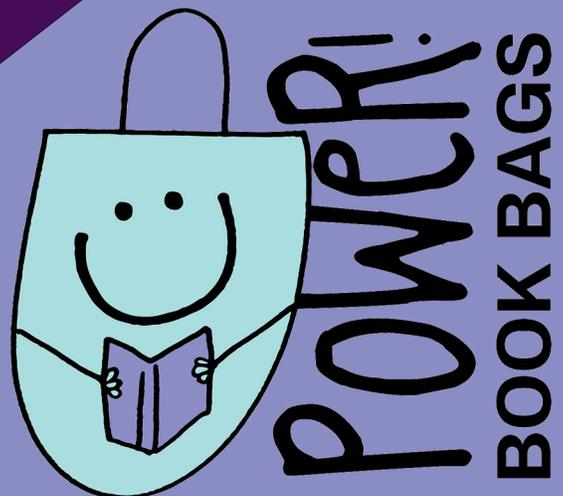




# Annual Report 2022



[www.powerbookbags.org](http://www.powerbookbags.org)

# Table of Contents

<b>Letter from the Executive Director</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Mission Statement and Programs</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Service Map</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Data at a Glance</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Community Partners</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Grants and Grantors</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Thank You from the Board</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Community Endorsements</b>	<b>12</b>

# Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

“I don’t know about you, but I’m feeling 22!” are the words of one of the icons of today, Taylor Swift. Looking back at the year 2022, PoWeR! Book Bags felt a lot like that sentiment: young, strong, anything is possible! Even with COVID still “Alive and Kickin” – but starting to recede and change – our VOLUNTEER organization was able to “RISE UP!” from the pandemic world and continue the “rhythm” of our mission!

We have learned a lot about how to sing the newer tunes of the 20s! Throughout 2022, we found there were days, weeks, and even winter months where the beat was very quiet and the crowd of musicians thinned. Then, with the emerging “Greensleaves,” our pace quickened and the slow waltz was replaced by the rhumba, cha-cha, and polka! Volunteers slowly returned, family assistance sites and schools once again filled up, and our work quickened. Our materials to encourage the lifeblood of language once again flowed with a stronger beat.

Our volunteers near and wide, the community that creates OUR music, sewed thousands of lovely bags for the children that we serve! These “musicians” also created writing booklets, added tags to bags, placed stickers on books, filled our PoWeR! Language Bags with our supporting materials, packed countless boxes of books, and delivered these far and wide across 22 counties, somehow never missing a BEAT!

We distributed over 16,000 bags in 2022, with at least 10,000 made by community members. ALL were filled by still other community friends! This, alongside the 105,000+ books selected by children and families at our community partners’ sites throughout 22 counties, kept our theme music strong.

“PLAY, WRITE, READ, and INTERACT! with children!” was the simple message that was shared in harmony by our wonderful partners – the professionals hosting the children and families as they choose and receive PoWeR! materials at our various community partner sites.

(Keep reading on next page!)



# Letter from the Executive Director (cont.)



Music has been around forever. Tunes fill our heads and hearts, playing in the background and setting the tone or blaring in the foreground, pushing us onwards. Luckily for many of us, the music of our lives has broadened to include the tunes of PoWeR! Book Bags and we are oh-so-fortunate to have it in our world! The concert we've created for the common good, for under-resourced children to increase their experiences with language, literacy, and human interaction, has ALSO benefited each of us. Our "community of musicians," also known as the volunteers, donors, and grantors, has joined in to create not just a tune, but a beautiful symphony which is truly making a difference in the lives of children AND the adults in their world.

Our work with young children is helping create stronger bonds and better Early Relational Health, which is demonstrated in the research to positively impact the social, emotional, and physical health of BOTH children and their parents/caregivers. Our at-home reading and writing resources for school-age children offer on-going support to foster growth. We are not only helping children have the resources at home to "play a few notes," we are helping them learn and create scores of their own music to use throughout their lifetimes, which will ultimately enrich us all!

