

# Adopt A Classroom.org<sup>®</sup>

20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

## Annual Report 2018



### 20 Years of Making a Difference in Education



**200,000**  
Classrooms  
Adopted



**4.5 Million**  
Students  
Supported



**50 States**  
& U.S.  
Territories



**\$36 Million**  
Raised

# From the Executive Director



In 2018, AdoptAClassroom.org celebrated its 20th Anniversary and laid the groundwork for the next 20 years by introducing an updated mission statement:

***“Advancing equity in education. Powering today’s classrooms to prepare tomorrow’s graduates.”***

To better fulfill that mission, we launched an entirely new technology platform and website which enabled us to provide both teachers and donors with new, more effective and flexible ways to support education:

- **Teacher Program:** Our new website made our traditional crowdfunding program for teachers easier to use for both teachers and donors (p. 3).
- **Spotlight Funds:** Our new focused funds created a way for donors to “fund a passion,” and provided teachers with a way to access funding through AdoptAClassroom.org that does not involve traditional crowdfunding (p. 4-5).
- **Disaster Relief:** New technology enabled us to respond quickly and effectively to connect donors with teachers and students in need following the devastating hurricanes of 2017 (p. 6).
- **Peer-to-Peer and Team Fundraising Tools:** New systems made it possible for donors like Yiran, who raised nearly \$5,000 for our Highest-Need Fund by hiking the Pacific Crest Trail, to create personal fundraising campaigns (p. 4).

Looking ahead to 2019, our investment in technology will also enable us to launch a new program to provide fundraising support to school principals and administrators. The AdoptAClassroom.org **School Program** will enable donors to support larger, school-wide projects that can have a transformative and lasting impact on education for many students (p. 7).

With your support, we will continue to “think bigger” about how we can advance equity in education by supporting teachers, students, and schools across the U.S.

**Thank You,**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann Ruhr Pifer".

**Ann Ruhr Pifer, Executive Director**

## 2017-2018 School Year

**9,081**  
Classrooms  
Adopted

**227,000**  
Students  
Supported

**\$2.6 Million**  
Raised

# Teacher Program



Teacher Lance Madzey (right) with a former student, cinematographer Lucas Lee Graham

Connecting individual donors with individual teachers to provide needed classroom supplies is what AdoptAClassroom.org was created to do twenty years ago. It remains at the core of what we do. Here is why the AdoptAClassroom.org model is still the preferred crowdfunding option by many teachers and donors today:

- **We give teachers flexibility and discretion.** Teachers have one year to spend each donation on whatever resources they need for their classrooms. We believe that teachers know best what their students need, and this flexibility enables teachers to meet the changing needs of their students.
- **We give donors full transparency, accountability, and security so they have confidence that their donation is used appropriately.** Teachers receive donations in the form of online credit to shop on our e-commerce market place of educational product vendors. When a teacher makes a purchase, their donor receives an email listing exactly how their money was spent.
- **We connect teachers with funding sources beyond their local communities.** Registering on AdoptAClassroom.org connects teachers not just with individual donors in their community, but also donors across the country, small and medium-sized businesses, and corporate sponsors. Registered teachers are also eligible to apply for classroom grants from our Spotlight Funds (p. 4-5) and Disaster Relief Funds (p. 6).

Flexibility, transparency, accountability, and national reach have been hallmarks of our Teacher Program for more than 20 years, and these same qualities will continue to set our classic crowdfunding program apart from the “rest of the crowd” for the next 20 years.

## The Path to Hollywood Starts in the Classroom

Wyoming film production teacher Lance Madzey raised more than \$17,800 with AdoptAClassroom.org for new technology equipment. More than a dozen former students credit Lance's class for their success and have gone on to work on popular films and television series such as “Orange Is the New Black,” “The Walking Dead,” “Interstellar,” and more.

*“I was blown away by the generosity of so many,” Lance said. “Everyone who donated should know they played a part in providing everything my students need to tell whatever stories they can dream up.”*

# Spotlight Funds



In fiscal year 2018 we completed our first full year of our new Spotlight Fund program. We created these new funds to give both teachers and donors new options for funding, because our basic crowdfunding model is not the right fit for everyone.

## How Does It Work?

Donors and sponsors contribute to Spotlight Funds over the course of the year. AdoptAClassroom.org solicits applications for each individual fund from teachers who are registered on our site. Our staff review these applications and select grantees based on the merit of the applications, with priority given to teachers working in Title I schools. In this way, AdoptAClassroom.org is better able to direct donor funds to where they are needed most and where they will be put to best use.

## Our Spotlight Funds:

### Highest-Need fund

Supports classrooms in the highest-poverty schools across the country.

**296 Classrooms Funded**

### Inclusive Classroom fund

Supports teachers' work to foster inclusivity and accessibility of all types in the classroom.

**42 Classrooms Funded**

### New Teacher fund

Supports teachers in the first three years of their careers, when many struggle to equip their classrooms.

