



Innovating a 2020 Vision

By: Holly McCoy, Executive Director

I celebrated the New Year convinced that 2020 was going to be a tremendous year for Literacy Services of Wisconsin. How could it not be? It was our 55th anniversary! At the same time, we had just merged with Greater Waukesha Literacy and expanded our comprehensive services to further increase impact. We were also partnering in so many other meaningful ways throughout the two counties, and there was just so much to be excited about. In March, however, along with the rest of the world, we were forced to consider a new trajectory as we adapted and adjusted programming with the same energy with which we began the year. We embraced change, enhanced LSW's services, and elevated our educational repertoire.

LSW's amazing staff have been integral in our ability to genuinely show the communities we serve that we are now more accessible and comprehensive than ever before, even amid a pandemic. Behind the scenes, we had difficult conversations and approached roadblocks in ways that pushed us professionally. I cannot possibly express enough gratitude for LSW staff in 2020. No matter what challenge presented itself, we persisted with mission focus. I remain humbled to work with and learn from each and every one of them.

In the midst of the largest public health crisis in the history of most of our lifetimes, LSW did what we have consistently done. We innovated. We researched models from around the country, examined enrollment strategies, shifted our course offerings to allow for additional team-teaching,



(left to right) John Anderson, Director of Programs and Partnerships at WRTP/BIG STEP; Holly McCoy, Executive Director at LSW; Aaron Goyette, Associate Director at LSW; Matthew Waltz, Chief Operating Officer at WRTP/BIG STEP

created new volunteer roles, and listened to both students and volunteers in the process. We launched our largest professional development series ever, spanning four months and including dozens of workshops with hundreds of participants. We distributed over a hundred laptops and provided technical support for students struggling with the tech learning curve. Now, more than ever, technology is a necessary resource and we have reframed its role in facilitating learning environments for our students.

We moved into our Waukesha location and started conversations that will lay the foundation for strong partnerships once we are able to be in-person again. While Waukesha may be new ground for LSW, the area's dedication to adult literacy was already established over 30 years ago by

Greater Waukesha Literacy. We are honored to carry forward our new aligned mission and expand on the work that they have done over the years. The Waukesha community has been extremely welcoming and the volunteers and new friends we have made so far are incredible. When we are able to do so safely, we will be inviting all of you to our new (and beautiful) downtown Waukesha location.

All of this innovation and creativity was brought full circle in September. LSW was one of only four adult education providers from the entire nation to be recognized for developing an innovative practice in the inaugural Advancing Innovation in Adult Education project presented by the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, a division of the U.S. Department of

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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

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 nearly 500 volunteers and financial support from 1000 individuals; 200 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 Equus, Maximus, and Milwaukee Public Schools.

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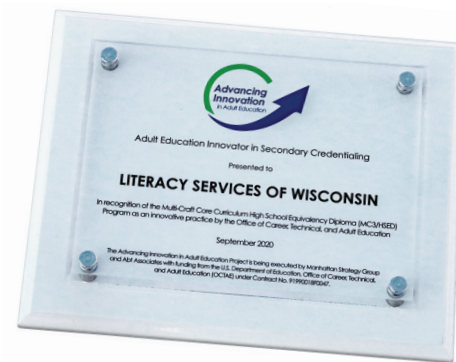
www.literacyservices.org
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2020

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Education (I admit it is a mouthful, but I promise you, from the nerdiest parts of my soul, that this is a tremendous honor). It was affirmation that student-focused and partnership-driven programs that integrate both education and training are where we thrive. This award also recognized our growing partnership with the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership Building Industry Group Skilled Trades Employment Program (WRTP/BIG STEP). As we continue to lead the way in thoughtful Integrated Education and Training for community-based organizations, we hope to use this national recognition and process as a catalyst for additional employment-focused programming in the future.



We have appreciated everyone's love, support, and patience as we were stretched in ways that have made us grow and think more intentionally about who we are as a staff and as an organization. Your support is more crucial than ever before in helping us bridge the digital divide and support adult education. Thank you for loving us through our own learning.



