



Our 50th Year Inspires \$100,000 Challenge Grant!

By: Ginger Duiven, Executive Director

With the close of our 50th anniversary year just around the corner, I am thrilled to announce an amazing new challenge grant: *The Ensuring Our Future Endowment Challenge*. This new challenge grant from the Rita A. Stevens Charitable Trust is inspired by our 50 years of providing effective one-on-one literacy programs. The grant is a powerful incentive to raise \$100,000 in gifts, pledges or documented planned gifts restricted to the Literacy Services Endowment Fund to earn the \$100,000 permanently restricted matching endowment funds. Donors making a qualified gift or pledge will see their support **doubled** to strengthen Literacy Services for the next 50 years.

When I arrived, I learned that Literacy Services had an endowment trust fund that was established by the board in the late 1970's. As I sought to understand the history and purpose of the fund, I learned about the people who had the foresight, vision and leadership to create and grow the fund. Mr. William H. Brady, founder of the Brady Corporation; board members Julia Harding,

Anne Luber, and Bob Abendroth; and the first Executive Director, Vyvyan Harding, all played a role. The vision of the fund was to provide a strong foundation for the organization for years to come. Mr. Brady's leadership, and the donors he inspired with his original challenge 33 years ago, have been instrumental in Literacy Services thriving through the recessions of 1990,

2001 and 2008. The endowment fund has also helped us weather the unpredictable nature of philanthropic support.

In April 1982, Mr. William H. Brady proposed the first of two challenge grants from the W.H. Brady Foundation. The balance of the
see **\$100,000 Challenge** continued on **page 2**



One person helping another, a timeless recipe for success.



Expansion Increases Services

By: Kelly Fox, Director of Adult Basic Education

The flagship program within our Adult Basic Education (ABE) Department is the Wilson Reading System® (WRS). Implemented in 2008, this highly structured, multisensory phonics education program was designed for adults with learning disabilities in need of intensive remediation. This evidence-based program employs an assortment of special materials and specific procedures to help students become successful at reading and spelling. Literacy Services uses WRS to serve

beginning readers and "pre-literate" adults, many of whom are ineligible for enrollment at other organizations, to teach them basic reading and spelling skills and provide remediation for certain language-based learning disabilities.

Since the demand for WRS instruction is higher than for any other service we offer, we are motivated to find creative ways to expand the delivery of this effective programming to as many adults in our community as possible.

This year, we have redesigned how students enroll in WRS; created a more functional, higher capacity classroom; and increased our efforts to recruit, train, and retain WRS tutors to support more students each week.

To help expand our reach to more students, we have successfully launched a new sub-program in ABE – Computer Assisted Learning (CAL). Under the guidance of
see **Expansion** continued on **page 4**

The Syllabus

Literacy Services of Wisconsin Newsletter



\$100,000 Challenge

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Here are a few ways you can help:

Consider making a...

- **pledge to be paid over time.** Pledges can be made over 2 years. For example, you could make a pledge of \$1,000 and then pay in \$50 monthly increments. If 100 people made a pledge like this the challenge would be met! (I made a pledge like this already so we only need 99 more people!)
- **planned gift to our endowment fund,** through your will or by making LSW the beneficiary on an insurance policy
- **gift of highly appreciated stock,** which may offer you some tax advantages
- **gift of a mutual fund;** if you are at least 70-1/2 years old there are some special tax advantages
- **cash gift today!**

We rely on your annual support to keep our doors open each year. Please consider making an additional gift to help us meet the *Ensuring Our Future Endowment Challenge*! This is a wonderful way to build on the vision and investments made by so many over the last 50 years and set the stage for Literacy Services to remain viable and vital for the next 50 years. We pledge to use your investments wisely to continue unlocking potential. Visit literacyservices.org and click "donate now." to contribute. Reference "Endowment Challenge" in the notes section when prompted. Please contact me with your questions! I love talking to our friends and supporters.

Email me at ginger@literacyservices.org
or call 414-344-5878.

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

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Founded in 1965, 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.

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 & Waukesha County, and funds administered by Wisconsin Technical College System Adult Education and Family Literacy.

