



Annual Report 2020  
 Adopt A Classroom.org<sup>®</sup>

Advancing equity in education,  
one classroom at a time.

# A Note from the Executive Director

“Challenging” is the word that everyone is using to describe the past year in education, in the nonprofit sector, and in the world as a whole.

At AdoptAClassroom.org, we found that we were in the right place, at the right time, and equipped with the right tools, to respond to the events and issues of the past year. In the face of these challenges, we not only survived, but had our best, most impactful year ever. Why? Because the challenges of the past year highlighted what we have been doing right all along.

- **A focus on equity:** COVID-19 revealed glaring inequities in education as students of color in high-needs communities were disproportionately impacted. AdoptAClassroom.org was already focused on supporting teachers and students in high-needs schools. Our existing relationships with leaders in some of the highest-needs districts in the country allowed us to quickly deploy resources to where they were needed most. The end result was that 86% of the 33,000+ classrooms adopted were high-needs this year ([Page 3](#)).
- **Agile, responsive programs:** Our experience working with schools following natural disasters positioned us well to respond in 2020. We quickly launched the *COVID-19 Relief Fund for Schools and Teachers* in March, 2020 reaching 46,000 students in 48 states ([Page 5](#)). When teachers were asking for more diverse books and support for students of color, we created the *Racial Equity in Schools Fund* in June, 2020 and supported 574 classrooms nationwide ([Page 9](#)). Our ready network of partners and advisors quickly informed and guided the design, launch, and continuing evolution of these new programs.
- **Leveraging technology:** Technology is our “superpower.” Previous investment in our technology made our successful support of classrooms in 2020 possible. It enabled us to seamlessly pivot to remote work arrangements; to quickly adapt to new ways of serving teachers and schools as they shifted to remote learning; and to continue to improve our technology infrastructure to better meet the needs of teachers and donors.

Our nonprofit model and experience supporting educators during disasters meant we already had the toolkit to be there for teachers and schools. We delivered critical support when teachers needed it most. Ultimately, you made this possible. In 2020 we saw an increase in donations from individuals, businesses, and corporate sponsors. AdoptAClassroom.org was showcased on the annual “CNN Heroes” television special in December, 2020 featuring nonprofits making the biggest impact in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our work together has been nationally recognized as some of the most vital relief efforts accomplished during 2020.

I look forward to working with you during the coming school year. Together we can create a world where every child has the school supplies they deserve to succeed in school.



Ann Pifer, Executive Director



# Teachers Are Spending More Than Ever

2020 Teacher Spending Survey



\$745

the average cost of teaching during 2020.



70%

of teachers delivered learning supplies by hand or mail to students.



45%

of teachers spent more in response to distance learning.



*"I have spent many hours during the pandemic tracking down funding sources, identifying students who lack access to books, ordering books, and personally delivering them to students' homes. The joy of seeing students watch out their window for my arrival has been a highlight of the past few months."*

- Kirsten, Teacher in Illinois



# We Adopted More Classrooms Than Ever Before

2019-2020 School Year at a Glance



**33,326**  
Classrooms  
Adopted



**555,000**  
Students  
Supported



**86%**  
of Adopted Classrooms  
were High-Needs



**40,000**  
AdoptAClassroom.org  
Orders Delivered



**#1 Order**  
PPE and disinfectant

COVID-19 shifted how teachers approach safety and health in the classroom. The number one category of school supply ordered on AdoptAClassroom.org during the 2020 back-to-school season was PPE and disinfectant. In prior years, teachers focused on buying learning supplies.

## Technology Makes It All Possible

Technology powers everything we do. As we ramped up to support more classrooms than ever before during the pandemic, we were able to do so because our technology allows us to scale efficiently. We know where each donation goes and how it is spent on classroom supplies. Your gift to AdoptAClassroom.org supports the technology maintenance and development that powers our mission.

**92% of classrooms have students whose families cannot afford school supplies.**



*What schools provide...*

**Educators fill the gap, spending an average of \$745 a year.**



*...what teachers add from their own funds.*

## How AdoptAClassroom.org Works:



**1.** Educators create a fundraising page or apply for a Spotlight Grant.



**2.** Donors give to a classroom, school, Spotlight Fund, or where it's needed most.



**3.** Educators receive funding in the form of an online credit to the AdoptAClassroom.org marketplace.



**4.** Educators can immediately order the items they need.



**5.** Donors receive updates about the impact they made.

**Together, we ensure students have the supplies they deserve to succeed.**

**Our Promise:** When you donate online to a teacher, 100% of your gift goes immediately in their AdoptAClassroom.org account so they can order supplies in our marketplace.



