

\$25,000 Challenge!

R.A. Stevens Family Foundation has awarded Literacy Services a challenge grant to entice new and lapsed donors to give more on the eve of our 50th Anniversary.

Here's how it works: For every \$2 contributed by a new or lapsed supporter, the Foundation will contribute \$1, up to a total of \$25,000! The Foundation's Challenge will also match \$1 for every \$2 of the portion above last year's contribution from a current supporter. Your gift now will have a bigger impact than ever.

While you read the rest of our new newsletter, *The Syllabus*, **we hope you will consider making a contribution to help us meet this exciting challenge.**

The envelope found in these pages will make it easy for you to give!
Or call 414-344-5878.



Transitions, Transformations and a Teaser

By: Ginger Duiven, Executive Director

I love alliterations. Creating alliterations is playing with words, sounds, and ideas. I love them even when they are corny or clichéd, but I really love it when they add to our ability to remember, explain or paint a picture.

In the last year, Literacy Services has been going through a leadership transition. While the Board of Directors began the process of filling the Executive Director role, they tapped someone they knew to be experienced, knowledgeable and capable to serve as the interim leader. Jan Constable, a former board director, a current tutor and a retired executive whom you will read more about on page 5, served Literacy Services with excellence during this important time.

This January, I began my own transition. After a first career in printing and publishing, I enjoyed a transformative ten years with the Urban Ecology Center as the Director of Development and Marketing during a time of rapid and exciting growth. Two and a half years ago I challenged myself to continue my professional growth by enrolling in the Alverno College MBA program. I achieved my goal in December and realized that I had been transformed by the experience. I was ready for the next career challenge.

Literacy Services has been transforming lives through adult education for 49 years. This mission, this organization, and this transitional time called to me.

See **Transitions** continued on **page 3**



Deadline Met! Moving Forward

By: David Peters, Director of GED

Last year, GED students, tutors, and staff faced a significant challenge. The five GED tests in effect for the previous 12 years were being retired at the end of 2013. This presented our students with a stark reality: Finish all remaining tests by December 13th or start over in 2014 with four new, more rigorous tests.

What impressed me most about our GED program in 2013 was how students and tutors rose to meet the challenge of that deadline. Many added hours and/or days to their weekly schedules. We also opened the agency on Saturday mornings to provide extra time for GED preparation. This meant that some students were here studying six days a week. Twenty-two pairs of students and tutors

sacrificed these weekend mornings to take advantage of this additional study time. For many, that extra preparation was decisive. The resolve demonstrated by our students and tutors in the face of this challenge was simply inspiring.

As a result of these extraordinary efforts, 28 students earned their GED through Literacy Services in 2013. Twenty of those grads finished between June and December of 2013. In those six months the program produced more grads than in the entire previous year!

At 6:00pm on June 4th, 2014 our students will participate in the city-wide GED graduation held at the Milwaukee Theater.

continued on **page 3**

Save the Date!

Literacy Services of Wisconsin's
50th Anniversary
Kick-Off Luncheon
Thursday, September 18th

Mark your calendars! Literacy Services is turning fifty and we want you to come celebrate with us. Stay tuned for more event information.

The Syllabus

Literacy Services of Wisconsin Newsletter

The Syllabus is the quarterly newsletter of
Literacy Services of Wisconsin,
a 501c3 nonprofit organization.

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Nancy Ignacio, Director

Maxime Peeters, Assistant Director

GED® Preparation

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Program Support

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Literacy Services serves adult learners with quality
education programs; Adult Basic Education (ABE),
General Education Development (GED) test preparation,
English Language Learning (ELL), and integrated and
personalized Functional Literacy instruction.

Founded in 1965, our mission is to educate,
motivate and inspire engaged adults to achieve
greater independence and transform their lives. We
are grateful for the broad support of our community,
including over 400 volunteers and financial support
from 883 individuals, 186 foundations, corporations
and organizations, The United Way of Greater Milwaukee
and funds administered by Wisconsin Technical College
System Adult Education and Family Literacy.

