



# Strong Start to reading™

"Making a difference in the life of a child"

Strong Start Annual Newsletter • December 2023

## Inside

**By the Numbers**..... 2

**Letters, Sounds and Words™**

From Chore to More ..... 2

**Baby Connections®**

Celebration of Language, Literacy  
and Connection ..... 3

**Get Ready for School™**

Through Miss Pamela's Eyes ..... 3

**Thank You to Our Generous**

**Donors** ..... 4-5

**News & Events**

A Student Journey to Employment ..... 6

Materials Volunteers Donate 2,000  
Hours ..... 6

Tools of the Trade ..... 6

Volunteer Wins Youth Appreciation  
Award ..... 6

Wired for Sound with a Right  
to Read ..... 7

**Strong Start Board of Directors** ..... 6

**Stronger Together: Our Program**  
Partners ..... 7

**Strong Start Achieves 'Very Low  
Risk' Rating** ..... 8

**Hooks & Letters – 3D Printer**  
**Donation** ..... 8

Detailed program results and stories can be  
found on our website: [www.strongstart.ca](http://www.strongstart.ca)

Follow us on social media



“

*Volunteering with Strong Start  
is a highlight of my week. It is  
a joy to be a part of helping a  
child along the road to reading  
success.*

”

*Letters, Sounds and Words  
Volunteer Coach, 2023*

## A Year of Change and Growth

This has been another exciting year at Strong Start! We have grown our program partnerships, our geographic reach and most importantly our impact! Last year 4,398 children benefitted from Strong Start programming. Our ambitious *Letters, Sounds and Words™* program expansion is going well with 79 new schools added last school year, an organizational annual record. We are well under way adding even more this year. *Get Ready for School™* experienced a full, uninterrupted in-person program year with 360 at-risk preschoolers better prepared for school this past September. *Baby Connections®* welcomed new partners as far east as Renfrew and as far west as Windsor, with 844 babies 6 -12 months from Waterloo Region and beyond getting a strong start in their lives with the support of their loving parents and caregivers and the coaching and resources the program provides.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) was at the centre of our work this year. Preparing for the rapid expansion of the *Letters, Sounds and Words* program, we first took time to do an extensive review of this program using an EDI lens. We engaged external experts and stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds and lived experiences to bring new perspectives to our work. This evaluation showed us that 55% of our games and activities could be enhanced for even greater representation. It is so important that children and volunteers see themselves in our program materials. The London Community Foundation gave Strong Start a generous first-time Vitality Grant to assist us with this work and to help cover the costs of retrofitting our current program kits with the new materials. We have enlisted the help of a Canadian artist named Eryn McCarthy to assist us with the new illustrations for our games. We plan to do a similar review of our other two programs in 2024.

We have also experienced some staff and Board changes this year, as some members took on new roles and others moved on to new opportunities outside of Strong Start. We are always grateful for the talent and dedication of the Strong Start Team and volunteers. With change come opportunities to grow and reimagine to meet the future needs of our evolving charity, programs, and communities. A huge thank you to our stakeholders: program partners, volunteers, donors, families, staff, and literacy champions. We could not help thousands of children each year without you. We hope you will enjoy the stories in this year's report and feel proud of the contribution you have made in supporting children's right to read.

With heartfelt appreciation,



*Machel Denison*

**Machel Denison,**  
Chief Executive Officer



*J King*

**Jennifer King,**  
Board Chair



# Impact That Lasts.....



**Letters, Sounds and Words™**  
A Strong Start to reading program

## From Chore to More! Jayden's Story

*Machelle Denison*

Jayden started Junior Kindergarten during COVID, and the pandemic robbed him of a full year of classroom learning and a strong start to school. September of 2022 was tough. Starting SK, Jayden did not enjoy school. Being shy, he struggled to join in the learning. His parents read with him nightly and practised his alphabet. Reading with his parents was a chore for Jayden. He took no interest in the books and his eyes searched the room for something interesting.

