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Form **990-EZ**

# Short Form Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax

Under section 501(c), 527, or 4947(a)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code (except private foundations)

OMB No 1545-1150

2014

Open to Public  
Inspection

Department of the Treasury  
Internal Revenue Service

▶ Do not enter social security numbers on this form as it may be made public.  
▶ Information about Form 990-EZ and its instructions is at [www.irs.gov/form990](http://www.irs.gov/form990).

**A** For the 2014 calendar year, or tax year beginning \_\_\_\_\_, and ending \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>B</b> Check if applicable:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Address change <input type="checkbox"/> Name change <input type="checkbox"/> Initial return <input type="checkbox"/> Final return/terminated <input type="checkbox"/> Amended return <input type="checkbox"/> Application pending	<p><b>C</b> Name of organization <b>TREE HOUSE BOOKS</b></p> <p>Number and street (or P O box, if mail is not delivered to street address) Room/suite  <b>1430 W. SUSQUEHANNA AVENUE</b></p> <p>City or town, state or province, country, and ZIP or foreign postal code  <b>PHILADELPHIA PA 19121</b></p>	<p><b>D</b> Employer identification number <b>59-3802913</b></p> <p><b>E</b> Telephone number <b>215-236-1760</b></p> <p><b>F</b> Group Exemption Number ▶</p>
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**G** Accounting Method:  Cash  Accrual Other (specify) ▶ \_\_\_\_\_

**I** Website: ▶ **TREEHOUSEBOOKS.ORG**

**J** Tax-exempt status (check only one) —  501(c)(3)  501(c)( ) (insert no )  4947(a)(1) or  527

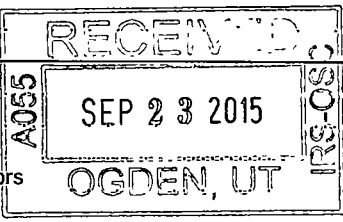
**K** Form of organization:  Corporation  Trust  Association  Other \_\_\_\_\_

**L** Add lines 5b, 6c, and 7b to line 9 to determine gross receipts. If gross receipts are \$200,000 or more, or if total assets (Part II, column (B) below) are \$500,000 or more, file Form 990 instead of Form 990-EZ. ▶ \$ **177,959**

**Part I Revenue, Expenses, and Changes in Net Assets or Fund Balances (see the instructions for Part I)**

Check if the organization used Schedule O to respond to any question in this Part I

	Description	Line	Amount
Revenue	1 Contributions, gifts, grants, and similar amounts received	1	154,401
	2 Program service revenue including government fees and contracts	2	23,558
	3 Membership dues and assessments	3	
	4 Investment income	4	
	5a Gross amount from sale of assets other than inventory	5a	
	b Less: cost or other basis and sales expenses	5b	
	c Gain or (loss) from sale of assets other than inventory (Subtract line 5b from line 5a)	5c	
	6 Gaming and fundraising events		
	a Gross income from gaming (attach Schedule G if greater than \$15,000)	6a	
	b Gross income from fundraising events (not including \$ _____ of contributions from fundraising events reported on line 1) (attach Schedule G if the sum of such gross income and contributions exceeds \$15,000)	6b	
c Less: direct expenses from gaming and fundraising events	6c		
d Net income or (loss) from gaming and fundraising events (add lines 6a and 6b and subtract line 6c)	6d		
7a Gross sales of inventory, less returns and allowances	7a		
b Less: cost of goods sold	7b		
c Gross profit or (loss) from sales of inventory (Subtract line 7b from line 7a)	7c		
8 Other revenue (describe in Schedule O)	8		
9 <b>Total revenue.</b> Add lines 1, 2, 3, 4, 5c, 6d, 7c, and 8	9	177,959	
Expenses	10 Grants and similar amounts paid (list in Schedule O)	10	
	11 Benefits paid to or for members	11	
	12 Salaries, other compensation, and employee benefits	12	42,901
	13 Professional fees and other payments to independent contractors	13	27,887
	14 Occupancy, rent, utilities, and maintenance	14	1,511
	15 Printing, publications, postage, and shipping	15	
	16 Other expenses (describe in Schedule O)	16	23,424
	17 <b>Total expenses.</b> Add lines 10 through 16	17	95,723
Net Assets	18 Excess or (deficit) for the year (Subtract line 17 from line 9)	18	82,236
	19 Net assets or fund balances at beginning of year (from line 27, column (A)) (must agree with end-of-year figure reported on prior year's return)	19	8,461
	20 Other changes in net assets or fund balances (explain in Schedule O)	20	-1,847
	21 <b>Net assets or fund balances at end of year.</b> Combine lines 18 through 20	21	88,850



For Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see the separate instructions.

Form 990-EZ (2014)

SCANNED OCT 01 2015

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**Part V Other Information** (Note the Schedule A and personal benefit contract statement requirements in the instructions for Part V) Check if the organization used Schedule O to respond to any question in this Part V

		Yes	No
33	Did the organization engage in any significant activity not previously reported to the IRS? If "Yes," provide a detailed description of each activity in Schedule O		X
34	Were any significant changes made to the organizing or governing documents? If "Yes," attach a conformed copy of the amended documents if they reflect a change to the organization's name. Otherwise, explain the change on Schedule O (see instructions)		X
35a	Did the organization have unrelated business gross income of \$1,000 or more during the year from business activities (such as those reported on lines 2, 6a, and 7a, among others)?		X
b	If "Yes," to line 35a, has the organization filed a Form 990-T for the year? If "No," provide an explanation in Schedule O	N/A	
35b			
c	Was the organization a section 501(c)(4), 501(c)(5), or 501(c)(6) organization subject to section 6033(e) notice, reporting, and proxy tax requirements during the year? If "Yes," complete Schedule C, Part III		X
35c			
36	Did the organization undergo a liquidation, dissolution, termination, or significant disposition of net assets during the year? If "Yes," complete applicable parts of Schedule N		X
36			
37a	Enter amount of political expenditures, direct or indirect, as described in the instructions		
37a			
b	Did the organization file Form 1120-POL for this year?		X
37b			
38a	Did the organization borrow from, or make any loans to, any officer, director, trustee, or key employee or were any such loans made in a prior year and still outstanding at the end of the tax year covered by this return?		X
38a			
b	If "Yes," complete Schedule L, Part II and enter the total amount involved	38b	
38b			
39	Section 501(c)(7) organizations. Enter:		
a	Initiation fees and capital contributions included on line 9	39a	
39a			
b	Gross receipts, included on line 9, for public use of club facilities	39b	
39b			
40a	Section 501(c)(3) organizations Enter amount of tax imposed on the organization during the year under: section 4911 <input type="text"/> ; section 4912 <input type="text"/> ; section 4955 <input type="text"/>		
b	Section 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), and 501(c)(29) organizations Did the organization engage in any section 4958 excess benefit transaction during the year, or did it engage in an excess benefit transaction in a prior year that has not been reported on any of its prior Forms 990 or 990-EZ? If "Yes," complete Schedule L, Part I	40b	X
40b			
c	Section 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), and 501(c)(29) organizations Enter amount of tax imposed on organization managers or disqualified persons during the year under sections 4912, 4955, and 4958		
d	Section 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), and 501(c)(29) organizations Enter amount of tax on line 40c reimbursed by the organization		
e	All organizations At any time during the tax year, was the organization a party to a prohibited tax shelter transaction? If "Yes," complete Form 8886-T	40e	X
40e			
41	List the states with which a copy of this return is filed <input type="text"/> PA		
42a	The organization's books are in care of <input type="text"/> MICHAEL ROBERSON-REID Telephone no <input type="text"/> 215-236-1760 1430 W. SUSQUEHANNA AVENUE Located at <input type="text"/> PHILADELPHIA PA ZIP + 4 <input type="text"/> 19121		
b	At any time during the calendar year, did the organization have an interest in or a signature or other authority over a financial account in a foreign country (such as a bank account, securities account, or other financial account)? If "Yes," enter the name of the foreign country: <input type="text"/>	42b	X
42b			
c	See the instructions for exceptions and filing requirements for FinCEN Form 114, Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts (FBAR). At any time during the calendar year, did the organization maintain an office outside the U.S.? If "Yes," enter the name of the foreign country: <input type="text"/>	42c	X
42c			
43	Section 4947(a)(1) nonexempt charitable trusts filing Form 990-EZ in lieu of Form 1041 — Check here <input type="checkbox"/> and enter the amount of tax-exempt interest received or accrued during the tax year <input type="text"/> 43		
43			
44a	Did the organization maintain any donor advised funds during the year? If "Yes," Form 990 must be completed instead of Form 990-EZ	44a	X
44a			
b	Did the organization operate one or more hospital facilities during the year? If "Yes," Form 990 must be completed instead of Form 990-EZ	44b	X
44b			
c	Did the organization receive any payments for indoor tanning services during the year?	44c	X
44c			
d	If "Yes" to line 44c, has the organization filed a Form 720 to report these payments? If "No," provide an explanation in Schedule O	44d	
44d			
45a	Did the organization have a controlled entity within the meaning of section 512(b)(13)?	45a	X
45a			
b	Did the organization receive any payment from or engage in any transaction with a controlled entity within the meaning of section 512(b)(13)? If "Yes," Form 990 and Schedule R may need to be completed instead of Form 990-EZ (see instructions)	45b	X
45b			