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Inspired by Student Progress

By: Kelly M. Fox, Director of Adult Basic Education

In the field of adult education, it can be difficult to measure or define student progress. The personal transformations our students experience as they learn aren't easily captured by standardized testing. Their growth as individuals, parents, or citizens isn't quantifiable and can't be readily extrapolated from our data. At Literacy Services, we recognize progress in the way our students carry themselves and interact with our community. We see their dramatic improvements in self-respect and confidence as clear markers of personal achievement. Regularly, we celebrate victories over seemingly unattainable goals, and we're inspired by the successes we see.

With help from our amazing team of dedicated tutors, our students continue to make tremendous personal gains as their reading skills improve. A man who lost his long-time factory job learned to read and write, eventually using his new skills to get a better job. A young woman from an illiterate family finished her GED and is now an important role model for her young children. A man who had been told he would never learn to read proved his detractors wrong; after learning to read at Literacy Services, he got a job at a five-star restaurant and left public assistance. A bright woman who never had an opportunity for formal education came to LSW in her senior years and completed her HSED to prove to herself that she could. Daily, our students tell us about what they're reading with their children and grandchildren and how those youngsters are learning to love reading.

One of the greatest transformations we have witnessed came from a gentleman who had been court-ordered to attend school. When he first came to Literacy Services, he was down trodden, defeated, with little confidence or self-respect. He would sit hunched in his chair, avoiding eye contact and trying to appear nonchalant. As his skills slowly improved, so

did his demeanor. Not long after he successfully read his first text passage, his posture lifted, his eyes shone with eagerness, and a smile made regular appearances on his lips. This gentleman would become one of the most courteous, polite, and friendly members of our community. When he met new students, he shared with them his journey from his insecure beginning at our organization through his newfound self-respect and self-assurance, and all who knew him saw what an amazing transformation this man underwent as he achieved literacy.



Academic achievement certainly occurs in our programs in normative, measurable ways. But the data points fail to capture the evolution of our students as confident, self-respecting individuals. No statistics can describe the triumphant feelings our students experience when they conquer job applications, medical information, traffic signs, even their children's schoolwork. We celebrate progress when our students are capable of things their parents never accomplished, when they achieve goals they never thought possible, and when they share their knowledge and skills with their own children and grandchildren. In this way, the influence of education transcends the individual and touches the lives of our whole community. As our students continue to learn, grow, contribute to, and participate in society, Literacy Services staff and volunteers feel renewed commitment to help them succeed. Their progress inspires and motivates us each and every day.



Transitions

continued from **Page 1**

I knew I could use my experience, knowledge, and passion to lead Literacy Services into its 50th year and beyond. The selection committee of the board ultimately decided they thought I could, too. I am grateful to board members Dave Hanson, Kim Metcalf-Kupres, John Miller, Sandy Wysocki and Grace LoCoco for giving me their confidence after several interviews, one of which was memorably marked by a fireworks display! I wonder now if this was just a distracting coincidence or “made for the movies” life moment.

Since I have joined the organization, there has not been a day without someone sharing with me their personal story of transformation. Students, tutors, and community members come up to me each day and tell me their stories and the results of their experiences at Literacy Services. Tutors tell me that they think they get more out of their volunteer service than the students. Students tell me that their lives have been truly transformed as a result of their studies and their learning partnership with their tutor. What we do here really works! What we do really matters in our community!

With an estimated - and astounding 55,000 - adults lacking basic literacy skills in Milwaukee County (National Center for Educational Statistics) there is a documented need for Literacy Services and its programs. In 2010/11 21,000 adults participated in adult education programs statewide. There are many more adults who are in need of basic education and many more seeking education services than can currently be met by us and the other literacy programs throughout the county. Our work is laid out for us. Our model of one-on-one volunteer tutoring is cost effective and produces results.

