

Simpson Street Free Press

James Wright Free Press • Sennett Free Press • Henderson Free Press • La Prensa Libre de Simpson Street



Simpson Street Free Press

New Battery Technology Aids Renewable Energy Development in Wisconsin

by Robert Tecposotl, age 13

Climate change is a continuing



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Wisconsin Oil Pipeline Leak Went Unreported for Over a Year

by Sydney Steidl, age 15

Over 1,200 gallons of petroleum were spilled from an underground pipeline leak near Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin, in September

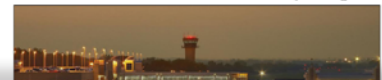


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PFAS Contaminate Groundwater Near Dane County Airport

by Gabriella Shell, age 14

Recent tests have revealed extremely high levels of dangerous contaminants called PFAS

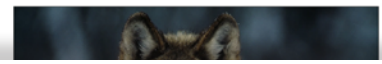


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Wisconsin Wolves Removed from Endangered Species List, but Controversial Hunt Leaves Future Uncertain

by Moises A. Hernandez, age 16

Wisconsin's gray wolf population increased by 13 percent



Simpson Street Free Press

Dane County Land Purchase Expands Indian Lake County Park

by Josepha Da Costa, age 15

Recently, Dane County Board adopted a Resolution that expands Indian Lake County Park. The resolution authorizes the purchase of 295 acres of land, which will be added to the park. This expansion makes Indian Lake County Park one of the biggest parks in Dane County.

Indian Lake County Park is one of Dane County's most popular parks, and it has seen more visitors than ever as a result of social



2020 Annual Report

Copies of this report are available on request and on our website:

www.SimpsonStreetFreePress.org

Never Hand in Your First Draft!

Community Impact

SSFP builds permanent community assets. We address Wisconsin's most glaring disparities in tangible and concrete ways. Our approach is anchored by award-winning lesson plans and Dane County's first all-academics youth center. We put innovative curriculum in the hands of more kids – right now. SSFP develops assets. And we expand those assets in two ways: provide free curriculum to other organizations (example: Janesville Free Press) and expand SSFP to additional sites (example: James Wright Free Press, and Sennett Free Press).

SSFP examines after-school and summer national research and applies that research in practical out-of-school settings. The organization collects data and uses that information to develop curriculum. SSFP uses a project-based model backed by evidence and ideally suited for gathering meaningful, evaluative data. The model closely matches all new academic standards. Lesson plans meet individual student needs.

Known for rigorous curriculum, SSFP delivers award-winning academic instruction. Our focus is writing for publication. SSFP students write about science, geography, books, history, and the arts. The organization's mission is to spark student success and bridge achievement gaps. Students acquire practical literacy skills working in authentic newsrooms. They learn 21st century job skills. SSFP closely monitors student progress data.



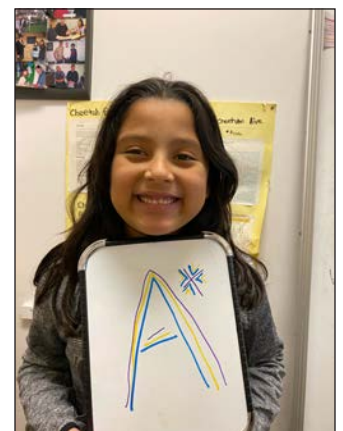
Impact Report

During 2020 SSFP was able to add new/additional students across all programs and increase student participation. Book clubs expanded and new sections were launched. We were prepared and nimble when C-19 hit and closed down most youth programs in our area. SSFP made sure all our students had tablets or laptops and we helped many families secure reliable internet connections. We even added new students. Average per-student hours of one-on-one time grew. During fall semester of 2019 we used MAP tests and Forward Exam results to help gauge student progress. We continued to see better than grade-level-expected gains among most of our students. About 87% of SSFP students improved overall academic progress according to key academic benchmarks. Tutoring in math and science was provided through an ongoing partnership with the UW-Madison Physics Department.

