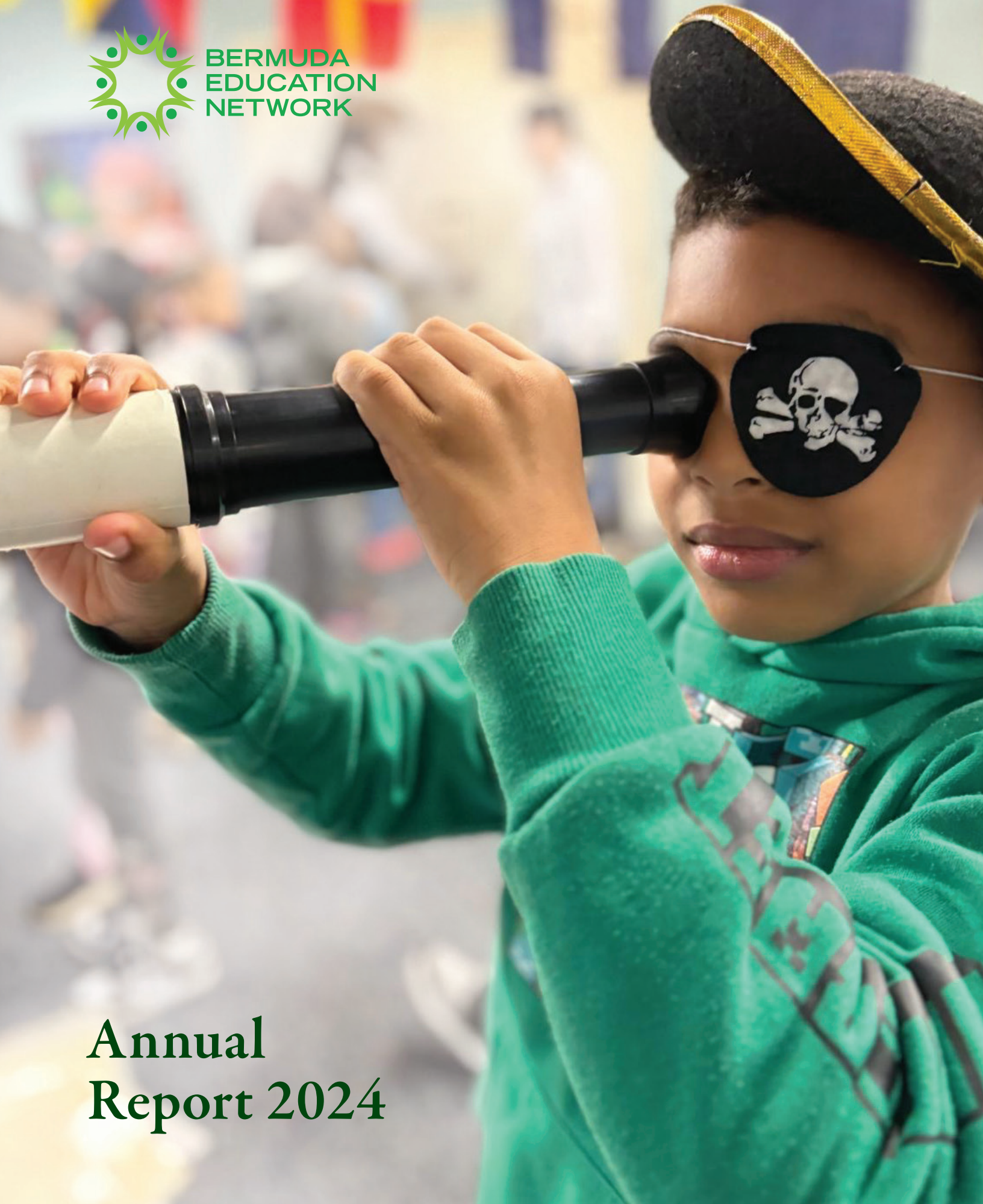




BERMUDA
EDUCATION
NETWORK



Annual Report 2024

High Frequency Words

| | | |
|------|------|-----|
| a | at | go |
| it | no | to |
| am | can | he |
| like | see | up |
| in | come | I |
| le | so | we |
| ord | do | in |
| ny | the | you |
| | | is |



Making a Difference in Education

BEN is on a mission to reduce the percentage of public school students who do not reach reading proficiency by third grade.

