



A large group of diverse children and one adult man, all smiling and holding up various children's books. The books feature colorful illustrations and titles like 'The Cat in the Hat', 'Dinosaur Dinosaur', 'The Boy in the Garden', and 'Little Billy Bakery'. The background is a solid blue color.



Mission / Vision Statement

CLiF aims to inspire a love of reading and writing among low-income, at-risk, and rural children up to age 12 throughout New Hampshire and Vermont.

History

Duncan McDougall walked away from his corporate consulting career to create the vision of CLiF in 1998. The idea was to deliver transformative literacy experiences to those children at highest risk of growing up with low literacy skills. Extensive research involving more than 200 teachers, principals, librarians, publishers, and literacy program directors produced CLiF's first program — providing new collections of children's books to rural public libraries and inspiring presentations to the children in those communities.

The organization's offerings have expanded significantly since then. CLiF currently serves children in low-income housing and shelters, refugee children, children of prison inmates, children in rural communities with limited resources, foster children, and many others. CLiF arranges for more than 50 professional children's book authors, illustrators, storytellers, and poets to work directly with children, and conducts many seminars with parents to encourage and help them read with their kids. CLiF partners with hundreds of schools, libraries, childcare centers, Head Start programs, summer camps, and other organizations that serve its target audience.

For over 20 years CLiF has provided inspiring, free literacy programs to more than 225,000 young readers and writers in more than 400 communities across the Twin States, and has given away more than \$6 million in new, high-quality books to children who need them most.



I enjoy my books because they have gave me more to read. These books have helped me get even better at reading which will bump up my grades. You have inspired me to help people to



Goals

From 2018 to 2020, CLiF will focus its activity on the following areas:

- CLiF will continue to pursue a community-based literacy program model — creating a culture of literacy in the communities that it serves.
- CLiF will continue to be the leading resource in children's literacy in the Twin States.
- CLiF will continue to build on the foundation it has established as a strong, sustainable organization.
- CLiF will begin the process of planning for a leadership succession in 2023 and relocation to new, larger headquarters.

Values Statement

CLiF ...

- Believes that literacy skills are core skills that are foundational to success in school, work, and life and must be nurtured in all young people during their critical formative years.
- Provides programs and services for free to the children, families, and organizations served.
- Relies entirely on community members for its funding and does not seek or receive any state or federal support.
- Collaborates with partner organizations in efficient and effective ways, and will be responsive to the differing needs of the various communities it serves.
- Gathers feedback, conducts research, and uses data to continuously strengthen its programs.
- Is Yankee-frugal, delivering its services in a very cost-efficient way.
- Nurtures a community of children's literacy expertise to effectively shape its ideas and to deliver its message to children.
- Values CLiF staff, Board members, presenters, and volunteers, and strives to make their involvement with CLiF as pleasant, satisfying, and productive as possible.
- Believes it is important to have a go-to resource and convener for children's literacy in the region and CLiF should play that role.
- Actively supports and endorses diversity and inclusion, and strives to have our books, programs, and presentations reflect that diversity. Our hope is for all children to be able to see themselves and their world in the pages of a book.
- Should play a critical role in New Hampshire and Vermont for as long as necessary ... decades or more.



Thank you thank you thank you!! Thank you for donating the books to our school. I am grateful because you made me a better writer. Now I write stories all the time. First I think of an idea then I jot things down. Last I make them into a story. Again Thank you so much.



SWOT Analysis

These are CLiF's principal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats:

Strengths

Possesses high quality throughout its operations — inspiring presenters, experienced and passionate staff, carefully designed and innovative programs, high-quality books, and simple application processes.

Delivers programs in a very efficient and cost effective manner.

Enjoys a loyal, growing, and supportive donor base represented by motivated and experienced Board.

Has a culture of innovative adaptation. Its staff gathers feedback, conducts research, and frequently beta-tests new ideas to see what works best.

Has an established presence as an effective organization that leads to deep and long-standing collaborative relationships with the broader literacy community in New Hampshire and Vermont.

Conducts strong, positive communications with all stakeholders and enjoys a very favorable reputation among those who know CLiF.

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Weaknesses

Continues to experience relatively low name recognition and a misperception among those less familiar with CLiF that the organization simply gives away books to children.

Has fairly concentrated reliance on older, long-standing donors. Low engagement of donors <40 years of age and need for an enhanced system to attract more first-time donors.

Offers few volunteer opportunities for engagement by passionate supporters. Many supporters have not experienced a CLiF event in person.

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Operates currently in a relatively compact facility. This limits staff, which in turn limits scale. Office and library aren't central to the geography that CLiF serves.