In February 2023, in a letter from school, Yasmin, Jayden's mom, learned that he had been chosen for the *Letters, Sounds and Words™* program. At first, she felt sad that he was struggling with his

“

**Jayden had cracked the code to reading!**

”

reading, but then happy that the school cared about her son and had identified early that Jayden needed help. Ironically, Jayden's dad, Jamil, is a volunteer Director on Strong Start's Board and he eagerly shared with everyone that his son was in the program.

Jamil shared that suddenly, "learning was game time fun!" Jayden loved his coaching sessions with his volunteer and playing all the different games. With his learning success he became excited about the letter names and sounds and the way they went together to make words. Jayden had cracked the code to reading! He wanted to read everything. In the car he read signs, "look mom... Code Ninja". He was picking up adult books and searching the text for the words he recognized. "Look there is 'and' and 'the', "Mom, I am reading your book!"



Jayden starts his day with a game. His mom traces letters on his back with her finger and he names the letters. Yasmin shared that now when they would go to Indigo to buy a gift, Jayden races to the books instead of the toys and looks for books with themes he is interested in, like basketball. His favourite book from the library is "New Pants." Jayden brings that book home every week in addition to two new ones. He loves reading!

Now with his new skills and confidence he is helping his little sister, Ayla, who is in JK, sound out words. When I asked Yasmin and Jamil how they were feeling about Jayden's reading success they said, "it is true joy."



SCAN ME

◀ **LEARN MORE**

**22 years  
and  
counting!**



**Strong Start to reading™**  
"Making a difference in the life of a child"

**Thank You!** To date Strong Start has **400** annual program sites, has reached **56,171** children through **634,908** volunteer hours, **37,416** volunteers and **YOUR** generous donations.

The numbers above reflect the totals for the 2022/2023 program year for *Letters, Sounds and Words™*, *Get Ready for School™* & *Baby Connections®*

## 2022-2023 PROGRAM YEAR by the numbers



Ontario by FreeVectorMaps.com

## Strong Start Timeline





## A Celebration of Language, Literacy and Connection

Iwona Dmitrienko

Madeline and her baby found the path to *Baby Connections*™ through EarlyON and the Waterloo Public Library. As a new mom without nearby family or friends with babies, this program became her bridge to other parents. She participated in the program at the St. Boniface EarlyON with her son, Bowen, who was 8 months old at the time. When asked about her experience, she stated warmly, "We loved the program."

Madeline is a parent and an elementary teacher with a Master's Degree in Child Language Acquisition, bringing a unique,

“*There is much to language that’s beyond words. It carries the richness of culture, heritage and identity.*”

dual lens to the experience. Personally, she cherished the opportunity to connect with other moms and praised the Facilitator’s care in checking-in with parents. Her son, whom she termed a “social butterfly”, adored the songs and exploring the textured “Numbers” book from the *Baby Connections* kit.

Professionally, she was heartened by the program’s alignment with her education, especially its practical strategies and their theoretical underpinnings. While she was familiar with much of the language development information, she gained fresh insights into the baby’s socio-emotional and overall growth and how it is intricately linked to language and literacy.

Although Madeline’s family is a single

language household, a particular message from the Facilitator struck a chord. Madeline passionately believes in the value of using home language with babies, seeing them as repositories of culture. She emphasized that language transcends mere words. She remarked: “There is much to language that’s beyond words. It carries the richness of culture, heritage and identity.” This was echoed in the message shared in our program, the encouragement for families to continue using their home language with their baby and the reassurance that this would not impede language development and that in fact, the same neural connections for language are formed in the brain regardless of the language spoken at home.

When asked about recommending the program, Madeline’s response was unequivocal: “Absolutely, and I already have.” Her experience extends far beyond mere participation; it’s a testament to the profound impact of connection, education, and the celebration of language and literacy.



