



Loop It Up Savannah

Loop It Up Savannah 2020 Annual Report



Mindfulness Zone students jumping in front of their group painting shortly before Covid-19 Pandemic

In late 2019 and early 2020 we began to dig more deeply into our mission of addressing childhood trauma and early literacy in our student population.

The Mindfulness Zone Program, based on mindfulness practice, yoga, and expressive arts, continued at Juliette Low Elementary School where it had been launched in the fall semester of 2019. We collaborated with the school's behavior intervention program and served 50 students during the school day and 75 during the 21st Century after school yoga program. The fall of 2019 and early winter of 2020 showed fewer instances of challenging behavior at school, and increased instances in which students used techniques they had learned to calm themselves and feel in control of potentially overwhelming situations. Plans were made to implement school-wide mindfulness programming, including displaying artwork by the students about mindfulness techniques, establishing mindful corners in each classroom, and introducing monthly mindfulness practices with all staff and access to training materials.



Bank of America Volunteer with Mindfulness Zone student at Gadsden Elementary School

At Brock and Gadsden Elementary Schools we began to set up Mindfulness Zone spaces, and to co-create a vision for how the Program would be used at each school. We consulted with principals, assistant principals, counselors, school social workers, behavior specialists and teachers to design versions of the program that would best support the unique needs of each school. With the support of volunteers from Bank of America, students at Gadsden were able to create murals on the walls of the classroom that will become their dedicated Mindfulness Zone space.



We completed the construction of the Exploration Station at the West Broad YMCA Early Learning Center. This full classroom-sized space was dedicated to interactive group activities and set up for maximum flexibility, allowing a wide range of class sizes from very intimate to very large to take place in a single classroom. A carpeted library area, a very large work surface, easels, and easy access to materials were all part of the design. This classroom hosted art, music, and movement classes and a science and math learning area where materials were readily available to the children.



Looping Literacy Together volunteer reading to students at Otis J. Brock Elementary School

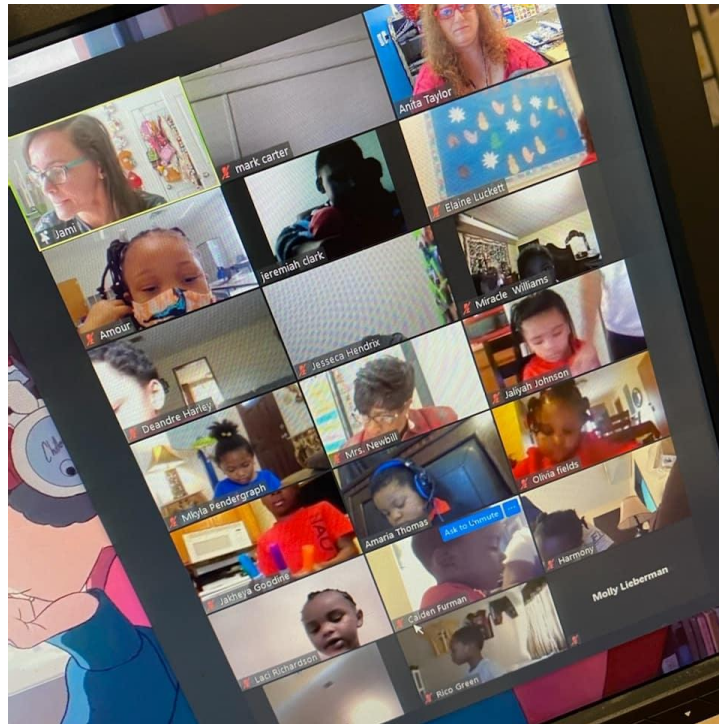
Our staff and many volunteers began another semester of Looping Literacy Together which included Weekly Reading Partnerships, Book Box Library projects, Music, Movement, and Art classes, and an interactive storytelling unit. The program uses literary, fine, and performing arts to offer different but complementary approaches to early literacy. The goal is to develop reading and writing skills from an early age and to encourage self-expression in both words and images.



Student receiving her first ArtSmart Activity Kit created in response to school closures

ArtSmart Activity Kits

By mid-March of 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic required us to make radical adjustments to normal operations. When our in-school, after-school, and community center programming was cancelled we pivoted to alternative ways of offering enrichment materials and programming to as many of our students as possible. Our staff spent much of April and May creating and distributing the ArtSmart Activity Kits that included art materials, worksheets, games and toys, mindfulness practice worksheets, 2020 census and music education workbooks, and age appropriate books in English and Spanish among other enrichment materials. Along with our Board of Directors diverse community partners including Mayor Van Johnson, the Savannah Fire Department, Metropolitan Rotary Club, Junior League of Savannah, Christ Episcopal and Isle of Hope Methodist Churches, PACK, Coastal GA Indicators Coalition, NY Life Insurance, The Savannah Music Festival, The Southern Palate and Forsyth Farmers' Market contributed funds, in-kind materials, and time to make this costly and labor intensive project possible. Normally volunteers would congregate at our office to assemble materials for special events, but per social distancing requirements all materials were bundled for pick up and assembly at individual homes. We distributed over 5000 kits between spring and late fall.



Virtual Learning Programs

Throughout fall of 2020 we piloted our virtual learning enrichment programs through a collaboration with ArtsNow at Heard and Marshpoint Elementary Schools. Through this collaboration we built upon our existing ArtSmart Kit program, and started packing bags with materials which corresponded to specific projects that we did with the students via zoom as part of the ArtsNow program, working with all of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades at Marshpoint and all of the Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades at Heard. The programs we did became the template for our Looping Literacy together at Home program, sharing a story or book and then doing a project based on that story.

We were also able to do a virtual version of our annual Whale Week program, sharing the book *Whale Alert*, and doing a painting project about the North Atlantic Right Whale with our students and the community via zoom.