Our strategy is simple — we believe in empowering teachers and caregivers and providing them with the support and confidence they need to support students on their literacy journey.

2024 has been a pivotal year where we have achieved:

- More targeted interventions for students reading below grade level
- More workshops, focus groups and convenings for teachers to reflect, co-plan, pool resources and share feedback
- More collaboration with our strongest partners

We received a “game changer” grant of \$250,000 from Fortitude Re. This level of support has allowed us to assemble the expert team we need for more literacy initiatives and to expand our collaboration with key partners.

Our community of educators led by Kelly Rodday and Natalie Roberts work and learn together with the shared goal of helping young children with foundational reading skills and providing more hands-on exploration and immersive experiences.

Life in a School is made up of a Developmental Triangle

- The core instructional programme
- The academic, social, cultural and recreational offerings which are designed to expand student’s opportunities for learning; and
- The support services, which can remove barriers to learning.

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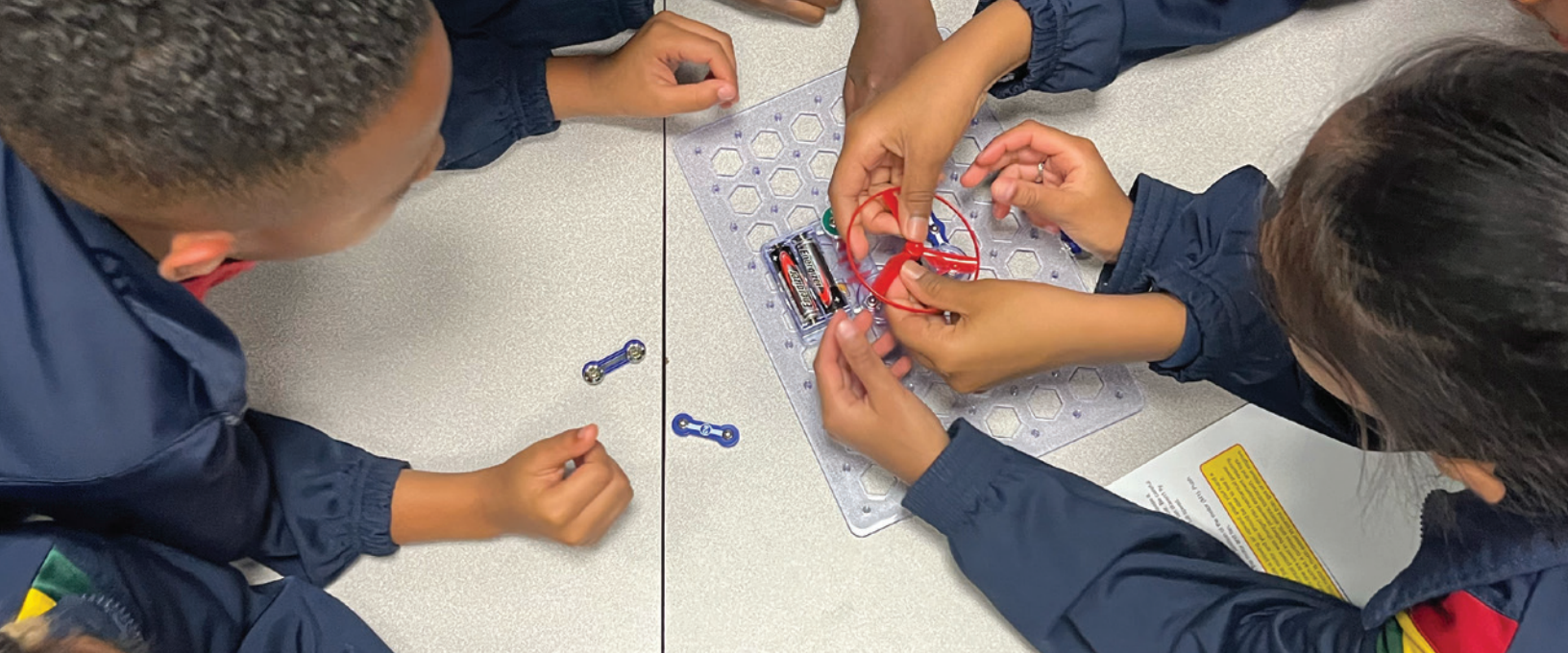




MISSION

To build a professional learning community that increases the opportunities and services available to public school students and teachers.





