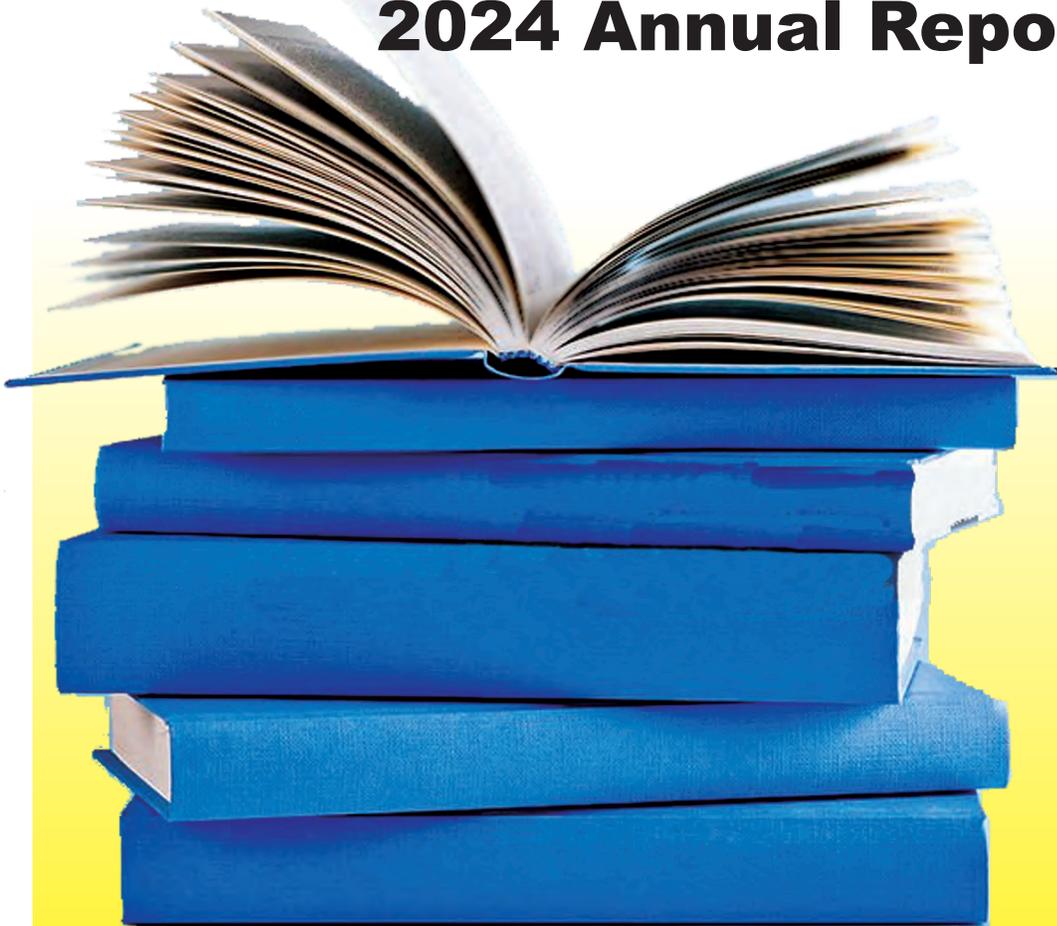


# FREADOM<sup>®</sup>

*A way out*



## The FREADOM<sup>®</sup> Road Foundation 2024 Annual Report



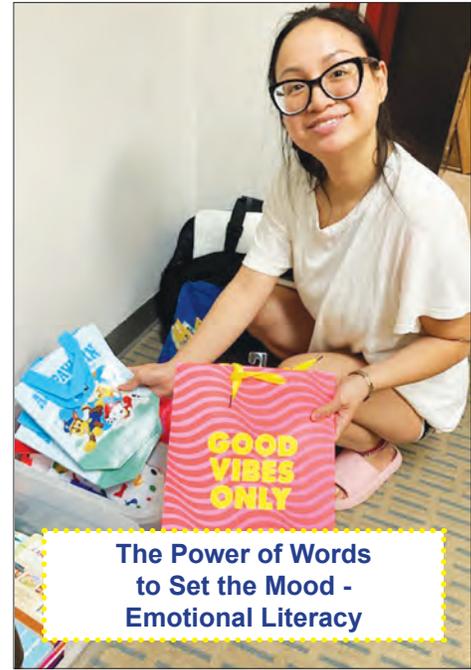
Platinum  
Transparency  
2024

**Candid.**

The Freedom<sup>®</sup> Road Foundation is a 501 (c) 3 Not-For-Profit Tax Exempt organization, whose mission is to break the cycle of intergenerational incarceration. We accomplish this through ongoing research and evidence based literacy programs conducted onsite with partner organizations committed to the same, or mutually supportive goals.