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endowment trust at the time of this challenge was \$2,971. Mr. Brady's challenge was just what the board and staff needed to inspire donors to help grow the small fund. The goal for the challenge was to raise \$100,000 to earn the \$20,000 match from the W.H. Brady Foundation. The second challenge came in 1988 and the challenge was to raise \$90,000 to earn the \$30,000 match from the Foundation. The second challenge was met in early 1991, in large part, from gifts from the board, Friends of Literacy members, staff and people like you. We have a long history of successfully meeting challenges!

These challenge grants helped to build the endowment from \$2,971 in 1982 to \$564,632 as of July 31, 2015. Of that amount \$290,249 is permanently restricted. These funds are invested so they grow over time and produce investment returns that can be used for the organization's needs. The unrestricted amount is \$274,383, which equates to 4.5 months in operating expenses. This is our "operating reserve" that can be appropriated by the board to manage cash flow, unexpected expenses or financial shortfalls. Best practice for an organization that relies on annual fundraising efforts to cover the operating needs is to have 6 months in operating reserves. If we are successful, this challenge makes it possible to increase both our permanently restricted and unrestricted endowment funds and achieve the 6-month operating reserve target. In the tradition of Literacy Services board's governance values and beliefs, the board has been conservative in the use of these funds over time.

Will you join me in helping to meet this new challenge?



Reaching Out

By: David Peters, GED Director

One of our students recounted to me recently how he used to walk past Literacy Services when it was located on 27th and Wells. Because of the agency's name, he identified it as a place only for people who wanted to learn how to read. Since he already knew how to read, he didn't feel there was anything there for him. It was only years later that he discovered that was not the case. Other students who have found our GED program during the time I've been here have sometimes expressed having similar initial perceptions about what level of services were provided at the agency. A common thread is that they were surprised to find out there was a GED program and wished they would have known about it sooner. Before I began working here, even after years as a professional in the field of Adult Basic Education, what I knew about Literacy Services was that it was where I could refer people with very low literacy levels. I didn't know with certainty that the agency even had a GED program until less than a year before I became its director.

LSW's reputation as a place that excels at working with people at the basic levels of literacy is well earned. The name of the organization does a good job of representing this part of what we do. This strong, proud identity, however, poses a challenge for the GED program in attracting eligible students. Due to pervasive perceptions about what kind of programming is offered, the presence of programming which requires higher skill levels at enrollment too often escapes notice in the general public. For this reason, I've been involved in some recent community outreach events to help raise awareness of Literacy Services and its GED program. The events listed below, while not comprehensive, give an idea as to some of the contexts in which I've engaged with the community outside of Literacy Services' walls.



David expanding our reach with presentations throughout our community.

• **Milwaukee Succeeds Parents' Network** - (Hopkins Street School) The Parents' Network is part of Milwaukee Succeeds, a city-wide effort of business, civic and non-profit organizations to improve educational outcomes for children. Parents are obviously key to their child's success. The parents at this gathering were learning some new reading techniques to use with their children. After the workshop, I had a chance to speak to the group, acknowledging the critical role they play in helping their children succeed in school. I shared with them the powerful positive example that students in our GED program had set for their own children by actively engaging in education themselves.

• **Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership/BIG STEP (WRTP/BIG STEP)** - WRTP/Big Step is a nonprofit that works closely with the skilled trades and manufacturing industries to prepare people for jobs in those areas. In order to get into the training that WRTP/BIG STEP provides and access the jobs that it targets, candidates must undergo testing. I have an opportunity each month to address candidates just before they test, letting them know about our one-on-one tutoring should they need help clearing the entrance thresholds. This tutoring which is usually in mathematics is conducted within the GED program.

• **Froedtert Hospital** - Literacy Services was invited to participate in the first of what is intended to be an annual event in the sickle cell wing at Froedtert Hospital. The event brought various community resources and service providers together for the benefit of those with sickle cell and their families.

• **Universal Academy for the College Bound** - This K-8 school had a resource fair as part of the last day of school activities. Aside from representation from various community service providers, this event included a blood drive and was open to parents and the community at large. Two boys noticed the graduation photo of Charles Grant on the display board. Charles, a Literacy Services GED graduate, and his youth mentoring work with The Milwaukee Flyers were featured in a previous edition of the Syllabus. "He's my coach!" one of the boys said, looking at the photo of his mentor wearing a cap and gown. That brief exchange was my favorite part of the day.

If you know of any outreach events coming up that might help us increase awareness of our GED program in the community, please let me know.

You can send me an email at:
david@literacyservices.org. Thanks!