Brief History of Organisation

Since 2010 Bermuda Education Network has provided opportunities for students and teachers in all of the schools in the public school system. Our first programme, the Math Springboard programme, provided adolescents with a combination of math coaching and work-shadow experience at international businesses. Many students who we introduced to insurance and reinsurance are underwriters, actuaries and brokers in Bermuda today.

We have hosted large teacher professional development seminars with guest speakers including Dr. Shari Tishman from Harvard's Graduate School of Education, (Artful Thinking) and The Science Museum of London, Big Ideas.

In 2016, we suspended the Springboard Programme to shift our focus to the primary school curriculum, concentrating on experiential learning for P5 students through the Horizons Programme and providing free summer camp and sailing opportunities to primary students in P4 and P5.

In 2017, BEN launched our annual Teaching Award which honours public school teachers at every level of the system.

In 2018, we started to develop language enrichment in our Horizons programme while

adding reading support services to the summer camp services we offered in collaboration with BUEI.

In 2020, BEN worked with PTAs to arrange donations of 258 computers to public primary school families who did not have a computer in the home during the pandemic and whose children were struggling to access online education. We raised a total of \$96,393 from a total of 13 donors. In the summer of 2020, we paid for tutors to provide catch-up reading tuition to public primary children attending camp at BUEI.

In 2021, we launched a new programme, the BEN Book Club which was conceived by one of our Award winners to provide a monthly story time for families of pre-schoolers and to support pre-reading skills and school readiness.

In 2022, we made the shift to a full Summer Learning Programme providing reading intervention for P3s with our own team of reading teachers.

In 2022, the Horizons programme achieved the milestone of providing field trips and resources to all of the primary schools and serving years P2-P5.

In 2024, we received a major grant from a Bermuda reinsurer, Fortitude Re to expand the Summer Learning Programme and in 2025 it will be offered to P3 and P4 students. The Horizons Programme, BEN Book Club and Teacher Awards also continue to grow and support teachers and students in the public schools.

Community Need

BEN exists to address educational gaps. The greatest need in the public primary schools is to reduce the number of children at risk of reading failure.

1. FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

Children need to acquire foundational skills in order to “crack the code”. According to the Science of Reading, this process starts with the alphabet and phonemic awareness and should be followed by a systematic phonics programme which teaches basic letter-sound correspondence and gradually builds word recognition and retrieval skills.

2. CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

At the same time as learning how to decode, children need to build their bank of knowledge in order to make sense of what they are reading. Starting with our BEN Book Club for pre-schoolers, and continuing with the Horizons Programme, we build content knowledge and vocabulary through field trip experiences and authentic texts which include rich science and history themes.

3. STANDARDS INFORMED

Teachers and parents need help understanding what reading skills students should acquire at each stage of their educational journey. BEN’s reading programmes are created by literacy experts and are designed to ensure that students are mastering standards appropriate for their grade level.

4. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Those responsible for teaching reading need to understand the Science of Reading and have opportunities to learn about how to prevent reading challenges. Our Network brings together educators responsible for reading instruction and supports them with professional development about language and reading.

5. DATA TO INFORM INSTRUCTION

BEN uses reading assessment data to help select students for support, tailor the remediation to meet their needs and design our programmes. We measure accuracy and automaticity rates for word reading and screen for other reading and language challenges.



OUR PROGRAMMES

In Review



HORIZONS

All BPS teachers from P2-P5 can sign up for free experiential learning expeditions with tie-in professional development workshops, and cross-curricular lesson plan support. We collaborated with Bermuda Sloop Foundation, Kaleidoscope Arts Foundation, BUEI, The Agra Living Institute, the St. Georges Historical Society and the St. David's Historical Society.