SSFP was not able to use school-based tests results during 2020. But we have planned carefully, and staff has developed a toolbox of appropriate measurement strategies. SSFP continues to track and document close-reading doses. We continue to believe that, in large measure, learning happens during the revision and fact-checking process. SSFP will continue to hone and refine its award-winning curriculum and expertly adjust to the new realities of online instruction. We are right now expanding our cohort of trained volunteers. New volunteer editors from the UW-Madison School of Journalism and School of Education are joining the SSFP ranks. This increases our capacity to provide one-on-one close-reading and editing sessions.

SSFP continues to employ skilled and experienced college-age editors who come from lower-income families. We've not had a single layoff. These young but experienced literacy specialists are providing crucial academic instruction at a critical moment. The SSFP professional pipeline approach provides meaningful employment and financial support (especially during C-19) and helps them afford rising college costs. SSFP will continue to respond to the C-19 crisis with practical and accessible remote learning support for Dane County's most vulnerable children.

SSFP readership has increased exponentially during the past several years and spiked again (across all platforms) during C-19. We focus on the core-subject areas. And now on authentic, effective e-learning. SSFP students are prepared and ready to learn online during the 2020-21 school year. Our cohort of dedicated young editors has evolved into one of Madison's most effective academic achievement assets.



Methods and Approach

SSFP reporters are kids (grades 3-12). Program graduates, now in college, work as writing instructors and editors. Experienced and credentialed volunteers support the editors. This innovative “farm system” teaching model and staffing formula places young people of color in leadership positions. Results are consistent and measurable. Students produce seven separate youth newspapers, including the bilingual *La Prensa*. Students join book clubs and publish content on various platforms. SSFP reporters write and read extensively. SSFP students inspire young readers throughout Wisconsin.

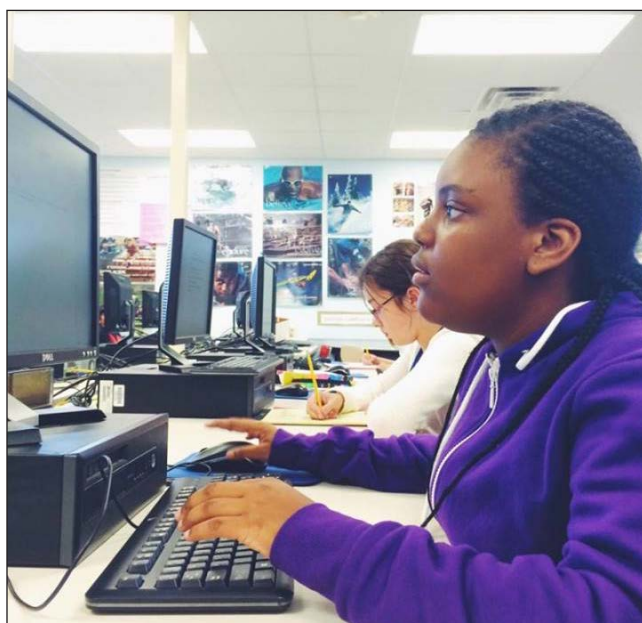
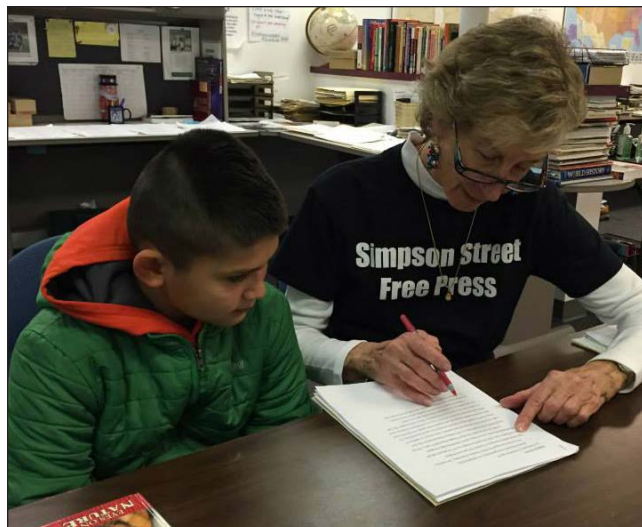
SSFP operates at several sites, but SSFP South Towne is our anchor facility. Our South Towne Mall newsroom is a 21st century learning center and Dane County’s first all academics youth center. It is an incubator and laboratory with a proven track record. It’s where innovative, local instructional methods are pioneered. SSFP also operates a book club network. Students in grades 3-9 participate. High school and college students serve as club captains. SSFP has developed dozens of book review lesson plans aimed at a middle school audience. Students publish a feature series called “My Favorite Library.” Other ongoing series are titled “That’s a Good Word,” Wisconsin Museum Series and “Coin that Phrase.” SSFP students produce book trailers and publish their videos online.

