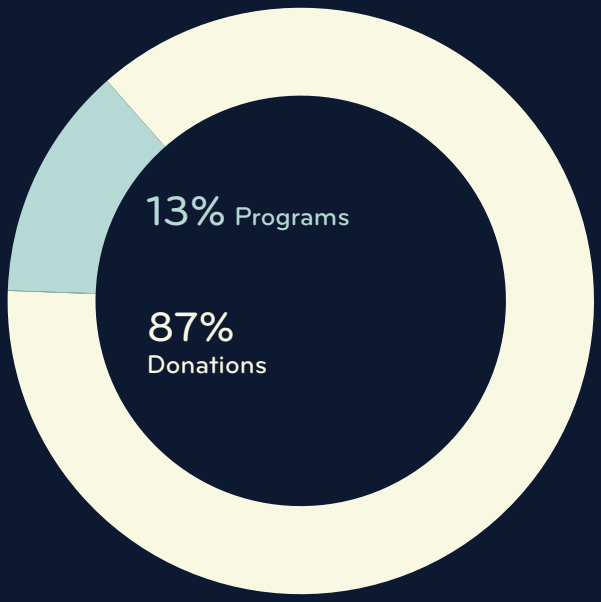

Financial Support
$146,727

*Displayed on an accrual basis for transparency. Our tax and Form 990 reporting is done on a cash basis.

** Investment in Salesforce.com implementation to enable effective data and program management at scale; funds raised specifically for this purpose.

A Look Ahead – Spreading Our Reach

Every Books@Work program reaches into the local community. The books are passed along to friends and family, while the seminar topics often foster new connections to a place and with other people. Moments like these have encouraged us to think of Books@Work as an opportunity to build community – well beyond the walls of the seminar. We have begun working with other nonprofit and human service organizations to reach into local spaces, cultivating a sense of connection and collaboration within neighborhoods, schools, and families through community-based Books@Work programs. Our first such program is underway with the Maple Heights City Schools' classified (non-teaching) staff, with the generous support of The Martha Holden Jennings Foundation and The Weathertop Foundation.

A Thank You

to Our Partners – Donors, Companies and Colleges

THANK YOU. Our donors, company partners and college partners give life to Books@Work. Your dedication to lifelong learning is helping individuals, families and communities. You are making learning accessible and inspiring. Together, we are building role models for the next generation of learners.

Donors

(inception through December 31, 2013)

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Cardinal Health, Inc.
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Fairbanks Morse Engine (a division of EnPro Industries, Inc.)
Maple Heights City Schools
Swagelok Company
Valmet Corporation

Colleges and Universities

Beloit College
Case Western Reserve University
Denison University
Dickinson College
Drew University
Hiram College
University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown

The Kite Runner - Hosseini

CURIOSITY

Reading news of the elections in Afghanistan, participants are more interested because they "know people from there."

"By telling the story of how the wisest and most just man of their time was put to death for pursuing the truth, Plato shines a light on humankind's fear of the unknown and our sometimes irrational belief systems."

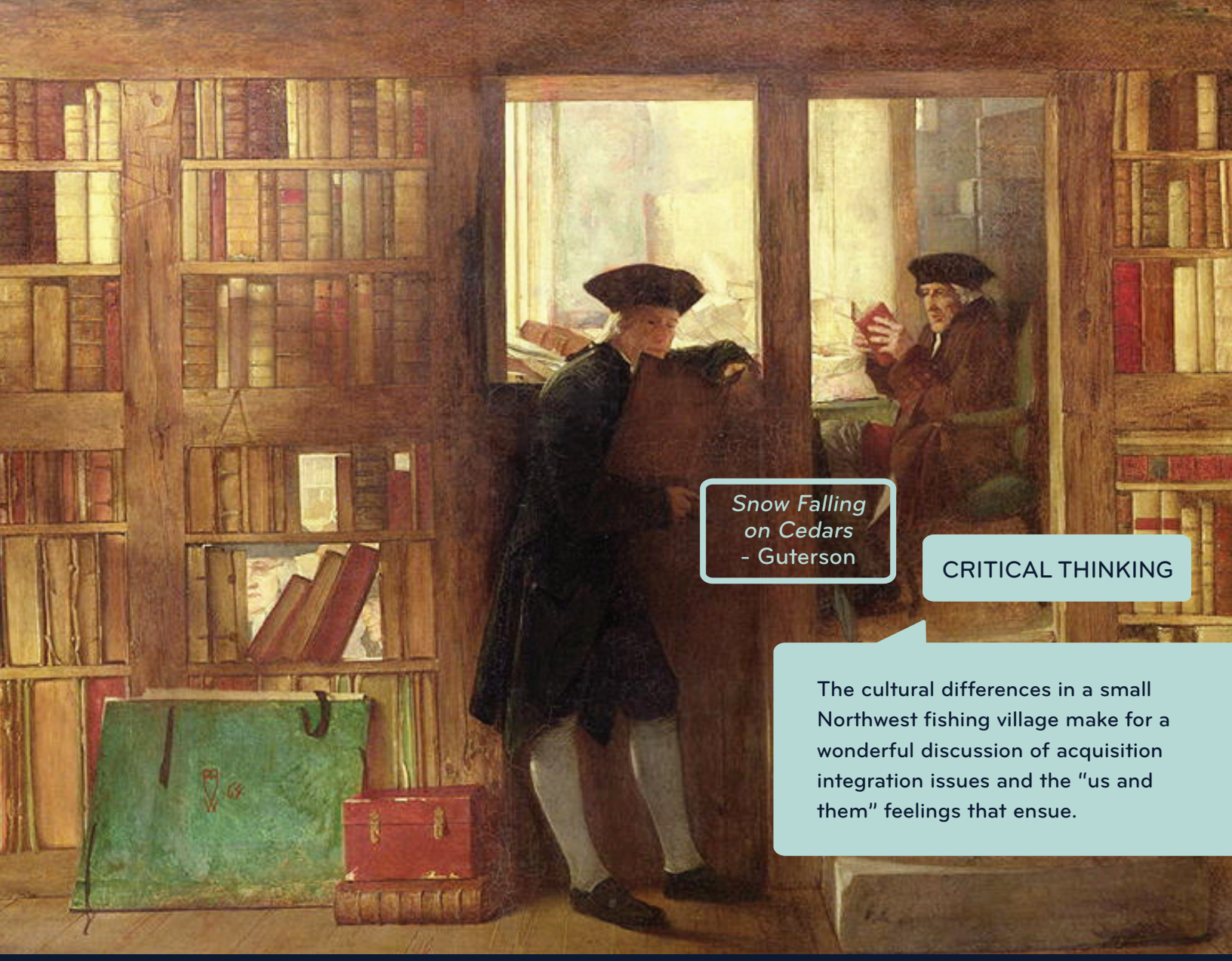
CRITICAL THINKING

The Apology - Plato

As We Are Now - Sarton

EMPATHY

The story "gets you to think the next time someone calls you from the field. Are you treating them as a valued person and anticipating their needs?"



Snow Falling on Cedars - Guterson

CRITICAL THINKING

The cultural differences in a small Northwest fishing village make for a wonderful discussion of acquisition integration issues and the "us and them" feelings that ensue.

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Jamie Simoneau, *Deputy Director*
Ann Kowal Smith, *Founder & Executive Director*
Marcia Wexberg, *Board Member*

BOOKS@WORK

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