NEW this year! School Garden support in collaboration with Agra Living.

223 EXPEDITIONS ATTENDED BY 2,989 STUDENTS AND 96 TEACHERS

BEN BOOK CLUB

Creates an opportunity for children to develop language skills at the pre-reading stage, such as phonemic awareness, rhyme and repetition.

Fun activities and crafts are combined in the monthly story time events.

46 FAMILIES RECEIVED FREE ACTIVITIES & BOOKS WORTH \$150+



SUMMER LEARNING

Intensive three-week summer reading intervention provided by specialist teachers and tutors with enrichment from Kaleidoscope Arts Foundation.

41 STUDENTS COMPLETED THE PROGRAMME

LITERACY CONNECTIONS

In October 2024, we launched a professional development series for reading teachers and classroom teachers.

50 EDUCATORS ATTENDED FOUR WORKSHOPS



OUTSTANDING TEACHER AWARDS

BEN's annual Outstanding Teacher Awards recognises the accomplishments of exceptional teachers in public schools and provides grants and support for teacher leadership opportunities. The 2024 winner was Natalie Roberts, Deputy Principal and Reading Teacher at St. George's Prep.

9 LOCAL TEACHERS RECEIVED \$1000 & ATTENDED A CEREMONY HOSTED AT THE LOREN



Horizons Programme

The Bermuda Education Network's Horizons Programme continues to play a vital role in supporting curriculum enrichment through experiential learning. In 2024, the programme engaged all 17 public primary schools, with many classes attending multiple field trips. Over 500 students participated in enriching, hands-on educational experiences that deepened their understanding of science, social studies, the arts, and more.

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

Horizons offers students the chance to connect classroom learning with real-world exploration through coordinated field trips to local cultural and environmental institutions. Each trip aligns with the Ministry of Education's curriculum and is accompanied by detailed lesson plans and follow-up activities, ensuring long-term learning outcomes.

EQUITY AND ACCESS

A core goal of the Horizons Programme is to promote education equity. By removing financial and logistical barriers, Horizons ensures all students—regardless of background—can access meaningful learning experiences outside the classroom.

“My class and I thoroughly enjoyed the lesson and activity presented by KAF about local artist, Mr. Chesley Trott and his bronze sculpture ‘We Arrive.’ Our class featured Mr. Chesley Trott for our school’s Annual Bermudian Black History Museum so the students already knew the back story for this particular piece of art work depicting Bermuda’s enslavement and emancipation history. It was great to have this lesson to reinforce and reinterpret the topic.”

PARTNERSHIPS

The programme's success is built on strong partnerships:

- Kaleidoscope Arts Foundation and Bermuda Underwater Exploration Institute delivered 10 of the 14 themed units in 2024.
- Agra Living Institute supported the development of school gardens and nature-based learning. A range of new lesson plans and accompanying story books about gardening will be available in 2025.
- St. George's Historical Society and St. David's Island Historical Society were recognised at BEN's Annual Teacher Awards for their role in helping students explore Bermuda's early settler history.

TEACHER ENGAGEMENT

Teachers are encouraged to access BEN's online lesson resources and to sign up for up to four field trips per academic year. The continued enthusiasm from both students and educators highlights the programme's enduring value and impact.





Growing new opportunities

In November 2024, we expanded the Horizons programme with new School Gardening support in collaboration with The AgraLiving Institute. Launched with an initial project at Paget Primary, our collaboration brings hands on gardening experience to students, teaching them about sustainability, nature and healthy nutrition. The new garden support falls into three categories — garden design support for creating new or enhancing existing school gardens; volunteer community days and gardening activities and lesson plans.

The new garden at Paget Primary has been an early success story and was a great community effort. BEN raised funds for this and AgraLiving worked with Nature's Compass on designing and transforming an unused space into a vibrant "outdoor classroom". We had volunteers from

Wilton Re, the Garden Club, the Botanical Society and Bermuda is Love who came to help us to construct the garden in November and we are now seeing the amazing results of that work.