The current student body at SSFP is younger than it was in five years ago. Our pipeline staffing model grows dedicated and skilled literacy instructors. This increases the organization’s capacity. Young editors work in neighborhoods where they grew up and in schools they attended. They are well-versed in award-winning SSFP curriculum. High school students, as they gain experience, assume leadership roles. They serve as book club captains and section editors. SSFP creates practical, proven pipelines for young professionals of color.

SSFP Operations, Planning for 2021

While SSFP plans a gradual resumption of in-person instruction, remote learning will continue to be part of the toolbox--even after COVID restrictions. Transitions are challenging, but it’s important to offer OST program choices for kids and families, especially during C-19. Online or in-person, SSFP curriculum delivers. We provide abundant close reading doses and one-on-one time, especially for elementary-age and middle school students. SSFP high school students hone practical editing and revision skills. All SSFP students use technology. SSFP instructional methods are adaptable, perfect for e-learning platforms, in-person instruction, or hybrid models.

In 2021, SSFP will put more boots on the ground and at the frontlines. We will build on what works and apply what we’ve learned during C-19. SSFP will continue to hire, promote and train local youth leaders. SSFP backs its young editors with experienced volunteers and credentialed reading specialists.



Facts and Figures

Achievement gaps in Madison mirror trends in other urban districts. SSFP is based in decidedly low-income neighborhoods. The median household income in south and southeast Madison (WI. census tract #15.02) is about 60% of median household income in Dane County. According to UW-Madison Institute for Research on Poverty, the poverty rate for Madison is three times the state average. In Madison, 29.7% of families fall below the poverty line vs. 10% statewide. Madison's poverty rate exceeds Milwaukee's poverty rate, which is 18.8%.

Schools in these neighborhoods show chronic truancy rates between seven and 20%. Schoolday attendance numbers show the high rates of truancy typical of schools in low-income neighborhoods. SSFP always measures school attendance, and we show stellar results in sparking attendance. During the most recent five-year period, more than 80% of SSFP students showed improved school attendance within two semesters.

According to Wisconsin DPI, about 79% of students from these schools are below proficiency in reading. About half of students in these schools are ELL, and many are in DLI programs at their schools. SSFP literacy curriculum is backed by research and evidence. We emphasize close reading, vocabulary, writing and literacy, and practical skills building. At least 90% of new students improve reading comprehension during their first semester at SSFP.

“The size of children’s vocabularies, reading comprehension, and verbal skills are directly related to the quantity of text they read. Because children are typically given little time for reading in school, reading during out-of-school time is the primary way to increase the amount of reading children do, hence building their reading competence.”

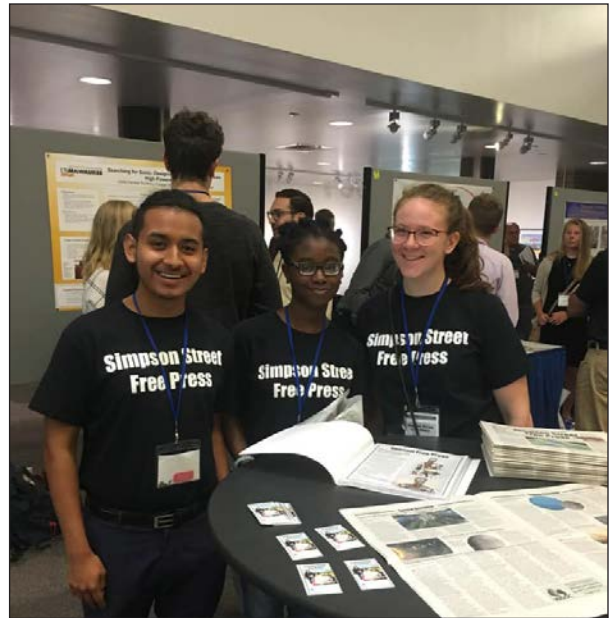
— Cunningham and Stanovich

“A child’s reading comprehension in first grade is predicted almost exclusively by decoding ability. But by second grade deficiencies in vocabulary, background knowledge, and critical thinking are the principal limiting factors of a child’s reading comprehension abilities. This effect increases with each grade.”

