

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Literacy Services of Wisconsin and Greater Waukesha Literacy Merge  
to Strengthen Adult Education and Workforce Development Services in Southeast Wisconsin

(January 2, 2020) – Milwaukee & Waukesha, Wis. – Literacy Services of Wisconsin (LSW) and Greater Waukesha Literacy (GWL), two nonprofit community-based organizations providing adult education programs in Southeastern Wisconsin, have combined operations to expand opportunities for adults looking to increase job readiness skills, gain fluency in English or complete their high school credentials. The merger, which was approved by both boards, took effect on January 1, 2020. The combined agency retains the name of Literacy Services of Wisconsin, Inc.

Although there is a nationwide trend of mergers among adult literacy organizations, Holly McCoy, Executive Director of LSW, recognizes that it is crucial to ensure that mission-focus is at the heart of each of these decisions. Nationally, there are nearly 36 million adults who lack foundational literacy skills. In Waukesha, that translates to 4%, or about 16,000 adults. McCoy noted that LSW is committed to strategic partnerships that increase efficiency and effectiveness in southeastern Wisconsin for adults who seek access to quality educational services locally. “Impact cannot occur in a silo. True impact requires collective resources and changing the ways that we interact with other like-minded organizations. Improving and increasing educational access has a tremendous impact on our K-12 school systems, employment market, and social and economic well-being,” McCoy said.

The GWL Board of Directors unanimously approved this strategic decision and saw the move as an opportunity to increase capacity. “I am excited that Greater Waukesha Literacy is merging with Literacy Services of Wisconsin. I am confident that the merging of these two historic organizations will provide uninterrupted, high-quality services to people with literacy needs in Waukesha County,” said John Klima, president of the GWL Board.

“We are pleased to join with Greater Waukesha Literacy to deliver critical adult literacy services to the residents of Waukesha County,” said LSW Board President Jim Paetsch. “One’s ability to read and write is not only the gateway to civic participation, it’s a fundamental requirement for finding meaningful employment. Merging with GWL enables us to extend the geographic reach of LSW services and deepen our regional impact.”

### **About Literacy Services of Wisconsin**

The mission of Literacy Services of Wisconsin is to partner with motivated adults to provide access to quality basic education and skills training so they can improve their lives, enrich their families, and strengthen our community. Incorporated in 1965, the primary aim is to help adults learn to read. Over the years, LSW has added programming designed to provide a continuum of education services to better meet the adult learning community's needs. These services include English language learning, GED/high school equivalency diploma preparation, financial literacy, computer literacy, and workforce readiness skills development. LSW reaches over 1,000 adult learners each year through the dedicated service of more than 500 volunteers who provide 25,000 hours of quality one-on-one instruction and 5,000 hours of other services. For more information, see [www.literacyservices.org](http://www.literacyservices.org).