



Meet Holly

By: Holly McCoy, Executive Director

What an exciting time to become the new Executive Director of Literacy Services! In just under a year, we journeyed through an incredible amount of transformation to make a deeper impact on the adult students who need our services to build a better life for themselves and their families. During times of transition, more change can sometimes bring uneasiness in wondering what's next. Succeeding a great leader like our former Executive Director, Ginger Duiven, is no small task. I want to thank Ginger for the exceptional leadership she provided to Literacy Services of Wisconsin over the past four years. Her leadership was instrumental in creating the Literacy Services of today. I know that I have big shoes to fill. I am delighted to work together with our board, staff, volunteers, funders, community partners, and students to meet this incredible opportunity head-on.

While I don't want to give you a full professional bio in my first communication, I am sure that there are those of you who are wondering more about my background and why I have such a passion for this work. As a Milwaukee resident and a Milwaukee Public Schools alum and parent, I believe that literacy is a critical piece to a thriving community. I originally studied English Secondary Education throughout my undergraduate studies at Alverno College. I wanted to be a teacher in the very school system that

see **Literacy Found Me** continued on **page 2**



Victorious! GED grads Andrea, Donell, and Janeita capture the joy of all of our graduates.



LSW Grads Shine at MATC City-Wide Commencement

By: Aaron Goyette, Senior Director of Programs

On Wednesday, May 23, 2018, Milwaukee Area Technical College and ten community-based organizations (CBOs) convened in the Cooley Auditorium on MATC's downtown campus for a night of celebration. Since 1985, MATC has been putting on a commencement ceremony once or twice a year for its partners in the CBO consortium of which Literacy Services is a member. Within this arrangement, MATC places a select group of its certified instructors in off-campus roles, assigning them to outreach positions at local CBOs to widen its reach in the community. In return, CBOs such as LSW receive capacity-building access to qualified staff and other educational resources through the college. As an extension of this growing educational partnership, the commencement was the

latest in an ongoing tradition of recognizing the hard work and sense of achievement that Milwaukee's adult population experiences in earning their high school credentials. That evening, present agencies honored the real stars, the 200 plus GED and HSED graduates from the Spring 2018 semester of programming. It was a moving sight to see CBOs from all over the city celebrating with their students and their families. The program consisted of greetings from MATC leadership, an inspirational keynote speech by executive coach Alonzo Kelly, and an emotional personal testimony from a member of the graduating class. A video featuring additional voices from several of the other graduates attested to the diverse journeys, struggles,

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The Sylla·bus

Literacy Services of Wisconsin Newsletter

The Syllabus is the quarterly newsletter of Literacy Services of Wisconsin, the merged 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

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Sara Risley

Founded in 1965, Literacy Services serves adult learners with quality education programs - Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Education Development (GED) test preparation, 5.09 High School Equivalent Diploma (HSED), English Language Learning (ELL), Workforce Training and Career Pathway Bridges, and integrated and personalized Functional Literacy instruction.

Literacy Services of Wisconsin is grateful for the broad support of our community, including over 500 volunteers and financial support from 1000 individuals; 196 foundations, corporations and organizations; The United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County; and Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. We are grateful for our partnerships with ResCare and Milwaukee Public Schools.

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Literacy Found Me

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changed my life. I valued the education I had been provided with and wanted to return that same value to the students coming after me. After graduation, there were almost no teaching jobs available in my focus area and I started to look for ways to work within our community while still focusing on education.

Adult literacy found me... and I fell in love. I realized that adult literacy makes an impact on the parents and families of the very children I was originally hoping to work with. After coordinating an adult literacy program and delivering direct instruction and programming to adult students, I decided to go back to Alverno and get my Master's Degree in Adult Education with a focus on Organizational Development. I am a committed, life-long learner. Education has saved me in ways that can't possibly be expressed with words. In some of my most difficult moments where I wasn't sure what the future would hold or how to move forward, it was a book, a course, a teacher, or a professor who provided not only the knowledge, but also instilled a deep sense of power to overcome. In much the same way, our staff and volunteers instill

knowledge and confidence in our students every day in the classroom. I know that there is always more to learn and always new ways to approach ideas.

I co-chaired the city-wide GED/HSED commencement ceremony, featured throughout this newsletter, in partnership with Milwaukee Area Technical College. An amazing 149 students from LSW graduated and walked across the MATC stage in the last 12 months! There is nothing as truly beautiful as witnessing our students achieving their goals and reaching for their dreams.