		Yes	No
<b>46</b> Did the organization engage, directly or indirectly, in political campaign activities on behalf of or in opposition to candidates for public office? If "Yes," complete Schedule C, Part I	46		<b>X</b>

**Part VI Section 501(c)(3) organizations only**

All section 501(c)(3) organizations must answer questions 47-49b and 52, and complete the tables for lines 50 and 51.

Check if the organization used Schedule O to respond to any question in this Part VI

		Yes	No
<b>47</b> Did the organization engage in lobbying activities or have a section 501(h) election in effect during the tax year? If "Yes," complete Schedule C, Part II	47		<b>X</b>
<b>48</b> Is the organization a school as described in section 170(b)(1)(A)(ii)? If "Yes," complete Schedule E	48		<b>X</b>
<b>49a</b> Did the organization make any transfers to an exempt non-charitable related organization?	49a		<b>X</b>
<b>b</b> If "Yes," was the related organization a section 527 organization?	49b		

N/A

**50** Complete this table for the organization's five highest compensated employees (other than officers, directors, trustees and key employees) who each received more than \$100,000 of compensation from the organization. If there is none, enter "None."

(a) Name and title of each employee	(b) Average hours per week devoted to position	(c) Reportable compensation (Forms W-2/1099-MISC)	(d) Health benefits, contributions to employee benefit plans, and deferred compensation	(e) Estimated amount of other compensation
NONE				

**f** Total number of other employees paid over \$100,000 ▶ \_\_\_\_\_

**51** Complete this table for the organization's five highest compensated independent contractors who each received more than \$100,000 of compensation from the organization. If there is none, enter "None"

(a) Name and business address of each independent contractor	(b) Type of service	(c) Compensation
NONE		

**d** Total number of other independent contractors each receiving over \$100,000 ▶ \_\_\_\_\_

**52** Did the organization complete Schedule A? **Note.** All section 501(c)(3) organizations must attach a completed Schedule A ▶  Yes  No

Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have examined this return, including accompanying schedules and statements, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is true, correct, and complete. Declaration of preparer (other than officer) is based on all information of which preparer has any knowledge