Kerry Leet

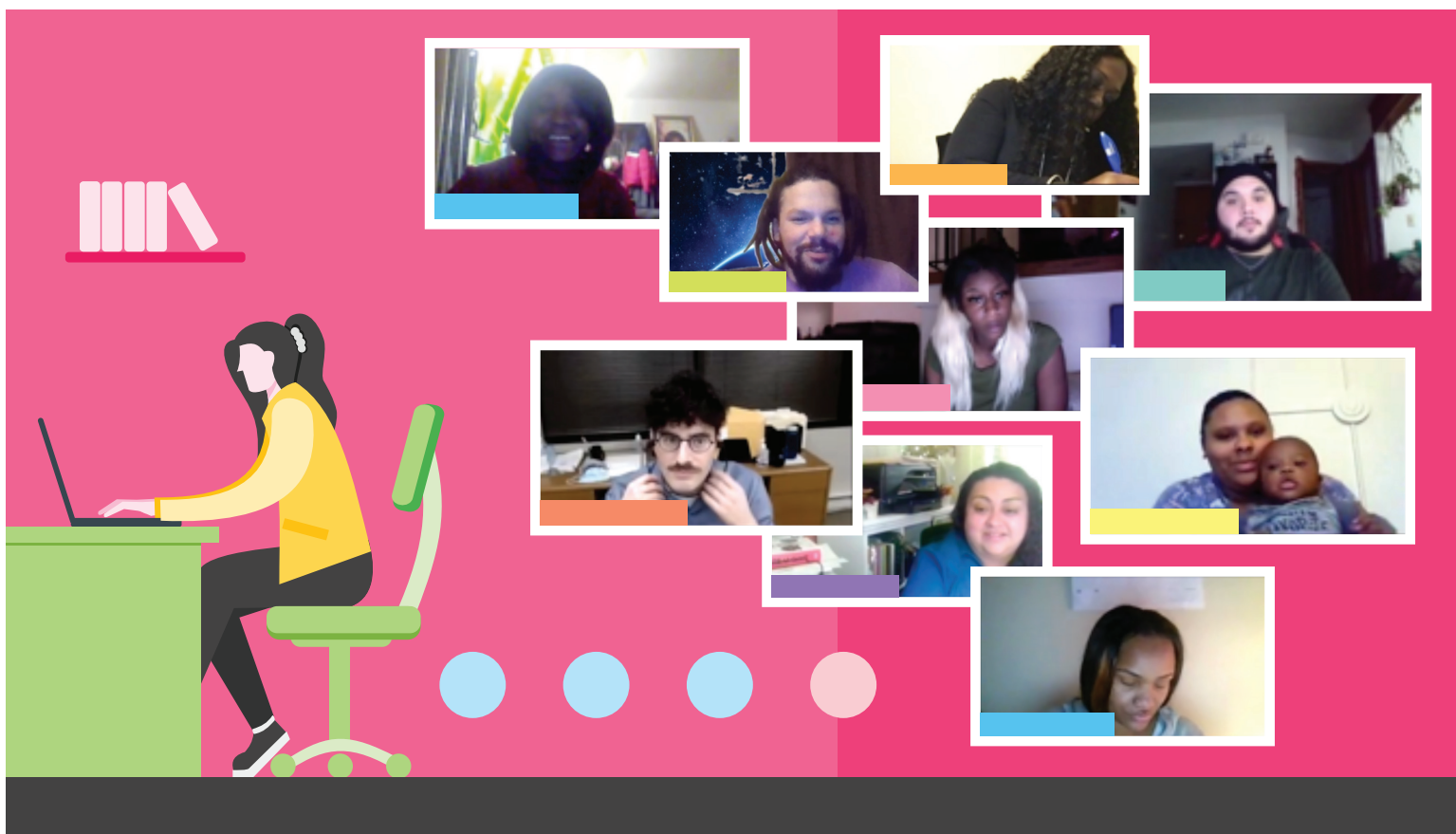
Wells Fargo

Literacy Services Board of Directors

(previously Greater Waukesha Literacy board member)

“I am excited about the opportunities that the merger of Greater Waukesha Literacy and Literacy Services of Wisconsin brings to learners in Waukesha and Waukesha county! The expanded services, online capabilities, and new location are only some of what this new organization brings to the table at great benefit to both tutors and students.”