**Little Superheroes - Education, the Big Superhero**



**The Power of Words to Set the Mood - Emotional Literacy**

**PROGRAMS IN PARTNERSHIP**

**Home Visiting Programs at Family Focus - Englewood, Chicago**

We provided a curated, on-site collection of materials available to all families in the various Home Visiting programs which serve families with children ages 0 – 5.

We participated in Mother’s Day and Community Celebration events, where we distributed literacy materials and encouraged library card sign-ups. With Family Focus doulas and supervisors we planned a literacy based prenatal parent support program scheduled to begin in 2025.

**Monique Matthews’ Freedom® Families**



Monique Matthews

Monique Matthews, long-time program participant and Parent Advisor, continues to distribute books to families with children of all ages and recruits others to our services.

**John Stephan’s\* Escape from the Jeopardy Zone**

Located at the Logan Square Boys and Girls Club (Funston school), this program promoted love of reading to children K-8 through personal book ownership, home libraries, and exciting activities created by Club staff using our books, writing, and craft materials. The program aimed at improving reading skills as a way of preventing the risk of future incarceration of children reading below proficiency by the end of third grade.

\* John Stephan was a long-time member and officer of the Kiwanis Club of Lakeview, former director of the Logan Square Chicago Boys and Girls Club, and co-creator of “Escape from the Jeopardy Zone.”

**STEPS — Lexington, Virginia Supporting Transitions by Engaging Parolee Sponsorships**

STEPS is a yearlong program in Lexington, Virginia assisting returning citizens in making the transition “from incarceration to indepen-



**Learning and Love - Holistic Literacy**

dence.” We invite participants to choose new books for personal ownership at no cost from our online curated book collection.

**Chicago Dept. of Public Health**

Since being invited as partners in 2017, our work has been guided by their extensive research document “Healthy Chicago 2.0”. We also draw on their information relating to CEV - Children Exposed to Violence, using it to inform all our programs, services, and participant relations.



**Great Expectations - Caps, Smiles and Books**



**Gifts of Hope and Learning**

**Dominican University**

A Dominican marketing student, whose internship was paid for by Dominican University, worked with us to create new building blocks to increase our ability to raise funds.

**LOOKING FORWARD**

In partnership with a former Illinois Department of Corrections Coordinator of Prison Libraries, we will continue to develop our curated online book collections customized to the needs of the incarcerated, prerelease detainees and returning citizens.

We will update our Strategic Plan, focusing on scaling and sustainability by substantially increasing our funding, expanding our program reach, and refining our succession plan.

**DISTINCTION**

We earned the Candid Platinum Seal of Transparency.

**IMPACT – LOOKING BACK 10 YEARS**

Over 500 people benefitted from our services in 2024 - either directly or through access to our programs and materials— an increase over the 50 people served at the program launch in July 2014.

**“It is my pleasure to support the wonderful things you are doing with families.”**

*Long-time Freedom® consultant and supporter, Useni Eugene Perkins, late American poet, playwright, and activist. (1932-2023), Author of Home is a Dirty Street and the nationally celebrated “Hey, Black Child.”*

**“There isn’t enough money in the world to equal the value you bring.”**

*Ivy Drechney, first volunteer*

**“I could jump for joy!”**

*Mother of a third grader who “escaped” “The Jeopardy Zone” by learning to love to read and raising his grades from all Fs and Ds to all As and Bs.*

**GRATITUDE**

We are grateful to and sincerely thank all our donors, supporters, volunteers, partners, program participants, and sponsors who have made 2024 a memorable year of sustaining and growing programs that make a difference in the lives of our participating children and families.

We are especially thankful to our dedicated Board of Directors and to the Kiwanis Club of LakeView

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Maria Hayley**  
*Founder and President*

**Martin Gomez**  
*Vice-President*

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*Secretary*

**Joseph N. Lazzara**  
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*Human Resources Specialist*

**Thomas D. Rosenwein Esq.**  
*Legal Counsel*

which supports our children’s programs which fall under Kiwanis International’s Young Children: Priority One and Read Around the World.



To support our work, simply scan the QR code or contact us at:  
[info@TheFreedomRoadFoundation.org](mailto:info@TheFreedomRoadFoundation.org)

The Freedom® Road Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) Not-For-Profit Corporation.  
Tax ID 36-4109624

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