# Where Did The Funding Go?

*The Impact of the COVID-19 Fund*

Challenges created by the pandemic were unique to every school community. Throughout 2020 and into 2021, we coordinated with education leaders to identify areas of greatest need and the strongest solutions, from bridging the technology gap during distance learning to digital thermometers for temperature checks.

Our relief efforts reached 46,000 students in 48 states, with an emphasis on communities with great need in New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Boston.

## **New York, NY**

New York City Department of Education opened up nearly 100 enrichment centers throughout the city to address remote learning and childcare needs of essential workers. We deployed critical aid in the form of emergency grants for classroom supplies to support students at enrichment centers.

## **Los Angeles, CA**

School leaders immediately found there was a technology gap when students learned from home. We rush delivered laptops to students in the Watts neighborhood in South Los Angeles.

## **Boston, MA**

We delivered 100s of no-contact thermometers to schools in Boston to keep learning safe for students attending class in person. Thermometers were used for temperature checks to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

## **Chicago, IL**

In Chicago, schools set up technology pick-up stations where parents could receive laptops for their children. Educators handed out Chromebooks, a cost-efficient laptop, to parents who needed them.



**“Receiving this Chromebook will truly help my child finish his school year strong! I am very happy and grateful for this support.”**

**- Parent of Student in Chicago, IL**



# What Did Teachers Need?

*The Impact of the COVID-19 Fund*

COVID-19 rewrote the traditional school supply list. Educators overwhelmingly asked for personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies, and technology for distance learning.

How great was the need? Maria, a school social worker, was issued only one N-95 mask at the beginning of the pandemic. We sent her paper face masks and face masks with a transparent panel—key for communicating to students with disabilities. Without funding, many teachers would have had to pay out of pocket for something as simple as a face mask.



*"This school year I've already used \$40 in AdoptAClassroom.org funds to purchase face masks. I purchased cloth face masks and face masks with clear plastic windows. This is especially important for my students working on emotion identification—many of them are on the Autism spectrum."*

*- Maria, School Social Worker in Denver, CO*



# Thank You From Educators

The Impact of the COVID-19 Fund



*"You all have made enormous changes for the better in our school. The kids are so happy—learning and growing—due in large part to the help we received from AdoptAClassroom.org. Thank you so much."*

- Jenny, Arts Teacher in New York, NY

*"From the bottom of my heart, thank you for your support. As adults, we know that this is just a moment in time, and the challenges presented by COVID are temporary. But for my young students, these challenges are scary, never-ending, and all-consuming. Having the proper resources to meet their needs will make these challenges easier to bear for my students and for me."*



- Jennifer, 4th Grade Teacher in Akron, OH



*"Access to education totally stopped for many of our students when schools closed. The laptops you donated are absolutely critical for students in our community. We are extremely grateful for your generosity."*

- Luis, School Administrator in Los Angeles, CA

# Racial Equity in Schools Fund

**574**

**Classrooms  
Adopted**

**24,000**

**Students  
Impacted**

**12,000**

**Diverse Books  
Delivered**

In June 2020, we launched the Racial Equity in Schools Fund in response to a growing demand from educators for tools to better serve BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) students. We received an unprecedented number of grant applications—more than ever before.

Due to an outpouring of support, we funded 574 educators across the country who were championing initiatives in their schools to better support their students of color. Grant funding empowered educators with knowledge through professional development to eliminate racial biases, enriched classroom libraries with multicultural books, and more.

Founding Partner:

**Burlington**

**Fund Supported By:**

**ECMC**  
Foundation

**INNOCENT**  
CLASSROOM

**LEE & LOW BOOKS**



*"The Racial Equity in Schools Grant we received from AdoptAClassroom.org will benefit the Black students at our school because it will allow us to connect students [virtually] with a great representation of amazing local artists with different backgrounds, from culinary arts to music. We will be able to show our students that we have an amazing Black community that has so much to share, and so much to offer, and that we have so much to learn from. This funding will be super beneficial for all of us to keep learning and growing together."*

- Felicia, Teacher in Jersey City, NJ



*"To the donors of the Racial Equity in Schools Fund, thank you so much. Students of color, as well as their classmates, will come away from the learning that we're able to obtain from this grant much more knowledgeable, much more aware, and much more empathetic to the needs of others."*