The Virtual Classroom

By: Steve Barron, Manager of Adult Education Programs

Exposure to, and knowledge of, technology has never been completely absent from LSW's classrooms. In this day and age, academic institutions and employers alike assume some familiarity with a computer, whether it's basic typing skills, word processing, or navigating the internet. Prior to COVID, LSW implemented digital literacy not out of necessity, but as a supplemental skill learned alongside traditional academic subjects like Language Arts and Social Studies. When possible, essays for our HSED program were typed using Google Docs, stored and shared through Google Drive, and communication with instructors was through Gmail versus landlines.

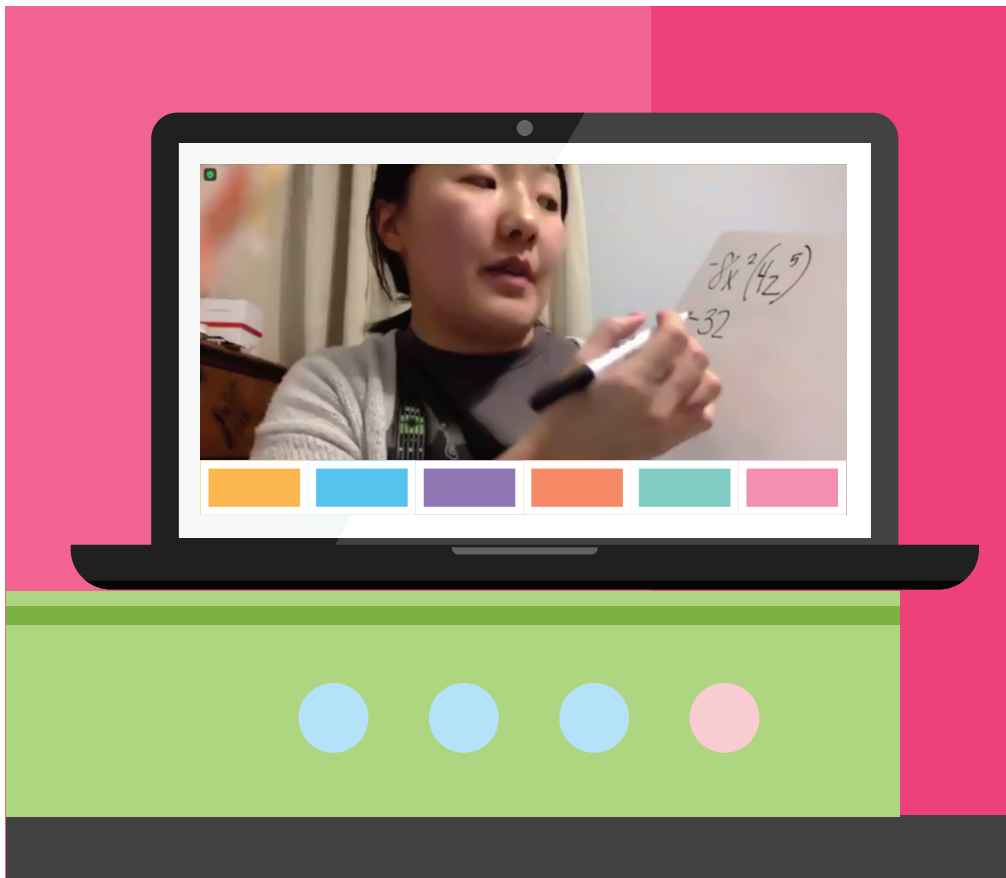
In March as the U.S. was watching the virus make its way across Europe, LSW began conversations about what a shut-down would mean for our students. The

first questions asked would foreshadow the imminent hurdles: Does LSW have digital versions of curriculum and do we have a way to deliver them in a cohesive manner? Before we could fully address these topics, our centers were closed down. There was a scramble within those following days to not only research online learning management systems, but to learn them and deploy them to as many students as possible. Within a week, Google's G Suite was an obvious choice. LSW applied, and was approved for, a G Suite for Education--an upgraded service available to nonprofits and academic institutions. This afforded LSW with a plethora of tools beyond those available to users of Google Classroom for free.

