



Integrating Innovation

By: Holly McCoy, Executive Director

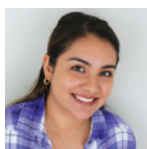
Innovations can be powerful, paradigm-shifting breakthroughs that alter our ways of being. They can be simple, yet elegant, solutions that bridge long-standing gaps and create efficiencies and better outcomes. Innovation is born out of questioning what we do and asking ourselves and others, “Can we do this better?” Seeking innovative solutions is an important part of honoring our commitment to our students and supporters. One of the ways we maintain a continuum of innovation is through deliberate collaboration and in-depth conversation.

Two of our partner organizations, Wisconsin Literacy and the Wisconsin Technical College System, plan annual professional development offerings that help connect the dots locally, regionally, and at the state level for over 800 adult education professionals throughout Wisconsin. The latest of these, the *2018 Common Ground Conference: Coordinating Efforts to Improve Student Success*, was held at the end of October in Elkhart Lake. We had six staff members attend the conference this year. A broad range of sessions were offered on everything from how technology rewires the brain to legislative updates to curriculum development and everywhere in between.

As a part of the *Common Ground* conference, I was asked to co-present see **Innovation** continued on **page 2**



Karim looks towards a bright future in civil engineering after studying in two LSW programs.



Building Bridges

By: Adriana Vázquez, Program Director/Instructor - South MPS Learning Lab

One of the best parts of the work we do is meeting people with stories so different than our own that it challenges us to consider a world beyond our everyday lives. When we encounter and work daily with people from other cultures, with different experiences and outlooks, we push ourselves to be more understanding, more empathetic, more kind... Doctors suggest cardio to exercise the heart as a muscle, but I would say we should exercise it through caring and compassion just as often, if not more!

Karimullah is a young man from Burma who came to LSW this past June with a clear goal to earn his high school equivalency so that he could enroll in college classes. He had already been studying English and reached the point where he needed the support of LSW staff to transition from an English Language Learner to an Adult Secondary Education student. Since June 2018, Karimullah - or “Karim” as he lets us call him for short - has successfully transitioned into

one of our High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) programs and will graduate with his diploma on December 19th! He received HSED prep tutoring at South Division for three months before starting the program at Layton Center in September. Over the past few months he has progressed enormously, becoming the go-to math guru for his fellow classmates, a more confident English speaker, and an invaluable personality at our Layton Center location.

The following are some of Karim’s views on his experience as a student at LSW. As you read, please take a moment to “exercise your heart” and learn about what many people like Karim bring to the fabric of the American Dream. Hopefully you will agree that the privilege to do this work is all ours...

Where are you from and what can you tell me about your childhood?

Karim: I was born [and lived] in Myanmar - it’s

see **Karim** continued on **page 4**

The Syllabus

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

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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, 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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Innovation

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Photo courtesy of Wisconsin Literacy

"How do we make sure that learning and growth are continuous?" Holly McCoy, Executive Director from Literacy Services of Wisconsin, in talking about partnerships.

the *Community Literacy Organizations as Part of a Regional Adult Learning Strategy* session. We discussed the ways in which community-based literacy programs here in Wisconsin engage with local workforce and postsecondary partners to help our students navigate barriers relative to their personal experiences and goals. I was delighted to be at the table for this discussion. We continue to be at the forefront of educational models ensuring that every student who comes to LSW with a goal has a clear path towards achieving it academically. I was encouraged to hear feedback from others indicating that we are leading the way in our efforts to connect adult literacy at its natural intersection points with workforce development and postsecondary education. Ultimately, this creates more access and opportunity for our students so that their learning may continue long after they exit LSW programming.

This spring, I will join the national dialogue by presenting some of LSW's work with WRTP BIG/STEP at the 2019 Coalition of Adult Basic Education (COABE) Conference. LSW does adult literacy very well. WRTP/BIG STEP does construction and the building trades very well. As you will hear from Steve in this edition of *The Syllabus*, the combined expertise of our two organizations has created an amazing program that serves students in an innovative and intentional way. Nationally, our local program is an example of how community literacy organizations can continue to do our great work, helping our students connect to their next steps and helping to better integrate our work into the communities we love. We know that our work is important and vital to the human experience. It is important that these conversations continue and I am excited to share more with you in the new year!



Constructing Curriculum

By: Steve Barron, Director of HSED Programs

As December winds down, another session of High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) programming nears completion. The HSED program at Literacy Services of Wisconsin is offered three times a year, running 16 weeks in duration, and aims to provide adults with a credential earned through more than just standardized testing. Although each LSW site that offers an HSED program uses the state's Common Core Standards to measure proficiency, *how* those proficiencies are demonstrated is what sets us apart in our mission to further the success of our learners.