<b>Sign Here</b>	Signature of officer: <i>Cassandra M. Bailey</i> Type or print name and title: <b>CASSANDRA M. BAILEY, CHAIR</b>	Date: <b>9/14/15</b>
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<b>Paid Preparer Use Only</b>	Print/Type preparer's name <b>DAVID G. FAW</b>	Preparer's signature <i>David G. Faw</i>	Date <b>07/28/15</b>	Check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> if self-employed	PTIN <b>P00729505</b>
	Firm's name ▶	<b>DAVID G. FAW, CPA</b>		Firm's EIN ▶	<b>23-2701559</b>
	Firm's address ▶	<b>998 OLD EAGLE SCHOOL ROAD, SUITE 1221 WAYNE, PA 19087</b>		Phone no	<b>610-687-8160</b>

May the IRS discuss this return with the preparer shown above? See instructions ▶  Yes  No

**SCHEDULE A**  
**(Form 990 or 990-EZ)**

**Public Charity Status and Public Support**  
Complete if the organization is a section 501(c)(3) organization or a section 4947(a)(1) nonexempt charitable trust.

OMB No 1545-0047

**2014**

**Open to Public Inspection**

Department of the Treasury  
Internal Revenue Service

▶ **Attach to Form 990 or Form 990-EZ.**  
▶ **Information about Schedule A (Form 990 or 990-EZ) and its instructions is at [www.irs.gov/form990](http://www.irs.gov/form990).**

Name of the organization

**TREE HOUSE BOOKS**

Employer identification number

**59-3802913**

**Part I Reason for Public Charity Status** (All organizations must complete this part.) See instructions.

The organization is not a private foundation because it is: (For lines 1 through 11, check only one box.)

- 1  A church, convention of churches, or association of churches described in **section 170(b)(1)(A)(i).**
- 2  A school described in **section 170(b)(1)(A)(ii).** (Attach Schedule E.)
- 3  A hospital or a cooperative hospital service organization described in **section 170(b)(1)(A)(iii).**
- 4  A medical research organization operated in conjunction with a hospital described in **section 170(b)(1)(A)(iii).** Enter the hospital's name, city, and state:
- 5  An organization operated for the benefit of a college or university owned or operated by a governmental unit described in **section 170(b)(1)(A)(iv).** (Complete Part II.)
- 6  A federal, state, or local government or governmental unit described in **section 170(b)(1)(A)(v).**
- 7  An organization that normally receives a substantial part of its support from a governmental unit or from the general public described in **section 170(b)(1)(A)(vi).** (Complete Part II.)
- 8  A community trust described in **section 170(b)(1)(A)(vi).** (Complete Part II.)
- 9  An organization that normally receives: (1) more than 33 1/3% of its support from contributions, membership fees, and gross receipts from activities related to its exempt functions—subject to certain exceptions, and (2) no more than 33 1/3% of its support from gross investment income and unrelated business taxable income (less section 511 tax) from businesses acquired by the organization after June 30, 1975. See **section 509(a)(2).** (Complete Part III.)
- 10  An organization organized and operated exclusively to test for public safety. See **section 509(a)(4).**
- 11  An organization organized and operated exclusively for the benefit of, to perform the functions of, or to carry out the purposes of one or more publicly supported organizations described in **section 509(a)(1)** or **section 509(a)(2).** See **section 509(a)(3).** Check the box in lines 11a through 11d that describes the type of supporting organization and complete lines 11e, 11f, and 11g.
  - a  **Type I.** A supporting organization operated, supervised, or controlled by its supported organization(s), typically by giving the supported organization(s) the power to regularly appoint or elect a majority of the directors or trustees of the supporting organization. **You must complete Part IV, Sections A and B.**
  - b  **Type II.** A supporting organization supervised or controlled in connection with its supported organization(s), by having control or management of the supporting organization vested in the same persons that control or manage the supported organization(s). **You must complete Part IV, Sections A and C.**
  - c  **Type III functionally integrated.** A supporting organization operated in connection with, and functionally integrated with, its supported organization(s) (see instructions). **You must complete Part IV, Sections A, D, and E.**
  - d  **Type III non-functionally integrated.** A supporting organization operated in connection with its supported organization(s) that is not functionally integrated. The organization generally must satisfy a distribution requirement and an attentiveness requirement (see instructions). **You must complete Part IV, Sections A and D, and Part V.**
  - e  Check this box if the organization received a written determination from the IRS that it is a Type I, Type II, Type III functionally integrated, or Type III non-functionally integrated supporting organization.