Through a team effort, users within this platform were created, classroom shells were designed, curriculum and assignments

were uploaded, and one by one, students were entered into this new digital class. By summer, our HSED program was fully launched online using video conferencing apps such as Zoom and Google Meet. Students were able to connect online with each other and their instructors, and see projects assigned with due dates and grades.

An added feature of this new virtual classroom is the use of breakout rooms. For fall, 59 students began the HSED program--a much larger cohort than what's typical for in-person instruction. Anticipating the demand on the instructors and the potential loss of more individualized attention for students, LSW called upon staff and volunteers to take on a small group of students for the final hour of class in what we've labeled "coaching sessions". During these sessions, students are able to get



more direct instruction and feedback without the anxiety of speaking up in front a large group. This added tool has been an absolute success. Coco Leflore, a student in the morning HSED cohort, describes her small group as "a little family." Christina Hardmon describes her coach Lois Bernard as "the perfect fit" for her group. And Lois describes her group of students as "patient, caring, and helpful to one another."

As for having the online option, Nicholas De La Garza was worried that he wouldn't have a choice but to continue at a local GED program that he's struggled in.

"I've been trying for years to get my GED. I no longer had the courage to continue, but I found this program and it immediately gave me hope. I'm now more confident than ever because I know I'm learning. Everyone at LSW has done an amazing job."

LSW's transition has not been without its hiccups, but through student feedback and the passion and drive from our staff, we are confident we are providing the same quality experience that our learners can take with them once they move onto their next stage in life. Our dedicated staff and instructors continue to learn new and innovative ways to teach remotely each day and we aim to make online programming a staple of LSW's broad range of services even after we all return to normalcy.

Registration is now open for the Spring Online HSED Classes!



Act quickly.
Apply by Jan. 8th!

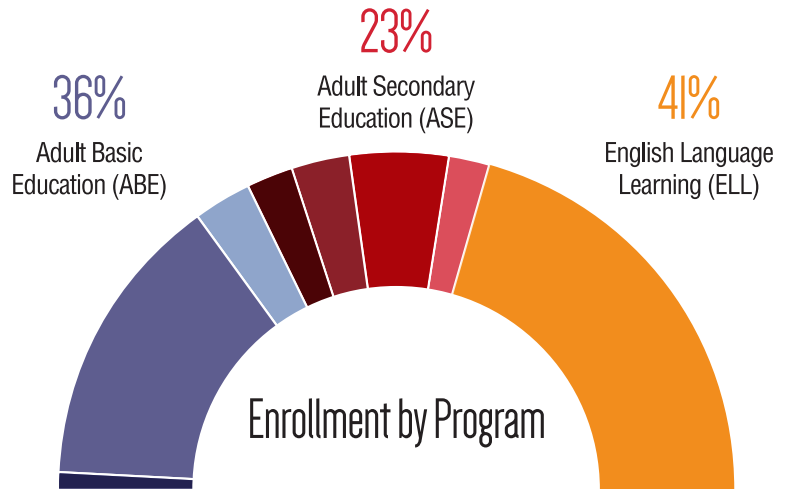
Literacy Services of Wisconsin's High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) sits on the cutting edge of Adult Education in Milwaukee and surrounding areas. This state-approved PI 5.09 program is based on the Common Core State Standards and emphasizes communication skills such as speaking, listening, and writing in preparation for post-secondary education and the workplace. Learners are assessed on classroom-based projects, not standardized tests, and are provided a multi-disciplinary, holistic approach to learning that equips them with the skills needed to further their education and excel in the workforce. Our learners often cite that they graduate from our program with not only a high school credential, but with real world tools, soft skills, confidence, and a renewed sense of purpose.