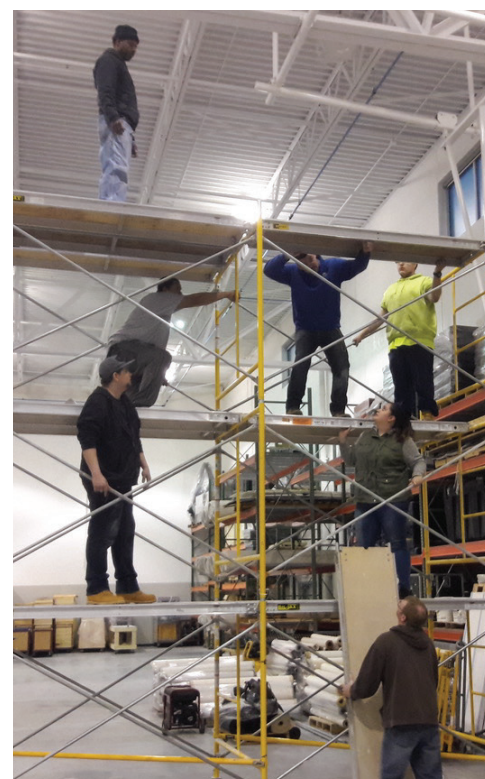
Just one example of how LSW is ahead of the curve in the adult education space is our Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3)/HSED program in partnership with WRTTP/BIG STEP in Milwaukee. Programming staff--all the way from our Executive Director to the instructors themselves--are in constant pursuit of not only improving our services, but expanding them. Once credentialed, what will become of our learners? Is education the only component we can contribute to their lifelong journey? Staff at LSW recognized that postsecondary education and career readiness were just a couple ways to help transition our learners into the next stage of their lives. The MC3 program is a pre-apprenticeship program that provides hands-on training in conjunction with classroom education in an effort to connect members of our local, underprivileged community with apprenticeships that lead to careers in the growing, high-demand field of construction.

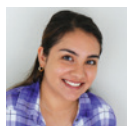
Since one of the requirements of the MC3 program is a high school credential, candidates looking to improve their skills and job readiness without a high school diploma or GED can enter the program offered by LSW and WRTTP/BIG STEP *concurrently*. This amazing opportunity begins with no cost, which means no student debt, and ends with an HSED and a link to an apprenticeship!



In addition to earning a high school credential, students enrolled in the MC3/HSED program receive training on techniques like bricklaying (above) and proper scaffolding construction (below).

On December 19th, our fourth cohort of students from the MC3/HSED program will walk across the stage at MATC's Cooley Auditorium at the city-wide graduation ceremony. Needless to say, since its inception, the program has been a huge success. So much so, we are expanding to Racine! The offices of WRTTP/BIG STEP at Gateway Technical College will host the MC3/HSED program with LSW in the spring semester of 2019. Recruitment for our very first cohort is underway and we are thrilled to bring aboard our newest staff member, Ginger Kinyon, to lead the HSED curriculum for LSW. Ginger, from Racine, brings 12 years of teaching experience at the Racine Unified School District. We are excited to bring all of the opportunities these programs offer to the greater part of Southeast Wisconsin and we look forward to improving the community of Racine one learner at a time.





Karim

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also called Burma - until I was about 10 years old. I attended school until grade 6 before my family left Myanmar to live in Malaysia. We had to flee Myanmar because we are Rohingya people and basically, we are not really wanted there. Living in Malaysia was difficult too because we weren't permanent residents there either. We lived in a refugee camp, my mom, dad, sister, and me.

When did you come to the U.S.?

Karim: I came to the United States on April 7, 2016. I remember the exact day. I didn't speak English; only very basic things like, "What's your name?," things like that. When I was in school in Myanmar, classes were taught in the mother tongue, Burmese, and we had one English class that was very basic. My first language is Rohingya, so in school I learned Burmese, and when we moved to Malaysia, we learned to speak Malay. In the United States, I work as a care worker for my dad, so I don't speak that much English at home unless my niece practices with me. I did not have American friends to help me. Of course, I could not use Burmese, Rohingya, or Malay to study here, so I enrolled in MATC for English classes. I enjoyed the classes and after time, I wanted to enroll in college to study for my career. One of my English teachers told me to try Literacy Services of Wisconsin for the HSED program. I needed my high school diploma so that I could enroll in college classes at MATC.

How has your experience with LSW helped you?