- Monisha, Teacher in Jasper, AL

# Corporate Partners

## Burlington Impact

2020	<b>\$1,500,000+</b> Raised	<b>3,502</b> Classrooms Adopted	<b>87,550</b> Students Supported
All Time	<b>\$7,000,000+</b> Raised	<b>38,838</b> Classrooms Adopted	<b>1,000,000</b> Students Supported

During the 2020 back-to-school season, Burlington Stores raised \$1.5M+ to help K-12 teachers and their students get the learning tools and materials they needed this school year. Even in the midst of a global pandemic, Burlington's customers in all of their 730+ stores stepped up to support teachers at high-needs schools in their communities, by donating when they checked out. This is the fourth consecutive year Burlington Stores has partnered with AdoptAClassroom.org.

During a typical year, Burlington surprises teachers at selected schools with a donation during a school-wide assembly. That all had to change in 2020. When the pandemic hit, AdoptAClassroom.org helped transition from in-person school-wide events to virtual surprises during all-staff school video conferences, like this one:



*"The impact Burlington has had on my students and me has been immeasurable. It made my students feel equal, since they were all provided with the same, great quality school supplies."*

*- Karen, Middle School Teacher in Haverhill, MA*

**In 2020, Burlington became the Founding Sponsor of AdoptAClassroom.org's Racial Equity in Schools Fund. In addition to their in-store fundraiser, Burlington donated \$155,000 in honor of the 155th anniversary of Juneteenth. Learn more on Page 9.**

# Corporate Partners



**\$260,000+**  
Donated

**11**  
Schools  
Adopted

**5,808**  
Students  
Supported

In honor of World Teachers' Day, HTLF's 11 member banks each donated \$20,000 to a high-needs school in their community. An executive from each bank surprised the teachers at their bank's adopted school during a virtual staff meeting with news of their donation. HTLF's surprise donations brought immense joy and needed relief to educators who were working tirelessly to keep their students safe and engaged in their learning, during one of the most challenging school years ever.

HTLF encouraged employees to join their efforts with a fundraiser to increase their impact. 100 percent of employee donations went to the banks' adopted schools.



*"2020 has been one of the most insane and bizarre years that anyone has ever taught in. We have been so supported by families, administration, and the community as a whole. With that said, it has also been one of the most tumultuous times in schools. We are faced with incredibly difficult decisions and constant change. This donation will allow us to serve our students a little easier, and means we are able to focus on getting the extra things that we would not have otherwise."*

- Denise, Instructional Specialist  
in Brooklyn Park, MN

# Corporate Partners



**\$500,000+**  
Donated

**1,200**  
Classrooms  
Adopted

**30,000**  
Students  
Supported

In honor of Teacher Appreciation Week 2020, Puffs started a movement to thank teachers. During their #PuffsLovesTeachers campaign, Puffs invited the general public to customize a Mad-Lib-style poem for their favorite teachers. The poems recognized teachers for their dedication and hard work.



Nate Berkus and his daughter joined in on the fun to thank their favorite teacher with a #PuffsLovesTeachers poem.

In conjunction with the campaign, Puffs donated \$500,000 to AdoptAClassroom.org, flash funding 1,200 classrooms at high-needs schools across the country. It was a big surprise for teachers, at a time when they needed help more than ever before.



**Nicole Valiente Moran**  
@redlandreads

@Puffs thank you for your generous donation via @Adopt\_classroom! The funds will be used to purchase new books that will expose our students to diverse characters and cultures while instilling a love for reading. #puffslvesteachers



**Shauntrell Leaks**  
@ShauntrellLeaks

Thanks @Adopt\_classroom and @Puffs for the kind donation to my classroom! It was a pleasant surprise 🥰🎁👍. #PuffsLovesTeachers



**Leah Alix**  
@ArtWithMrsAlix

HUGE shout out to @Puffs for their generous donation to my amazing young #art #students! Your gift will affect close to 600 children in grades K-6th grade! I cannot thank you enough! #PuffsLovesTeachers

# Corporate Partners



**\$30,000+**  
Donated

**100**  
Classrooms  
Adopted

**2,500**  
Students  
Supported

VTech surprised 100 Pre-K teachers in high-needs schools with \$250 each on AdoptAClassroom.org. During a year when teachers have been spending more than ever before on supplies to support remote teaching and learning, and to keep themselves and their students safe in the classroom, VTech provided much-needed funding to Pre-K classrooms across the country.