Thanks for joining our community concert! We look forward to many musical journeys together in the future!

With songs of heartfelt gratitude,

Kara Gregory, Ph.D.

Founder and Executive Director of PoWeR! Book Bags

P.S. And in keeping with Gloria Estefan, "The rhythm's gonna get you," so if you haven't joined us yet, do so now!



# Mission Statement



Our mission is to increase children’s experiences with language, literacy, and human interactions to better understand themselves, communicate with others, and connect with the world.

When children PLAY and WRITE and READ, they engage in meaningful interactions, practicing crucial behaviors and skills necessary to build strong language and literacy abilities that will better equip them for life!

PoWeR! Book Bags accomplishes its mission through a set of programs outlined below.



## PoWeR! Book Bags Programs

For our **Little Learners** program, we partner with local organizations whose professional staff serve low-income families with children ages 0-5. These agencies’ staff are already in one-on-one relationships with families enrolled in their programs and possess the credibility and opportunity to nurture, encourage, educate, and guide parents. These professionals teach the importance of and show parents how to use the resources we provide to them (including books they get to select and keep) to achieve their child’s developmental milestones.

**School Vacation Literacy Give-Aways** are for elementary students. Older children select books and materials at their schools 3-4 times a year, before vacation breaks, to help combat the “vacation slide,” which is a common result of the school breaks.

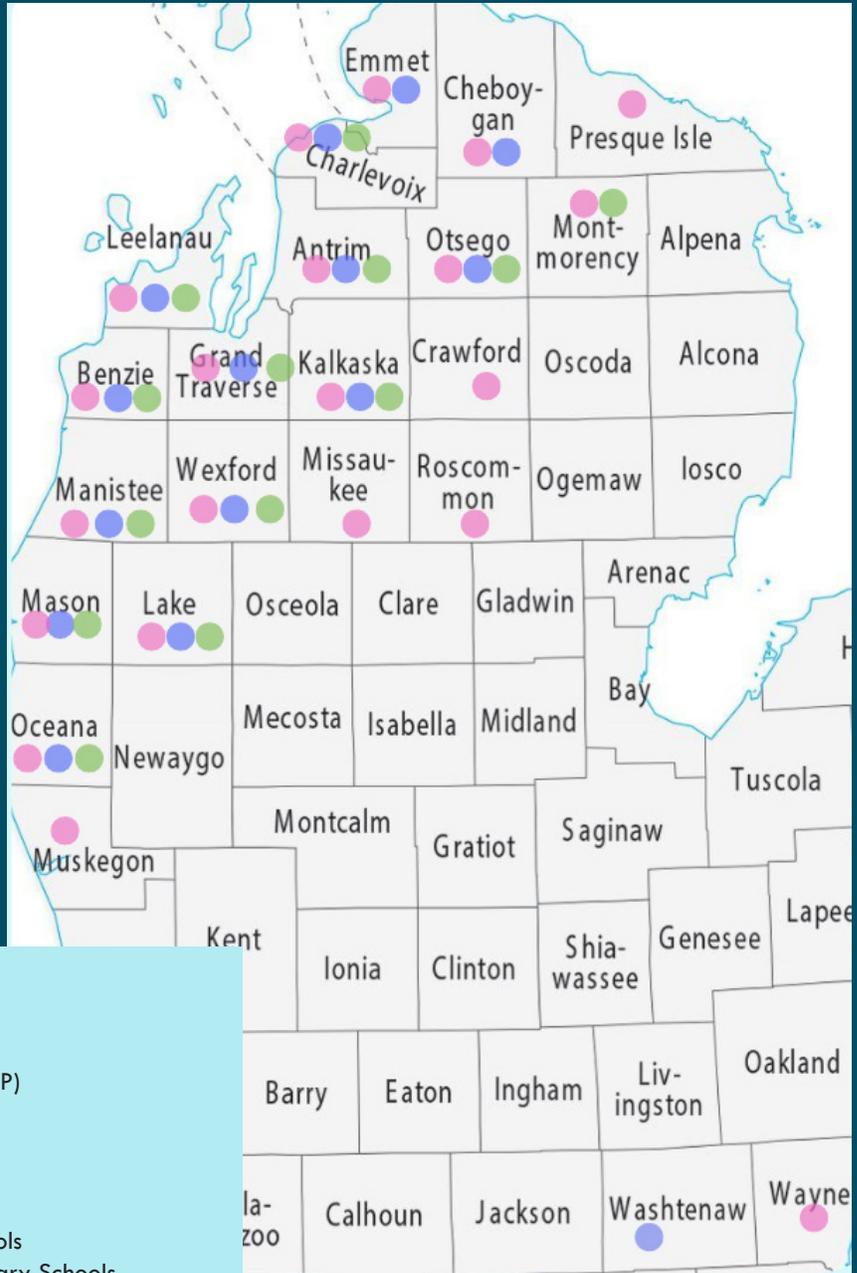
Finally, in our **Community Sites** program, we provide books and the PoWeR! Language bags for children whose families are receiving services at our partner locations.