f Enter the number of supported organizations

g Provide the following information about the supported organization(s)

(i) Name of supported organization	(ii) EIN	(iii) Type of organization (described on lines 1-9 above or IRC section (see instructions))	(iv) Is the organization listed in your governing document?		(v) Amount of monetary support (see instructions)	(vi) Amount of other support (see instructions)
			Yes	No		
(A)						
(B)						
(C)						
(D)						
(E)						
<b>Total</b>						

**Part II Support Schedule for Organizations Described in Sections 170(b)(1)(A)(iv) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi)**  
 (Complete only if you checked the box on line 5, 7, or 8 of Part I or if the organization failed to qualify under Part III. If the organization fails to qualify under the tests listed below, please complete Part III.)

**Section A. Public Support**

Calendar year (or fiscal year beginning in) ▶	(a) 2010	(b) 2011	(c) 2012	(d) 2013	(e) 2014	(f) Total
<b>1</b> Gifts, grants, contributions, and membership fees received. (Do not include any "unusual grants.")	121,015	177,889	101,925	110,326	154,401	665,556
<b>2</b> Tax revenues levied for the organization's benefit and either paid to or expended on its behalf						
<b>3</b> The value of services or facilities furnished by a governmental unit to the organization without charge						
<b>4 Total.</b> Add lines 1 through 3	121,015	177,889	101,925	110,326	154,401	665,556
<b>5</b> The portion of total contributions by each person (other than a governmental unit or publicly supported organization) included on line 1 that exceeds 2% of the amount shown on line 11, column (f)						38,378
<b>6 Public support.</b> Subtract line 5 from line 4						627,178

**Section B. Total Support**

Calendar year (or fiscal year beginning in) ▶	(a) 2010	(b) 2011	(c) 2012	(d) 2013	(e) 2014	(f) Total
<b>7</b> Amounts from line 4	121,015	177,889	101,925	110,326	154,401	665,556
<b>8</b> Gross income from interest, dividends, payments received on securities loans, rents, royalties and income from similar sources						
<b>9</b> Net income from unrelated business activities, whether or not the business is regularly carried on						
<b>10</b> Other income. Do not include gain or loss from the sale of capital assets (Explain in Part VI )						
<b>11 Total support.</b> Add lines 7 through 10						665,556
<b>12</b> Gross receipts from related activities, etc. (see instructions)					12	54,031
<b>13 First five years.</b> If the Form 990 is for the organization's first, second, third, fourth, or fifth tax year as a section 501(c)(3) organization, check this box and <b>stop here</b> ▶ <input type="checkbox"/>						

**Section C. Computation of Public Support Percentage**

<b>14</b> Public support percentage for 2014 (line 6, column (f) divided by line 11, column (f))	14	94.23%
<b>15</b> Public support percentage from 2013 Schedule A, Part II, line 14	15	100.00%
<b>16a 33 1/3% support test—2014.</b> If the organization did not check the box on line 13, and line 14 is 33 1/3% or more, check this box and <b>stop here.</b> The organization qualifies as a publicly supported organization ▶ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<b>b 33 1/3% support test—2013.</b> If the organization did not check a box on line 13 or 16a, and line 15 is 33 1/3% or more, check this box and <b>stop here.</b> The organization qualifies as a publicly supported organization ▶ <input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>17a 10%-facts-and-circumstances test—2014.</b> If the organization did not check a box on line 13, 16a, or 16b, and line 14 is 10% or more, and if the organization meets the "facts-and-circumstances" test, check this box and <b>stop here.</b> Explain in Part VI how the organization meets the "facts-and-circumstances" test. The organization qualifies as a publicly supported organization ▶ <input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>b 10%-facts-and-circumstances test—2013.</b> If the organization did not check a box on line 13, 16a, 16b, or 17a, and line 15 is 10% or more, and if the organization meets the "facts-and-circumstances" test, check this box and <b>stop here.</b> Explain in Part VI how the organization meets the "facts-and-circumstances" test. The organization qualifies as a publicly supported organization ▶ <input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>18 Private foundation.</b> If the organization did not check a box on line 13, 16a, 16b, 17a, or 17b, check this box and see instructions ▶ <input type="checkbox"/>		

