



## Staying True

By: Holly McCoy-Perez,  
Executive Director

We have had an incredible start to 2025. Not only have we celebrated 60 years of adult literacy service to the community, we also opened the first-ever adult education hub that provides comprehensive adult education programming.

When we support adults, we uplift families. We change generations. In 1965, LSW was founded. Over the past six decades, we've learned a lot – not just about literacy, but about humanity, resilience, and the power of opportunity. I want to share six truths – that shape everything we do:

### Truth One:

**Growth thrives on encouragement.**

Our students come to LSW motivated – motivated by opportunity, by the pursuit of something for themselves and their families, and by the desire to build a better future. They arrive with clear goals: earning a GED or HSED, improving English proficiency, developing digital skills, advancing in their careers, or supporting their children's education. Whatever drives our students, achieving those goals is made easier when we provide encouragement and a clear path forward.



At LSW, growth comes through dedicated tutors, personalized instruction, and a welcoming community of learning. Last year alone, our 270 volunteers contributed nearly 8,000 hours of one-on-one tutoring. In addition, our partners at MATC and WCTC supported us with instructors who create a connection between LSW and the technical colleges. They are the steady presence, the voice that says, "I support you and you got this."

### Truth Two:

**Systemic barriers keep too many adults from opportunity.**

We live in a world where barriers continue to prevent many adults from accessing educational opportunities. Over 100,000 Milwaukee adults lack a high school diploma. Over 200,000 adults in Milwaukee and Waukesha struggle with low literacy. Literacy and graduation rates are NOT tied to intelligence. That's not because they're unmotivated or not "smart enough." Many of our adult students navigate so much when they decide to add our educational programming to their lives – food and housing insecurity, lack of access to technology, unreliable

transportation – yet they remain full of potential.

We meet our students where they are at BOTH academically and geographically. This is why we have 8 locations across Milwaukee, Waukesha, and Racine. Access to opportunity is our top priority.



### Truth Three:

**Determination fuels transformation.**

Our students embody determination. LSW students show up consistently. They stay up late studying. They ask questions. They take every opportunity to learn, knowing that their



# The Sylla·bus

Literacy Services of Wisconsin Newsletter

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

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Volunteer Photographer: Sara Risley

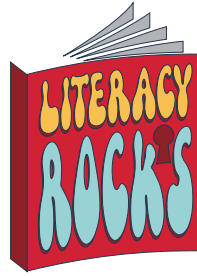
Founded in 1965, Literacy Services serves adult learners with quality education programs - Adult Education (AE), General Education Development (GED) test preparation, 5.09 High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED), English Language Learning (ELL), Workforce Training and Career Pathway Bridges, and integrated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

Literacy Services of Wisconsin is grateful for the broad support of our community, including more than 300 volunteers and financial support from 1000 individuals; 200 foundations, corporations and organizations; The United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County; and the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. We are grateful for our partnerships with Equus, Maximus, and Milwaukee Public Schools.

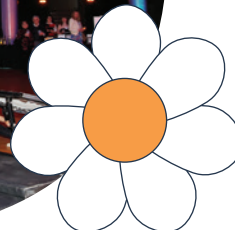
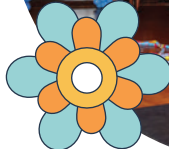
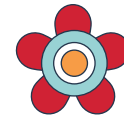
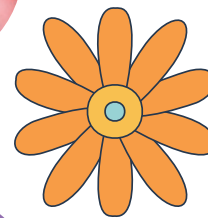
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## Literacy Rocks the Eagles Ballroom!



CELEBRATING SIXTY YEARS  
OF PEACE, LOVE, & LITERACY



The crowd went wild celebrating sixty years of peace, love, and literacy at The Rave/Eagles Club on May 1. The annual fundraiser began with a lively cocktail hour, appetizers, and spirited bidding at our silent auction. Energy filled the ballroom as guests danced with Fred Astaire Dance Studio, grooved to True Skool's musicians, and marveled at the acrobatics of The Milwaukee Flyers.