Expansion

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volunteer Advancement Coaches, these students work on pre-Wilson skills while demonstrating their commitment to learning. This prerequisite program has enabled us to enroll all eligible students immediately, eliminating the need for waiting lists. After a brief period in the CAL program, students transition to working one-on-one with tutors trained in WRS.

With the help of a few handy volunteers, we implemented a plan created by the staff leadership team to repurpose several spaces in our downtown location. Previously unused or underused areas received new designations. The alterations allow us to expand the ABE classroom and to eventually house more machines in our computer lab. Though modest and low cost, the changes have resulted in a dramatic transformation! As we begin to engage our whole space as efficiently as possible, we are pleased to increase the number of students we serve. Thus far, the feedback from the students and tutors in our community has been positive and encouraging!

The first CAL students have begun to graduate and be matched with WRS tutors. To prepare for these students, I hosted two

weekend training workshops for new WRS tutors during June. With the additional classroom space and new WRS tutors ready to begin, ABE is ready for up to 30 more students per week!

As a non-profit organization, we have a responsibility to our students, volunteers, and donors to be excellent stewards of our resources. Improving the ways we utilize all the spaces in our facility helps us to increase our capacity and allows us to deliver our quality educational services to more students. We are confident that all these changes – the new CAL program, increased efforts to recruit and train WRS tutors, and the expanded ABE classroom – will help us make a bigger difference. So many adults in our community struggle with reading or lack basic literacy skills; with the Wilson Reading System at our disposal, we are ready to meet all levels of students to help them become readers and achieve their educational goals. If you would like to join us in this period of growth, we would happily welcome your support!

Email me directly at **Kelly@literacyservices.org** for more information on how to get involved.



The early years of computer assisted learning.

Consider a donation to keep our books open and our computers on.

From the enclosed donation envelope to employer matching programs, there are many ways to support our student's hard work. A deferred gift can help you balance your financial goals and your charitable interests - all while possibly achieving significant tax benefits. A planned gift, such as a bequest in your will or trust, life insurance designations, or stock donation ensures your support for the adults we serve, well into the future. You'll do more than teach someone today, you'll create a legacy that will impact our community for years to come.

Please let us know if you've named Literacy Services of Wisconsin in your estate. Please call Michaela at **414-344-5878**, or connect with her at **michaela@literacyservices.org**.

In-Kind

Check out our wish list for items that we need to continue our work.

Wish List

- Forever Postage Stamps
- Headphones (not ear buds)
- Headphones splitters
- USB Webcam
- Clip Boards
- Bus Tickets
- Table Cloths
- Coffee, Tea, Creamer, and Sugar
- USB Thumb Drives
- Orange Highlighters
- Dry Erase Markers
- Copy Paper
- Paper Towels & Facial Tissue
- Dish Soap & Hand Sanitizer
- Disinfectant Wipes & Spray
- Hanging File Folders (Letter)
- Box-Bottom Hanging File Folders (Letter)
- Pocket File Folders

Call **Robin** or **Becky** at **414-344-5878** before arriving with durable goods.



A Gift in Every Book

By: Dustin Slane, Director of Marketing & Information Systems

No object better exemplifies the concept of education than a book. They are trusty teachers and entertainers, but for us they have also been a source of much needed funding. Over the years, the sales of books have been a way for us to raise funds and engage volunteers and book donors from all over our community while creating a larger circle of awareness of our programs. Each year, we explore new ways to get the biggest return from generously donated books by minimizing out of pocket expenses and use of staff time.

This year, as we have focused our attention on events surrounding our fiftieth anniversary year, we considered whether to host a book sale in 2015. Based on the time it would take to create a meaningful milestone celebration, reflection on what we have learned after years of running the sale, and current trends in book sales, we decided to take a year off. We are using this year to experiment with a new partnership with a local social entrepreneur. This partnership will allow us to keep accepting book donations, hosting book drives, and drawing funds toward our mission.

I met Jarod Cronk, owner of Sharehouse Goods, as we wrapped up our book sale last fall. Just as in the years previous, the sale ended with thousands of great books still on the tables. Sometimes, it is as if we leave with more books than we brought! Faced with the prospect of moving countless boxes back into expensive off-site storage, we were thrilled by Jarod's offer to take everything and offer the books through his online store. In return, we would get a significant percentage of each sale and would no longer need to pay for extra storage expenses. I'll get to the results in a moment, but first I would like to elaborate a little more on why we thought Sharehouse Goods would be a good partner for Literacy Services.