**40 Classrooms Funded**

### STEM fund

Supports teachers in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math to get the materials they need to teach.

**28 Classrooms Funded**

### Arts fund

Supports teachers of visual, musical, and performing arts.

**22 Classrooms Funded**





## A Teacher's Story: Inclusive Classroom Fund

*"When I applied for this grant, I never expected I would be selected! Overall, the value represented approximately twenty years of my classroom budgets.*

*I purchased classroom library sets on different cultures, family structures, and abilities so my students can read stories about other kids who are like them. Seeing their own life experience on the page not only engages my kids, but also tells them their stories have value.*

*I feel like thank you is not enough. Donors to this fund validated my sense that I'm on the right page with these children."*

Janice Pack  
Spotlight Fund Recipient  
Kindergarten Teacher



## A Donor's Story: Highest-Need Fund

In May 2018, Yiran embarked on the Pacific Crest Trail to raise awareness for classrooms that need our help. By the end of his journey, he had raised nearly \$5,000 for classrooms across the country that need it most as part of the **Highest-Need Fund**. Donations came from Yiran's friends and family who were inspired by his dedication.

*"My high school math teacher instilled a love of math that allowed me to pursue a career in engineering," Yiran said. "I still use the fundamentals he taught me to this day. For me, early childhood education is the most important way for a child to experience a full range of opportunities in life. AdoptAClassroom.org does a fantastic job of helping our teachers who have to spend \$740 on average per year out of their own pockets."*

**If you would like to start a fundraiser like Yiran, you can do so for any of our Spotlight Funds. Please visit the "Ways to Give" section of our website, or contact us at [info@adoptaclassroom.org](mailto:info@adoptaclassroom.org)**

# Disaster Relief



Photo from school affected by Hurricane Maria

In 2018, AdoptAClassroom.org became more active in disaster relief for classrooms around the country. When three major hurricanes hit the U.S. in 2017, we learned that we are uniquely positioned to provide effective support to schools and teachers affected by disaster. Why? Our new technology enabled us to react quickly, providing donors with an immediate way to contribute. Our deliberate approach to evaluating need among our nationwide network of teachers enabled us to distribute funds in a targeted manner to where they were needed most. Finally, the flexibility that we give teachers to spend their funds on exactly what they need, when they need it, over the course of one year ensures that donor contributions are spent in the best possible way to benefit students.

Over the past year, AdoptAClassroom.org raised \$88,630 for Disaster Relief Funds, bringing relief and hope to 277 classrooms, teachers, and students, many of whom lost everything.

**Hurricane  
Harvey Fund**  
**\$52,440 Raised**

**Hurricane  
Irma Fund**  
**\$16,190 Raised**

**Hurricane  
Maria Fund**  
**\$20,000 Raised**

## Hurricane Maria Fund

Hurricane Maria presented a unique challenge for us due to the disruption of communications networks in Puerto Rico and uncertainty about which schools would reopen in the fall. So we waited until schools reopened and went in person to visit schools and evaluate needs.

With funds from the Hurricane Maria Fund, and the support of our corporate sponsor OOLY, we were able to adopt all of the teachers at two schools in Ponce, P.R. When Maria hit, the schools' teachers lost most of the classroom supplies that they had purchased over many years.

*"Teachers here spend so much of their own money so that students can have the things they need to learn,"* said teacher William Toledo.

*"I spend about \$1,000 of my own money every year. One year later, none of us have been able to replace what we lost in Maria. The support from AdoptAClassroom.org will make a really big difference for us and for our students."*



Executive Director Ann Pifer speaking with teachers at Escuela Sor Isolina Ferre

# School Program NEW



Dr. Ann Rice with students at Ute V Perkins Elementary

## School Program Launching in 2019

We are excited to announce the launch of our new program which will make the fundraising tools that we have offered to teachers available to principals and administrators at public and private schools across the country.

A range of factors led us to develop this new program piloted in 2018:

- Many innovative school principals today are seeking funding for larger, school-wide projects to improve the learning environment for students.
- Many teachers desperately need new technology for their classrooms, but these purchases need to be done at the school level rather than by individual teachers to be most effective and efficient.
- Many donors are interested in funding larger, more transformative projects that will have a lasting impact on K-12 education in their communities.

Watch your inbox for more information or contact [info@adoptaclassroom.org](mailto:info@adoptaclassroom.org) if you would like to learn more.

## One Donor's Ability to Transform Five Schools In Need

Dr. Ann Rice (pictured here and above), a lifelong educator, asked principals in her community what they needed most. Their answer? Computers and related software to support classroom learning, and to ensure that the students in this remote, rural community can achieve the level of computer literacy needed to succeed in high school, college, and beyond.

Through her foundation, Project GET SMART, Dr. Rice approached AdoptAClassroom.org to ask if we could connect her funding with appropriate vendors and the principals of each of the schools in the community. Through this partnership, thousands of Chromebooks and supporting software were purchased for these schools. Principals and teachers say that the gift has completely transformed learning at the schools and increased student engagement.