Norma in Hemet, CA is one of the Pre-K teachers we surprised with funds from VTech.

**Watch her surprise below.**



*"Thank you VTech for adopting my classroom so we can get all the supplies and materials that we need. This will make a big difference, especially with parents losing employment—purchasing materials for their children will be one less thing they need to worry about."*

*- Tamrah, Pre-K Teacher in Chicago, IL*

# Corporate Partners

**Lenovo** Impact

**\$46,500+**  
Donated

**13**  
Classrooms  
Adopted

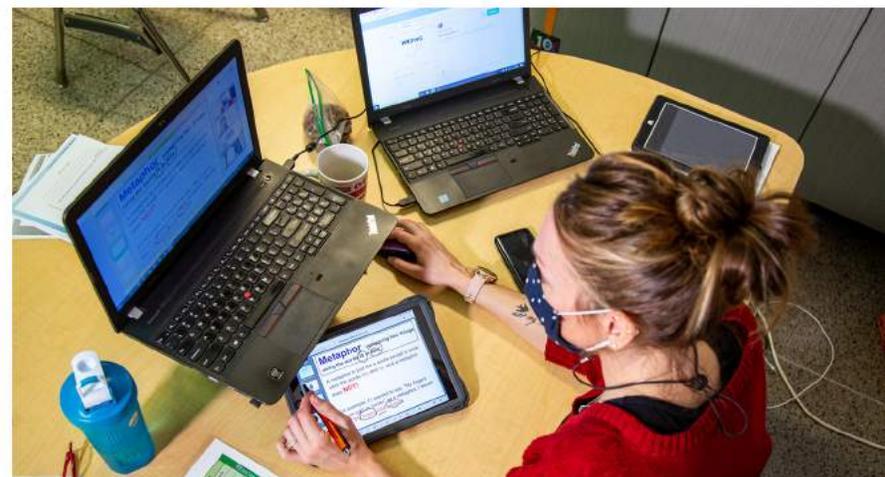
**325**  
Students  
Supported

During the 2020 back-to-school season, Lenovo launched the Lenovo Teacher Giveaway, a monthly sweepstakes program to support teachers across the country. Throughout the year, the public can nominate PreK-12 teachers for the chance to win a \$1,000 grant on AdoptAClassroom.org to purchase school supplies. At the close of the sweepstakes in September 2021, one teacher will win the grand prize, a \$2,500 grant on AdoptAClassroom.org and a Lenovo notebook computer of their choice.



*"Wow! What an awesome giveaway! These funds will help my students who are all learning from home. I would like to buy them books and other materials they may need while distance learning. Thank you so much for this gift!"*

*- Irene, Kindergarten Teacher in Las Vegas, NV*



# Corporate Partners



**\$50,000+**

Donated

**24**

Classrooms  
Adopted

**3**

Schools  
Adopted

**2,184**

Students  
Supported

Staples funded STEM education in 24 classrooms across the nation, giving teachers and students access to the resources they needed for STEM curriculum. STEM is an educational approach that integrates science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. STEM education has become increasingly important in preparing our youth for jobs of the future, but our schools are not equipped to meet the demand. Shrinking school budgets make necessary STEM tools and materials, especially big-ticket technology items, unobtainable for many teachers and schools.

By providing teachers with the resources and supplies they needed to teach STEM, Staples helped ensure more of our nation's students will be better prepared for twenty-first century jobs.

Staples also supported schools in three different school districts with \$5,000 each, so they could purchase the resources and supplies they needed for distance learning, and to keep staff and students safe during COVID-19.



*"Most of my students enter my classroom below grade level in both reading and math. Providing daily exposure to STEM activities has had a massive impact on student outcomes. By the end of the school year, my students grow an average of two grade levels, with some students growing as many as three."*

- Arianna, 3rd Grade Teacher in Richmond, VA

*"This school year has been the most challenging in my 24 years in education. We have had to think 'outside the box' with everything we do in creating a positive, worthwhile learning experience for our students. The donation from Staples truly helps us purchase those items that are more than just pencils. Thank you!"*