Enroll at
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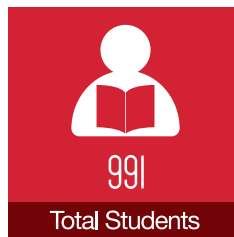
2019-20 IMPACT REPORT

Fiscal year ending Jun 30, 2020

STUDENTS & VOLUNTEERS



2% Enrichment ■ 28% Pre-HSED ■ 6% Wilson Reading System®
 4% Construction HSED ■ 6% GED® Preparation
 9% 5.09 HSED ■ 4% Post Secondary
 41% English Language Learning



67 countries were represented by our 431 ELL students



69% of HSED students borrowed an LSW laptop



Congrats, Class of 2020!

Congratulations and best wishes to all of our HSED & GED graduates!

31

SPRING GRADS!

26

SUMMER GRADS!

42

FALL GRADS!

From Paper to Pixels

With fifty-five years of support from people like you, Literacy Services of Wisconsin has transformed, expanded, and innovated to become a leader in adult education service delivery. We still use books, pencils, and paper, just like our very first students and volunteers, but our programs have now evolved to include online tools to expand in-person instruction even further. The same way our programming transitioned to the digital realm in response to COVID-19, so followed our annual fundraiser.

LSW's first-ever virtual fundraiser was energetic, inspiring, and uplifting! But you don't have to take our word for it. The coolest thing about virtual events is that everyone can watch them on their own time (or watch them over and over again!). If you missed our event on September 15th, head online to the video link below and check it out. It runs 40 minutes and is sure to make you feel all warm and fuzzy.

The celebration continues at
<https://bit.ly/LSW55>



Celebrating fifty-five years!

2020 Inspiration Award Winners



Priscilla Andaverde

Alumnae of Inspiration - 2016 HSED Graduate

Priscilla is a leader in so many ways. Her patience, persistence and love of learning are always evident in her life. Priscilla graduated from (Milwaukee Achiever) LSW's HSED program in 2016. In January 2017, she enrolled in Milwaukee Area Technical College's Healthcare Customer Service Certificate program, which was a pilot Career Pathways program offered in partnership with LSW. Priscilla graduated from the certificate program during the summer semester, and submitted her petition for the medical assistant program. She graduated with Presidential Honors from MATC in 2018. During her internship, she fell in love with healthcare and they hired her on as a medical assistant when she graduated. During COVID-19, she has been one of our hometown healthcare heroes! She plans to go back to college in 2021 to become a Registered Nurse. Priscilla is also a dedicated mother. She was always a pleasure to have in class and we are thrilled to honor her extraordinary academic excellence.



Edwin Gonzalez

Student of Inspiration - English Language Learning

Edwin enrolled in the ELL program at our downtown location in fall of 2019. He moved to the United States from his home country, Panama, about two years ago to start a new chapter with his wife in Milwaukee. Since he started, Edwin has been one of ELL's most dedicated students, attending small group classes three to four days a week on top of his one-on-one tutoring lessons. He can always be seen taking diligent notes, asking questions, and helping his classmates during activities. He is a friendly face whose sense of humor and warm demeanor make everyone around him feel welcome and at ease. Edwin has stated that his time spent at LSW is making a big difference in his life. He feels more confident in conversations outside of class and at his job, where he works as a barista and regularly has to interact with English speakers. Edwin has a background in photojournalism, and his recent improvement in English came in handy when he was approached by two local publications that were seeking to use his work. Since then, photos of his have been published by many different newspapers and websites around the world!