By now, you must wonder what the “teaser” in my alliterative title means. The year ahead is filled with many exciting opportunities and a few challenges for Literacy Services. One of those challenges will be raising the funds needed to continue our quality and cost-effective work to fulfill our mission to educate, motivate and inspire engaged adults to achieve greater independence and transform their lives. The challenge grant from the R.A. Stevens Family Foundation is one way we can “tease” new or lapsed supporters to consider contributing to make this transitional

year a success. This challenge also teases those of you that have regularly contributed to consider increasing your support this year.

To make it easy to help us with this challenge you will find an envelope between the pages of this newsletter or you can call us to make your donation with your credit card. It's that easy!

Want to know more before you decide? Do you know someone who might like to get involved? **Give me a call at 414-344-5878 or send me an email at ginger@literacyservices.org.** I would love to meet, talk or communicate with you about what is in store for this amazing organization for our 49th year and beyond! Let the transitions and transformations continue!



(left to right) Robin Brisco, Ginger Duiven and Bianca Ortiz



Forward

continued from **Page 1**

GED tutors and supporters from the community are invited to attend and share in the accomplishments of our graduates and adults from all around the city. Thank you to all the tutors who worked tirelessly with these students to help them learn, prepare, and succeed.

Since the big push to meet the end-of-year deadline, I have been meeting with colleagues, tutors and educational publishers to determine how to best position our program for student success on the new generation GED. With the introduction of computerized testing and increased emphasis on mathematics, composition, and reasoning skills, we must bring

forward the best of our past educational platform while introducing new ways to engage our students for academic success.

Strengthened by our experience in meeting previous challenges, GED program staff and tutors are ready and eager to guide our new students through the challenges posed by the 2014 GED. We all have a stake in their success.

I am humbled and grateful for the efforts of those who contribute to the success of this program. Special thanks go to:

- The more than 40 GED tutors who came out to recent events such as the latest program meeting and subsequent training sessions. Your continued commitment helps the program maintain a strong foundation. We can't do it without you!

- JPMorgan Chase for donating computers to benefit our students' practice and learning.
- My colleague Dustin Slane for his help in getting these computers set up and ready to use.
- Tutor Chris Colby, who helped to create the new training videos. The use of video as a training tool has already begun to broaden and deepen ongoing program discussions.
- Tutor John Shefchik, who, among other things, is creating cross-reference lists of materials for each of the four GED subject areas. These will prove to be valuable resources for each tutor in the program.
- Tutor Sara Risley for her donation of new GED books and help with classroom projects.



What's in a Name?

By: Nancy Ignacio, Director of English Language Learning

My name is Nancy Ignacio, and I am the new Director of our ELL program. ELL? We have made the change from calling our program ESL, English as a Second Language to ELL, English Language Learners. This name better reflects that fact that students may already speak more than one language before beginning to learn English!

So with that, I want to introduce myself. My husband and I relocated to Milwaukee in June last year. My work in our previous home of Buffalo, New York was as an Adult Education Instructor of ESL, ABE and GED. I love this work so when I arrived in Milwaukee I found my way to Literacy Services and began work as a volunteer tutor in October. I applied for the Director role in February and am thrilled to have joined the staff as Director part-time on March 6.

I want to share another name and make another introduction.

Maxime Peeters joined Literacy Services on March 17 as the part-time Assistant Director of ELL. Like me, Maxime joined Literacy Services as a tutor in October 2013. She moved to the United States a year ago from her home in Belgium. In addition to her native language, Dutch, she fluently speaks English and Spanish and is an advanced French and a basic German speaker. This



combined with her tutoring experience, her bachelor's degree in linguistics and her passion for tutoring students in English make Maxime a great addition to our team.



Many of you may already know Arlette Bennett, our Community Engagement Coordinator, but just in case you don't, let me introduce her

to you, too! Arlette came to us a year ago from St. Luke's Hospital, where she was an intervention radiologist and interpreter. Arlette is bilingual in Spanish and English. Her responsibilities include arranging civics education field trips for tutors, students and their families.