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**Get Ready for School™**

A Strong Start to reading program

Based on the research of Dr. Juliana Baciu 2010

## Through Miss Pamela’s Eyes

Pamela Copat, Lead Instructor

*Get Ready for School*™ is the most rewarding program I’ve had the privilege to be part of. It’s easy to see the positive impact the program has on the children. They start at varying levels of abilities and development. Many speak no English, are new to the country or exhibit exceptionalities. Some coming with a diagnosis. Post-COVID, most have little socialization, have only been in the care of family, or are new to environments with lots of children. Separation anxiety is dealt with lovingly by the Team, for both the guilt-ridden parent and the upset child. Tears, aggression, vomiting, and withdrawal are common at the start of the program, but remarkably, the children outgrow these fears, and the anxiety disappears. I am surprised how quickly they adapt. We establish routines, set boundaries and the children begin to flourish. What begins as a slightly chaotic room of children all moving in different

directions, blossoms into a collective learning space, preparing children who listen, follow instructions and routines, use manners, wait, line up, take turns, engage appropriately with others, and make friends. After the first month of programming, I had a parent comment on the noticeable improvement of her child’s behaviour at home, “all thanks to your program, she proclaimed.” Others noted the displeasure their children had on the days they couldn’t go to “school”, as they refer to it. They commented that the skills and competencies the children develop while in the program are impressive. They develop increased letter, sound and word recognition and new vocabulary, all are examples of their academic success. Equally important are the drastic improvements we see in classroom learning behaviours.

The parents / guardians of the children are positively impacted by program,



“*The most moving parent impact I saw this year was the ‘village’ they created.*”

too. Not only reaping the benefits of their child’s development but also by way of parent supports. During parent meetings we share what children are learning, the teaching strategies used and model how to support at-home learning. Many resources are provided to families to keep including letter cards and decodable books. The most moving parent impact I saw this year was the “village” they created. By being together and sharing a common experience, they formed friendships. They supported each other and showed care and concern. A community and a sense of belonging is a gift. Seeing children’s progress, the families’ and instructors’ feelings of pride and accomplishment, and the true relationships formed are what make this incredibly rewarding. *Get Ready for School* is truly giving children a Strong Start!



SCAN ME

◀ **LEARN MORE**



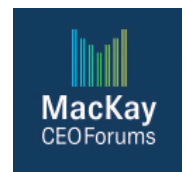
# Thank You.....

***We couldn't do this without you.***

Your financial support enables us to offer our quality programs.



An agency of the Government of Ontario.  
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario.



Optimist Club of Hespeler  
Optimist Club of Lakeshore Village  
Optimist Club of Waterloo North



Alex and Trish Brown Family Fund  
Alex Schmidt Memorial Fund  
Collins-Wright Fund  
Daidy & James Flavelle Fund  
David Yach & Eleanor Yach Family Fund  
Don Hutzler & Elaine King Fund  
Gerri Williston Endowment Fund  
Isabel & Laurence M. Savage Fund  
Lonsdale and Roberta Schofield Fund  
Machelle and Tony Denison Family Fund  
School Sisters of Notre Dame Legacy Fund  
Steffensen Family Fund  
Terry and Margaret Osbourne Family Fund  
The Jim and Sue Hallman Family Fund  
The Marion Edgar Fund  
Waterloo Region Community Fund  
Waterloo Region International Plowing Match 1995 & 2012  
Woolwich Community Fund



Building our Community. Investing in the Future.  
City of Brantford Community Grant Program  
Community Fund  
Donald and Jo-Anne Wilkin Fund



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Kitchener-Conestoga Rotary Club  
Rotary Club of Brantford Sunrise  
Rotary Club of Dunnville  
Rotary Club of Kitchener-Grand River



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We're here for good.



KITCHENER  
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COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION



United Way

United Way Brant  
United Way East Ontario  
United Way Haldimand Norfolk  
United Way Oxford  
United Way Waterloo Region Communities



William & Mary Mackesy Fund

Bickerton Family Fund  
Brian & Pauline Fisher Fund  
Erb & Good Family Funeral Home  
Community Fund  
Jim & Sue Hallman Family Fund  
Horace & Rita Coelho & Family -  
Unsung Heroes Fund  
Sharon & Paul Good Fund

## Thank you to all our financial and in-kind supporters.

Your investment in helping young children read is making a lasting difference and will pay dividends now and in the future.