**SCHEDULE O**  
(Form 990 or 990-EZ)**Supplemental Information to Form 990 or 990-EZ**

OMB No 1545-0047

Complete to provide information for responses to specific questions on  
Form 990 or 990-EZ or to provide any additional information.**2014****Open to Public  
Inspection**Department of the Treasury  
Internal Revenue Service

▶ Attach to Form 990 or 990-EZ.

▶ Information about Schedule O (Form 990 or 990-EZ) and its instructions is at [www.irs.gov/form990](http://www.irs.gov/form990).

Name of the organization

TREE HOUSE BOOKS

Employer identification number

59-3802913

**FORM 990-EZ, PART I, LINE 16 - OTHER EXPENSES****DESCRIPTION****AMOUNT****EXPENSES**

LICENSES & FEES	\$	1,301
OFFICE EXPENSES	\$	3,791
POSTAGE	\$	575
TELEPHONE	\$	1,048
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	\$	2,800
TRAVEL	\$	42
INSURANCE	\$	3,172
BOOKS	\$	7,087
FUNDRAISING EVENTS	\$	2,178
TRAINING	\$	1,430
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>23,424</b>

**FORM 990-EZ, PART I, LINE 20 - OTHER CHANGES IN NET ASSETS OR FUND BALANCES****DESCRIPTION****AMOUNT**

2013 REVIEW ADJUSTMENTS	\$	-1,847
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**FORM 990-EZ, PART II, LINE 24 - OTHER ASSETS****DESCRIPTION****BEG. OF YEAR****END OF YEAR**

GRANTS RECEIVABLE	\$	0	\$	44,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>44,000</b>

**FORM 990-EZ, PART II, LINE 26 - OTHER LIABILITIES**

Name of the organization

TREE HOUSE BOOKS

Employer identification number

59-3802913

DESCRIPTION	BEG. OF YEAR	END OF YEAR
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND ACCRUED EXPENSES	\$ 642	\$ 16,475

FORM 990-EZ, PART III - PRIMARY EXEMPT PURPOSE

OUR MISSION IS TO GROW AND SUSTAIN A COMMUNITY OF READERS, WRITERS, AND THINKERS IN NORTH CENTRAL PHILADELPHIA.

## TREE HOUSE BOOKS HISTORY AND OVERVIEW

### **Organizational Information**

Tree House Books is a non-profit organization that creates interactive programs to encourage the North Central Philadelphia neighborhood to explore books and learning in new ways. **Our mission is to grow and sustain a community of readers, writers, and thinkers in North Central Philadelphia.**

Tree House Books (THB) has its initial rooting in the summer of 2003, when the Advocate Community Development Corporation (ACDC) conducted a Susquehanna Avenue Commercial Corridor Study. The study included a report of existing conditions, a market analysis, and a description of retailing trends. As a part of the market analysis, interviews were conducted with merchants, area residents, and students. The study was conducted in cooperation with the Susquehanna Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC) and was funded by the Samuel S. Fels Fund.

The completed study contained a number of recommendations-including focusing initial redevelopment activity in the 1400 block of Susquehanna Avenue. Among the types of retail operations suggested for this block were an arts and crafts supply store, moderately priced ethnic restaurants, an independent coffeehouse, and a used bookstore. The bookstore concept was presented to ACDC's Board of Directors, and the Board felt that a bookstore was a strong idea, but it was not within the scope of ACDC's work at that time. However, Temple Partnership Schools, a local real estate developer, and local politicians supported the development of a used bookstore. Tree House Books opened in May 2005, and since then has become a vital piece of the North Central Philadelphia neighborhood. Early on we learned that merely operating a bookstore was not sufficient enough to meet the educational needs of our community, therefore we decided to transform into a literacy enrichment center where we would provide literacy support to neighborhood children, distribute books throughout the community, conduct our own literacy summer camp, and provide resources regarding education.

