



## Close to Home

By: Holly McCoy, Executive Director

Greetings! A couple of weeks ago, I witnessed something that was both remarkable and emotional. No, I'm not talking about the plot-twisting ending of the latest Marvel Avengers film (however, I don't read the comics and didn't see it coming). I am talking about a naturalization ceremony.

To provide some context, the man I watched proudly take his oath, pledging allegiance to the United States of America alongside others from all parts of the Earth, wanted nothing more than to be welcomed and accepted. This man has waited a long time for this very day. He came to the United States in search of work and a better living to support his parents who were rural farmers in Mexico. The cost and standard of living is so drastically different from the U.S. that a little under \$300 a month helped to support food,

see **Moi** continued on **page 2**



Jasper receiving Student of Inspiration Award in 2017



## Becoming Your Own Hero

By: Kelly Fox, Director of Specialized Education & Program Evaluation

In the summer of 2017, ABE student Jasper was working hard and making excellent progress towards his goals. He had just been recognized as LSW's 2017 ABE Student of Inspiration for his tenacity and perseverance in basic-level studies, and he had transitioned to preparing for secondary instruction.

Around that time, however, Jasper lost his job of ten years. He had endured poor treatment and conditions, with grace and fortitude, for many of those years. Nonetheless, his employer terminated him and several of his colleagues that summer.

But achievement inspires confidence. When challenges arise, confidence can make a world of difference in navigating through the unknown, and Jasper was undeterred.

He focused on building his skills and made quick progress through our pre-secondary curriculum. Jasper reliably attended drop-in math tutoring every Friday morning. He read

books, wrote papers, and engaged in critical thinking discussions with his tutors and peers. All the while, he quietly researched Wisconsin labor standards and practices...

Jasper reached out to his former colleagues and explained to them what he had learned about employee rights. He persuaded them to join him in filing a formal complaint against their former employer for the years of unfair treatment and the subsequent wrongful terminations.

When the complaint was referred for binding arbitration, Jasper represented himself and his colleagues. He was successful in convincing the arbiter of the misdoings of the employer, and Jasper and his colleagues were awarded a favorable decision.

Jasper used that victory to further motivate him in pursuit of his goals. He gained entry into LSW's High School Equivalency Diploma

see **Jasper** continued on **page 3**

**2019**  
**INSPIRATION**  
**AWARDS &**  
**FUNDRAISING DINNER**

**DEFINING & DISCOVERING LITERACY**

**Save the date**  
**Tuesday, May 14th**  
**Discovery World**

# The Sylla·bus

Literacy Services of Wisconsin Newsletter

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

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## Volunteer Photographer

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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## Home

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Kay (Holly's mom), Moi, and Holly at the Milwaukee Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse.

shelter, and his parents' medical care. This man is my step-dad, Moi. While I am sure I will have the opportunity to share more of my life story at some other point, this is really about how the two of ours intersected.

Moi has been in my life since I was sixteen and has never been anything but kind, compassionate, and gracious. Moi raised my brother and me as his own. He came into our lives and made us a family in a way that I wasn't sure was possible at one time. He married my mother 13 years ago. That is how long this process has taken: 13 years! The judge presiding over the ceremony commented that our country isn't perfect and that we have more work to do. Welcoming people from other nations into our country always makes us better. We

must continue to strive for better together. Our pledge of allegiance states "with liberty and justice for all." Equality is basic. Equity is a step towards justice. As an official U.S. citizen, the first thing on Moi's "to do" list is to register to vote. He takes his civic duty seriously.

This made me reflect on the English language learners that come to LSW every day. They represent 56 countries throughout the world. Last year, ten LSW English language students received their citizenship. I have been so close to the naturalization process for so long and yet I had never attended the ceremony. It was impressive to see first-hand the pride and patriotism that beamed from the courtroom and our new friends and neighbors.





## Two Women - One Mission

By: Margaret MacLeod Brahm, Former Executive Director (1987-1996) & Holly McCoy, Executive Director

Non-profit organizations are indeed fortunate when they are blessed by unsung heroes who unstintingly dedicate unique skills and endless hours to missions they cherish. Holly Ann Pape and Sr. Vonnie DeCleene were two of those heroes to Literacy Services of Wisconsin and Milwaukee Achiever Literacy Services. Holly died this past July, leaving a legacy of quiet and devoted service to our community. Sr. Vonnie passed away a month later in August, leaving many to honor her lifelong commitment to adult literacy.

Holly joined the LSW board in the early 1980s and was soon named Treasurer. With a limited staff at the time, almost every aspect of financial management was handled by the person in that volunteer position! This included tracking income, paying bills, processing payroll, preparing financial statements, and handling all reports required by state and federal governments. Virtually everything was done manually back then, so these tasks consumed significant amounts of Holly's time while she also held positions of responsibility at Associated Bank and Park Bank.