### Foundations

Baile Family Foundation  
Caledonia Community Foundation  
Canada Helps  
Literacy For All Fund  
Centre Wellington Community Foundation  
D.H. Gordon Foundation  
Lessif Family Fund  
PayPal Giving Fund Canada  
S.M. Blair Family Foundation  
Samuel W. Stedman Foundation  
Social Venture Partners - Waterloo Region

### Corporate

Bell Match Donations  
Farm Mutual Reinsurance Plan Inc.  
Fiberoptics Technology Incorporated  
Germania Mutual Insurance  
IMAX Corporation  
Manulife  
RLB Management Partnership  
SAP

### Clubs, Schools, Groups

Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario  
Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association  
Retired Teachers of Ontario District 11  
The Maycourt Club of Kitchener-Waterloo  
The Probuc Club of Kitchener-Conestoga, Club 51

### Third Party Events

Elmira Maple Syrup Festival  
Julie House Facebook Birthday

### Government

City of Brantford  
City of Kitchener

### In-Kind

2WA Consulting - Anne Bermingham  
Tony Denison  
Aagam Jhaveri  
Advica Health  
Arrowsmith Corporation  
Carolyn Vandenberg Coaching & Consulting  
Chris Howlet  
Carol Jankowski  
Fiskars Brands Inc.  
Loise Kool & Galt  
Shannon Morris  
Jeff Posluns  
Bill Schwarz  
Shop 3D.ca  
Simpson Print  
TechSoup Canada and Partners

### Individuals

2WA (35)  
Stephen Allcock  
Alan Alpasha  
Ena Arnot  
Marsha Auxilly  
Janet L. Baker  
Cheryl Bauman  
Greg Billo  
Stephen Brock  
Douglas Bundock  
Lyse Cameron  
Steve & Patricia Cameron  
Shaun Carroll  
Dove Champagne  
Mandeep Chauhan  
Zikun (Jerry) Chen  
Ron & Rita Cherkewski  
Diane Cherry  
James Cote  
Benjamin Creary  
Bill & Mary Cressman  
Addie Denison  
Tony & Machele Denison  
Jessica Dewell  
Jordon Dixon

Ryan Dougherty  
Tania Dunn  
Susan Dusick  
Brooke Eby  
Laura Eby  
Dr. Jane Fancy  
Heather Farrow  
Holly Feeney  
Constance Finn  
Suzanne Fisk  
Lewis & Inge Ford  
Kathryn & Bradley Frederick  
Rosemary Griffiths  
Claudia Haack  
Julie Hause  
Margaret Hennig  
Renate Himmel-Hobson  
Christopher & Lynn Howlet  
Mr. & Mrs. Ilse Gessner  
Carol Jankowski  
Robert Kelly  
Janet Kent  
Joan and Penny Kibble  
Jennifer King & Christopher McIntyre  
Mary Klymko  
Senem Lacasse  
Monique Laderoute  
Karen Lintott  
Toby Little  
Deborah MacLatchy  
David Maggiori  
Ella Marklevitz  
Theresa Marks  
Judy McDonald  
Gabe McDonough  
Norma & William McMillan  
Toby Merritt  
Hulene Montgomery & Michael Graham  
Colette Moffat  
Kristina Montero  
Claire Morcos  
Bryan & Jackie Murdoch  
Suzanne Murdoch  
Stan & Donna Nahrgang