# Service Map



*"It is wonderful to see delight and excitement on the faces of both the child and caregivers when they engage in the new books together. Not only does this support literacy, but it strengthens bonds as well! I enjoy hearing the families share that they are happy to have a new book to read at bedtime or have another great book to add in their growing collection of books from the program."*

*-- Carmen, Family Support Specialist, DHD#10-Healthy Families America Affiliate, Kalkaska County*



## Little Learners

- Early Head Start
- Health Departments
  - Maternal Infant Health Program (MIHP)
  - WIC
  - Immunization Clinics

## Community Sites

- Food and Baby Pantries
- Health Clinics
- Child Care Centers

## Schools

- Preschools
- Elementary Schools
- Middle Schools

*"Supporting PoWeR! Book Bags is an investment in our future; not only enriching the hearts and boosting the minds of our children but empowering the adult they will one day be!"*

*-- Mary, Volunteer*



# Data at a Glance



**20,000 Kids Served!**

**16,000 Bags Delivered in 2022**

**105,000 Books Delivered in 2022**

**Revenue: \$434,190.00**

**Expenses: \$354,525.00**

**22 Counties Served**

**Over 12,000 Volunteer Hours**

*“When I first started to work with Kara, it didn’t feel like work. There was laughter and conversation while we made writing booklets, strung yarn on bag tags, and any other job that needed done. I am still involved because I have seen how excited the kids are when they get new books to choose from....The teachers of the kids who receive books from PoWeR! Book Bags tell us their kids show improvement in their language skills. I don’t think there is a better way to spend my retirement; being busy, helping others, and knowing these kids will be in charge of our world one of these days. We need to support them now so they can support us in the future.”*

*-- Penny, Volunteer Coordinator*

*“As a retired elementary teacher of 34 years, I fully understand the importance of reading and having books in the home. I love sewing and making the bags, so it is satisfying, as well as enjoyable to assist with this extremely worthwhile project.”*

*-- Dorothy, Volunteer*



# Community Partners

## **Antrim**

Antrim Baby Pantry  
Antrim County Health Department (Northwest DHD):  
WIC, MIHP & Immunizations Clinic  
Early Head Start  
Women's Resource Center

## **Benzie**

St. Philip's Baby Pantry  
Benzie County Health Department (Benzie-Leelanau  
DHD): WIC, MIHP & Immunizations Clinic  
Early Head Start  
Women's Resource Center

## **Charlevoix**

Charlevoix County Health Department (Northwest  
DHD): WIC, MIHP & Immunizations Clinic  
Early Head Start  
Women's Resource Center

## **Cheboygan**

Cheboygan County Health Department (DHD 4): WIC,  
MIHP & Immunizations Clinic  
Early Head Start  
Women's Resource Center

## **Crawford**

Early Head Start

## **Emmet**

Emmet County Health Department (Northwest DHD):  
WIC, MIHP & Immunizations Clinic  
Early Head Start  
Beaver Island School  
Women's Resource Center