Master of Ceremonies Lauren Feaster kept the evening moving as we recognized the dedication of LSW partners, students, and volunteers. We were proud to award college scholarships to students Benglo, Haben, and Anthony in support of their academic journeys. Cheers erupted when longtime ELL tutor and community engagement volunteer Chris Payerl was honored for her years of service. We also recognized our partner Barby the Book Fairy for her community-driven literacy initiatives, including Milwaukee's Biggest Free Library.

The evening was a joyful culmination of decades of support for adult education in our community. Thank you for continuing to rock literacy with us!



## Keynote Speaker

### Benglo Kabengele

is a devoted husband, father, and lifelong learner from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He arrived in the U.S. in 2017 with a bachelor's degree in computer science but soon realized that language barriers and credential challenges made it difficult to pursue his career. Determined to succeed, he earned his HSED at Literacy Services of Wisconsin in 2021, went on to complete an IT associate's degree at MATC, and is now working toward a bachelor's degree at UW-Milwaukee.

At LSW's 60th Anniversary celebration, Benglo shared his inspiring journey as a Student Speaker and was honored with a scholarship to continue his education. The following excerpt from his speech reflects both his perseverance and the vital role LSW has played in helping him reach his goals.



In 2018, as I struggled to figure out how to move forward on this new journey, a friend introduced me to Literacy Services of Wisconsin. He told me that LSW offered one-on-one tutoring and could help me get back on track toward my career goals. That moment changed everything. I walked into LSW, unsure but hopeful.

LSW didn't just teach me English—they focused on me as a person, on my dreams, and on my future. I was assigned a tutor who helped me with language, but more importantly, we talked about my goals. Through LSW, I learned about the HSED program. At first, I didn't expect to go back for something I had already achieved, but LSW showed me that education is about opportunity, not just certificates.

LSW assigned me an academic advisor who helped me navigate the U.S. education system, ensuring I was on the right path. I also learned about certifications and received personalized career advice to align my education with my long-term goals.

I completed my HSED, which laid the foundation for everything that followed. With guidance from LSW's career advisors, I enrolled in the IT Computer Support Specialist program at MATC. I earned my associate's degree. From there, I transferred to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM)

and enrolled in the Information Science and Technology program.

I'm now officially one year away from completing my second bachelor's degree—THE FIRST IN AMERICA—and a Bachelor of Science in Information Science and Technology from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. This is a massive milestone for me. A few years ago, I could NOT fully see the path—only my dreams. The journey has NOT been easy and continues to be HARD WORK—balancing full-time work, studies, family, and community commitments—but it's been worth the challenge.

Graduation won't be the end of my journey. I have no plans to stop. I'm committed to continuing my education, whether earning new certifications, pursuing a master's degree, or exploring new opportunities in IT and leadership.

In addition to LSW's support, I'm grateful for the support of my family. One of the most important things I've learned is that education isn't just about personal achievement. It's about lifting up those around you. Thanks to LSW, my wife has also been able to enroll in programs that will help her achieve her own educational and career goals. As we build our new American dream together, it's officially become an LSW family affair.

LSW is a lifeline for adults who didn't have the chance to complete their education or who face barriers to success. Many of us come to this country with dreams, skills, and experience, but we're often overwhelmed by the idea of starting from scratch.

By offering educational support, career advice, and personal mentorship, LSW makes literacy and education accessible and meaningful for everyone.

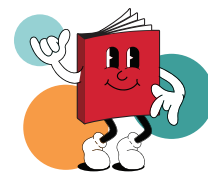


# Congrats, 2025 Scholarship Awardees!

**Haben** is a proud graduate of the Fall 2024 HSED for English Learners program, where she earned her diploma after months of dedicated study. Beginning with a tutor and progressing through the Pathway and HSED-EL courses, Haben steadily improved her English skills, demonstrating determination and a strong work ethic throughout her journey. Originally from Eritrea, Haben faced significant challenges in her early life, having witnessed hardship while fleeing her home country. Now living in Milwaukee with her sister, she carries the love and encouragement of her parents, who remain in Eritrea. Soft-spoken and humble, yet courageous in sharing her story, Haben earned the admiration of both her teachers and classmates. With her resilience, compassion, and quiet strength, Haben is poised to excel in any field she chooses to pursue.