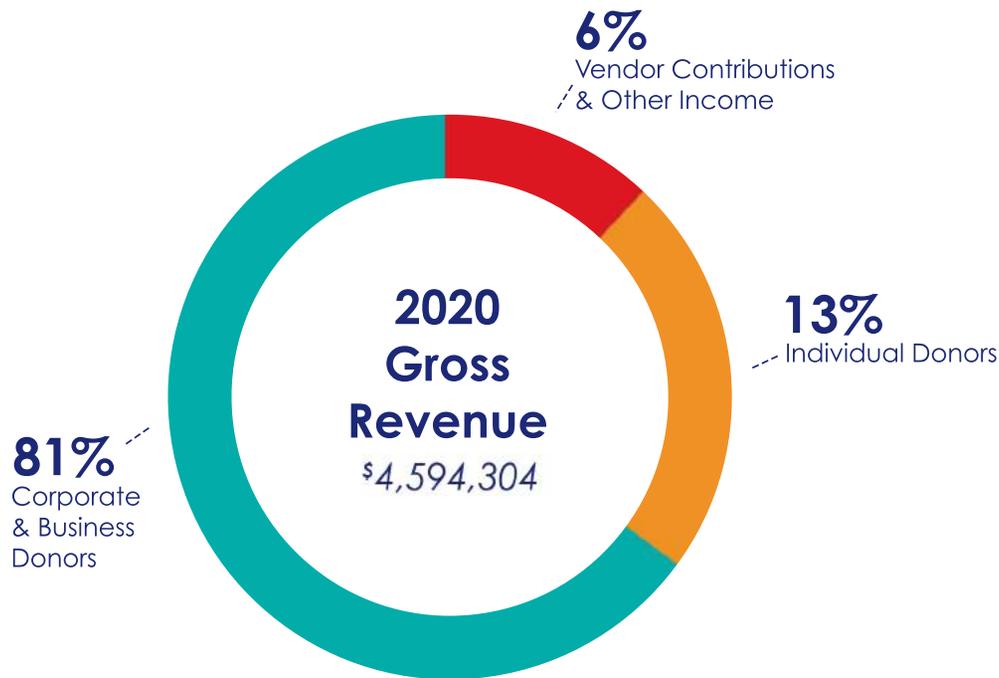


- Traci, Principal in Burlington, NC

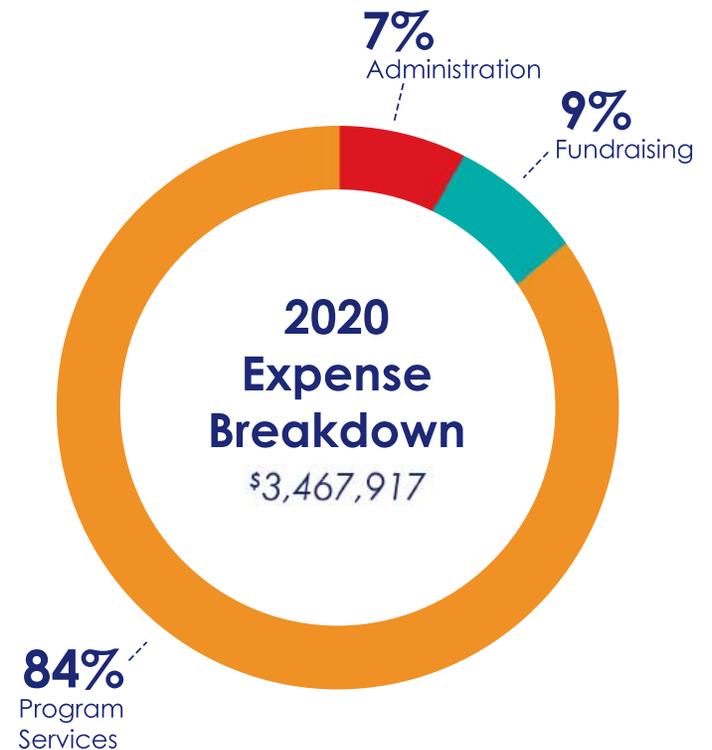
# 2020 Financial Summary

Full, audited financial statements are available on our website

## BREAKDOWN OF GROSS REVENUE



## BREAKDOWN OF OPERATIONS EXPENSES



GuideStar awarded AdoptAClassroom.org with the highest possible rating Platinum Seal of Transparency.



Charity Navigator awarded AdoptAClassroom.org the highest possible rating of 4 stars for ten consecutive years.