So now let me fill you in on what Arlette, Maxime and I have been up to! We have been very busy organizing, inventorying materials and tidying up the ELL classroom. We know that it will enable our wonderful tutors to more easily access the materials they need, right when they need them, so the students have the benefit of high-quality instruction.

Maxime has begun a conversation group for students and their tutors that meets twice a week in the library. There are many stimulating topics of conversation with manipulatives to enhance comprehension. The last conversation group was able to taste Maxime's wonderful Belgian chocolate!

Arlette continues to arrange interesting and educational field trips for students and their tutors; in March they went to the Milwaukee Art Museum and in April, there was a guided tour of the Milwaukee Public Library. Future field trips may include the Milwaukee Public Museum and the Courthouse. These trips are part of the civics education modules designed to help students practice speaking English and learn about the community and country in which they live.

In the future, we are planning to hold tutor workshops. These will enable tutors to have some hands-on experience with new materials and techniques and to share their knowledge and experience with each other.

Our student numbers are growing and we have added outstanding new tutors to our roster to meet the demand. We are inspired daily by our amazing, thoughtful and generous tutors and our hard working students. Literacy Services is a great place where great things are happening every day!

A Warm Welcome and a Fond Farewell



In February, our Director of Operations, Mark Neufang, accepted a position at Diverse and Resilient. We are grateful for his hard work coordinating volunteers, keeping a keen eye on our finances, and giving much of himself to the mission of Literacy Services. We will miss his friendly personality (not to mention his exquisite baking skills), and we also wish him continued success in all his future endeavors.



Literacy Services now has a new friendly personality, Becky Grandone, in the Director of Finance & Operations position. Becky brings her 15 years of experience as a business manager, HR supervisor, and several nonprofit board and consulting roles to Literacy Services. She earned her Master's in Public Administration from St. Louis University. She is also currently serving as the President of the Board for the Victory Garden Initiative. Becky lives in Shorewood with her husband and two children. Join us in giving her a warm welcome.



Beyond One-on-One

By: Dustin Slane, Director of Marketing

There are many ways to contribute to the mission of Literacy Services. Our giving community is made up of passionate staff, committed board members, caring donors and hundreds of volunteer tutors. Sometimes, one person aspires to take on all of those roles. Milwaukee native Jan Constable is one such guy. Jan began tutoring at Literacy Services after retiring from a rewarding career with AT&T. From there, his role at the agency evolved into much more. I was happy to sit down with him and chat about the many hats he has worn since he was first introduced to us.

What compelled you to come to Literacy Services? In the spring of 2008 then LSW Executive Director Barbara Felix gave a literacy presentation to the Elmbrook Rotary Club. I was shocked at the state of illiteracy in the Milwaukee area. Being retired and having time on my hands, I volunteered to attend an orientation and later a training session.

You have been tutoring in our Adult Basic Education Program, where students learn the basics of reading. What was it like to sit with your first student? I was very comfortable with the one-on-one tutoring program. I seemed to be well received by the students, and the experienced tutors and staff answered my questions with smiles and made me feel at home.

Do you have a favorite memory or story from working directly with a student? Yes, I was tutoring a gentleman who was advancing in the program, but was afraid to try and read a book. He believed he failed his children by not being able to help them with their homework, and he was scared to fail in his attempt at reading books. After some coaxing,

together we read a Dr. Seuss book, Green Eggs and Ham. He then read it out loud by himself! After finishing the book he got a genuine smile on his face and proudly said "I've read a book." When he left that day he took the book with him. At our next tutoring session, I asked him if he had taken the book to practice. With tears in his eyes, he said "No. I took it home and read it to my granddaughter." I was hooked on tutoring!

Fundamentally, tutoring is about educating the student, but often our volunteers gain from the experience as well. What have you learned about yourself by working with our students? I've learned to be more patient and to recognize that what I see as small improvements in a student's learning can be seen as major ones for them.

Why did you pursue becoming a board member? I was asked to join and then voted onto the Board in 2009. I was really impressed with the work being done by the staff and tutors and wanted to become more involved in setting policy and agency goals.