Sharehouse Goods is a community-minded small business. Their business plan revolves around the idea of sharing as a way for individuals and organizations to raise money. The concept is simple and akin to a consignment shop; Sharehouse Goods keeps an inventory and sells items donated on behalf of an entity, like Literacy Services, and shares the profit with them. Behind the scenes at Sharehouse's humble coffee-shop storefront on 55th and North Ave, Jarod and his team evaluate, appraise and catalog donations to be sold online. Jarod has been able to assist organizations like ours to garner much needed support while also providing entry-level jobs specifically for folks who struggle to find work. Every facet of his business is rooted in building a better community for all.

We saw many benefits of partnering with Sharehouse. Not only do we stand to collect substantially more money on each individual book sold, we have also greatly reduced the costs associated with picking up, sorting, moving and storing books. Sharehouse even helps by creating attractive outdoor collection bins specifically for Literacy Services!

Since beginning our partnership with Sharehouse Goods last October, we have already brought in more than half of the total profit of last year's books sale! At this rate, we are cautiously optimistic that the funds raised through this experiment will exceed the funds raised from last year's book sale and save us time to focus on our 50th anniversary.

Will you help us find places to collect books to expand this essential support? Companies, condos and apartment complexes, churches, and community centers are great locations to host a book drive. Please connect with me if you have an idea for a place to host a drive.



We'll make it easy by providing collection boxes, signage, and pick-up. We're also looking for a couple of great locations to feature those new outdoor collection bins from Sharehouse Goods. Give me a call if you have goods you would like to share. We accept items beyond books; audio books, movies and music are also great ways to help our mission. If you have any questions or if you would like to support our book sale effort, please connect with me directly at **dustin@literacyservices.org** or give me a ring at **414-344-5878**.

While many of the books donated to us are raising funds for our mission, these books are helping our students in other ways too. We stock the new book shelves in our lobby with books for our students to take home for free. They enjoy browsing through the books you donate and find new stories to take home, read and share with their families.

Stay tuned as we unveil plans for future book sales. In the meantime, we hope we can count on you to keep the books coming!



A Mile in Their Shoes

By: Amanda Pierce, Assistant Director of English Language Learning

With my interest in linguistics and cultural anthropology, the English Language Learning program is to me what a toy store is to children. I relish listening to our students work out how to form a grammatically correct English sentence, focus intently on the passages they are reading, and tell their stories. Watching the tutors working with the students is truly inspirational – it takes a good heart to contribute one's time, meet someone where they are, and walk with them through their struggles to learn a new language and culture.

One of the reasons I am passionate about working in ELL is because I have personally experienced some of the same obstacles that our students face. Let me explain. For a year and a half, I had the opportunity to live in the bustling, noisy chaos of Cairo, Egypt. When I moved there I knew very little Arabic, and had

to learn how to function in an entirely new culture. It is eye-opening when you are the one who has to learn how to pay the electric bill, find the groceries you need and pay for them, and get to and from work using public transportation. I love Egypt and part of me still considers Cairo home. I also remember that learning how to survive and thrive was oftentimes incredibly difficult. It has given me empathy for immigrants to the United States, because I know how hard it really is to pick up and move your life to a new country.

Thanks to my own experiences in Egypt, I understand just how strong and brave our students are. It was difficult for me to navigate even with the benefits and resources I had at my disposal. Many of our students have little in the way of resources and few relationships or contacts here in their new home to help

them. On top of that, some of our students have never had access to education in their home country, and their new life here has grown into a bewildering challenge. I see the flustered faces of new students coming in for their initial assessments, and I remember how difficult it was to just get to the building for my own initial testing for Arabic school. I sympathize with the students who struggle to learn English phrasal verbs, asking when to use “look at” versus “look for”. English is a frustrating language to learn, yet time and again our students ask for homework, seek out ways to gain more exposure to the language, and simply don't give up. I see the drive of our students to learn this language and culture, and I can't imagine giving anything but my all to help them navigate their new world.