# AdoptAClassroom.org Honor Roll

January 2020 - December 2020

## \$1,000 or more

Agnes Hsu  
Alpine Testing Solutions, Inc. \*  
Ami Anderson \*  
Ann Whitley \*  
Badcock Home Furniture  
& More Of Orange Park  
Benjamin And Karen Malave \*  
Burgis Holdings Llc  
Century Gold LLC \*  
Cheryl Mandala  
Dermalogica  
Emilie Kintner  
Eric Haaser †  
Erik Huckle \*  
Greg And Julie Marsh \*  
Heatherann Dawson \*  
Jai Kim \*  
Janet Rivas \*  
Jennifer Swanson \* †  
Judith Pollack \*  
Kevin Debbs †  
Lane Albanese \*  
Laura Chen  
Law Offices of Jeffrey L. Baxter, P.A. \*  
Lawless French \*  
Leslie O'Loughlin \* †  
Martha Phelps  
Maryanne Young  
Paige Winebarger \*  
Paula Patineau  
Randy Doroff  
Richard Huckle \*

Ronald James Pozzi \*  
Rouse Family Foundation \*  
Salma Ibrahim  
Steve Noll  
Tony Marchese  
Zhong Gao

## \$999 - \$500

Aaron Pilcher \*  
Alexia Leib \*  
Alison Arnold  
Anthony Phillips  
Bill Blackstone  
Chuck & Jill Stroud \*  
Chris Pahl \*  
Courtney Bowers \*  
Coyote Logistics  
Deborah Dagang \*  
Diana Podol  
Diana Vowels  
Ellen Peloquin \*  
Gabriel Perloe \*  
Hailey Balestra-Foster  
Harsh Patel  
Heidemarie Maierhofer \*  
Jacquilyn Cleary  
Janet & Gerald Mckinney  
Jitender Singh  
Jonathan Tan \*  
Julie Vaello \*  
Justin Sheehy  
Karen Dennis  
Karen Kochhar \*

## Monthly Giving | Denoted by †

Our monthly supporters have committed to education by giving on a recurring basis. Thank you for standing by our side every single month.

## Sustaining Giving | Denoted by \*

Our Sustaining Donors have chosen to make unrestricted gifts to AdoptAClassroom.org to support our team, our technology infrastructure, and to give us the flexibility to be nimble and responsive to changing circumstances in education.

# From Our Supporters



*"The uncertainty and volatility of the past year have made the inequality that exists in education access and resourcing even starker. Although many students are not in a physical classroom right now, the need to equip teachers with the right tools is greater than ever."*

- Sarah, Donor



*"I contributed because a lack of technology shouldn't be a reason kids can't participate in school. I also feel very fortunate at this time to be in a position where I can give a little back to those less fortunate during this pandemic."*

- Michael, Donor

# AdoptAClassroom.org Honor Roll

January 2020 - December 2020

Katrina Holliday \*  
Katty Chow \*  
Krishnan Coughran \*  
Learners Edge \*  
Leonard Roberts \*  
Lori Tritel  
Maria Holmes  
Megan Tingley \*  
Olivia & Gilles Bransbourg  
Paul And Sue Kilrain \*  
Rahoul Ghose \*  
Richelle Rice  
Robert Denham  
Sandra Backor  
Sarah Parks \*  
Sean Goodrich  
Sean Kelley \*  
Sent 4U Ministries  
Steve Sperber \*  
Teddí Maull  
Topsy Teacher  
Tom O'Donnell \*  
Tracey Taylor \*  
Trish King \*  
UKG  
Valerie Frost-Mckinley  
Veronica Enriquez \*  
Vincent Sawaya \*

**\$499 - \$250**

A M \*  
Alicia Ernsky \*  
Andrew Johnson \*  
Andrew Rippert \*  
Ann Badding \*  
Barbara Barkovich \*  
Carolyn And Mark Rose \*  
Catie Koraleski \*  
Christopher Kinzig  
Connor Laehn  
Corinne Kusa  
Cris Jacobs \*  
Dan Pettit \*  
David Yakobovitch  
Douglas Taylor \*  
Elizabeth Fry  
Elizabeth McGovern \*  
Elizabeth Schechter \*  
Elmehdi Elyadri \*  
Evan Sorett \*