We are also helping three other schools with existing gardens and offering help from AgraLiving as "stewards". The idea is to provide teachers with just enough support to make the option of a gardening lesson really appealing. Teachers are busy, so we can't expect them to take on garden management on top of everything else. The support from AgraLiving is intended to remove any obstacles to making use of a school garden and we hope BEN's new range of lesson plans will inspire teachers to give gardening with their students a try.

AgraLiving and BEN hope that the gardening projects continues to blossom in 2025 and will help to put nature at the heart of learning in Bermuda's public primary schools.

Summer Programme

BEN believes that if we provide support at the classroom and individual child level in the areas of language, literacy and numeracy as well as social emotional learning, and if we partner with parents, teachers and community members, we can increase the likelihood of positive life outcomes for at risk children.

The Fortitude Re Summer Learning Programme provided intensive reading support to students at the critical milestone of P3 when they need

to achieve mastery of reading skills in order to move onto more advanced texts in upper primary.

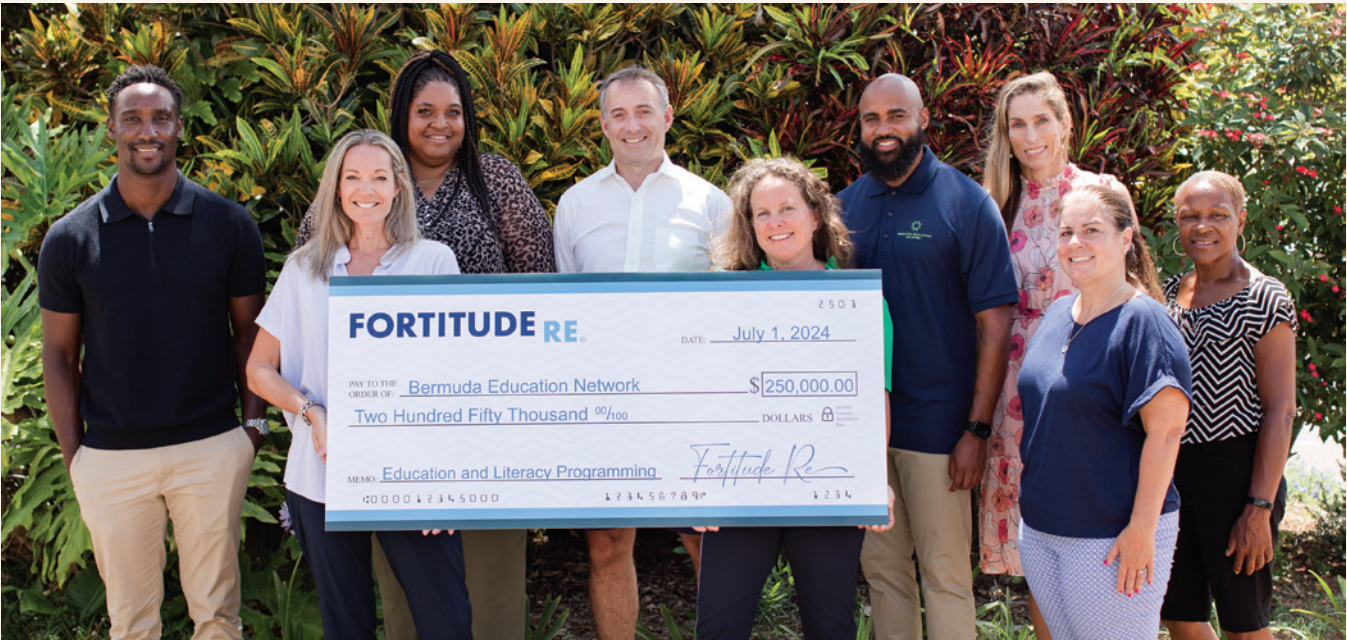
44 students referred to us at the end of their P3 year by their school Reading Teacher received an intensive “catch up” course during July.

There are numerous ingredients that go into a successful summer intervention. Months are spent on curriculum planning to create a “tailor-made” programme combining research-based reading lessons with arts and language. Most important is the recruitment of a great team of reading teachers, tutors and interns.

Since 2022, BEN has provided summer remediation for young students struggling with foundational skills.

