



THE walking classroom®
walk. listen. learn.

ANNUAL REPORT

Making the best of 2020

ONE SIMPLE GOAL...

Less of this



More of this!



Thanks to our supporters, the pandemic didn't stop us!

Since 2011, hundreds of thousands of kids have walked, listened, and learned with The Walking Classroom—and 2020 was no exception!

It's no secret that 2020 was extremely hard for students and educators. With little to no warning, classrooms were shut down, students were sent home, and teachers were left trying to figure how to keep their students learning virtually. While some of our program adopters had been able to give their students their WalkKit audio players to take home, many either didn't have their own set to distribute or didn't get an opportunity to hand them out because the closure was so sudden.

We knew The Walking Classroom could easily be adapted to virtual and physically distanced learning, and we knew our timely response could make a big difference. Here is our story.

A 2020 TIMELINE

February 25, 2020 — The CDC issues a warning for schools to prepare for possible shut down. [Source: EducationWeek]

March 4, 2020 | Hey, we should build an app!

With support from The Oak Foundation, The Walking Classroom begins an **“all hands on deck” effort to build an app** to make all podcasts available via mobile devices so more kids can walk, listen, and learn from home during school closures.



Working from home, The Walking Classroom staff rallies to determine what we can do to help.

March 18, 2020 | Let's give teachers free podcasts to use

While app building gets underway, The Walking Classroom makes **26 podcasts and lesson plans** freely available on our website and encourages teachers and parents to share them broadly. And they did!



“Thank you so much. This is incredible, and I know the students will enjoy some variation in their remote learning! It is such a huge help!”
—Maria Pirner, teacher, CA

“Thank you for sending this info. My team is going to use it as we plan for the next couple of weeks! Please continue to share with us, especially 4th grade content! Be safe!”
—Amy Moore, teacher, NC

“Thank you so much for offering this while we are trying to teach from home! I’ve shared with all my friends! You’re amazing! Thanks!”
—Lissa Jarnigan, homeschooler, TN

“Thank you for this! I plan to get this information to our 650 afterschool students. This will be a wonderful way to introduce this to our families. Thank you and best to you and yours!”
—Shannon Messick, afterschool professional, PA

“SOOOOOOOOOO GRATEFUL for this! Thank you! You made my day... our scholars will love it.”
—Magaly Vega, teacher, CA

“This is fabulous! Thank you! I was just wondering how to incorporate The Walking Classroom while my students are learning from home!!”
—Kathie Yonemura, teacher, CA

March 25, 2020 — All U.S. public school buildings are closed. School buildings in 27 states had been closed since the 16th. [Source: EducationWeek]

April 30, 2020 | It's a-Live!



Our scrambling pays off and **The Walking Classroom's new app is available for iOS** in the App Store! And, it's **completely FREE to use** through 7/31/2020. Woo hoo! (The Android version is stuck in review with Google Play.)

May 20, 2020 | There's more than one way...

The process for getting app approval at Google Play is way harder than we are expecting. So, we make available a **web-based version of the app**, called a progressive web app (PWA) that's accessed via most any web browser, for anyone who needs it. It's also free through 7/31/2020.

June 8, 2020 | It's a-Live 2.0!



Finally, **the Android version of the app is live in the Google Play store** —again, free to use through 7/31/20.

July 2020 | Even more support for educators

One of our primary goals is to fully support educators using the program.

A few years ago, we created an “Adopter Resources” library that contains supplemental resources for all 191 podcasts — things like slide decks, video links, etc. **But, we know we can do more and we know the additional resources will be especially needed during the pandemic.**

So, our interns get busy curating and creating (with our help) even more resources to support the podcast topics. **Now, every podcast has extensive resources** like worksheets, virtual field trips, online exercises, and/or hands-on activities.

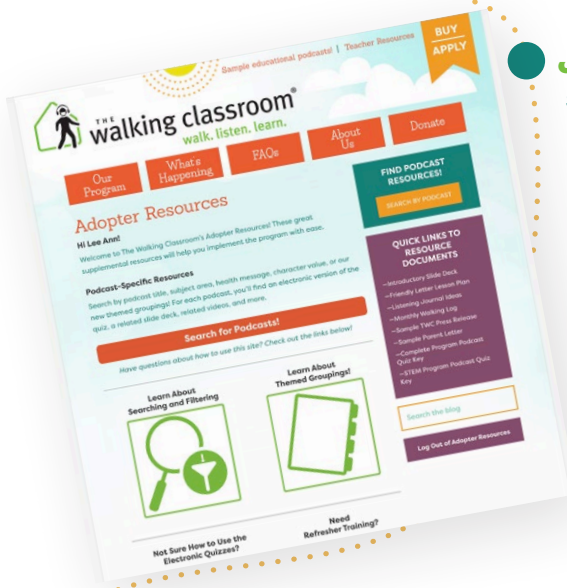
“I'm really appreciative of this innovative product, and I'm lucky to provide the students with an educational tool that allowed them to learn as they tried to get fresh air during this pandemic.”