Courtland Bowens

Student of Inspiration - Adult Basic Education

Courtland has been a part of the Literacy Services family since 2009. Over the past decade, he has grappled with maintaining his connection with LSW due to a lack of confidence in his skills. His memories of struggling to keep up in high school affected his commitment level at LSW. In September 2019, he restarted the ABE program with a concrete goal to make this his last enrollment. As a dad of six young children, Courtland knew he had to change his mindset to trust his ability to move forward and to give his family the best example of perseverance. He completed the ABE program in December and transferred to our Silver Spring HSED program in January. Courtland describes it best: "The hard stuff builds character, self-esteem, and courage." He successfully completed the HSED program in May! Courtland is not only the best role model for his children, but also to every student at Literacy Services. You can succeed if you give yourself a chance.



Patty Varela

Student of Inspiration - Adult Secondary Education

This past year Patty overcame tremendous challenges to complete her GED. Since achieving this long-held goal, she has also gone on to become a Certified Nursing Assistant and is now preparing to enter a Certified Medical Interpreter program. These achievements are testaments to Patty's commitment to continue learning and growing despite facing incredible obstacles along the way. Organic to Patty is her love of and deep desire to care for people. She often goes out of her way to offer a listening ear and words of encouragement to those who she sees are struggling. Well-liked by fellow students, volunteers, and staff, Patty's warmth and genuine concern for the well-being of others stand out as enduring qualities. Ultimately, she wants to become a nurse, an occupation in which her inborn passion to care for others can find its perfect expression. Patty's commitment to learning and growth, persistence in the face of obstacles, and deep and abiding love for others serve as inspiration for all of us.



Karen Schoenicke

Tutor of Inspiration - Adult Basic Education

Karen is recognized as our Tutor of Inspiration for her absolute commitment to providing high-quality instruction to ABE students. Karen contributed to the creation of a new, evidence-based curriculum for students with significant deficits in phonological awareness. She donated an entire set of novels for student use, and recruited a colleague to donate another whole set. She volunteered dozens of hours reading the student novels, and she developed tutor guides, chapter summaries, and character glossaries for each novel. Karen arrives early to help program staff with projects and spends many of her free hours doing research to improve her teaching practices. Her incredible dedication and volunteer spirit truly inspire us to soar to the greatest heights of service.

Congratulations!

Thank you to our sponsors!

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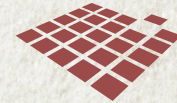
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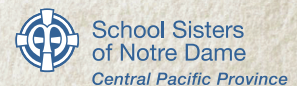
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There are many ways to support our students' hard work!

- Gifts of cash
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- In-kind gifts such as furniture, books, or office supplies (check out the wish list on our website for current needs)
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\$40/month • Supports a student through an entire 16-week high school certification course.

Questions about giving? Call Chad Knezel at (414) 226-5357

In honor of:

My Tutor Amelia - Joo Hyun Song • **Robin Brisco** - Mary Koehler • **Linda Ciske** - Carol Josten • **Frank Clines** - Anonymous • **Chris Colby** - Nat Butler • **Barb Felix** - Andrea Roschke & John Gaebler • **Kelly Fox, Bianca Johnson Ortiz, & Betsy Kerns** - Sue Steinkraus & Kevin Brown • **Clare Freitag** - Brigid Freitag • **James Greer** - Sandy Brusin • **Kathy Herbst** - Robin Schnake • **Herzing University IT Team** - Gwen Mueller • **Mary B. Jones** - Andrew & Amy Jones • **Judy Jorgensen** - Marilyn & John Olson • **Sherrill & Chad Knezel** - Linda Carlson • **Jeffry Knezel** - Susan & Paul Reardon • **John Liebenstein** - Grace Liebenstein • **To LSW for 55 years of educational services to the community.** - Donald Rich • **Holly McCoy** - Ginger Duiven • **Thomas Moreno** - Dianna Higgins • **Sara Risley** - James & Donna Landwehr, Kerry Risley & Sean Goldner • **School Sisters of Notre Dame Volunteers** - Carol Ann Lulewicz • **John Simonelli** - Kristin Koch • **Dustin Slane** - Sara Risley • **Michele Spencer** - Alexis Bernard • **Linda Spice** - Ginger Duiven • **Christina Ward** - David Iverson • **Donald H. Waterman** - John & Paige Waterman • **Marie Weiss** - Ethel Cahill and Charles & Priscilla Camilli