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Identify and target underserved at-risk populations, including those affected by the rapidly growing opioid epidemic.

Pursue more robust emphasis on outreach to youngest readers/writers/listeners, ages zero to five.

Consider expanding use of digital platforms to reach broader audience.

Carry out more and deeper integration across programs and across communities with which CLiF is working.

Strengthen CLiF's position as the leading literacy resource for communities/partners.

Consider adopting more of an advocacy role on children's literacy issues.

Take training of presenters to the next level to ensure uniformly high-quality presentations.

Identify additional opportunities for supporters to get involved as volunteers or to attend events.

Continue to enhance the organization's web and social media presence.

Expand support for CLiF's programs from businesses.

Opportunities

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CLiF's founding executive director plans to step down in 2023, and before then the CLiF office will move to a new location. Both transitions will need to be addressed very thoughtfully.

CLiF's aging donor base might lead to some funding risk.

Given its small staff size CLiF is always at risk of a loss of institutional memory and/or damage to important relationships through any future staff turnover.

Technological and societal change may lead to a general trend away from books and reading.

Threats





I LOVE this program and the EPFC Book chooses I've got 3 Books from the CLIF celebracons. I LOVE how you put it together. The best other make sating there not boring and then we get a book.



Strategies

Pursue a community-based literacy program model.

CLiF will ...

- Continue to maintain an ongoing presence in a community for a year or longer as programs allow.
- Create relationships and connections with and between many stakeholders in the communities we serve, as well between the communities themselves, to help weave a web of literacy across New Hampshire and Vermont.
- Provide communities with the education and empowerment to maintain a culture of literacy after CLiF leaves.
- Offer a wide variety of high-quality literacy experiences and resources which help more low-income, at-risk, and rural children develop a love of reading and writing.
- Offer a template, or menu, of activity and program options for towns to customize based on their interests and needs.

Continue to be the leading children's literacy resource.

CLiF will ...

- Continue to be a consistent provider of high-quality, up-to-date information and ideas regarding family and childhood literacy to parents, teachers, librarians, and others involved in educating children.
- Disseminate information using various media — website, videos, electronic newsletters, social media, print, etc.
- Be an organization that past, present, and future CLiF communities will turn to for continuing literacy support and ideas.
- Continue to develop resources for communities to communicate and share ideas regarding children's literacy (e.g. via forums on our website).

Build on the foundation it has established as a strong, sustainable organization.

CLiF will ...

- Expand and strengthen durable relationships with other organizations serving its target audiences and frequently partner with them to deliver community-based literacy programming.
- Maintain strong ties with previous CLiF communities.
- Continue to operate ethically and stay true to its mission.
- Keep its fiscal house in order, continue building effective internal systems and policies, and maintain an organized, pleasant, and professional office environment.
- Continue expanding awareness of its work, diversify its donor base, and offer a wider range of volunteer opportunities.
- Spend time and energy ensuring that it continues to have the greatest positive impact on the children, families, and communities it serves for decades to come.



Upcoming CLiF Initiatives

To ensure CLiF accomplishes its goals by 2020, CLiF's Board of Directors and staff have identified more than 40 tangible initiatives that CLiF will undertake over the next three years. The following is a sample of our highest priority initiatives across five key areas:

Programs

Research potential new target audiences (e.g., opioid-affected families), expand length and impact of existing programs (e.g., At-Risk Children and Summer Readers) delivered to existing audiences (e.g., children aged zero to five), and enhance activities that maintain momentum across all programs.

Operations

Develop clear how-to manuals for all aspects of CLiF's operations, and continue enhancing the efficiency of the CLiF donation library.

PR / Communications

Research the latest trends in social media outreach techniques and tools; use them to disseminate CLiF's growing array of literacy materials and resources and to expand awareness of our work.

Development

Develop tactics for attracting more first-time donors and businesses to the CLiF family, and encourage more existing donors to consider including CLiF in their planned giving.

Leadership Transition

Plan for a smooth leadership transition. In 2023, after he has served as Executive Director for 25 years, CLiF founder Duncan McDougall will pass the reins to a new leader. The CLiF Board is already exploring the most effective ways to carry out this leadership transition. CLiF is also researching the potential design and location of a new CLiF headquarters.

Plan for Monitoring and Updating

CLiF's Executive Director and its Board will review the organization's progress against its strategic objectives every six months. The CLiF staff will review the plan every three months. As needed, revisions will be initiated.



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Thank you for donating money
to the library so we have
more books. I hope you still
have some money so you
can take care of your family