In 2013, you stepped up to help us during our leadership transition by taking on the role of Interim Chief Operations Officer. Did the experience affect your view of the agency in any way? Working more closely with the program directors, I became aware of their dedication to the programs, their students and the students' successes. The dedication of the tutors also surprised me. Many tutors come multiple times a week, are involved with their students' training preparation and make themselves available to take on non-tutor tasks. It's hard to find a tutor at Literacy Services who does not have a good comment, positive message or smile on his or her face.

Having seen so many aspects of our organization, what is the most important message you could pass on to someone

that has never heard of us? I would ask them to come to an orientation session and observe our staff, tutors and students in action. Last year, I invited donors to visit us and tour the agency. You could tell by the questions they asked that they were impressed by the experience and professionalism of our staff, the dedication of long term volunteers, the engagement of our students, and the prudent manner in which the agency spends donations. We have a great leadership team in place with the LSW Board, Ginger, our Executive Director, our great staff and our unbelievably fantastic volunteer tutors.



Jan Constable working with one of his students.

Jan continues his commitment to our students by coming in two days a week to tutor. Looking back at all he has achieved, it is hard for us to fully capture our gratitude for his service in words. A humble man with a quiet kindness, he knows, we trust, the value of his selfless gifts when he sees the transformation of our students. That said, we are always happy to say "Thanks again!"

Calendar Bookmarks

Accepting New Students! While our ABE program is close to full capacity, we do have openings for new students in our new GED program. Students can call starting on May 26th to join our Initial Assessments Sessions in the first week of June. These sessions are the first step in our new enrollment process for ABE and GED students.

We also have openings in our ELL (formerly ESL) program. Assessment and enrollment appointments are available two times each week. Prospective students can call to schedule an appointment.

Join Executive Director Ginger Duiven for coffee and pastry at 8:30am on the dates given below. Please come and share your views, ask questions or simply visit with Ginger. She wants to get to know you and hear from you!

May

8th – Volunteer Orientation 8:30-9:30am
22nd – Book Now - Iron Horse Hotel Book Drive Kick-off Event 6-9pm
26th – Memorial Day – Agency Closed
27th – Volunteer Orientation 5:30-6:30pm

June

3rd - Initial Assessment Session
5th - Coffee with Ginger 8:30am
5th - Initial Assessment Session
12th - Volunteer Orientation 8:30-9:30am
20th - Volunteer Orientation 5:30-6:30pm

July

8th - Coffee with Ginger 8:30am
 - Initial Assessment Session
10th - Initial Assessment Session
4th - Independence Day – Agency Closed
10th - Volunteer Orientation 8:30-9:30am
22nd - Volunteer Orientation 5:30-6:30pm

August

4th - Coffee with Ginger 8:30am

Visit literacyservices.org/events for more information about upcoming events and trainings.



Breaking the Record Books

Last fall, Literacy Services raised well over \$15,000 from book sales and surged past the total of any previous year. This great achievement was dependent on the collective work of countless volunteers and book donors. We are grateful for the tremendous support from local businesses, individuals and organizations like United Way of Greater Milwaukee who give both time and literature to make the event such a success.

Our first step towards another record-breaking year is book collection. We collect new and used books throughout the year and we hope you will take part by contributing a part of your library or even hosting your own book drive. We can supply boxes and co-branded posters and can even schedule book pick-ups to help make the process as simple as possible. To take part in a book collection, or to help sort books before the sale, please email Dustin Slane at dustin@literacyservices.org.

Check out some of this year's exciting new book drives:

Iron Horse Hotel & Fuel Milwaukee Book Collection Kick-Off Party, Thursday, May 22

The Iron Horse Hotel is kicking off its ongoing book collection program "Book Now" with a happy hour soiree sponsored by FUEL Milwaukee on Thursday, May 22, from 6-9 p.m. The event is free and open to the public, and guests who donate a hardcover book during the event will receive a complimentary specialty cocktail. The Iron Horse Hotel's new book drive initiative is worth celebration. Their book collection process is brilliantly simple: Guests are encouraged to leave books in their room or in the hotel's library upon departure, and the hotel will donate those books to Literacy Services. We hope to see you at the kick-off!