Later adding the role of Vice President-Finance to her LSW work, Holly was committed to careful monitoring, accurate work, and timely reporting. She was diligent about calling to the board's attention any financial

concerns she perceived emerging in the future. Even after Holly's board service ended in FY1993-94, she enthusiastically supported LSW's mission. Literacy, she believed, was vital for all.

Sr. Vonnie was a staff member at Milwaukee Achiever from 1992 to 2007. Even after retiring, she continued volunteer tutoring. She was a force. Her commitment to her students was always the focus of everything she did. At her funeral, many of her former students and colleagues shared the ways in which she had changed lives. She was supportive of the merger between Milwaukee

Achiever and Literacy Services because she knew our important work and mission would be even better with the two organizations together. She attended the Inspiration Awards that were held this past May, just months before passing. She often called her sister, who also volunteers with LSW, to ensure she had a ride and could be present.

These are just two stories of women who have helped to shape the Literacy Services of today. Their memories will never be forgotten, and their commitment to literacy will live on as we continue to serve our mission.



## Jasper

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(HSED) program at the beginning of summer.

Program Director Carol Josten, Jasper's HSED instructor, commented on his diligence and leadership in class: "Jasper was a determined, hard-working, and wonderful member of our HSED class! Jasper learned a great deal about himself,

how he learns, and what he could accomplish, and he also contributed in so many ways to the entire class. I feel so fortunate to have had him in our summer group."

At the conclusion of the program, I met with Jasper to offer my congratulations. He wasn't exactly bursting with pride; his demeanor was more like that of someone who had just completed a marathon. He shared, "That math – algebra – that was hard!" Jasper humbly and graciously

accepted the praise I heaped upon him, but he chose to remain laser-focused on the future.

Whereas he once seemed lost and uncertain about that which lies ahead, now Jasper looks forward with confidence and surety. With his secondary credential in hand, his next goal is culinary school. Given the tenacity that he has shown throughout his time at LSW, I have no doubt that he will be incredibly successful in all his future pursuits.

# *Lives* CHANGE *because of your* SUPPORT.



## Volunteer Appreciation

By: Chad Knezel, Director of Development  
& Volunteer Engagement

On the evening of September 20th we gathered at United Way's Johnson Controls Volunteer Center to share a meal together, to be one of the first groups to experience the new community center, and most importantly to shine a spotlight on the **remarkable** work of our volunteer family.

**Remarkable** is not an overstatement. **Remarkable** is more than 500 volunteers giving of their time and talent! **Remarkable** is almost 31,000 hours of volunteer service!

Volunteerism is truly the heart and foundation of Literacy Services. Last year over 1300 adult students chose a courageous path forward due to the dedication and spirit of our volunteer corps. With a small, albeit AMAZING, program staff we simply could not serve so many learners at our 8 locations throughout Milwaukee if not for the hundreds of volunteers providing thousands of hours of **remarkable** service.

Our volunteers are tutors. Our volunteers are board members. Our volunteers greet visitors at the front desk, help fundraise and plan events, build curriculum, maintain our facilities, market our mission, and so much more! The following list contains all of the amazing people who made the work of Literacy Services possible in FY2017/18.

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- *Anonymous*  
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- *Charles Margulis*  
- *Susan & Guy Wolff*

### Tributes

In honor of ABE Downtown - Kelly Fox, Bianca Johnson-Ortiz, and Betsy Kerns  
- *Linda Ciske*  
In honor of Lori Hanes  
"Congrats Lori! All of us are so proud of you!" - *Northwestern Mutual HR Team*  
"*Lori Hanes is the best boss ever!*"  
- *Julia Whittet*  
In honor of Erica Machulak and Omar Swei's Marriage  
- *Judy Donegan*  
- *Michael & Deb Dwyer*  
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- *Edythe & Louis Manza*  
In honor of Marie Mikolainis  
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In honor of Ann Marie Perhach's 70th birthday  
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- *Joan Quinn*  
- *Maureen Sarsfield*  
- *Linda & Jerome Stepaniak*  
In honor of Sharon Weissenburger  
- *Steven Weissenburger*

## Tiny Updates, Big News

**Brian** completed his GED and got a job!

**Telia** job shadowed radiation techs at St. Luke's Hospital as part of the Career Exploration Program.

**Patty** did an informational interview with the Director of Nursing at a retirement home as part of the Career Exploration Program.

**Hind**, a professional nanny from Morocco, passed the American Red Cross CPR course and is one step closer to being able to work in her field here.

**Yao**, a visiting scholar from China, showed a great improvement in his English speaking skills before he returned home in September.