Raluca Nuta  
Sean O'Brien  
Gudrun Oswald  
Susanne Palmer  
Jennifer Parke  
Janet Peddigrew  
Sue Peterson  
Veronica Popova  
Jithin Pradeep  
Beverly Pullen  
Sid Ratna  
Hank & Pam Salin  
Beverly & Stan Saliwonchik  
David Sangster  
Irma Sawatzky  
Bob & Mieke Schroeder  
Norman Schwegel  
Amy Sergi-Hammond  
Kendra Siddall  
Ken Silvester  
Arthur & Margaret Sonnenburg  
Caitlin & Craig Smith  
Steve Takacs  
Miriam Trump  
Amalea Tshilds  
Cliff Voisin  
Scott Wagler  
Brian Webb  
Scott Williams  
Anne Winge  
Julie Witmer  
Christina Young  
Marilyn Young

### Other Gifts

Thank you for all named memorial gifts received in memory of:  
Susan Bloos  
Joan Germann  
Susan Gerth  
Lynda Silvester

Strong Start thanks everyone who made a gift in honour or in memory of a family member or friend.

*This list reflects gifts received between July 1, 2022 and November 28, 2023*



**Strong Start to reading™**  
"Making a difference in the life of a child"

# News & Events.....

## A Student Volunteer's Journey to Part-time Employment

Saisha Pilankar, a Bluevale Collegiate Institute grade 11 student, inspired by the mission of Strong Start, volunteered as a Materials Assistant in the summer of 2022. She quickly demonstrated excellent organizational skills and leadership. Recognizing her competence, Strong Start offered Saisha a part-time job as an Inventory Assistant for the school year. The role expanded to a full-time summer position in 2023, supporting material volunteers. Her passion for helping people fuels her desire to create positive spaces in the future. Reflecting on her journey, Saisha shared, "Strong Start is a fulfilling experience of learning and connection, all to help our future readers." To read Saisha's full story, scan the QR code.



## Materials Volunteers Donate Over 2,000 Hours of Time

Our materials volunteers generously donate gifts of time to help assemble the games and activities for our programs. We are incredibly grateful for our weekly volunteers, summer volunteers including high school students, and corporate volunteers from Gore, IMAX, SAP, and Vanguard. In the past year, a remarkable 2,064 hours were donated by 80 volunteers. Their support ensures more and more children learn to read as we expand our programs across Ontario.



## Tools of the Trade - OTF Capital Grant

Last fall 2022 Strong Start asked, and the Ontario Trillium Foundation answered! A successful, generous OTF capital grant of \$104,000 gave Strong Start new laptops, a Neat Board for video conferencing, many stand-up assembly tables for the volunteers to use in our warehouse, a power-washer for our floors and power opener for our doors, to keep our facility clean and 100% accessible for staff, volunteers, and guests. This generous financial support also provided for many materials-handling aids such as plastic pallets, bins, totes and rolling racks. A clean, safe, well-organized environment, carefully planned work, and a meaningful contribution to children's literacy keeps our valued volunteers coming back! The technology tools this grant provided ensure our small team is connected to each other and our stakeholders, while working with ease and efficiency.

## Meet the Board of Directors

### Board of Directors:

**Jennifer King** Board Chair  
**Teresa Norris-Lue** Vice-Chair  
**Jodi Ritter, CPA, CMA** Treasurer  
**Dr. Kristiina Montero** Secretary  
**Sydney Pereira** Director  
**Jamil Shamji** Director  
**Kendra Siddall** Director

Please visit our [website](#) to read more about our team.

Thank you to all our program and operation staff and volunteers who deliver and support *Letters, Sounds and Words, Get Ready for School* and *Baby Connections*. We are so grateful for your enthusiasm and time to help children learn to read. We couldn't do this without you.

## Materials Volunteer Wins Optimist Club Youth Appreciation Award

Austin Richardson was selected as one of three winners for the 2023 Optimist Club of Waterloo North's Youth Appreciation Award. He joined



Strong Start as a volunteer at the age of 14 and has been assembling games and activities ever since. His reliability, dedication, and friendly demeanor have made him an integral part of the team. Volunteering at Strong Start has provided Austin with a meaningful position, where he can find value, a sense of belonging and appreciation for his many talents.

Congratulations, Austin!

To read the full story, scan the QR code.





