

DRAWN IN

WATCH. READ. PLAY. LEARN.



This is DRAWN iN!

We did this because every child deserves to be drawn into a story.

Learning to read leads to reading to learn – a needed, necessary skill for life. *Drawn In* takes kids on journeys where words are tools that help them interpret, decode, and understand texts, as well as the world around them. Literacy curriculum is woven into the stories and empowers young viewers and readers to explore multimedia content in new, exciting ways – and introduces them to the relatable genre of comic books and graphic novels.

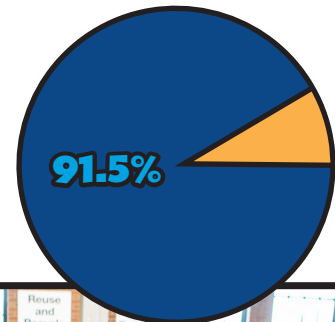
All children in our region and across the country should be represented and celebrated in the media they consume. In doing so, we remove one more possible distraction and barrier to learning. We model success and grit among characters that look and sound like our community members. We model neighborhoods that look and feel like home.





A Focus on improving Literacy Skills

In our most under-resourced school districts, 91.5% of third-grade students are not reading on grade level (MO DESE & IAR, 2021).



Get Drawn in

Drawn In is a series of epic adventures that follow the exploits of four comic book-loving kids—Tyler, Jady, Grace, and Nevaeh—whose real world collides with their comic world in every story. When characters escape from the comic pages and cause mayhem, it takes keen vocabulary, problem solving, and teamwork to set the world right again!

This multimedia literacy initiative from Nine PBS and Lion Forge Animation is designed to encourage emerging readers with an emphasis on ages 6-8. Stories are shared via comic books and animated shorts. Learning is reinforced through an interactive website with games and includes resources for grown-ups to support literacy skill-building at home and in the classroom.



Nine PBS developed our Public Media Model for Engagement after decades of work in the community. We employ the following cycle of activities with community co-creators in a way that is crucial to understanding community needs and monitoring progress:

- Understand community priorities through convening and listening
- Develop programming and curriculum tied to priorities that emerge
- Impact awareness, understanding, and confidence in competencies tied to those priorities
- Measure impact to inform future content, engagement, and dialogue

INITIATIVE GOALS

Drawn In is anchored to the community by regularly convening more than 40 trusted partners in early education as part of the Nine PBS Model for Engagement. Two clear purposes are at the core of the work:

1. Support the improvement of children's literacy skills relative to grade-level expectations
2. Celebrate representation for black and brown kids

Meet the Comic Crew

Black, Latinx, and Asian early learners will see themselves represented in every aspect of *Drawn In*. It is imperative to tell our communities' authentic stories by reflecting on all the wonderful things that make up our identities. All children in the St. Louis region and across the country benefit when exposed to authentic and non-stereotypical characters who may be different from the viewer's own identity. We build empathy and foster a more connected society when we share experiences.

Lady Magnitude (aka Lady M)

Age: 60

Favorite comic genre

All of them. (Asking this is like asking which child is your favorite.)

Best qualities

Cool, hip, kind smart and patient

Best known for

Owning the coolest comic book shop in town and teaching the kids about new words and concepts



Tyler Agbani

Age: 10

Favorite comic genre

Action and adventure

Best qualities

Infectious enthusiasm to discover new adventures

Best known for

Leading the charge



Grace (Yeong-ja) Park

Age: 9

Favorite comic genre

Superhero

Best qualities

Artistic, colorful style

Best known for

Quick action for every situation the crew's in



Nevaeh Campbell

Age: 11

Favorite comic genre

Manga

Best qualities

Cool and confident

Best known for

Mapping out a plan while on her longboard



Jadyn Harris

Age: 9

Favorite comic genre

Science fiction

Best qualities

Loyal; highly advanced reading and memory

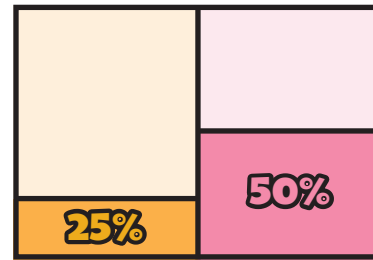
Best known for

his trusty backpack



Our kids are WATCHing!