**Rajaa** got her driver's license.

**Sepideh** got her driver's license and was accepted into a PHD program in Chemistry at UWM.

**Satoko** honored her tutor with a traditional Japanese tea service.

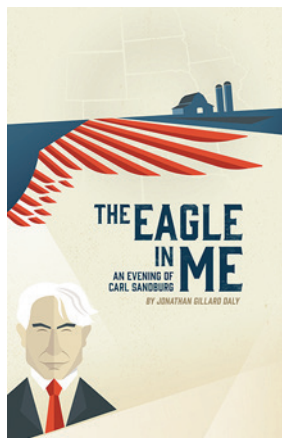
**Sylva** is preparing to take his final GED test after passing all of the other required tests.

**Anika** started a new job after completing her HSED.

Keep up the good work!

## Literacy in the Limelight

Literacy Services has partnered with two great Milwaukee theaters to collect books during the performances of the following shows. Help us thank In Tandem Theatre and The Rep for supporting adult education. Grab your books and enjoy the show!

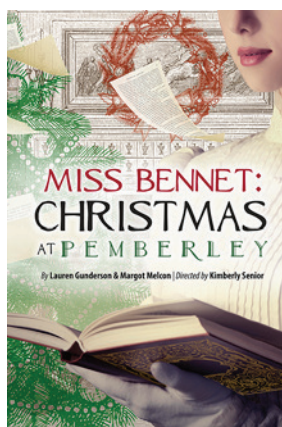


### The Eagle in Me: An Evening of Carl Sandburg

**September 28 - October 21, 2018**

Enjoy a delightful journey through the heart of America by one of its finest storytellers, Pulitzer-Prize winning author, Carl Sandburg. Milwaukee's own Jonathan Gillard Daly recreates Sandburg's traveling show, bringing his poetry, folklore, and music to life in this exciting world premiere. Plus, Literacy Services' volunteers will receive a **\$10 discount** on regularly-priced tickets when using the code "**LSW**" at checkout. All performances located at the Tenth Street Theatre (628 N. 10th Street, Milwaukee WI 53233), home to In Tandem Theatre. More information online at:

[intandemtheatre.org](http://intandemtheatre.org)



### Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley

**November 13 - December 16, 2018**

In this clever and charming sequel to Jane Austen's masterwork written by the most-produced playwright in America in 2017, the bookish and oft-forgotten middle child of the Bennet family finally has her day. An unexpected guest sparks Mary's hopes for independence and the chance to be the heroine of her own story. Told with exceptional modern wit and dazzling period style, this romantic comedy will delight Austen aficionados and newcomers alike.

All performances held at the Milwaukee Repertory Theater located in the Patty & Jay Baker Theater Complex, inside the Milwaukee Center at 108 East Wells Street. Learn more at:

[milwaukeekeerep.com](http://milwaukeekeerep.com)

## 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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(414) 344-5878

[www.literacyservices.org](http://www.literacyservices.org)  
[info@literacyservices.org](mailto:info@literacyservices.org)

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# The Syl·la·bus

Fall 2018

Literacy Services of Wisconsin Newsletter

## Superhero Edition:

- **Becoming Your Own Hero**
- **Two Women - One Mission**
- **Identities of Local Superheroes**
- **And more!**



[twitter.com/LiteracyWI](https://twitter.com/LiteracyWI)



[facebook.com/literacyservices](https://facebook.com/literacyservices)

### 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 [chad@literacyservices.org](mailto:chad@literacyservices.org) or call us at 414-344-5878.

We are **FINALISTS!**  
Nonprofit  
Organization  
of the Year  
- Small -

FRIDAY,  
NOVEMBER 2

**BizTimesMedia**  
PRESENTS

2018 **NONPROFIT  
EXCELLENCE**  
AWARDS

Congratulations to the other amazing award finalists:  
The Cathedral Center, Inc., CORE El Centro, and  
Northwest Side Community Development Corp.!

### Student Enrollment

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

## Event Calendar

### October

- 2nd - Volunteer Orientation** 9:30-10:30am
- 2nd - Student Honors Celebration**  
5:00-6:30pm - Downtown Center
- 17th - Volunteer Orientation** 5:30-6:30pm

### November

- 1st - Volunteer Orientation** 9:30-10:30am
- 15th - Volunteer Orientation** 5:30-6:30pm
- 22nd & 23rd - Agency Closed**  
Happy Thanksgiving

### December

- 6th - Volunteer Orientation** 9:30-10:30am
- 18th - Student Honors Celebration**  
11:45am-1:30pm - Downtown Center

### Winter Break Agency Closed

December 24th - January 4th  
Classes resume January 7th

Follow local media announcements for weather-related closings, call our office, or check our website to verify if we have canceled classes due to inclement weather.