Our summer programme gets results! In 2024, after three weeks of intensive phonics instruction, **98% of 40 participating students showed improvements in Automaticity and Accuracy. 100% made gains in word identification** (both phonetically regular words and “trick words”).

13 students reached a 95% score in their assessment which means they achieved reading proficiency. Through extra support in the summer, these students were able to catch up with their classmates and no longer needed individual reading support once they returned to school.





Summer Internship

“Invest in our teachers and our children will succeed.” – BARACK OBAMA

BEN’s summer internship in 2024 provided five interns with paid work experience composed of a two-week placement in a school and three weeks working at BEN’s summer learning programme. The placements in schools were a 2024 innovation and were warmly received by the principals at Gilbert Institute, Paget Primary, St. George’s Prep, Lyceum and Purvis who welcomed having an extra pair of hands at the end of the summer term.

After the placements, interns were encouraged to take a break and enjoy a bit of travel or Bermuda summer fun before returning to work at our summer programme in July where they run

the after-school care at the camp, provide one-on-one attention for students who need social emotional support and teach writing in small groups.

The internships are primarily designed to provide undergraduates with training for reading instruction, including teaching the rudiments of reading and writing and doing assessments. In most cases, teaching colleges do not offer this kind of hands-on training about reading instruction until master’s level and we are finding that this internship has been invaluable for teachers considering specialising in special education for children with language-based learning differences. The internship also provides more general opportunities to apply the learning from university education programs in a real-life setting. Interns are supervised by highly experienced teachers and have the opportunity to increase their responsibilities each summer until they qualify.

“For me, this internship has been an incredible journey—growing both personally and professionally while shaping the futures of young learners. If you’re looking to dive into education and make a real difference, this is the perfect place to start!” – ALEXANDRA CALAURO, INTERN 2022-2024



Literacy Connections

Fall 2024 saw the launch of our exciting new professional development series with support from our Literacy Partners, Fortitude Re and Bermuda Centre for Creative Learning.

Natalie Roberts, Deputy Principal and Reading Teacher at St. George's Prep, and Stephanie Hughes, West End Primary's Reading Teacher delivered a session focused on decoding strategies for early readers. BCCL's Cynthia Armano revealed how Structured Word Inquiry can produce vocabulary and spelling strategies which deepen students' understanding of language and foster curiosity around word structure.

Makeese Gilbert, a P2 teacher and English Language Arts leader, explored how read-alouds can serve as powerful tools for literacy, social studies, science, and social-emotional development. Teachers were shown how to strategically select texts that promote learning across subjects, strengthening both reading and broader classroom connections. Karen Franks, Bermudian author of *Abigail's Dream Adventures* inspired educators with her life mission of creating stories that encourage children to believe in themselves and develop a love of reading.

For upper primary educators, Dr. Patricia Paugh presented strategies for helping students engage with disciplinary texts in science and social studies. Educators walked away with practical tools to build literacy skills while teaching content-rich subjects, helping students navigate complex texts with confidence.

Teaching Awards

The Bermuda Education Network Teaching Awards is an annual event designed to honour and celebrate the outstanding contributions of educators within Bermuda's public school system. The awards highlight the dedication, creativity, and excellence that teachers bring to their classrooms, ensuring that students have the opportunity to thrive and succeed.

The BEN Teaching Awards were created with several key goals in mind. The first is to recognise excellence by showcasing exceptional educators who demonstrate innovative teaching practices and make a measurable impact on student outcomes. By highlighting these individuals, the awards serve as an inspiration for others, encouraging them to push the boundaries of traditional teaching methods and foster dynamic learning environments.

Another goal is to inspire growth within the education system. By recognising teachers who are going above and beyond in their roles, the awards promote an environment of continuous improvement. Teachers are encouraged to innovate, experiment with new strategies, and build on their professional development to create the best learning experiences for their students.