People of color represent only 25% of the human characters in children’s television* yet children of color are nearly 50% of the U.S. population of children under the age of 15**. *Drawn In* is a key step in closing the content gap for diverse character representation in children’s programming through the diverse ethnicities of the characters and their life experiences.



Characters of Color Represented in Children’s Media Children of Color Living in the US



— Literacy Power Hour participants

16 animated video shorts distributed on-demand via social and digital platforms.

Four broadcast specials featuring the animated shorts enhanced with live-action segments to reinforce the featured vocabulary words.



12.8 million+

total impressions (includes earned media from local and national press, on-air promotion, online promotion, and email)

147,000

views of video shorts and broadcast specials across all platforms: Nine PBS Broadcast, YouTube, Facebook, and at drawnin.org.

(Nielsen, YouTube, Meta, Google Analytics 4)

38%

of Broadcast Impressions were among **BIPOC Persons 2+**.

(Nielsen/TRAC Media Services – Dec 2022 - Feb 2023)

51%

of video views were **from digital sources** (YouTube, Drawnin.org, Facebook)

39%

of Broadcast Impressions were among **Persons 2+ with no college**.

(Nielsen/TRAC Media Services – Dec 2022 - Feb 2023)

1,000

on-air promotions and interstitials to build awareness about *Drawn In* to our entire broadcast audience.

*Common Sense Media Representation Fact Sheet 2021
** 2020 U.S. Census Data

Our kids are READING!

Researchers have found students' reading comprehension significantly improves when reading culturally relevant books whose characters, places, and events align well with their own cultural and experiential backgrounds (Christ, 2018). And, all children benefit when exposed to authentic and non-stereotypical characters who may be different from the viewer's own identity. *Drawn In* invites viewers to become readers and explorers of their own!

"MY SON LOVES DRAWN IN! HE LOVES COMIC BOOKS, AND THEY HAVE REALLY HELPED HIM GET INTO READING AND HE LOVES SEEING CHARACTERS WHO LOOK LIKE HIM."

"EXCITED TO SEE A BLACK BOY NAMED JADYN BECAUSE THAT IS ALSO HIS NAME!"

"MY 6-YEAR-OLD LOVES THE COMIC BOOK STYLE. MY 11-YEAR-OLD MADE HER OWN COMIC!"

— *Drawn In* Community Survey Responses



Four comic book issues are available at drawnin.org and were distributed widely across the community via community partners.

Two magnificent words featured in each comic story. Kids who learn these words and concepts are more likely to understand situations and literary texts on a deeper level.

57

community partnerships distributing comics via the *St. Louis American* newspaper, St. Louis Public Schools, Public Libraries, local bookstores, and comic shops.

200,000

print comic books distributed across the St. Louis region to help build at-home libraries.

Our kids are PLAYing!

Research over the last few decades has repeatedly shown that learning is optimized when adults structure an environment towards a learning goal, but the learning environment encourages fun, child-led exploration and discovery. Learning to read can and should be FUN! Playful learning is at the heart of *Drawn In*.



An **interactive website** designed to be responsive on both high- and low-end devices with minimal bandwidth. Here kids can watch, read, play, and learn.

Keep the fun and learning going at home! Our **grown-ups page** houses resources for caregivers to accompany the comic issues and video shorts. Tools include, comic activities, coloring sheets, and more.

Two **literacy focused online games** designed to engage independent readers or emerging readers to play with help from grown-ups.

- Mystery Snack Hunt with riddles written by local high schoolers at Confluence Academy
- The Dragon Egg Riddle

53,000+

website visits to drawnin.org

(Google Analytics 4)