This experience showed us how we could enable donors to make larger, more transformative investments in schools, and how we could help schools raise funds for larger projects that can have a broader and longer-lasting impact on student learning. Our new School Program grew out of this experience.





# Our Corporate Partners



Shown: Award-winning artist and activist Common during check presentation to P.S. 111 in New York City

## Burlington Supports Teachers Across the Nation

In celebration of their 70 new stores opened in 2018, the off-price retailer adopted 70 local elementary schools in communities across the country. Each school received \$10,000, divided equally among their teachers, to purchase classroom supplies. Thanks to Burlington, more than 75,000 students received the tools they need to learn and succeed in school.



## Dr. Seuss Day brought more than fun!

Northend Elementary School got a big surprise on March 2, 2018. The new local Burlington store presented the New Britain, CT school with \$10,000 for classroom supplies.

## A special Thanks to our 2018 Sponsors:





## Our Team



**Ann Pifer**  
Executive Director

**Carolyn Aberman**  
EVP Corporate  
Partnerships

**Chuck Stroud**  
Director of Finance  
& Administration

**Peter Erpenbach**  
Finance &  
Operations  
Associate

**Ryan Jordan**  
Director of Programs  
& Technology

**Laura Skubic**  
Program Manager  
School & District  
Outreach

**Melissa Hruza**  
Director of Marketing  
& Corporate  
Sponsorships

**Ezra Horton**  
Program  
Associate

**Austin Hagle**  
Program Coordinator  
Teacher Services

**Devon Karbowski**  
Communications  
Associate

**Sarah Fowler**  
Assistant Account  
Manager

**Travis Wycislak**  
Graphic Designer

## Our Board of Directors\*



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Strother Communications  
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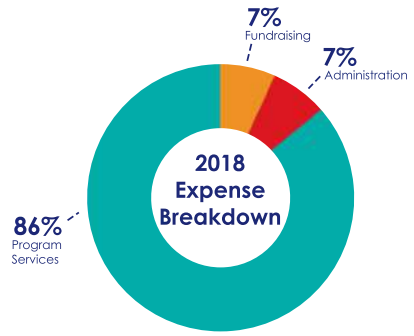
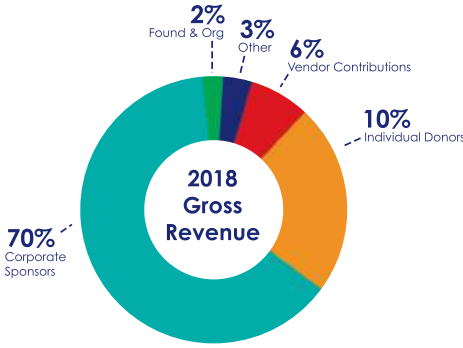
**Martha Phelps**  
Counsel,  
Davis, Wright Tremain

**Scott Pansky**  
Senior Partner &  
Co-Founder  
Allison+Partners

**Ryan Vernosh**  
Principal  
Maxfield  
Elementary School,  
St. Paul, MN

# 2018 Financials

Information based on FY 2018 and FY 2017 audited financial statements



Balance Sheet	2018 Actuals	2017 Actuals
Cash and Equivalents	\$2,214,275	\$2,383,311
Accounts Receivable	\$205,140	\$88,600
Other Assets	\$541,535	\$527,744
Property and Equipment, Net	\$766,819	\$848,736
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$3,727,769</b>	<b>\$3,848,391</b>
Accounts Payable	\$195,798	\$114,974
Accrued Expenses	\$20,258	\$20,258
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$216,056</b>	<b>\$135,232</b>
Net Assets, Unrestricted	\$1,053,605	\$1,364,280
Net Assets, Temporarily Restricted	\$1,916,573	\$1,821,135
Net Assets, Permanently Restricted	\$541,535	\$527,744
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$3,511,713</b>	<b>\$3,713,159</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	<b>\$3,727,769</b>	<b>\$3,848,391</b>

## Statements of Activities

Support & Revenue		
Contributions, Grants & General Public	\$865,707	\$1,335,455
Investment Income	\$14,321	\$4,225
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	\$3,120,582	\$2,561,184
<b>Total Support &amp; Revenue</b>	<b>\$4,000,610</b>	<b>\$3,900,864</b>
Expenses		
Program Services	\$3,716,984	\$3,294,665
Fundraising	\$281,692	\$262,731
Administration & Management	\$312,609	\$225,914
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$4,311,285</b>	<b>\$3,783,310</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>(\$310,675)</b>	<b>\$117,554</b>
Net Assets, Beginning of the Year	\$1,364,280	\$1,246,726
Net Assets, End of Year	\$1,053,605	\$1,364,280



GuideStar awarded AdoptAClassroom.org with the Silver Seal of Transparency.



Charity Navigator awarded AdoptAClassroom.org its highest possible rating of 4 stars for the seventh consecutive year.



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