



## WHO WE ARE

### Our Mission

A 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded in 2005, the Literary Society of the Southwest celebrates contemporary literature and authors and promotes the cause of literacy within Arizona.

### Our Vision

Bring the joy and lifelong benefits of reading to all!

## WHAT WE DO AND WHAT MAKES US UNIQUE

We provide meaningful, remarkable experiences with highly acclaimed, award-winning authors, create awareness and a deeper connection to the literacy needs of Arizona, and award grants to literacy programs in our community. The organization is governed, managed, and operated by a dedicated volunteer Board, we offer a rare and distinctive space for friendship, dialogue, and discourse over books spanning an array of genres, and our membership donations are 100% tax deductible.

### Membership:

A \$400 tax deductible donation is required for membership each season, allowing members to attend our premier Author Luncheons while enjoying a collection of carefully selected books with discussions from each author and supporting grants to literacy organizations in Arizona. Members have the option to attend the season's luncheons in Phoenix/Paradise Valley, Scottsdale, or Tucson locations.

### Author Luncheons:

Each season is composed of a series of meaningful, intimate, curated luncheons featuring an author's presentation and discussion with a unique perspective. The authors share their journeys and personal insights, transporting the experience beyond any standard author reading event. The Literary Society has proudly hosted more than 90 gifted and celebrated authors. The Society hosts five outstanding authors each season (November - April).

### Literacy Grants:

The Literary Society of the Southwest advances and impacts the cause of literacy in Arizona through advocacy, grantmaking, and volunteer opportunities. We offer our members a way to take action and become directly involved in improving literacy in Arizona. To date, the Literary Society has awarded nearly \$300,000 in grants to local non-profit literacy programs from net proceeds of memberships and donations. Recently, our generous members exceeded our Literacy Grant Challenge goal and more than doubled our grant budget to \$56,825. Grant applicants are carefully vetted by the board and a committee of volunteers through a thoughtful and accountable process and review.

### Volunteer Opportunities

Membership is enhanced with opportunities to volunteer in author selection, grant awards selection, and various event-related activities each season.



## WHY ANNUAL CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS MATTER

Philanthropy is the heart of our mission and allows us to survive and thrive. With an annual budget of \$495,000, membership donations, general operating donations, and sponsorships provide 72% of our revenue. Individual luncheon fees and investment income make up the remaining 28%. Giving is truly reciprocal - the members and donors receive the gifts of friendship and community in reading and engaging with incredible authors while supporting the art of contemporary literature and giving the gift of literacy to others.

The Literary Society operates with great attention to detail, efficiency, effectiveness, and fiscal accountability. This is partly due to the over 325 hours contributed to governance, programs, and operations per week by our board members, committee and individual volunteer service by many of our members, and virtual work groups and processes. While volunteer-driven, with no full-time employees, operations in support of our mission require a variety of program and administrative expenses, including but not limited to authors' contracts, travel and accommodations, luncheon venue fees, program materials and supplies, software, administrative support, and other due diligence and routine costs of managing a successful business.

Generous **Donations, Sponsorships and Underwriting** allow the Literary Society to:

- Exist and continue to provide a forum that values and promotes contemporary literature by offering excellent books, engaging author interaction, and growing friendships through reading and learning together.
- Extend to others through grants to nonprofit literacy programs focused on children K-12.
- Enrich community programs that acquaint Arizona students with new literary possibilities.
- Support our author luncheons, literacy grants, members, and general operations.

While most organizations provide sponsorships in support of a one-time event, the Literary Society offers benefits of sponsorship at 20 luncheon events, recognition on our website and in our newsletter, signage, announcements, and donor rosters throughout the season, and opportunities for engagement with our authors and educated and engaged members. (See our Sponsorship and Donation Form for more details).

**Please support our mission through membership, sponsorship, underwriting, or a general contribution. Every gift matters and helps us sustain and grow our unique and meaningful programs and impact.**





## THE LITERARY SOCIETY GRANTS PROGRAM

### Fact Sheet

Because early reading skills are the most significant predictor of academic and life success, the Literary Society focuses its grant-making on Arizona literacy programs targeting young children in areas where literacy rates are below state standards. These can be remote areas of the state or the middle of the most populated urban areas.

### WHY LITERACY FOR YOUNG READERS MATTERS

- Literacy goes far beyond the ability to read a book or write a letter. The inability to read and comprehend written language can cause immeasurable damage to an individual's emotional and intellectual development and often limits a person's ability to achieve a fulfilling and successful adult life. *Regis College, Master of Social Work Resource Guide*
- Reading is the primary foundational skill for all school-based learning, and reading proficiency by third grade is a crucial milestone in a child's future academic success. Third grade reading level is a strong predictor of ninth grade course performance, high school graduation, and college attendance.
- According to the Arizona Education Progress Meter, only 41% of third-graders read at grade level. The state's goal is 72%, stating that reading is THE foundational skill for all future learning.
- According to the National Research Council for the National Academies, "Academic success, as defined by high school graduation, can be predicted with reasonable accuracy by knowing someone's reading skill at the end of third grade. A person who is not at least a modestly skilled reader by that time is unlikely to graduate from school."
- Kids who read at least 20 minutes a day will be exposed to approximately 2 million words annually.
- About 130 million adults in the U.S. have low literacy skills, according to a Gallup analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education. This means more than half of Americans between the ages of 16 and 74 (54%) read below the equivalent of a sixth-grade level.

### BENEFITS OF SUPPORTING LITERACY THROUGH THE LITERARY SOCIETY

Through a formal Grant Application, Grant Guidelines, and thoughtful process, we manage the evaluation, conduct the due diligence, and require impact reports to ensure recipients of our grants are legitimate organizations with solid values that align with our mission.

Our members value us because:

- We do the legwork.
- We are a trusted resource that delivers 100% of the dollars designated for literacy to fully-vetted literacy programs.
- We hold the recipient organizations accountable.
- We involve our members in our grantmaking, regardless of whether they give or how much they give.
- We provide complete transparency of how the donations are granted to non-profits and literacy programs.
- We connect our members with other non-profits doing great work and promote their mission.
- We provide the opportunity to benefit several organizations with one donation through collective giving.

**Legal Name:** Literary & Prologue Society of the Southwest

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