# Stronger Together.....



## Get Ready for School™

A Strong Start to reading program

Based on the research of Dr. Juliana Baciu 2010



## Letters, Sounds and Words™

A Strong Start to reading program

- Activa Sportsplex, Kitchener
- Bridgeport Community Centre, Kitchener\*
- Centreville Chicopee Community Centre, Kitchener
- Chandler Mowat Community Centre, Kitchener
- Country Hills Community Centre, Kitchener\*
- Downtown Community Centre, Kitchener
- Forest Heights Community Centre, Kitchener
- Grand View Public School, Cambridge
- Huron Community Centre, Kitchener
- Kinbridge Community Centre, Cambridge
- Kingsdale Community Centre, Kitchener\*
- Langs, Cambridge
- Linwood Community Centre, Linwood
- Stanley Park Community Centre, Kitchener\*
- St. Basil's Catholic Elementary School, Owen Sound
- Victoria Hills Community Centre, Kitchener
- Waterloo Public Library, McCormick Branch, Waterloo
- Williamsburg Community Centre, Kitchener
- Wilmot Family Resource Centre, New Hamburg
- Woolwich Memorial Centre, Elmira

- Bruce County EarlyON
- Cambridge Family Early Years Centre
- Columbus House (Pembroke) Inc.
- EarlyON St. Mary's
- EarlyON Waterloo Region, YMCA of Three Rivers
- Idea Exchange (multiple locations)
- Kitchener Public Library (multiple locations)
- London Public Library
- Project READ Literacy Network (multiple locations)
- Region of Waterloo Healthy Babies Healthy Children
- Region of Waterloo Infant and Child Development Program
- Ready, Set, Go! – Windsor
- Region of Waterloo Public Library (multiple locations)
- Waterloo Public Library (multiple locations)

*\*Sites also offering a Baby Connections program*

*This list reflects program partners between September 1, 2022, to November 1, 2023.*

*For a list of current program partners, please visit our website.*

- **Algonquin & Lakeshore Catholic District School Board**
- **Bluewater District School Board**
- Braemar House School
- **Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board**
- **Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board**
- Ethel Gardiner Public School
- Glen Williams Public School
- **Grand Erie District School Board**
- Jamieson Elementary
- KidsAbility School
- Kitchener-Waterloo Bilingual School
- Koinonia Christian Academy
- Laurentian Hills Christian School
- Lloyd S. King School
- **Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board**
- **Thames Valley District School Board**
- **Waterloo Catholic District School Board**
- **Waterloo Region District School Board**
- **Wellington Catholic District School Board**

### Program Supporters

- Conestoga College
- Fanshawe College
- Mohawk College
- Six Nations Polytechnic
- University of Guelph
- University of Waterloo
- Western University
- Wilfrid Laurier University

## Wired for Sound with a Right to Read

When we are born, our brains are wired to develop oral language, by hearing sounds and learning words. Our brains are not wired to read.

In February 2022, the Ontario Human Rights Commission released their Right to Read Report. After comprehensive evaluation of the literacy landscape in Ontario and children and youth's reading acquisition levels, they created this report along with recommendations for changes to how children should be taught to read, based on the Science of Reading. With the development of oral language, children learn the names of objects, relationships, places, animals, spaces and places.



Science is clear that we must explicitly teach children the alphabetic symbols and the sounds that are associated with each. They must learn that the arrangement of the symbols and the sounds they make combine to make a word, which they can then associate with the word in their bank of vocabulary. This is sometimes referred to as cracking the code. As the child makes

these critical associations, their neuro-connections and reading brain develops. At first, children sound out the word, or decode. With lots of practice children gain quick recognition of the alphabet-sound combinations and reading fluency begins.

In response to the Right to Read Report, the Ministry of Education released the new Ontario Language Curriculum. Great news, Strong Start's programs strongly align with the Science of Reading and the new curriculum, helping children develop vocabulary, alphabet knowledge, alphabet sound knowledge and word reading. The fun games and activities provide children with lots of practise and help them develop their foundational literacy skills, and their confidence as a reader, which is their human right.