— Juel

“The new global, high-tech marketplace demands intense creativity and thinking that goes beyond basic learning skills. With the growing importance of 21st century skills such as critical thinking and global awareness, the ability to comprehend written text is an essential building block. At its core, literacy is the use of written information to function in society, attain goals and develop knowledge. Without this tool, a student will almost inevitably struggle with other forms of learning. Literacy is an absolute necessity to further learning and development.”

— MetLife Foundation and Afterschool Alliance



Outcomes and Measurement Tools

SSFP always measures the same things: school grades, school-day attendance, research/writing assignments published, book reviews completed, and hours of extra instruction time in core curriculum and literacy. At its South Towne site the organization also measures family and community engagement.

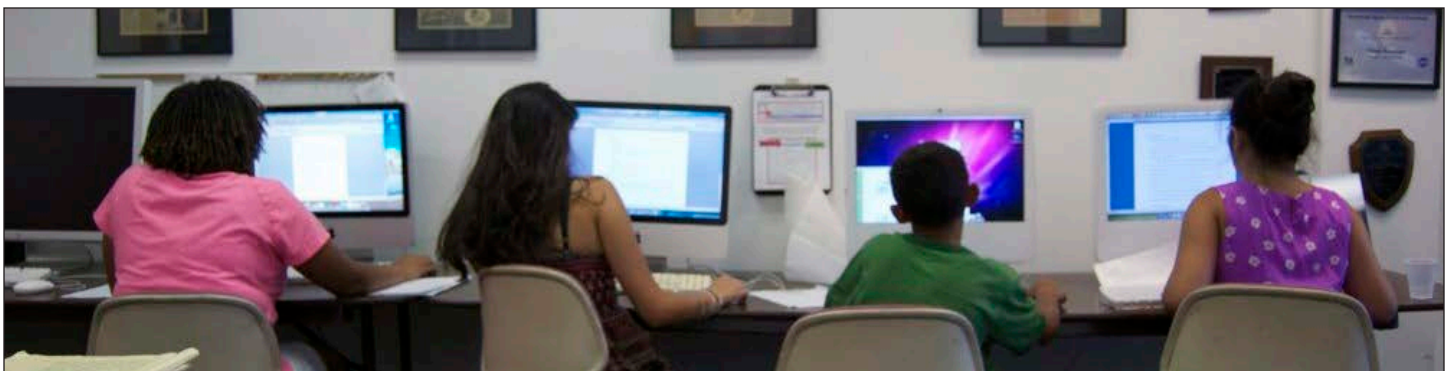
Objective #1: Students improve academic performance and school-day attendance. They acquire practical skills and learn to transfer those skills. **Measurement tools:** Report cards and school progress reports, Infinite Campus. Trimester evaluations conducted by parents, teachers and editors. **2020 Outcomes:** All (100%) students submit school report cards each academic quarter. More than 70% of new students improve overall school performance within two semesters. At least 80% improve (or maintain) school-day attendance (including online attendance). School-based test results were not available in 2020. However, during the most recent three-year period, 90% of SSFP middle school students improved overall core subject GPA. About 81% of students increased reading comprehension (More than grade level expected) according to school-based test results.

Objective #2: Students complete predetermined requirements for research/writing assignments. Students write across languages. **Measurement Tools:** Students keep assignment logs. Editors monitor assignments. Assignments are complete once published. Newsroom-style slug sheets track published assignments. **2020 Outcomes:** At least 90% of students published three research/ writing assignments per semester (including summer semester). About 85% completed a book review assignment each semester (including summer). All (100%) La Prensa students completed and published work in both English and Spanish. SSFP transitioned to online learning the same day that schools closed. We experienced no interruption of our core newsroom systems.