—Arin Kress, teacher, OH

July 30, 2020 | Helping teachers adapt to the new normal

We hold our first webinar, “*Using The Walking Classroom in Hybrid and Virtual Learning Environments*,” to **provide guidance on adapting The Walking Classroom program to a new routine.**

We have almost 300 registrants! **Our free webinars become a monthly event, each averaging more than 100 registrants.**



July 31, 2020 | We can't let it end like this

It is becoming obvious that we need to extend the free period for the app. **The app is now free through 8/31/2020. Woot!**

August 1, 2020 | Clearing away obstacles for using the program

To prevent our adopters from either spending their own money or not being able to use the program, The Mary Duke Biddle Foundation provides funding so **The Walking Classroom can offer free earbuds and batteries** to existing adopters. To qualify, the adopters must complete a short, online refresher training program. The training requirement is necessary because, 1) we have a limited number of earbuds and batteries, and 2) we routinely see how adopter training improves program implementation. It's a win-win for everyone.

We donate 5,000 earbuds and 2,000 batteries. Our adopters get a great refresher and **at least 7,000 more students can now use the program.**

Supporting Program Adopters



5,000
Earbuds



2,000
Batteries

Mid-August to Mid-September, 2020 — Schools across the country begin opening for the fall. Almost half (49%) of all school districts open with remote learning only, 24% open with full in-person instruction, and 27% open with hybrid instruction. [Source: EducationWeek]

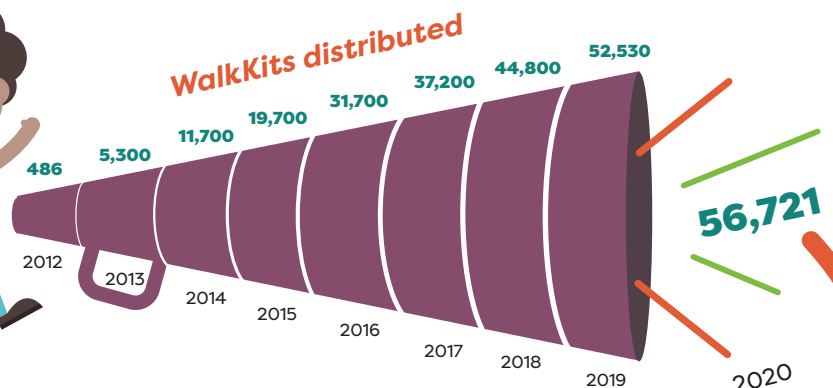
August 2020 | It is a tough year, but we still find some funds

Typically when school starts back up, The Walking Classroom begins fall donations of our preloaded WalkKit audio players. Like all things in 2020, things are a little different. But, even with a tough year, donor funding, grants, and product sales enable us to **donate 37* classroom sets of WalkKits to teachers on our waiting list and some new populations.** Rather than distributing them at back-to-school time, however, the distribution happens all throughout the year. The result? At least **1,700 more students can now get out of their seats (and away from screens) to learn while they get some fresh air and exercise.** (If you've been with us a while, you know that **they're also learning more and retaining more** while they do it!)

* Twelve sets were partial donations to schools that could contribute a small amount.

"I would love to be able to allow students who are not able to connect to the Internet to learn by something other than another packet of worksheets. I want to make sure that my students do not fall behind and have the same opportunity to reach their potential, regardless of their life situation. I think that The Walking Classroom can help me achieve this."

—Jennifer Dunn,
teacher, KY



With most teachers sharing with at least one or more other classrooms, that number translates to literally **hundreds of thousands of kids walking, listening, and learning** with The Walking Classroom.