**Anthony** is a dedicated and charismatic individual whose drive, resilience, and positive spirit have made a lasting impact on those around him. Anthony stood out in his program for his exemplary attendance and active classroom participation, consistently arriving early and engaging deeply in discussions. Known affectionately as "Hollywood," a nickname that perfectly captures his vibrant energy, Anthony often uplifted his peers by sharing words of encouragement and affirmations about perseverance. Motivated by his deep love for his daughter, Anthony has made education a central part of his life, not only to better his own future but also to support and inspire her. His hard work and commitment have positioned him for continued success as he pursues higher education at MATC in 2025. With a vision to give back to his community, Anthony is working toward opening his own nonprofit organization. His journey is a testament to the power of perseverance, positivity, and purpose.



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



**\$5/month** • Provides GED practice test vouchers for 15 students.



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**Questions about giving or joining our Legacy of Literacy Society?**

Call Madison Olig at (414) 344-5878 or email [MOlig@literacyservices.org](mailto:MOlig@literacyservices.org)





# Truth

Continued from **Page 1**

determination will shape their future and the future of their families.

In the past year, 50% of our students have been parents, balancing their learning with bedtime routines, school drop-offs, and scraped knees. This proves that the desire to improve their own lives often goes hand-in-hand with a fierce commitment to improving the lives of their children. We provide the tools – GED and HSED, work-force readiness, English language instruction, and digital literacy. But our students do the work.

The result isn't just personal success. It's powerful. It's children watching their parents light up in a new way. It's confidence passed down from one generation to the next. Determination doesn't just move one person forward. It moves entire families. Entire communities. Entire generations.

## Truth Four:

ALL progress toward goals creates momentum for the future.

A job application submitted. A GED earned. A driving exam passed. A Zoom meeting successfully joined. An interview crushed. All of this progress adds up to something much greater – a future full of possibilities. At LSW, we're committed to helping students take meaningful steps towards their goals.

Last year, 87% of our adult students showed measurable skill gains in reading and numeracy scores, and 230 learners earned their high school equivalency. To put that into perspective, that is compared to an average annual total of 16 graduates at other community-based organizations.

When students complete their education, they don't just gain skills – they gain the tools they need to achieve their dreams. These

aren't just statistics; these are families, these are futures.

## Truth Five:

We provide the infrastructure; you bring the vision.

At LSW, we create programmatic pathways, offering programs for every academic level and partnerships to holistically support our student experience. But it's our students who bring their vision to life. I often share when giving a tour to new LSW friends that because we work for adult students, we don't tell them what they SHOULD do: INSTEAD, we listen and provide programming that supports them with what they need to move closer to that goal – their goal.

We opened the doors to our biggest vision yet: a new home in Milwaukee's Brewer's Hill neighborhood on July 16. This has been nearly two years in the making. This is going to be a game-changer for adult education in Milwaukee.

Multimedia classrooms. An onsite GED testing center. Private enrollment spaces. A volunteer and student lounge. Thoughtfully designed to remove barriers and make every adult student feel seen, welcomed, and supported. This building is the standard for what adult education can and should be. Our students deserve this, and the organization should be proud of this moment in our 60-year history. This new space means we can serve hundreds more adult students each year. But even in this new space, it's the students who fill it with purpose.

## Truth Six:

We prepare you to keep moving forward.

For 60 years, LSW's goal has been to equip every enrolled adult with the tools, the knowl-

edge, and the confidence to walk forward on their own.

Because literacy is not just the ability to read.

Literacy is understanding a prescription. Writing a message to a teacher. Reading a lease. Sending a message to a landlord. Understanding a bank statement. Distinguishing misinformation on social media.

Literacy is about navigating the world with clarity, confidence, and dignity. It's about discovering new sides of yourself that were always there and that allow you to move forward.

And that kind of confidence and mindset doesn't happen overnight. It happens when someone is in your corner. When someone believes you can do it. We believe every student that walks through our door deserves the opportunity to learn. That's what LSW is. A place that says, "You've got this."