## Strong Start Achieves 'Very Low Risk' Rating and Boosts Data Privacy with Innovative Solutions

Strong Start prioritizes minimal personal data collection and safeguarding children's information. Responding to partner feedback, it eliminated the collection of children's personal data in the *Letters, Sounds and Words™* program. Consequently, the program received a "very low risk rating" from the Educational Computing Network of Ontario (ECNO) on September 12, 2023, reaffirming Strong Start's commitment to data protection.

With the guidance of privacy legal counsel, Constantine Karbaliotis of nNovation LLP, and support from volunteer software developer, Chris Howlett, Strong Start swiftly implemented a system of Meaningless But Unique Serial Numbers (MBUNs) in its proprietary web application, SiTE SOURCE™. All historical records

in SiTE SOURCE were anonymized, and important documents, including the privacy notice, terms of service, and incident response plans, were updated.

This proactive effort ensures that Strong Start does not collect children's Personal Information and maintains updated procedures for data collection, use, storage, retention, and disposal. School boards relying on ECNO for third-party service provider assessments can trust the "very low risk" rating, saving time and effort in evaluating Strong Start.

These improvements lead to quicker adoption and improved retention rates among school board partners, enabling Strong Start to continue its mission of helping thousands of children learn to read. Currently serving 10 school board partners and over 400 schools, Strong Start is committed to onboarding 750 new schools in Ontario within three years. This privacy initiative builds trust with existing and potential partners, aiming to serve 25% of Ontario's elementary schools.

## SHOP3D.CA

### Hooks & Letters – 3D Printer Donation

As Strong Start was sourcing a 3D printer for our Ontario Trillium Foundation ask, we contacted Shop 3D.ca. Realizing a children's literacy charity needed a 3D printer, they GAVE us four! Why do we need this cutting-edge technology? So far, we're making hooks and letters! These custom parts are to our own specification, and they are even better than the original purchased ones. When you lose the "B" from your alphabet set, the set is spoiled. Not now! Need a "B" make a "B". The fishing hook from our "Catch of the Day" game now looks like a real hook and has a tiny well to house the magnet. No more missing magnets. These 3D printers create endless possibilities and ways to innovate!

#### Thank you for your vote!

Strong Start was very humbled to be nominated as one of the top 10 charities in the 2023 Waterloo Region Record Readers' Choice Awards, for the fourth year in a row. We are delighted to share that we have won Diamond, the top honour, in the Non-Profit/ Foundations category.



## Make a Gift Today to Help Children Learn to Read

The vision of Strong Start continues to be one of communities rallying around their children with time and resources to help children learn to read. Please note that your gift can be designated to a specific program or community.

Create even more impact by registering as a Monthly Donor!



**Please make a gift today to help set a child on a path for success:**

#### Online:

[www.strongstart.ca/give](http://www.strongstart.ca/give)

#### Cheque by mail:

Strong Start Charitable Organization  
1-565 Kumpf Drive  
Waterloo, ON, N2V 1K3

**Email:** [info@strongstart.ca](mailto:info@strongstart.ca)

**Call:** 1-833-419-READ (7323)



**Strong Start to reading™**  
"Making a difference in the life of a child"

Charitable Registration  
#825948060RR0001

# DID? YOU KNOW

**4,400** children between ages of 6 months and 9 years benefited from Strong Start's programs.

**40,512** volunteer hours including **36,071** for *Letters, Sounds and Words™*, **2,064** for materials assembly, **2,224** for subject matter expertise including *SiTE SOURCE™* development and board governance, and **153** for *Get Ready for School™*.

**1,220** Volunteer Coaches registered for the ViPT™ (Volunteer Information Portal) since its launch in December 2022.

**238** Volunteer Coach Training Sessions were held resulting in **841** fully trained Volunteer Coaches and **89** Site Co-ordinators.

**79** new schools joined the *Letters, Sounds and Words™* program – an organizational record!

*The numbers above reflect the totals for the 2022/2023 program year, unless otherwise indicated.*