We were pleased to participate in a city wide collaboration called RISE (Religious Institutions Supporting Education), which was born from a conversation between Mayor Van Johnson, Superintendent Dr. Ann Levett and a group of religious leaders about how religious organizations could support education throughout this challenging time for children and families. Loop It Up was pleased to provide scholarships for 15 students from Brock Elementary School to attend a daily program at St. Mary's Church in West Savannah. The scholarships made it possible for children recommended by the Principal and School Social Worker at Brock Elementary to spend their school days in a safe location with access to the internet and assistance with school work as well as hot meals throughout the Fall 2020 semester.



Amanda Meyer teaching in a Mindfulness Zone at Home video

By late summer it became clear that we would be dealing with Covid-19 for longer than initially anticipated. All our programming was to be adapted for virtual learning by means of Zoom Rooms in schools, virtual learning and community centers, or from home. With funding from Coastal Georgia Indicators Coalition/Resilient Georgia, Bank of America, International Paper, and Gulfstream we developed the Mindfulness Zone at Home curriculum and video lessons and the Mindfulness Zone at Home Tool Box. Each video lesson included a mindfulness practice, breathing exercises, yoga, the reading of a book and a simple art project which reflected and reinforced the story and concepts in the mindfulness exercises. Mindfulness Zone at Home Tool Boxes included mindfulness based activity materials and a student handbook. These will be distributed to 400 students in the program, beginning in early 2021.





Master storyteller Lillian Grant-Baptiste video session

We also developed the Looping Literacy Together at Home Program. Much of the original program required in person instruction but the unit with Master Storyteller Lillian Grant-Baptiste would be adaptable to distance learning. Beginning in early 2021 we will present storytelling videos accompanied by live online lessons with Loop It Up teaching staff. Project-specific kits that relate to the stories will be delivered to the students to ensure that the overall interactive nature of this program is maintained.

Notable 2020 Community Events: Truckloads of Food!

We were involved with many community responses to the Covid environment. Among them were food distribution events which provided hundreds of meals.

This was also a year where the Beloved Community arm of our mission was fully exercised. Most years this project is carried out quietly, providing aid to specific families in need in our community. This year closed schools and places of work meant that the numbers of families in need increased exponentially. We collaborated with community partners to bring food and other essential supplies to many area families in need.

We were also able to hold a fundraising campaign that made it possible for us to make donations to some area nonprofits doing some of the much needed work that supports our community. Among the recipients of donations from Loop It Up were:

- Emmaus House
- Savannah Undocumented Youth Alliance
- Shelter from the Rain
- West Broad YMCA
- Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity
- Wesley Community Centers
- CASA



Charlotte Brawner Welch donating copies of her book for ArtSmart kits

Individual, institutional, and corporate donations of funds, materials, and volunteer time demonstrated the good will of our supporters and the depth of their concern for the well-being of Savannah's children and families. We received thousands of new or lightly used books including large donations from local children's book authors and both public and private school libraries. We also received art and crafting materials, including paper and both drawing and painting materials.

In-Kind donors included:

Film Biz Recycling and Prop Shop
 Creative Approach
 Chatham County Recycling Center
 Kristy Edenfield
 Savannah Fire Department
 Savannah Police Department
 Savannah Music Festival
 SCAD
 Local authors Emily Slusher and Charlotte Welch Brawner
 One Hundred Children's Foundation
 St. Andrews School
 Hubert Middle School
 Live Oak Library

Trinity Church offered its fellowship hall to serve as our headquarters for storing materials and constructing ArtSmart kits and Mindfulness Zone at Home Tool Boxes in a spacious, socially distanced environment.

2020 FUNDING

2020 Annual Campaign	\$49,500
Other Fundraising Campaigns	\$25,260
Grants	\$52,200
Institutional Support*	\$28,650
Corporate Donations	\$ 7,110
Unrestricted Individual Donations	\$32,575
Friends of Loop It Up	\$ 7,110
2021 Annual Campaign (Deferred Income)	\$10,500

*Institutional Support includes donations from other nonprofits, houses of worship, community service organizations, and fraternities.

Funders:

A-Town Get Down Music Festival
Bank of America
Black Voters Matter
Chatham County Board of Education
Chatham County Juvenile Court
City of Savannah
Coastal Georgia Indicators Coalition/Pittulloch
Foundation
Downtown Savannah Neighborhood
Association
Emerging Leaders Committee
Georgia Council for the Arts
Gulfstream
Heritage Bank
International Paper
Junior League of Savannah
Laney Contemporary
Mary Lane Morrison Foundation
Metropolitan Savannah Rotary Club
One Hundred Children's Foundation
Sentient Bean

2020 Loop It Up Savannah at a Glance:

- 5000+ ArtSmart Activity Kits were created
- 200 Volunteers helped us with packing and delivering materials
- 748 Generous donations were received during the course of the year
- We were well on our way to the goal of raising \$50,000 for 2021 during our Annual Campaign

Looking Ahead to 2021

Since it will not be possible to hold our Soup It Up for Loop It Up annual celebration our entire 2021 Annual Campaign will be held online and through the mail.

Our 2021 focus will be on the following programs:

- Expanding the Mindfulness Zone Program to more schools within and beyond our district
- Developing Mindfulness Zone for Early Learners
- Expanding the Looping Literacy Together Program
- Developing curriculum for the USDA Farm to School grant that we have received in partnership with SCCPSS Nutrition Department, SUGA, and Transport Studio

We also hope to address the needs of our growing organization. This will include:

- Developing our first long-term strategic plan
- Upgrading our donor database and our accounting software
- Creating a Loop It Up Program Manager position, much needed by our growing organization