It is such a pleasure for me to witness every day this same passion in the hearts of our tutors. I recently watched one tutor very carefully demonstrate how to make the sounds in English to his student, who has never been to school before and speaks virtually no English. This seemingly little thing is vital to the student's life, giving her the ability to be independent in a society that has been, for the most part, out of her reach just outside her door because of the language barrier. The same is true for the dozens of other tutor-student pairs who come every week to Literacy Services, whether to work on writing skills for their jobs, reading comprehension for college coursework, or holding more advanced conversations with others

Being able to contribute to both our students and our tutors has been a tremendous experience, and I am honored to work with such wonderful people. I hope that I can use my experience walking in our students' shoes to give them as much as they have given me.



This is a picture of Sudanese Displaced Children's Learning Center students, grades 9 & 10, on a field trip to the Pyramids. These students called me by my Arabic name, Habiba, as a way of showing that they saw me as one of them rather than as a foreigner.

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 April 30th and August 12th, 2015. Thank you on behalf of all the students who are motivated to improve their lives through education and learning at Literacy Services!

Endowment Challenge

Davidson and Harley Fund
Ginger Duiven
Bob Sproat

Individuals

Anonymous (4)
Ernice Austin
Theresa Barry & Aly El-Ghatit
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Debbie McGregor
Pat Murphy
Mark Pfaltzgraff
Kevin Scott

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In memory of Mary Elizabeth Brennan
- Risë Tucker
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- Yvonne Larme
In memory of Helen Koch
- Mary B. Jones
In honor of Scott & Mary McFadden for their generosity and their humble hearts
- Debby & George Hughes
In honor of Maryalice & Robert Rasmussen
- Rob L. Rasmussen
In memory of Susan Robertson
- Eugene Bykhovsky
- Michael & Colette Dillenburg
- Anne Hamilton
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In honor of Snehal Shah and Heather Izumi's wedding
- Kengo Baba
- Leroy Jackson
- David Kipp
- Jessica May-Shah
- Anita Shah & James Dunne
- Surya Shah
- Dilip and Bharti Shah
- Karen Watanabe
In honor of Marie Weiss
- Priscilla Camilli
In memory of Uncle Otto
- Dale L. Zimmerman



Calendar Bookmarks

Student Enrollment

Accepting New Students! Sign-up for our Initial Assessment Sessions. Call **414-344-5878** for available dates and times.

August

20th - Volunteer Orientation Noon-1:00pm

26th - Volunteer Orientation 9:00-10:00am

Summer Break

No Classes - Monday, August 31st -

Monday, September 7th (Labor Day)

September

8th - International Literacy Day

9th - Volunteer Orientation 5:30-6:30pm

17th - 50th Anniversary Celebration 5:00pm

24th - Volunteer Orientation Noon-1:00pm

29th - Volunteer Orientation 9:00-10:00am

18th - Volunteer Orientation Noon-1:00pm

October

7th - Quarterly Awards Noon-1:30pm

7th - Volunteer Orientation 5:30-6:30pm

14th - Volunteer Orientation 9:00-10:00am

22nd - Volunteer Orientation Noon-1:00pm

27th - Volunteer Orientation 9:00-10:00am

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

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**.

Upcoming Events

Wisconsin Literacy's Statewide READ

Have you ever wondered what it is like to be a literacy tutor? Rob Shindler describes it in his book *Hot Dogs and Hamburgers*, part of the Wisconsin Literacy's Statewide READ. If you'd like to know more about the book or becoming a volunteer tutor, call us at (414) 344-5878.

50th Anniversary Celebration

We have a pretty wonderful evening in store to celebrate the close of our 50th year. The guest list is shaping up to be a who's who of Literacy Services past and present. You should come too! We have a nice silent auction and a lovely wine pull planned for you. There is bound to be something you will find interesting, unusual or a great deal and the proceeds will help keep our programs going. There will be a nifty video with lots of voices of students, tutors and donors. Come to the celebration and watch it with 300 people; it will be like going to the movies and sharing a memorable experience. There will be a special take away for all our guests. I don't want to spoil the surprise so I will simply tell you that there is a talented group of people who have worked on it since the beginning of the year. Intrigued? Please come!

Buy your tickets online at literacyservices.org or call Michaela to get yours by phone **(414-344-5878)**. A half a century of steadily transforming lives through literacy is worth celebrating! **See you there!**

Thursday, September 17th, 5:00pm • Milwaukee Hilton City Center - 509 W. Wisconsin Avenue

one on one for **50**
unlocking potential for fifty years

Special Thanks to our 50th Anniversary Celebration Supporters:

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