engagement rate per impression across social media channels

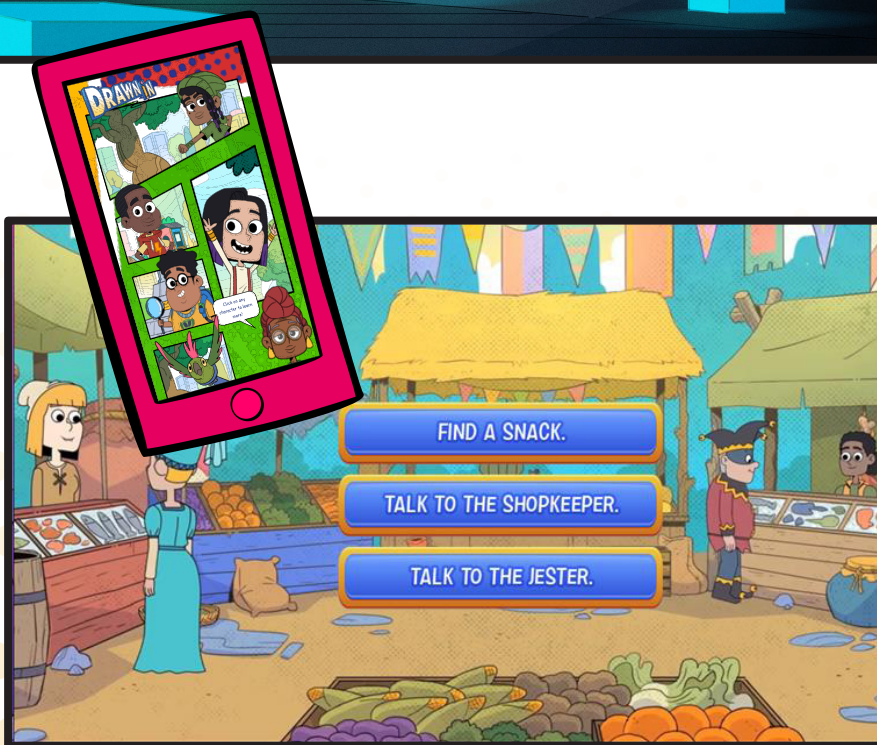
18%

(Meta Analytics)

81%

of visits to drawnin.org were on mobile devices.

(Google Analytics 4)



Our kids are LEARNing!

We learn better when we can see ourselves in the story. To help bridge the literacy gap, *Drawn In* utilizes research-based best practices, including English Language Arts (ELA) and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) fundamentals. Live learning events like Storytime in the Commons and events with community partners allow us to be in the community and encourage multigenerational interaction.

Comics and graphic novels are now widely praised as a gateway to reading. According to the Harvard Graduate School of Education, motivating students with texts that resonate with their personal interests and identities will increase their investment, leading to greater exposure to words, greater vocabulary acquisition, and more frequent use of reading strategies — three cornerstones of comprehension.

Drawn In is a full literacy initiative.

Early learning lesson plans and playful learning activities support the videos, comic books, and website content, all available online at drawnin.org.

Literacy Power Hours include comic story writing workshop sessions to build literacy activities into the everyday lives of early learners and their families.

Resources for grown-ups integrate literacy into everyday activities.

Resources for teachers and workshop leaders include a comprehensive facilitator guide — part of a foundation to train educators on how to best use *Drawn In* as a resource in the classroom.

"MY STUDENTS 'GOT' IT! THEY WERE SO EAGER TO WORK ON THEIR PROJECTS! AND THEY DEFINITELY BUILT STAMINA IN STAYING FOCUSED ON WHAT THEY WERE DOING DURING EACH SESSION."

— 2nd Grade Teacher response to independent evaluation survey

82%

of responding parents/caregivers indicated **they had benefited from Power Hours.**

73%

agreed that Literacy Power Hours (and *Drawn In* materials) **increased the amount of quality time** they were able to spend with their children.

73%

also agreed that ***Drawn In* materials and Literacy Power Hour activities increased [their] confidence in supporting [their] children's literacy skills at home.**

Data collected by LS Associates



70 Literacy Power Hour Sessions hosted in school and community settings

119 Early Learners completed their own comic book story while attending Literacy Power Hour sessions

950+ participants attended playful learning Community Engagement events hosted by Nine PBS and trusted community partners. Inviting the community in is one of the very unique aspects of the *Drawn In* initiative.

Our community is DRAWN in!

25+

earned media pieces. Press and partner interest has been strong with many features across, print, digital, radio, and broadcast television.

CULTURE / FILM /

Nine PBS and Lion Forge Animation partner for "Drawn In," a St. Louis-inspired multimedia franchise

The new project is among the nation's first kids' initiatives to feature Americans as lead characters in public media.