Objective #3: Students receive extra instruction in reading/language arts. Instruction is across the curriculum. Students receive individualized math support. **Measurement Tools:** Student timesheets, assignment logs, and newsroom slug sheets. Rough drafts, and all subsequent drafts, are reviewed one-on-one with an editor (writing and fact checking conferences). **2020 Outcomes:** About 96% of students completed assignments in at least two lesson plan categories. All (100%) students participated in regular one-on-one writing conferences. At least 90% of students completed one science assignment and one book assignment per semester. Students received, on average, 5 hours per week of extra instruction (over and above homework help).

Objective #4: SSFP students engaged the community. They gain confidence, leadership qualities, and 21st century job skills. Families find a range of enrichment activities in a modern center of learning. **Measurement Tools:** Participation in features lesson plans, interviews, newsroom events. All (100%) students host events or newsroom tours. Students conduct interviews and speak in public. Students participate in a school support system. Jeopardy quiz bowls, classic films, 70's board game nights, book clubs, technology training, and museum trips are available to parents and families. **2020 Outcomes:** At least 65% of SSFP middle and high school students assisted younger peers with math homework or newspaper assignments, most sessions were remote/online. All high school students and 80% of middle school students participated in a features lesson plan. While our newsrooms were open, 85% of SSFP students guided newsroom tours or attended public events. Approximately 80% of SSFP parents attended at least one event or activity per semester (including summer). Most 2020 events and activities were online only.

NOTE: Evaluations are conducted on a trimester schedule (1st, 2nd, and summer semesters). Evaluations focus on assignment completion, writing proficiency (7 Traits of a Writer), and organizational and work skills. At least 85% of program participants will achieve a 3.75 grade (on 5.0 scale) during each semester. NOTE: The evaluation team for the South Towne center includes parents, teachers, and school principals. SSFP is the only area non-profit that collects MAP scores.



COVID-19 Updates

SSFP planned ahead for COVID-19 and was by no means unprepared. Our pivot to online instruction was seamless and immediate. We see the C-19 crisis much like Madison's notorious "summer slide." Low-income students and students of color will bear the brunt. SSFP is actively addressing this key part of the crisis. We continue to provide crucial academic support to over 260 local kids. In turn, the young writers of SSFP (grades 2-12) inspire young readers across Madison and Dane County. All SSFP programs continue in robust and important ways.

SSFP has transitioned. Student writers work online and continue writing articles, columns, and features. Most importantly, kids continue to receive high-impact academic support. SSFP has managed to provide enough laptops so that every student can work online. Our skilled volunteers and dedicated staff assist student reporters with edits, research, and revisions. Then we publish. SSFP students learn practical, 21st century job skills right now—even in these challenging times. SSFP students publish online, in Spanish and English, on various SSFP platforms and in other publications.

All SSFP newsrooms are closed. But our work continues. SSFP delivers high-impact, core-subject academic instruction. Our approach to instruction is backed by research and data. SSFP is streamlined and efficient, which helped pivot so quickly and so expertly. SSFP fields a menu of academic achievement programs that promote literacy, foster confidence, and inspire young readers. This is especially true during the current health and education crisis.

SSFP projects challenge achievement gaps using award-winning curriculum. Students grow within sequential curriculum models. At every step in the SSFP pipeline young people get support from their school, their neighborhood, and their OST programs. SSFP students encounter predictable connections to the school day. Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) is a key strategy. SSFP is repeatedly recognized for program design that matches OST best practices and all new academic standards in Wisconsin. SSFP staff includes trained reading specialists and language acquisition experts. We deliver award-winning academic programs. We operate at several sites including Capital Newspapers, local schools, and our traditional South Towne Mall location. Invariably, for any new SSFP student, a light bulb goes on. Young people quickly gain confidence and quickly learn to transfer newsroom skills to the classroom.





Simpson Street Free Press

COVID-19 Program Operations Updates: Immediately, the very same day schools closed, SSFP was able to pivot quickly and provide online learning to hundreds of local kids throughout the spring and summer semesters. SSFP sees the C-19 crisis much like an “Extended Summer Slide” and is actively addressing this key part of the crisis. All SSFP programs and activities expand during summer semesters.