### **Current Programs & Services**

Our main programs are the *Life With Books Literacy Initiative*, an after-school literacy enrichment curriculum that occurs during the school year on Mondays through Thursdays from 3pm to 5:30pm., and our *Giving Library* which allows community residents to take an unlimited number of books at little or no cost. *Life With Books* is designed to immerse neighborhood children in the mechanics and culture of reading and literacy so that they will begin to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to live life on their own terms. During the course of each week we engage our students in phonics building, cultural exploration, creative writing, and communal reading. The cumulative effect of this curriculum is that our students will have a greater desire to read, they will improve their reading proficiency each year they are enrolled in the program, they will leverage this increased desire and reading proficiency to enable themselves to engage in deeper personal and cultural cultivation, they will learn new life skills, and they will have fun doing it. We believe this is the greatest gift we can give to our children and hope to be the physical embodiment of a great quote by W.E.B. DuBois, "Education must not simply teach work, it must teach life."

In addition to *Life With Books* and our *Giving Library* we offer other programs such as the *Tree Shade Summer Camp*, and *Words On Wheels* in which families can sign up to have books delivered to their homes free of charge.

*Life With Books* is broken up into four and five week cycles, and each cycle will have its own theme. The themes for this year are entrepreneurship, science, music, dance, social justice, and environmental stewardship. Each theme will be explored through a different activity (Read Now, Cultural Literacy, What's Your Story, and Book Club) depending on the day of the week, so that our students are able to learn new skills, while engaging in intellectual exploration, with books serving as their anchor.

**Read Now** is a scripted phonics-building curriculum on Mondays in which students receive one-on-one coaching from a reading tutor. At the program's essence are scripted tools that enable anyone who is able to read at a 5th grade level to coach a struggling student as they master literacy. After their phonics work is complete they will read magazines that relate to the theme for that cycle, and they will pick theme-related words out of these magazines to place on our "Word Wall."

**Cultural Literacy** occurs on Tuesday afternoons, and is divided into two sections. During the first portion of the day our students learn history by participating in reading circles, where they read culturally and historically relevant books about important African-American figures. During these readings they are asked comprehension questions about the story, and they are also asked to define new words. In the second part of the day African-American professionals speak to our students about their career choice and how books influenced them.

**What's Your Story** is our Wednesday program and it allows students to craft their own narrative. For the entrepreneurship cycle they will create business plans, employee handbooks, and write stories about how their businesses injected economic vitality into their neighborhood. With the science fiction theme they can design and explain new inventions or create science fiction stories. For environmental stewardship they might write letters to city hall asking for more recycling facilities in their neighborhood. The only limits are those placed on our student's imaginations.

Our **Book Club** takes place on Thursday and each semester students are assigned to a particular book club (usually comprised of four children) based on reading ability, interests, age, and intellectual and social compatibility with the other book club participants. Participation in Book Club not only helps develop a child's language acquisition and critical thinking skills, but also gives the students a forum to discuss contemporary issues that affect their lives. Two volunteers lead each Book Club, demonstrating for our students how reading, intellectual curiosity, and intellectual discourse can relate to current life situations. Books we will read this year include; *The Making of a Young Entrepreneur* by Gabrielle J. Williams, *Ellray Jakes is a Rock Star!* by Sally Warner, *The Toothpaste Millionaire* by Jean Merrill, and *President of the Whole Fifth Grade* by Sherri Winston.