## **Grand Traverse**

Salvation Army  
Immaculate Conception Food Pantry  
Grace Episcopal Church Food Pantry  
Redeemer Lutheran Baby Pantry  
Traverse Bay Children's Advocacy Center  
Generations Ahead

Kingsley Preschool  
NMC Preschool  
Traverse Heights Elementary  
Blair Elementary  
Women's Resource Center

## **Kalkaska**

Kalkaska County Health Department (DHD 10): WIC,  
MIHP, Healthy Families, & Immunizations Clinic  
Early Head Start  
Fife Lake Elementary & Middle School

## **Lake County**

Lake County Health Department (DHD 10): WIC, MIHP  
& Immunizations Clinic  
Grandma's Closet Baby Pantry  
Bread of Life Food Pantry  
Baldwin Elementary School

## **Leelanau**

Leelanau County Health Department (Benzie-Leelanau  
DHD): WIC, MIHP & Immunizations Clinic  
Leelanau Christian Neighbors Food & Baby Pantry  
Parenting Communities Play Groups  
Benodjenh Child Center  
Leelanau Montessori School  
Leland Elementary School  
Northport School, K-8  
Sutons Bay Schools, Pk-5th

## **Manistee**

Manistee County Health Department: WIC, MIHP,  
Healthy Families, & Immunizations Clinic  
Great Start Collaborative Play Groups

## **Mason**

Mason County Health Department (DHD 10): WIC,  
MIHP & Immunizations Clinic  
HELP Ministries  
C.O.V.E.  
Catholic Social Services  
DHHS Foster Care  
Salvation Army

# Community Partners (cont.)

Lakeshore Food Club  
Letha's Day Care  
Ludington Area Schools Pk-5th  
Scottville Senior Center Grandparents

## **Missaukee**

Early Head Start

## **Montmorency**

Montmorency County Health Department (DHD 4):  
WIC, MIHP & Immunizations Clinic  
Early Head Start  
Lewiston Elementary School

## **Muskegon**

Early Head Start

## **Oceana**

Oceana County Health Department (DHD 10): WIC,  
MIHP & Immunizations Clinic  
Early Head Start  
DHHS Foster Care

## **Otsego**

Otsego County Health Department (Northwest DHD):  
WIC, MIHP & Immunizations Clinic  
Early Head Start  
Women's Resource Center  
Otsego County Library  
Otsego Food Pantry  
North Ohio Elementary, Pk-3  
South Maple Elementary, K-3  
Johannesburg Schools, Pk-8  
Vanderbilt School, K-8

## **Presque Isle**

Presque Isle County Health Department (DHD 4): WIC,  
MIHP & Immunizations Clinic  
Early Head Start

## **Roscommon**

Early Head Start

## **Wexford**

Wexford County Health Department (DHD 10): MIHP  
Tabernacle Food Pantry  
Early Head Start



# Grants and Grantors

4Front Credit Union

Amar-Fox Family Fund of the Otsego Community Foundation

American Association of University Women - Gaylord

Antrim County Baby Pantry

Beaver Island Elks Lodge

Believe in Reading

Benzie County Central Schools Educational Foundation

Benzie Sunrise Rotary

Bui Family Foundation

Cadillac Elks Lodge

Cadillac Area Community Foundation

Cheboygan-Otsego-Presque Isle Great Start Collaborative/Literacy Hub Grant/MDE

Community Foundation for Northeast Michigan

Community Foundation for Oceana Youth Fun

Community Foundation for Oceana Grandma Pete Memorial Fund

Cwik Holly by Golly Fund of the Otsego Community Foundation

Deerfield Computer Associates Otsego Community Foundation

Dollar General Literacy Foundation

Friends of the Otsego County Library

Grand Traverse Elks Lodge

Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation (GTRCF): Campbell Endowment