August 31, 2020 | Building and maintaining an app isn't cheap

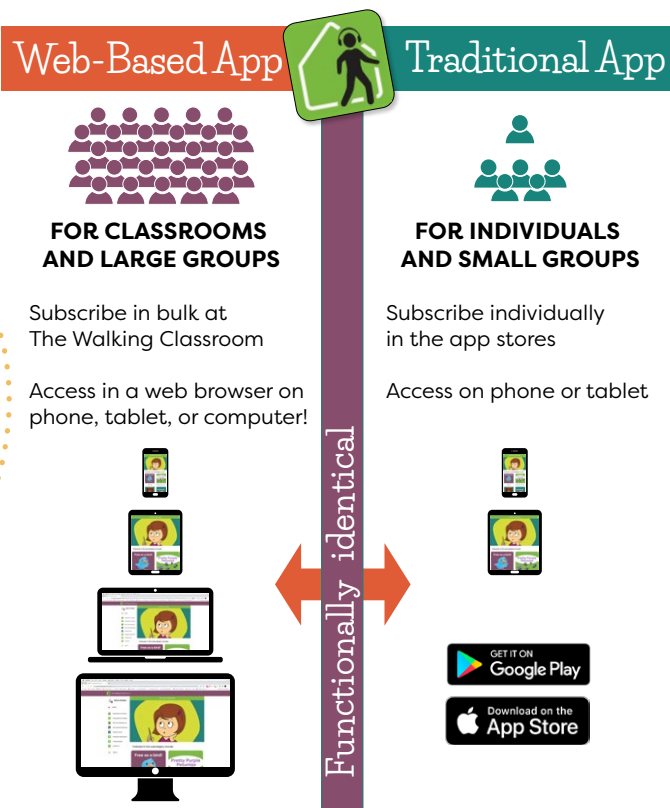
This is the last day the app is free in the app stores. Beginning 9/1/2020, the app still offers 26 free podcasts to preview, but accessing the full library requires a subscription for \$3.99/month. It is hard to flip that switch but, at the same time, an app is expensive to build and maintain.

September 2020 | App donation frustration

Those of you who are still reading are probably thinking, ***"Hey, can't you donate the app?"*** And, that has been our hope all along. But, we find that wrangling a free version of an app that has a subscription requirement in the app stores is even more complicated than building the app.

So... after much research and discussion with folks who actually know about things like apps, we determine that **the web-based version of the app** (the **PWA** if you're paying attention) will solve all of our problems. It is a copy of the original app without all of the restricted content that requires a subscription. We have control over the users, can donate to our heart's content, and can sell licenses in bulk on our website.

A PWA is functionally the same as a traditional app, but kids can access it in most any browser, meaning they can use an iPod, a smartphone, a tablet, and even a computer.



October 1, 2020 | Kinks and bugs

Beta testing with the web-based app (the PWA) begins. Managing and supporting web-based app users has several moving parts that could potentially cause issues so, to work the kinks out, we start a month of beta testing with our beloved program Ambassadors.

November 15, 2020 | Want free app licenses for your students?

With beta testing done and the bugs worked out, we next offer to **donate the web-based app to our current adopters** who, like our ambassadors, already know, understand, and love the program. We know not every school will have mobile devices for the students to use, and not all students will have their own devices at home, but the response is still encouraging!

"We thought you might like to know that this is going to be a foundational part of our approach to addressing the challenges we are facing with split sessions due to the pandemic next year. So thank you!!!!"

—Dana Letts, teacher, OH



Web-Based App Donations



1,100+

Students
using the
Mobile App
for free!

December 31, 2020 | Why, yes! Yes, we do want the app!

As of 12/31/2020, we have **donated over 1,100 licenses for the web-based app** and the number of paid subscribers to the traditional app through the app stores is steadily growing.

"Entering a new school year ... The Walking Classroom will be even more relevant during my school day. This is an easily socially distant tool that we will be able to implement."

—Kelsey Gravalin, teacher, ND

Extending our reach to new populations

Thanks to a grant from The Conservation Fund, we were able to donate the program to some new populations of students (and even some adults) in 2020. With this grant, classroom sets were distributed to a mix of community groups, faith-based groups, and organizations working with underserved populations. For a complete list of these new populations receiving the donated program, please [visit our website](#).

What does 2021 hold?

As things get back to normal in schools and elsewhere, we will continue supporting our beloved teachers and all of the kiddos who benefit so much from their continuous and unending efforts. Our hope for 2021 is that—with the right level of staffing and funding—we will be able to donate more of our new web-based app. We see the potential for a really big impact with this new tool!

We could have done none of this without the help of our supporters. Thank you!

How many kids are walking in your state?