BY GARY MENDOZA OCTOBER 26, 2022 2:57 PM



LOCAL TALENT BEHIND THE VOICES OF DRAWN IN: RECO MARTIN (PLAYING TYLER), RILEY ADAMS (PLAYING NEVAEH), YOSU (PLAYING GRACE). COURTESY OF NINE PBS / JASON WINKLER PHOTOGRAPHY

Nine PBS and Academy Award-winning studio Lion Forge Animation have partnered to create a new multimedia franchise for kids of color and help bridge the literacy gap with a new multimedia initiative called *Drawn In*. The project will consist of adventure stories featuring four Midwest kids who live in Midland City, a fictional place largely based on St. Louis.

In every *Drawn In* adventure, the real world will collide with the comic world, and the kids will have to come up with ways to save their city using problem-solving and literacy skills. Adults and children will be able to access *Drawn In* through animated video shorts, print and digital comic books, and, eventually, broadcasts on Nine PBS. There is also a website dedicated to the initiative, where kids can play educational games and educators and adults can access resources to further support literacy goals.

David Steward II, the executive producer of *Drawn In* and owner of Lion Forge Animation, is excited for the effect the project will have on its audience. "I'm most excited to see the kind of impact on people's lives. If we can start changing some outcomes for kids and get them excited about learning, maybe 10-15 years down the road, when these kids are adults, if I run into some folk and they say, 'You know what, I got into reading because I watched *Drawn In*,' I know what we've accomplished."

New Nine PBS animated series creates representative educational content for all

BY NEVADIA1980 KMOX • NEWS / LOCAL

The animation studio behind the Oscar-winning piece "Hair Love," Lion Forge, is partnering with Nine PBS to create a new animated multimedia series called "Drawn In." Alex Stallings, senior director of early learning at Nine PBS, and Mariah Richards, a voice actor in the series, told KMOX all about the project.



"It is from St. Louis, for St. Louis children, and it is a multimedia platform endeavor around literacy," Stallings said. "We're so excited about this partnership. We know that we wanted the best for our children, and so it really was [founder] David and Nine that came together to really launch this."

Stallings said the series will be a multimedia platform endeavor around literacy, featuring animated video shorts, print and digital comic books, and, eventually, broadcasts on Nine PBS. The initiative is designed to address educational objectives for English and language arts among kids ages 6 to 8.

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All New Kids Show Made in STL!

From Nine PBS and Lion Forge Animation comes a new multimedia literacy initiative for kids! In *Drawn In*, four comic book-loving kids go on epic adventures where their real world collides with a new comic world in each story. They must use literacy and problem-solving skills to set their world right again. Stories are shared through animated shorts, comic books, educational games, and more! Learn more at drawnin.org and follow *Drawn In* on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/drawnin.org) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/drawnin.org).



AWARD-WINNING ANIMATOR DAVID STEWARD II AND HIS TEAM FROM WEST COUNTY STUDIOS MONDAY, NOV. 21, 2022.

St. Louis Public School District did not have access to the internet, he said. "This negatively impacts our children's education." The digital divide disproportionately affects our communities. The report also shows St. Louis scores a 37 on racial disparities in early reading scores for Black and white students. A score of 100 represents equal opportunity meaning there are no racial disparities in outcomes between Black and white populations. The lower the Equity Score, the greater the disparity.

The analysis of the data shows that while third graders are the most likely to demonstrate reading proficiency at 64.5%, followed by Asian third graders at 54.5%. Hispanic third graders are reading at 32.1%. Black third graders are the least likely to demonstrate reading proficiency at 25.7%. If proficiency rates were equitable, 473 more Black third graders would have met state standards in English.

"With that type of information, we decided to go after bridging the literacy gap in Black and brown communities," said Steward. Partnering with Nine PBS and Lion Forge, they had conducted the research and found a need for a series that would supply make a difference, and other racial creators escape from the comic book pages. The *Drawn In* crew must analyze how to save their city from various threats.

Steward says that comic book reading has high interest in young readers, it sparks their interest to encourage them to read other books. The idea of *Drawn In* is to get into the wheelhouse of Lion Forge Animation.

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THE ST. LOUISAN

CULTURE FOOD & DRINK STYLE WELLNESS THINGS TO DO • ST. LOUIS, MO

Drawn In: In Comic-Loving Audiences Via A New Initiative

By Amy De La Hunt

you do, don't scream." Nevaeh encourages her ghost-busting friends in episode 12 from Nine PBS—and the four animated problem-solvers calmly proceed to come to restore a trio of ghouls to the comic book from which they escaped.

whole to unpack around that simple scene from the animated video short "Ghouls." It's part of a multimedia initiative designed to positively represent kids of color and help close the literacy gap by addressing educational objectives for English and language arts among kids ages 6 to 8.