## Become a Volunteer!

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[info@literacyservices.org](mailto:info@literacyservices.org)

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## Become a Student

Accepting new students!

Sign up at: <https://literacyservices.org/enroll>



# The Syl·la·bus

Summer 2025

Literacy Services of Wisconsin Newsletter

## In this issue:

- Grand Opening
- 60 Years of Literacy
- 2025/26 Event Calendar
- And more!



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## We are home!

Our headquarters relocation is now complete!

### Our new address is:

**1737 N Palmer Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53212**

### Please update your records.

Our phone numbers remain the same, but you may notice that staff have new email addresses. We've updated our email format to accommodate our increasing staff size. Don't worry—messages sent to our old addresses will still reach us.

**Thank you for your patience and support during this monumental transition!**







**WE'RE NOT THE ONLY TEAM  
OUR PLAYERS PLAY FOR.**

Each year, the Brewers' players, coaches and entire organization contribute millions of dollars to hundreds of Wisconsin nonprofits – improving the health, education, recreational opportunities and overall well-being of children and families in our communities. Please join us in going to bat for these worthwhile causes. Because creating a happier, healthier environment for all is definitely a team effort.

**BREWERS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

HEALTH RECREATION EDUCATION BASIC NEEDS

[brewers.com/bcf](http://brewers.com/bcf)



## BOOKS & RESOURCE FAIR

**Choose from hundreds of books** and take your favorites home for you and your family!

**A FREE event for ALL AGES** with entertainment, face painting, art activities and much more!



**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2025**

Kosciuszko Park • 4:30 PM – 7:30 PM

2201 S 7th St, Milwaukee, WI 53215

Book donations **WILL NOT** be accepted at the event.

Learn more at:

<https://bit.ly/BIGFREELIBRARY>



## Discover the Difference of True Partnership

There's no limit to what we can accomplish when everyone chips in. We're proud to support Literacy Services of Wisconsin.

800-79-BAIRD  
[rwbaird.com](http://rwbaird.com)

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- Seamless from start to finish
- Partnering with your community



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## 2025

Sept 1  
Sept 2-5

Labor Day - **All sites closed**  
Staff Planning Week -  
**LSW closed to students/tutors**  
HSED Fall Semester  
Fall Break - **All sites closed**  
Winter Break - **All sites closed**

## 2026

Jan 5-9  
Jan 19  
Jan 20-May 21  
Mar 30-Apr 3

Staff Planning Week -  
**LSW closed to students/tutors**  
Dr. MLK Jr. Day - **All sites closed**  
HSED Spring Semester  
Staff Planning Week -  
**LSW closed to students/tutors**  
Memorial Day - **All sites closed**

May 25

## Special Events

### GED/HSED Summer Commencement Ceremony

Thursday, September 4, 6:00pm

**Book Giveaway** at Silver City International Fest  
W National Avenue between 3rd and 35th St, Milwaukee  
Saturday, September 6th, 12:00pm - 5:00pm

**Milwaukee's Biggest Free Library** at Kosciuszko Community Center  
2201 S 7th St, Milwaukee  
Friday, September 12th, 4:30pm - 7:30 pm

**Community Mural Painting** at new headquarters  
1737 N Palmer St, Milwaukee  
Saturday, September 20th, 10:00am - 2:00pm

RSVP



**Doors Open MKE** at new Headquarters  
1737 N Palmer St, Milwaukee  
Sunday, September 28th, 10:00am - 3:00pm

**Fall Book Fair** at Dead Bird Brewing with MKE Books and Beers  
1726 Dr. William Finlayson St, Milwaukee  
Sunday, October 19th, 12:00pm - 4:00pm

### September 2025

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

### October 2025

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

### November 2025

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23/30	24	25	26	27	28	29

### December 2025

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

### January 2026

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

### February 2026

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

### March 2026

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

### April 2026

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

### May 2026

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

● - Closed ○ - No Classes ● - Special Event ● - Semester Begins

More information at [literacyservices.org](http://literacyservices.org)