Dedicated volunteer tutors, a volunteer Board, corporate funders, individual donors, and staff help to change lives at Literacy Services every day. As a new leader who has worked in different positions throughout the organization, I have a unique perspective on how the moving parts all work together. I am excited to bring my passion and love for education into this space and to lead Literacy Services into the future. Transition only continues to make us stronger, and I believe that together we are a force for our students.

Let's get to know each other!

I value your thoughts and feedback. Please feel encouraged to contact me directly at 414-344-5878 or at holly@literacyservices.org. Better yet, let's chat in person! I am hosting some morning and evening meet-and-greet dates to help get to know each of you more.

These are open to anyone interested in joining me for coffee and conversation in the conference room at our downtown location (555 N. Plankinton).



Monday, July 16th at 8:30 a.m.

Wednesday, July 18th at 8:30 a.m.

Tuesday, July 24th at 5:30 p.m.



MATC

continued from **Page 1**

and triumphs of those being honored. Of all of the agencies, LSW showed up with the largest number of graduates as, 63 students walked across the stage and received their ceremonial diplomas from Executive Director Holly McCoy to the cheers of their friends, families, tutors, instructors, and supporters in the community.

The fact that Literacy Services alone could account for over 30% of the graduates in Milwaukee is a feat unto itself, affirming the collaborative direction in which the organization is moving. These remarkable students represented eight separate locations across LSW, coming from Downtown, Layton Center, Silver Spring Neighborhood Center, ResCare, MPS North Division, MPS South Division, LSW's Career Pathway with MATC, and the award-winning Construction HSED program



at WRTP/BIG STEP. To have such a presence in the community, powered in large part by the efforts of volunteers and supported by a dedicated staff within a network of effective partnerships, is truly adult education working at a whole new level.

Holly McCoy presents diploma to Janice from our Administrative Professional Career Pathway HSED program.

Graduates' Experience

As joyous as the MATC CBO commencement ceremony was, it could only begin to touch on the actual impact a high school credential will have on the graduates' lives. Each victorious walk across the stage is but the first leg in a journey that puts these adults back on the trail to their goals. Just before completing their credentials, several students had the opportunity to share their thoughts on the occasion; they described their excitement about the new possibilities ahead, as well as the challenges that brought them to LSW in the first place.

Many of the students identified with Sherita's experience before joining the program, growing "tired of watching others achieve life goals as I sat in what seemed like the same life every day." Finding the courage and motivation to make a change was a common barrier. As Sharday admits, "It was a battle with myself, and I became afraid of success in a way. I took away my

own opportunities for a better future out of fear." Upon enrolling in one of LSW's GED or HSED courses, however, that viewpoint began to change. Although the content was challenging, the benefits became apparent. In addition to language arts, math, science, and social studies, Shawn learned that "If you want it, you have to go out and get it. You have to be on time, you have to be attentive, you have to work hard for what you want, and it starts with school."

With the guidance of LSW's tutors and instructors, the moral support of their classmates, and the pure drive to succeed, these students achieved something very real and life-changing for themselves and their families. Sharday tells us, "I have set higher expectations for myself, and I have done things I never thought I'd do. Everything that we learned in class has sparked a new fuse in my everyday life. I have acquired my first job, caught up on all my

debts, and proved to myself that I can accomplish anything if I don't give up." Shannon follows up, "I'm most proud of being able to say that I accomplished something that has hindered me my entire adult life." With a GED or HSED in hand, Dragana speaks of a new-found "self-confidence and desire to succeed."

Indeed, with so many more opportunities within reach, many of LSW's graduates expressed plans to attend college, advance in their jobs, find new employment, open up their own businesses, give back to their communities, and so on. There is much to look forward to. The final word goes to Sonia, as she summarizes her experience and acknowledges the role of LSW's supporters, "I'm beating the odds by getting my HSED to better my life. Thank you for creating a program that gives second chances to those who are ready to learn, grow, and achieve!"

GED? HSED? What's the difference?

In the realm of Adult Secondary Education (ASE), there are two main options for adult students hoping to earn a high school credential. Many people familiar with LSW's services will already have heard of the General Educational Development exam, or GED. Since the standards for the GED were reassessed and a new version of the test was released in 2014, another type of high school credential has come to prominence. The state of Wisconsin offers several different options for earning an HSED, or high school equivalency diploma, and the PI 5.09 program provided by Literacy Services is one of them.