Our **Words On Wheels** book delivery system was originally conceived in 2013 as a way to prevent the regression in reading comprehension often associated with summer vacation also known as the "summer slip". We know that reading is a multi-sensory experience and seek to create an environment at Tree House Books where students learn to love reading and take that love of reading everywhere. Aside from the used bookstore in Tree House Books, the closest library or bookstore is 3 miles away. The North Central Philadelphia neighborhood is in what can be described as a "book desert." Through *Words On Wheels* a total of 1000 books will be delivered to the homes of 250 children in our zipcode throughout the year. At the beginning of the year we receive applications from interested families which includes the name, age, gender of the child as well as various topics of interest, and books are specifically purchased to fit the needs of that child. With each book that is delivered there will be reading resources for parents, suggestions of activities to do with their child, and a bag that the children can always carry their books in.

Our **Giving Library** enables us to operate our own bookstore where we offer books either for free or at a significantly reduced cost, because we do not want economics to be a barrier for anyone looking to build their own personal library. Since 2008 we have given away over 65,000 free books.

#### **Goals of The Life With Books Literacy Initiative**

**Read Now** provides the mechanical foundation for our students to be excellent readers. We will also be partnering with Eastern University's Loeb School of Education to provide additional academic assistance to our students. All of our students will receive at least 8 hours of additional academic support per week for 31 – 35 weeks. Students who are significantly below grade level will receive 13 hours of additional support during the school year. **Cultural Literacy** provides our students with past and present examples of Black success so that they understand that they do not need to change themselves or their culture in order to live a life of distinction. **What's Your Story** not only provides students with concrete articulation skills that they will need to communicate, but it also establishes a precedent of them crafting their own narrative. **Book Club** provides a forum for our students to apply their reading skills in a recreational and communal setting, while simultaneously providing them an opportunity to engage in intellectual discourse (and to internalize the concept that their cultural reality is worthy of discourse.) **Words On Wheels** works to ensure that reading is one of the default activities of our children, thus enabling them to internalize the concept that reading, analytical investigation, and intellectual discourse are natural parts of their daily activities. The cumulative effect of these programs is that our students will increase one or two grade levels in reading, and this increased reading proficiency will allow them to engage in deeper personal and cultural exploration.

#### **Strengths and Accomplishments:**

During 2014, we were able to serve 38 children in our *Life With Books* program, 31 children in our summer camp, 250 children through our Words On Wheels book delivery system, and approximately 2,000 children took books from our giving library.

During the school year Tree House students reading proficiency improved, on average, .71 grade levels. Tree House students also improved 524% in their ability to decode words. Students in our *Life With Books* program are not only read to every day, but they engage in at least 15 to minutes of independent reading every day. At Tree House we have implemented Sustained Silent Reading, where students choose the books they want to read and read them for pleasure. Silent Reading allows a person to read long enough and far enough that the act of reading becomes automatic. A report done by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement compared the reading skills of 210,000 students from 32 countries and the students who were read to by their teachers daily and who read the most pages for pleasure daily had the highest scores regardless of income.

75% of our children attended our program 100 days out of the year. 12 children have attended our Life With Books for three or more consecutive years. In 2014 Tree House students read for a total of 2,000 hours.

#### **Statement of Need**

Tree House Books serves the North Central Philadelphia neighborhood, particularly around the 1400 block of W. Susquehanna Avenue. The 2010 census estimates the population within our zip code (19121) is 34,625, and 84% of the residents are African-American. Residents in the 19121 zip code with incomes below the poverty level was 53.4%, and 20.8% of residents had incomes below 50% of the poverty level. Approximately 34% of the population is between 6 and 18 years old, unfortunately the overall educational environment does not serve our children well. Only 53.6% of residents have

completed high school compared to the statewide average of 80.2%. Less than 10% of the population in the 19121 zip code has a bachelor's degree or higher. According to the School District of Philadelphia website 96.6% of students that attend our primary elementary and middle school are listed as "economically disadvantaged." In spite of these statistics we are quite optimistic about the future of the children in our neighborhood. We are optimistic because we know that when our children understand the legacy of greatness that they come from, they will do everything in their power to continue that legacy. Paolo Friere once said "students need to read the word and read the world so that they can engage life, and engage their community in ways they decide, not in ways that are superimposed on them."



LIFE WITH BOOKS GROWS HERE

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