GTRCF: Elk Rapids Area Community Endowment

GTRCF: Elk Rapids Area Education Endowment

GTRCF: Genuine Leelanau Charitable Endowment

GTRCF: Kingsley Community Foundation

GTRCF: Suttons Bay Bingham Endowment

GTRCF: Benzie YAC

GTRCF: Grand Traverse YAC

GTRCF: Kalkaska YAC

GTRCF: Leelanau YAC

Great Lakes Energy People Fund

Hardman Construction Fund

Hees Family Foundation of the Otsego Community Foundation

Hestia Women's Giving Circle

Immaculate Conception Church

Kiwanis Club of Gaylord Foundation

Just Give

Lake County Community Foundation

# Grants and Grantors (cont.)

Leelanau Parenting Communities

Leelanau Township Community Foundation

Leelanau Township Community Foundation Youth Advisory Council

Leland Public Schools

Leland Women's Civic Club

Livonia Elks Lodge

Ludington Area Schools

Mancelona United Methodist Women

Manistee County Community Foundation

Manistee County Community Foundation -The Doug Schlaff Youth Fund

Muskegon Elks Lodge

Northwest Community Action Agency (NWCAA)

Optimist Youth Foundation of Traverse City

Otsego Community Foundation

Otsego County United Way

Patchwork Ministries

Pennies From Heaven Foundation

Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation

Steve and Loree Potash Family Foundation

Precision Cares

Robet Foundation

Barbara and Frank Rock Family Foundation of the Otsego Community Foundation

Rotary Charities of Traverse City SEED Grant

Rotary Club of Traverse City Sunrise Foundation

Straits Area Community Foundation  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Traverse City Elks Lodge

Traverse City Optimist Youth Club

VMware

Westshore ISD Great Start Collaborative

Wexford-Missaukee-Manistee ISD Great Start Collaborative

Women's Giving Circle Cadillac Area Community Foundation

Women's Giving Circle for Presque Isle and Montmorency

Youth Fund of the Otsego Community Foundation

Zonta Club of Traverse City



# Thank You from the Board!



**Thank you ALL for your time, treasure, and talent!  
We could not have come this far without you!**

**Gratefully, the PoWeR! Book Bags Board**

*Kara Gregory, Founder and Executive Director*

*Leslie McInerney, Treasurer*

*Karla Gerds, Secretary*

*Aimee Lehmann, Communications Chair*

*Sue Smith, Fundraising Chair*

*Penny Campo-Pierce, Volunteer Coordinator*

# Community Endorsements

*"When the kids receive their books here at the WIC office they immediately sit down and begin going through the pages or take the book to their parent to have them read aloud. The books we provide help to encourage active parenting and positive interactions between parents and their children.... The families we serve in the WIC program often struggle to pay their bills and provide food for their families. Books are an expensive luxury many of our families cannot afford. The PowerBook Bag program provides quality, age-appropriate books to families who would usually not be able to afford them. Thank you for providing this amazing service to our families."*

*-- Elise, WIC Coordinator, District Health Department #10*

*"I believe that the communication and bond that's nurtured when parents and children interact with literacy and play materials creates a lasting impact on both the child and the community! I truly believe in our mission!"*

*-- Beth, Northern Region Coordinator*



*"Reading demands thinking AND learning. PoWer! Book Bags helps to make that available for ALL children. That's why I volunteer."*

*-- Guy, Volunteer*

*"The families in MIHP are truly appreciative of Power Book Bag books. I wholeheartedly believe it has increased parents' awareness and the importance of social/emotional interaction as well as assisting their infant/toddler with communication skills and learning. The kids look so forward to choosing a book as they know when I come I have the choice in my bag. It's so adorable when they want to look into my bag for books because they know and are excited to receive a new book!!..."*

*Some of the parents comments are:*

*"We got a bookshelf for the books. This is such an awesome program".*

*"It's our routine at night after his bath. He picks the book".*

*"Thank you for the book. We really like them!"*

*--Maryellen, MIHP Social Worker, Kalkaska, District Health Department #10*