From its premise to its ideators to its voice actors, "Drawn In" illustrates the incredible work of Black creators and artists dedicated to elevating and educating within the St. Louis community and beyond.



THE ANIMATED CHARACTERS

Nevah Campbell is an 11-year-old longboard-riding, manga-loving girl who thinks fast and moves fast.

Yeong-Ja "Grace" Park is the life of the party. She has big ideas—and, importantly, she has the ability to sketch them out for the crew usually adding in a few funny details.

Tyler Agbani is an expressive, emotional 10-year-old who sees the world through his own unique prism and loves a good action/adventure comic, ideally one with lots of humor.

Jady Harris, Tyler's younger cousin, is a quiet sci-fi reader armed with a trusty backpack, a fanny pack and a huge arsenal of words and phrases.

- Follow the adventures of 4 kids
- Drawn In wants to close literacy gap
- Will be able to view later this summer
- Drawnin.org

It's All in the Family

First Ladies' Health Equity Symposium addresses importance of cancer screenings

You'll be Drawn in

Nine PBS show, comic book designed to increase literacy

STL LIFE

ARTS + HOME + TRAVEL

DRAWING INTEREST

Animated show hopes to make reading an adventure for Black and brown St. Louis kids

Our community describes the Drawn in initiative as ...



Other words cited: Inclusive, Original, Colorful, Informative, Creative

- Collected via Literacy Power Hours Participant and Community Surveys



“DRAWN IN IS A REAL REPRESENTATION OF THE BRILLIANCE OF CHILDREN OF COLOR. IT IS A MIRROR AND WINDOW INTO THE REALITY THAT ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE, AND ALL CHILDREN ARE CAPABLE PROBLEM SOLVERS.”

—Amy Hunter
Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Caleres

—Rhonda Carter Adams
Director of Talent and Inclusion at DOT Foods

“AS A DIRECTOR OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN MY PROFESSIONAL LIFE, I UNDERSTAND HOW CRITICAL DIVERSITY OF THOUGHT AND LEADERSHIP IS TO A COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE. REPRESENTATION ABSOLUTELY MATTERS! ... IT DOESN'T MATTER YOUR AGE, WHERE YOU LIVE, OR WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE, WE ALL CAN DO GREAT THINGS.”

Thank you!

Join the adventures at

drawnin.org

@drawninofficial



Hundreds of people were “*Drawn In*” to the creation of this important literacy initiative. Facilitating an ongoing feedback loop ensures that community needs are embedded in every aspect. *Drawn In* Community Advisors include organizational partners and/or individual stakeholders who are specialized advocates of Early Learning, Literacy, Cultural Relevance and Representation, Classroom Success, and Autism.

We’d like to thank all of our community partners and advisory board who devoted hundreds of hours and resources to *Drawn In*.

Nine PBS, an award-winning and community-owned public media organization, magnifies and deepens understanding of our community to help our region flourish. Nine PBS tells authentic stories about the St. Louis region, which promote understanding and build empathy. By providing free access to entertainment, kids’ programs, documentaries, the arts, trusted news, and more, the station ensures learning opportunities for everyone.

Lion Forge Animation is a leading Black-owned, full-service animation studio based in St. Louis, MO. A recognized leader in bringing authentic content focusing on underrepresented voices and experiences to worldwide audiences, the studio was behind the Academy Award®-winning, culturally resonating short, *Hair Love*. One of the only Black-owned animation studios unmatched in size and scale, it is the only Black-owned animation studio with an Oscar®.

LS-Associates provides developmental and outcome evaluation services for *Drawn In*. Dewitt Campbell, MSW specializes in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion strategies and has 20+ years of experience working with nonprofit organizations and corporations. Dr. Leslie Scheuler is the lead methodologist, incorporating qualitative and quantitative approaches to outcome measurement. Developmental and collaborative evaluation strategies, as well as the utilization of results to make program adjustments in real-time, are included.



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Associated community engagement is funded in part by:



Joseph and Sandra Lehrer
in memory of Ted Koplar



Scan to visit
drawnin.org