The BEN Teaching Awards also aim to promote collaboration among educators. The awards celebrate those who actively foster a culture of sharing and teamwork, whether by working alongside colleagues to improve teaching practices, organising professional development opportunities, or implementing collaborative

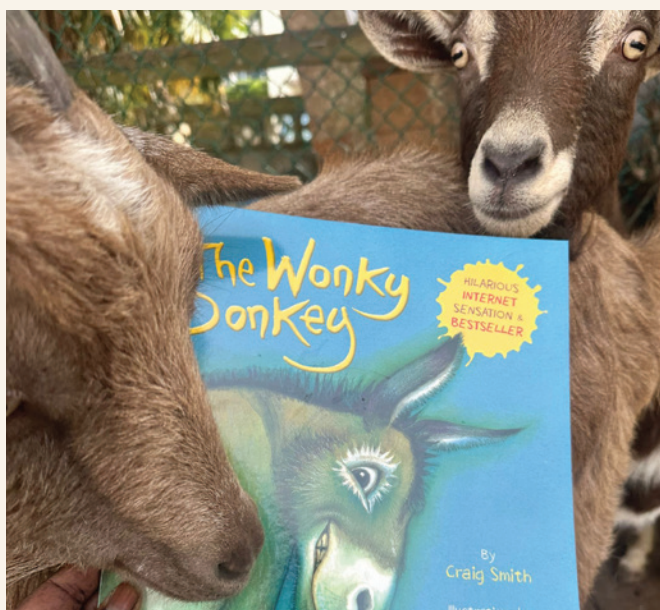
projects that benefit the entire school community. This spirit of cooperation is essential for advancing education as a whole and ensuring that the best practices are shared and adopted across Bermuda's schools.

In 2024, the BEN Teaching Awards recognised educators who made achievements in several key areas: Enhancing Resources, Engaging Students, Inspiring Learning, Innovative Teaching, and Fostering Collaboration. This criteria celebrates teachers who are making significant strides in improving resources, creating interactive and dynamic learning experiences, inspiring students to reach their full potential, employing creative and effective teaching strategies, and promoting teamwork within the school environment.

Our winner this year was Natalie Roberts from St. George's Preparatory School, recognised for her leadership in implementing the University of Florida Literacy Institute (UFLI) Phonics Programme. Ms. Roberts has made a significant impact on literacy instruction in Bermuda, providing professional development and hands-on support for teachers across the island. Her efforts are a testament to the goals of the BEN Teaching Awards, which celebrate educators who make lasting contributions to both their students and the broader educational community.

The BEN Teaching Awards continue to serve as a powerful reminder of the critical role educators play in shaping the future of Bermuda. Through the recognition of these outstanding teachers, the awards not only celebrate achievements but also foster a culture of continuous improvement, collaboration, and innovation within the education system.





BEN Book Club

The BEN Book Club is for preschoolers and Primary 1 (P1) students as they begin their educational journey. Focused on fostering a love of reading, strengthening language development, and building cultural awareness, the programme combines interactive literacy experiences with caregiver engagement to prepare young learners for long-term success in school.

The BEN Book Club monthly meetups include interactive story time with a volunteer followed by fun activities that caregivers participate in with their child and which help to build their confidence for supporting their child's literacy development. The books selected reflect a wide range of cultures and global perspectives, introducing children to both familiar and new experiences through literature.

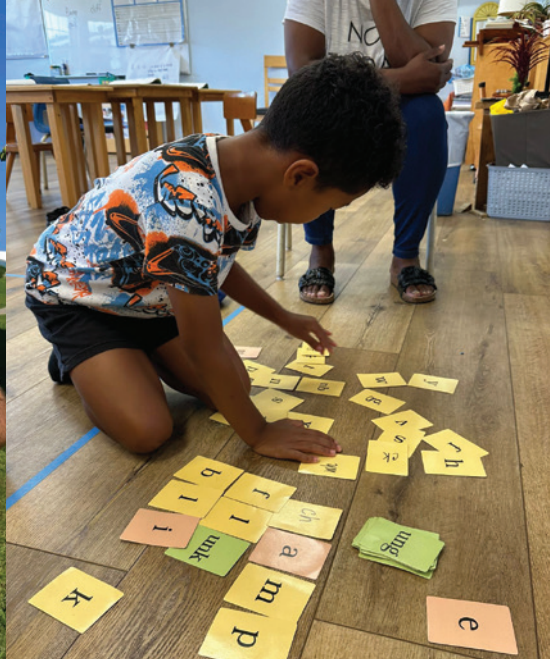
A core feature of the programme is the distribution of free books to participating families. At each session, every family receives a personal copy of the featured book to take

home, ensuring that families can continue to reinforce vocabulary and encouraging positive associations with reading, helping to build a lifelong love of books from an early age.