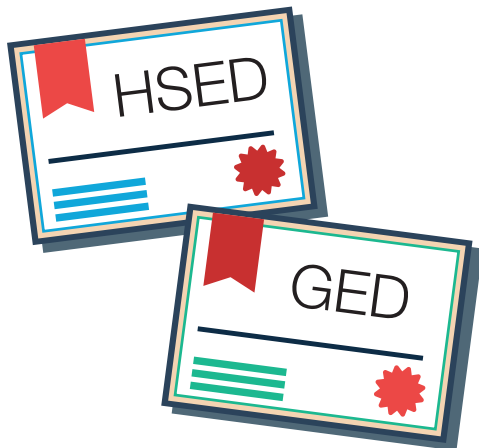
Literacy Services' PI 5.09 program was approved by the State Superintendent in May of 2014 as a competency-based HSED option for adults who are interested in developing their skills and applying them in the real world. The program is correlated with the Common Core State Standards, emphasizing communication skills in speaking, listening, and writing while meeting high school competencies in the academic areas of language arts, math, science, social studies, health, civics, and employability skills. More recently, occupational training components have been added to PI 5.09 courses to allow students to work toward these goals simultaneously. In order to earn the HSED, PI 5.09 learners are not assessed



through standardized testing. Alternatively, they demonstrate competency through projects and class performance, using a portfolio assessment containing representative works. The State Superintendent of Wisconsin issues the HSED based upon a review of these items.

While both credentials serve the same purpose in terms of employment and educational opportunities for adults, the HSED is not the same as a GED certificate. Passing the GED test shows that one has reached a high level of secondary education as evidenced on a national standardized test that the state has deemed indicative of being ready for college or a career. The HSED is more akin to a regular high school diploma in Wisconsin, attesting to the fact that one has completed a state-approved course of study that includes all of the academic areas expected of a high school graduate, including knowledge of health, civics, and career awareness.

Regardless of the route taken, there is no question that both the GED and the HSED are immense milestones that have the power to transform the lives and families of adult students forever. LSW is happy to be in a position to offer both opportunities to the Milwaukee community.



Tiny Updates, Big News

Charles, who completed his GED through Literacy Services, graduated from MATC with an Associate's Degree in Business!

Ana became a U.S. citizen.

Mersedes was able to speak in English at her child's teacher conference for the first time.

Saw and his tutor **Patrick** performed songs in English for an audience.

Sonia, Rosy, and Nancy earned referrals to the Summer 2018 Career Pathways course.

Leroy raised his math score by almost six grade levels and is entering pre-apprenticeship preparation for construction at WRTP/BIG STEP!

Moses rehabbed a house for rental income.

Penny received a great performance review at work.

Mahdi completed a job training program and got a good job.

Darryn was recognized as employee of the month!

Robert got his driver's license.

Rubi delivered a speech in English to legislators in Madison about Special Education services for her son.

Steven finished his GED in one week!

Congratulations to the Spring 2018 HSED/GED graduating classes!

Keep up the good work!

Thank You!

The following donors made gifts or pledged support between February 16 and May 31, 2018. Many of the donors listed generously supported our 2018 Inspiration Awards Dinner through monetary gifts as well as donations of silent auction items. Thank you for this important support that helped us raise funds beyond our goals for the 2018 event.

Thank you for empowering adult students to read and write their way to a better future. We promise to put your gifts to good work! It is our commitment to recognize every donor based on the donor's wishes. If your name does not appear as you would expect, please contact Chad Knezel by phone at 414-344-5878 or via email at chad@literacyservices.org.

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 - *Susan L. Nemetz*
 In honor of Sr. Mary Catherine Dundon
 - *Robert & Eileen Sherman*
 In honor of Holly McCoy
 - *Curran Burns*
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 - *Betsy Jeffery*
 In honor of Jim Schleif
 - *Shorewest Realtors*
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 - *Paul & Diane Schmidt*
 - *Susan Stewart*
 In memory of Maryalice & Robert R. Rasmussen
 - *Rob L. Rasmussen*
 In memory of Paul Utschig
 - *Mary C. Utschig*

Mother & Son's Passion for Literacy Finally Merges

LSW Board President Dave Hanson and his mother, Barbara Hanson, share a love of books and language, but their bond also includes something unique to our organization. Dave was a tutor at LSW in 1987-89 and has served on the Board since 2009, while Barb was a tutor at Milwaukee Achiever for more than ten years. When the two organizations merged last year, Dave's and Barb's related but separate literacy histories merged as well.