More information can be found on the Iron Horse Hotel's website: www.theironhorsehotel.com

Arab World Fest Free Admission with Book Donation

Literacy Services and Arab World Fest are bringing a message of literacy to the Henry Maier Festival Grounds. On August 8th, the festival is extending it's free admission hours and encouraging patrons to donate books to Literacy Services from 5pm until 7pm. We are excited to be a part of one of Milwaukee's iconic lakefront celebrations of ethnicity and culture. Please email dustin@literacyservices.org if you would be interesting in volunteering at the event to help collect books. All volunteers will receive free admission to the grounds.

To learn more about Arab World Fest visit: www.arabworldfest.com

Thank You

We are grateful to everyone who contributes to support the important work of Literacy Services. In the space below we recognize all of the donors who made gifts of support between January 1 and April 30, 2014. It is our commitment to recognize every donor based on the donor's wishes. If your name does not appear below as you would expect, please contact Dustin Slane at 414-344-5878 so we can correct our records. Thank you on behalf of all the students who are motivated to improve their lives through education and learning at Literacy Services!

Individuals

Michael & Jackie Herd Barber
Theresa Barry
Nancy Briggs
Jeanne Collins
Ginger Duiven
Joan Fagan
Nancy Filsinger
Patrick & Cecilia Hawley
Haile Henry
Jennifer Johnson
Benjamin Krovitz
Rita Lohmeier
Mindy Lubar Price
Anne & Fred Luber
Jan & Vince Martin
Joyce Mielke
Jeanne Milan
William Murray
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Jason Stamm
Robert Wawrzyn
Tovah Werner
Elaine Wilhelm
Paul & Sandy Wysocki
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Wisconsin Literacy Inc.
Wisconsin Technical College System
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Maureen Warmuth

Community Volunteer

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Associated Bank

Marie Weiss

Community Volunteer

Sandy Wysocki

The Business Journal

Wish List

We are always looking for donations, both large and small. The following list of items can be donated at any time.

Please call Robin Brisco at 414-344-5878 with inquiries about in-kind gifts.

Paper Shredder

Spiral Notebooks

Electric Pencil Sharpener

USB Thumb Drives

Dry Erase Markers

Copy Paper

Utility Knife with Blades

Glue Sticks & Shipping Tape

White-out

Coffee, Tea, Cream & Sugar

Coffee Cups

Bus Tickets

Dish Soap & Hand Sanitizer

Paper Towels & Facial Tissue

Serving Bowls/platters

Dish Set & Silverware/cutlery Set

Table Cloths

Audio System (PA)

Lysol Disinfecting Wipes & Spray

Fans

New Mouse Pads

Green Plants & Vases

Microwave Oven & Toaster

Basic House/hand Tools

Introducing “The Syllabus”

Our newsletter has a new name, a new look and a whole lot more to say.

In this issue you learn more about:

- Our New Staff
- An Awesome Challenge
- GED's Triumph Over Change
- The Volunteer Perspective
- And much more

Unsubscribe

We hope you enjoy reading about our mission, but we understand if you would prefer not to receive our mailing. To be removed from our mailing list, simply send a message to dustin@literacyservices.org or call us at 414-344-5878.



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SERVICES

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Help us find our former students!



Volunteer tutor, Norman Gill, with a student back in the day.

We are working with a cultural anthropologist who is documenting the stories of some of our current and former students as well as the stories of some of our tutor/student pairs. This project comes at the perfect time, as Literacy Services is preparing a year of celebration to commemorate 50 years of serving the community this fall. Through this book project we have the opportunity to reconnect with students who have studied and learned with us over the years. These stories will help us celebrate the successes of thousands of students and volunteer tutors who have been a part of our 50-year history. If you have ideas of people for this book project (you can even give me your name for the project!), please email them to Ginger Duiven at ginger@literacyservices.org. I look forward to hearing from you!

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