In 2024, our new network teacher from Southampton Pre-school, Shunna Muhammed, took over the BEN Book Club role and has helped BEN to increase the percentage of public pre-school students and their parents attending. We have also strengthened connections with Lyceum and Victor Scott Pre-schools and we are grateful to Sarah Brown and Gladnora Ming for their support.

Throughout the year, the BEN Book Club distributes up to 12 books worth \$160 per child, and we have 28 families currently enrolled for this year. We've noticed that on rainy days the number can increase dramatically! In the winter months, families with young children really appreciate educational indoors activities which don't involve screens and we are grateful to Connectech for being our "bad weather" location this year.

"Our family loves the BEN Book Club. BEN does a wonderful job with every aspect of this programme, from the diversity and quality of book selections to the high caliber of activities for the club itself. Bermuda needs more enriching events like BBC for families to participate in together. Thank you BEN and Fortitude Re!" - BEN BOOK CLUB TESTIMONIAL FROM CATHERINE HAY



Our Donors

GENERAL OPERATING

\$100,000

Allan & Gill Gray Philanthropy

READING PROGRAMME DONOR

\$250,000

Fortitude Re

SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAMME DONOR

\$25,000

Centennial Bermuda Foundation

AUDITORS

Deloitte

HORIZONS PROGRAMME DONORS

\$50,000

Oakley Capital Investments

\$8,000 - \$20,000

Ascot

Aspen Bermuda Limited

Hannover Re

Hiscox

Kattegat Limited

Peter Cundill Foundation

SOMPO

Wilton Re

TEACHER AWARDS TITLE SPONSOR

\$30,000

Allied World Assurance

GENEROUS DONATIONS

\$2,000 - \$10,000

CNO Bermuda Re

Conyers

Liberty Mutual

TGF Charitable Fund

The Network

Two new teachers joined BEN's team of Network Teachers in 2024: Natalie Roberts supports other educators through our new Literacy Connections Series and Shunna Muhammed, a teacher at Southampton Preschool, runs our BEN Book Club.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2024

| | |
|---------------------|----------------|
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Fiona Murdoch
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Natalie Roberts
Tiffany Bean
J'ree Burgess
Shunna Muhammed

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HORIZONS PARTNERS

AgraLiving Institute
Kaleidoscope Arts Foundation
Bermuda Underwater Exploration Institute
Bermuda Sloop Foundation
St. George's Historical Society
St. David's Island Historical Society

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Helen Paynter
Stephanie Hughes
Ashley Phipps

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Kyiah Robinson
Ines Bolarinho
Harlee Purvey



Bermuda Education Network Financial Highlights

JANUARY - DECEMBER 2023

| | 2024 |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| TOTAL INCOME | BD\$ 546,681.53* |
| Programme Expenses | |
| Experiential learning programmes | BD\$ 142,369.09 |
| Reading Programmes | BD\$ 121,131.83 |
| Teacher Development | BD\$ 33,792.22 |
| Total Programme Expenses | BD\$ 297,293.14 |
| Payroll Expenses | BD\$ 82,775.00 |
| Operating Expenses | BD\$ 22,304.84 |
| Marketing Expenses | BD\$ 16,051.38 |
| Audit Fees | BD\$ 21,660.00 |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | BD\$ 440,084.36 |
| Surplus | BD\$ 106,597.17 |

* Includes \$124,500 of donations deferred for 2025 programmes





BERMUDA EDUCATION
NETWORK

MAILING ADDRESS:

Bermuda Education Network
48 St. John's Road, Pembroke HM 07

EMAIL: admin@ben.bm

PHONE: (441) 505-5020

LET'S GET SOCIAL:

f @BermudaEducationNetwork

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