Karim: It has helped me so much. You know, especially this HSED program. It helps people like me who need to study at a different level because we did not finish school. About my teachers, I want to say thank you for helping me. You are helping other people whose first language is not



English to reach what they want to do in their lives. I like this program. I have never been absent since I started and I always come at 2 o'clock even though class starts at 5! Before class I work with my tutor or with Mai [Layton Center Program Director]. Mai helps me a lot too. I have many friends here now, and I get to speak English with them. I speak more English in public too. I can help my mom and dad at their appointments by interpreting for them.

What are your hopes and dreams for the future?

Karim: I want to study civil engineering. When I was young in Myanmar, I decided this. I told myself that I wanted to build bridges and houses and other buildings. I am very confident in my math skills, so this is why I believe I can be an engineer. Also, my family are residents in the United States. After five years, we can try to become citizens. I am really wanting to become an American citizen because my family doesn't have a country. We never really belonged to anywhere. I want America to be my country.

Tiny Updates, Big News

Karim is helping tutor his classmates in math. He plans to return to LSW as a volunteer tutor after he gets his diploma.

Tony, a recent HSED grad, started working as a truck driver at a much higher pay rate than his previous job.

Rashda, a student from Pakistan, invited her teachers to her home for a traditional Pakistani meal and to meet her family.

Doug and Tyler met their math goals and began Pre-Apprenticeship Readiness Training at WRT/BIG STEP, targeting a career in the construction field.

Josefina met with Moira, a real estate agent with Coldwell Banker, as part of the career exploration program.

Yannick and his wife just purchased a new home.

Trevor completed his GED and is enrolling at MATC to pursue an IT career.

John, a recent HSED grad, is about to start work with a new employer at a higher rate of pay than his previous job.

Congratulations to the 78 grads in the 2018 HSED/GED Winter Graduating class!

Keep up the good work!

Thank You!

The following donors made gifts or pledged support between September 14 and November 30, 2018. 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 via email at chad@literacyservices.org or call (414) 344-5878.



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 - Mary Beth Brever
 - Ali & Elizabeth Hatab
 - Darice C. Hermann
 - Barbara & Jeff Joseph
 - Amy Nelson
 - Jack & Jeanne West
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 John Shefchik
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 In honor of Jane Tanner
 - Debbie & Howard Callif
 In honor of Judi Havice
 - Joan Becker Friedman

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

Did you know...

Tax rules require an annual minimum distribution (on or before December 31st) from tax-deferred retirement accounts if you are age 70 ½ or older? This income will not be subject to tax if the funds are donated directly from the account to a qualified charity. Double your impact by supporting your favorite charitable organizations while reducing your tax burden!



Love & Literacy

By: Chad Knezel, Director of Development & Volunteer Engagement

Literacy Services was honored to be included in a wedding this fall! Although not physically in attendance as Erica Machulak and Omar Swei celebrated their marriage in October, our hundreds of volunteers and students were there in spirit. You see, Erica and Omar chose to include Literacy Services in their wedding registry. Working together, we created an online, stand-alone donation page unique to their wedding event. Through the virtual registry, family and friends could honor their marriage by paying tribute to Erica's mother and supporting our adult students as they reach for their educational goals and improve the quality of life for themselves and the community we share. We are grateful for this support!

Susan Robertson, Erica's mother, found great joy in volunteering at Literacy Services. Although Susan passed away in 2015, her memory lives on through the support received as part of Erica and Omar's wedding.

Erica reflected on Susan's passion for literacy and languages:

"My mom loved reading and learning languages, and she cared deeply about sharing those passions with others. Omar and I are grateful that the funds raised from our registry can help support other teachers in this way--it would have made my mom really happy, I think, to know that LSW has continued that work. Omar and I met in an Arabic immersion course, and we have immense respect for the commitment and concentration that it takes to read and write in a foreign language, as well as the patience and training required of instructors."

We wish Erica and Omar the very best as they embark on this new and exciting chapter in their lives together!



Photo by Jaden Good



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The Syl·la·bus

Winter 2018

Literacy Services of Wisconsin Newsletter

In this issue:

- Integrating Innovation
- Building Bridges
- Love & Literacy
- And more!



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Happy Holidays from all of us at Literacy Services!

2019
**INSPIRATION
AWARDS &
FUNDRAISING DINNER**

DEFINING & DISCOVERING LITERACY

Save the date
Tuesday, May 14th
Discovery World

Student Enrollment

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

Event Calendar

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.

January

9th - Volunteer Orientation 9:30-10:30am

21st - Agency Closed

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day

22nd - Volunteer Orientation 5:30-6:30pm

February

7th - Volunteer Orientation 9:30-10:30am

20th - Volunteer Orientation 5:30-6:30pm

March

5th - Volunteer Orientation 9:30-10:30am

19th - Volunteer Orientation 5:30-6:30pm