F B Bilson \*  
Farmers Insurance - Jenna Isch  
Gregory Svorinich \*  
Holiday Travel Venture 1, LLC  
Jacqueline Gualtieri \*  
Jeannine Lonski  
Jenn Hankin  
Jennifer Blair  
Jennifer Shannon  
Jerry Burns  
Jessica Bahl  
Jessica Lynn Enterprises \*  
Jim Rustad \*  
John Bennetto  
John Starbuck \*  
Joseph Gagnepain \*  
Julie Krueger \*  
Karen Bouton  
Karen Campbell \*  
Kate O'Toole  
Kathleen Walker \*  
Kay Roach  
Kim Ruane \*  
Kyle Lewis \*  
Linda Chapin \*  
Lisa Knight  
Mark Graham \*  
Maureen Kelley \*  
Maureen Madden \*  
Michelle Ortez \*  
Nadia Chkinef \*  
Neal James \*  
Oneview Commerce Inc. \*  
Patricia King \*  
Peter Aylward \*  
Richard Booth \*  
Richard Wagner  
Russell Bixby  
Sara Niemczyk \*  
Scott Sadler  
Selina Ramirez \*  
Sharon Mueller  
Sheri Stoll \*  
Siddhartha Mukkamala \*  
Spectrio Finance Department \*  
Stat Anesthesia, Inc \*  
Steven Gerwe \*  
Sugarman & Susskind, Pa \*  
Tiara Nata  
Tom & Donna Avery Kigin \*  
William Strynkowski \*



*"Education is essential to everyone's path in life. Having great teachers and resources to grow young minds is vital to their development. It's a privilege to be supportive of AdoptAClassroom.org and their teachers."*

- Kevin, Donor



*"I gave because I had a great education growing up—incredible teachers, specialized courses, and all of the materials I needed to learn. Education is transformational, and it's heartbreaking for kids to lose that because of a circumstance so far outside of anyone's control. I'm ecstatic that AdoptAClassroom.org is able to best use my funds to reach the most vulnerable populations during this time."*

- Alexandria, Donor

# AdoptAClassroom.org Honor Roll

January 2020 - December 2020

## Corporate Sponsors



Strength.  
Insight.  
Growth.

and its member banks:



## Business Donors



## Vendor Partners



# Our Team

## Leadership Team

Ann Ruhr Pifer, Executive Director

Chuck Stroud, Chief Operating Officer & SVP of Finance

Carolyn Aberman, EVP, Corporate Sponsorships & Brand Marketing

Melissa Hruza, Director of Marketing & Corporate Sponsorships

Austin Hagle, Program Manager

## Staff

Alex Aberman, Account Director

Sarah Beam, Program Assistant

Kirsten Fedorowicz, Outreach & Marketing Assistant

Sarah Fowler, Account Manager

J Gold, Program Coordinator

Ezra Horton, Donor Communications Coordinator

Ryan Jordan, Technology Project Manager

Devon Karbowski, Marketing Manager

Zach Stoebner, Graphic Designers

Travis Wycislak, Graphic Designers

# Board of Directors

## Board Officers

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Founder & Principal,  
Jen Swanson LLC

Rahoul Ghose  
Chief Information Officer,  
ECMC Group

Matt Johnson, Vice Chair  
Director, Technology,  
West Monroe Partners

Erik Huckle  
Senior Product Manager,  
AI Platform, Sailpoint

Julie Krueger, Secretary  
Americas Staffing Director,  
Google

Jordan McGowan  
Former National Director of  
Business Development;  
Commercial & Corporate  
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U.S. Bank\*

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Vice President, Commercial  
Lender, Union Bank & Trust

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Marketing Officer,  
Strother Communications Group

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Cleveland Foundation

Neely Tamminga  
CEO, Distill

Ashley Gobert  
Management Consultant  
Vynamic, Healthcare

Ryan Vernosh  
Principal, Maxfield Elementary  
School

Jeff Gray  
Partner, PriceWaterhouseCoopers LLP



The background of the slide is a collage of various school supplies. In the top left, there are several bundles of colored pencils in various colors like blue, green, yellow, and red. Next to them is a pair of red-handled scissors and a pink eraser. A wooden ruler is positioned diagonally on the left side. In the top right, there is a blue folder and another set of colored pencils. On the right side, there is a watercolor palette with several colors. At the bottom left, there is a red folder, a pair of blue-handled scissors, and several erasers in yellow, orange, and blue. In the bottom center, there is a silver calculator with a digital display showing '12345678'. At the bottom right, there are three folders in red, green, and blue. A single yellow pencil is also visible on the right side.

**Since 1998,  
AdoptAClassroom.org  
has adopted 225,000 classrooms,  
serving 5.5 million students.**