The daughter of a middle school principal and a teacher, Barb trained as a teacher herself and graduated from Albion College with a degree in English. As she and her husband, Jack, raised four kids, reading was an important part of their home. "Some of my earliest memories include going to the library with my mom," says Dave. "I also remember the Milwaukee Public Library's Bookmobile stopping near our house. I liked the narrow set of stairs in the front, the other set of stairs in back, and the narrow aisle between rows of book spines floor to ceiling."

Barb's childhood reading included the Nancy Drew mysteries. "Some friends and I tried writing some of our own," she says. A generation later, she introduced Nancy Drew to her daughters – Dave's three older sisters – and the Hardy Boys Mysteries to Dave. "I loved collecting Hardy Boys books," Dave remembers. "My mom would take us to



Board President Dave Hanson and his mom celebrating at the 2018 Inspiration Awards.

Schroeder's Books on Wisconsin Avenue, and I found Hardy Boys in the back for a dollar."

As her children grew, Barb shared with them her love of Shakespeare. "When we were in high school, she'd make us hand-written tests to help us learn Hamlet or Macbeth. She'd include a section for matching a character with his or her description, and a section for identifying who said which famous line. My friends couldn't believe it."

Eleanor Guilbert, a friend from North Shore

Congregational Church, introduced Barb to Milwaukee Achiever, and the two were regular tutors for more than a decade. Barb worked with ABE students and later taught in the GED program, often working on math skills. She says her favorite moments "were the times a student would understand a concept, breaking through to grasp something he or she had been working on." Over her ten years she saw how progress could at times be slow, and she admired how her students kept at it. "One of my students enrolled to regain skills after being injured in an accident; another did the same after suffering a stroke."

It was also during her time at Milwaukee Achiever that Barb met Holly McCoy, LSW's new Executive Director, who was then program coordinator at the Silver Spring location where Barb volunteered most often. The two were happy to reconnect at the LSW annual fundraising dinner May 15 at the Harley-Davidson Museum.

Dave, meanwhile, had joined the Board of LSW, a return to the organization he'd known in his first years after college. "I'd joke sometimes that my mom was over at the competition," he says. "We never did get her to switch allegiances, but the merger last year brought our experiences together. It underscores that we've been working toward the same mission all along."

Milwaukee Achiever and Literacy Services have thrived for a total of 86 years combined, thanks to generous donors who have made a monetary donation, donated textbooks, purchased tickets to a fundraising event, gifted shares of stock, worked with their employer to match their own donations, or remembered LSW in their wills.

We are so grateful!

When you are ready to give:

There are many ways to support our students' hard work and transform lives:

- Gifts of cash
- Online one-time or recurring donations through our website
- In-kind gifts such as furniture, books, or office supplies (check out the wish list on our website for current needs)
- Employer matching programs
- Gifts of stock, mutual funds, and other securities (may be additional benefits for supporters over 70 ½ years old)
- Deferred income gifts, including charitable gift annuities and charitable remainder trusts
- Bequests to Literacy Services as part of a will and last testament

Questions about giving? Call Chad Knezel at 414-344-5878

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The Syl·la·bus

Summer 2018

Literacy Services of Wisconsin Newsletter

Graduation Edition:

- **Meet Holly McCoy, LSW's new Executive Director**
- **MATC Commencement Recap**
- **Words from Graduates**
- **GED vs. HSED**
- **And more!**



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Student Enrollment

Accepting new students! Signup for our Initial Assessment Sessions. Call 414-344-5878 for available dates and times.

Event Calendar

July

- 4th - Independence Day Agency Closed
- 5th & 6th - No Classes
- 10th - Volunteer Orientation 9:30-10:30am
- 11th - Student Honors Celebration
11:45am-1:30pm Downtown Center
- 26th - Volunteer Orientation 5:30-6:30pm

August

- 8th - Volunteer Orientation 9:30-10:30am
- 16th - Staff Retreat Agency Closed
- 21st - Volunteer Orientation 5:30-6:30pm

Summer Break

No classes August 27th - September 3rd
Classes resume September 4th

September

- 3rd - Labor Day Agency Closed
- 6th - Volunteer Orientation 9:30-10:30am
- 19th - Volunteer Orientation 5:30-6:30pm
- 20th - **Save the Date!**
♥♥ Volunteer Appreciation Dinner