Program Operations Plan 2020-21: The SSFP plan follows MDCPH and local school guidelines. Whether online or in person, SSFP delivers high-impact academic instruction during out-of-school time. Fall semester instruction will begin online using email, phone calls, Zoom, and various other online tools to work one-on-one with student writers (grades 2-12). We use google docs and online slug sheets to monitor student assignments. A phased reopening will follow local guidelines

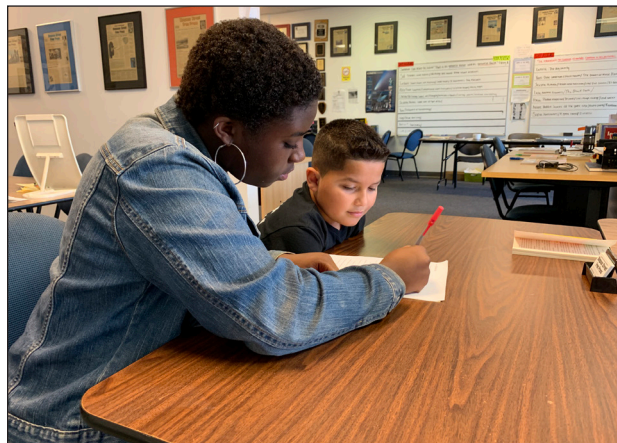
PHASE I: All Virtual Learning

SSFP employs college-age editors who are SSFP program grads. SSFP uses credentialed volunteers steeped in SSFP methods. Drafting, source/text analysis, outlining, and prewriting activities are supervised by editors. Volunteers work remotely with students to edit and fact check subsequent drafts.



PHASE II: Hybrid Learning Model

Following the lead of local school districts, SSFP will start limited in-person instruction when appropriate and safe. Our facilities allow for safe social distancing, PPDs are available. Parents who prefer continued online instruction will have that option. Remote learning is an area of expertise for SSFP.



PHASE III: In-person Learning

Phase III reopening at SSFP will include expanded hours so as to accommodate smaller groups and more social distancing. Fewer students spread across additional time slots will facilitate in-person learning. Online instruction will continue to be an option. Remote learning will be a permanent part of our instructional repertoire.



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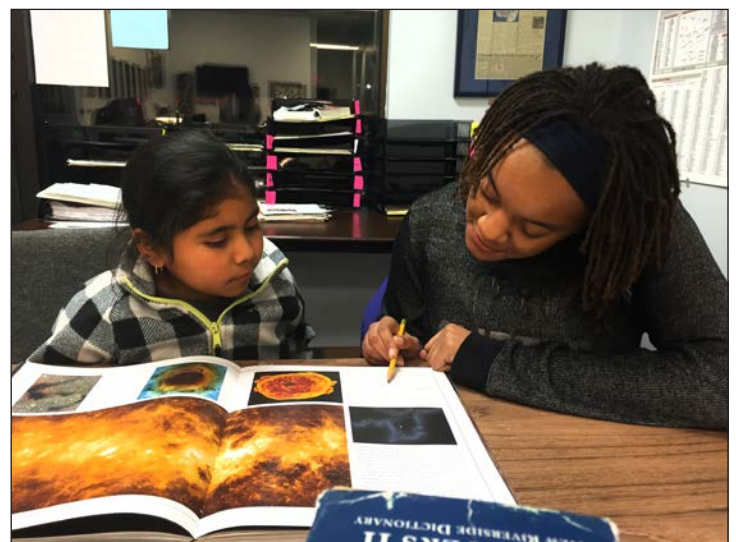
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Simpson Street Free Press

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SIMPSON STREET FREE PRESS, INC
Budget Draft 2021

UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	2021 Budget Draft	2020 Budget Actual	2019 Budget
Support and Revenue			
United Way Grant Allocations	\$ 33,000	\$ 33,000	\$ 35,000
United Way Designations	10,000	10,000	10,000
City of Madison Contract	37,500	37,500	23,600
Donations - Friends of SSFP	16,000	16,000	11,500
Corporate Donations and Foundation Grants	156,000	156,000	120,000
Board Generated Corporate Sponsorships	15,000	15,000	15,000
Strategic Partnerships	40,000	40,000	40,000
Advertising Income	5,000	5,000	10,000
In Kind Donations - Aberdeen	10,000	10,000	10,000
In Kind Donations - Others	10,000	10,000	10,000
Interest Income	250	250	150
Miscellaneous Income	1,000	1,000	725
Fundraising event (net income after costs)	-	-	15,000
Annual Giving Campaign	6,000	6,000	6,000
Total Support and Revenue	<u>339,750</u>	<u>339,750</u>	<u>306,975</u>
Operating Expenses			
Personnel Expenses			
Salaries	94,500	94,500	86,000
Stipends	48,000	48,000	42,000
Payroll Taxes	8,700	8,700	8,700
Circulation salaries and taxes	2,000	2,000	2,000
Field trip salaries and taxes	3,000	3,000	2,850
Glendale FP salaries and taxes	2,200	2,200	2,200
Pre-press production salaries and taxes	9,000	9,000	7,000
Wright FP salaries and taxes	4,500	4,500	4,500
Falk FP salaries and taxes	2,000	2,000	2,000
LaPrenza salaries and taxes	7,500	7,500	5,000
Literacy Partnerships Salaries and Taxes	5,000	5,000	5,000
Badger Rock Rock Free Press	2,000	2,000	-
Sennett Free Press salaries, taxes, and stipends	5,500	5,500	5,500
Total Personnel Expense	<u>193,900</u>	<u>193,900</u>	<u>172,750</u>
Other Operating Expenses			
Insurance	4,000	4,000	2,900
Employee Benefits	3,500	3,500	-
Fundraising/Community Events	10,000	10,000	1,500
Professional Fees	8,000	8,000	8,000
Membership / Subscriptions	-	-	-
Bank Service Charges	-	-	-
Paypal fee	15	15	-
Postage and Office Expenses	950	950	950
Supplies	3,000	3,000	1,900
Licenses and fees	100	100	-
Books/Reference Materials	2,100	2,100	2,100
Printing	3,100	3,100	3,100
Pre-Press Production Costs	6,650	6,650	6,650
Online Production Costs	5,800	5,800	5,800
Photocopy Expense	600	600	600
Photography Expense	200	200	200
Depreciation Expense	800	800	800
Capital Equipment	1,400	1,400	1,400
IT support services	10,000	10,000	10,000
Other Computer Equipment	2,000	2,000	1,600
Telephone/Internet	3,000	3,000	3,000
Financial Literacy Scholarship	1,000	1,000	800
Training/Conferences	1,500	1,500	1,200

Food/Household Supplies	850	850	850
Vehicle Costs/Travel/Delivery	4,200	4,200	4,200
Field Trip Expenses	5,000	5,000	5,000
Falk Free Press	1,600	1,600	1,600
La Prensa Libre de Simpson Street	10,000	10,000	6,850
Glendale Free Press	3,500	3,500	1,200
Wright Free Press	3,500	3,500	2,300
Youth Journalism Internships	4,500	4,500	4,500
Badger Rock Rock Free Press	2,000	2,000	
Literacy Partnerships - Book Clubs	12,000	12,000	6,000
Janesville Free Press	200	200	200
Sennett Free Press	4,000	4,000	3,000
Beloit Free Press	-	-	200
Math Tutoring	2,750	2,750	-
Summer Writing Workshops	5,000	5,000	4,000
Miscellaneous	825	825	825
Total Other Operating Expense	<u>127,640</u>	<u>127,640</u>	<u>93,225</u>
Facilities Expenses			
Rent/Utilities/Maintenance	<u>34,600</u>	<u>34,600</u>	<u>34,600</u>
Total Operating Expenses	<u>356,140</u>	<u>356,140</u>	<u>300,575</u>
Change in Unrestricted Net Assets	\$ (16,390)	\$ (16,390)	<u>\$ 6,400</u>

TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS

Contributions for 2019
Change in net assets
Net Assets – beginning of year
Net Assets – end of year