In memory of:

David J. Baldwin - Shauna Baldwin • **Will Belleau** - Executive Women International and Mark, Shiela, Laurel, & Brian Franczyk • **Audrey Blom** - Marilyn & John Olson • **Marianne Blunck** - Linda Christiansen, Jessica Clark, Doreen & Tom Constable, Lynn Cummisford, Tom Dougherty, Debra Ducette, Donna & Robert Lucht, Linda Misorski, Elizabeth Sallee, Heidi Valentine,

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George & Ann Whyte • **Diane Neubeck** - Robert & Theresa Muselman • **Shirley Orvis** - Chad & Sherrill Knezel and Tammy Knutson • **Mary Rafferty** - Deborah Granger, Gabrielle Loring, and Brigid Rafferty • **Robert & Maryalice Rasmussen** - Rob L. Rasmussen • **Jean Riebe** - Dona Rae Lundin • **Edward Ritter** - Dona Rae Lundin • **Susan Robertson** - John Machulak and Kathleen Schneider • **Ronald Santilli** - Linda Ciske and Jeanette Dukleth • **Andrew J. Smith, Walter L. Conner, and Ella Eckler** - Leaella Shirley • **Al Tennesen** - Robert & Theresa Muselman • **Paul Utschig** - Mary C. Utschig • **Brother Wayne** - Dale L. Zimmerman • **Bernard Weiss** - Laurie & Harry Rapkin and Jill Weiss • **Elmer & Louise Witt** - Julie Disseler • **Rose Witz** - Robert & Theresa Muselman • **Uncle Richard** - Mr. Dale L Zimmerman • **Mary Rafferty** - Beth Rafferty • **Phyllis V. Roeber-Ludwig** - Maria Dalton

In tribute to:

All those who are incarcerated and whose only key out of prison/jail is a book. - Kathleen Quinn • **Robin Brisco, Chad Knezel, & Dustin Slane** - Joyce Mielke • **Marilyn Daniel** - Ellen Winterburn • **Jennifer DeBoer** - Caroline DeBoer • **Lori Hanes** - Julia Whittet • **Pamela Lardinois** - Rezonn Dahlin-Klein • **The founders of LSW** - Robert Sproat • **LSW staff and board for leadership nationally on making dreams happen in a pandemic** - Gordon & Jacquie Ralph • **Holly McCoy and Ginger Duiven** - David & Heidi Hanson • **The Orton Gillingham trained reading tutors** - Cheryl C. Ward • **The TillBillies** - Michael & Donna Jushka, Stacey Van Rens, and Clarence & Barb Weller

“My experience with Literacy Services has been nothing short of amazing! Despite having to make adjustments due to the COVID-19 pandemic, staff made the transition smooth.”

- Iris, 2020 HSED Grad

Learn more about how your support helps students like Iris at:

<https://bit.ly/SupportLSW>



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



The Syl·la·bus

Winter 2020

Literacy Services of Wisconsin Newsletter

In this issue:

- **LSW's National Recognition**
- **Inside a Virtual Classroom**
- **2020 Inspiration Awards**
- **And more!**



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MORE INFO

VOLUNTEER & COMMUNITY MEMBER INFO SESSIONS

Literacy Services welcomes you to join us online for another informative virtual meeting. Bring your questions and get ready to learn more about all of the exciting things happening at LSW. Following a short presentation, Executive Director Holly McCoy and Associate Director Aaron Goyette will open up the meeting for a Q & A session. Your thoughts are welcomed.

Visit literacyservices.org/info
to register for one of three sessions:

- Tuesday, January 12th 9:00 a.m.
- Wednesday, January 13th 12:00 p.m.
- Thursday, January 14th 5:30 p.m.