



Literacy Network[™]
Improving Lives Through Literacy

Our Mission: Literacy Network teaches reading, writing and speaking skills to Dane County adults and families so they can achieve financial independence, good health, and greater involvement in community life.

ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Literacy Network is a private non-profit organization in Madison, WI founded in 1974. We work with teachers, tutors, volunteers and donors to improve adult literacy in Dane County. Our programs help adults find career opportunities, read with children and help with homework, improve computer skills, understand finances, and speak with doctors about health concerns.

In 2015, **1,042** adults studied with us a total of 30,055 hours.

We had **28** program locations including businesses, libraries, hospitals, clinics, schools, and social service agencies. These partners help us build essential community connections for program participants.

Learner outcomes: 82% of HIRE participants achieved a goal that is meaningful to their employment. Of these, 848 maintained their jobs, 170 received one or more certificates, 79 got a new job, 66 got a promotion or advancement in their employment.

Demographics:

90% of Literacy Network learners are low income people of color.

63% are women

Ethnicity/Race

61% Latino

17% Asian

8% Black/African American

7% White (mostly English language learners from Eastern Europe)

3% Southeast Asian

4% Multiracial

In 2015, 805 volunteers gave **29,323 hours** of their time to support Literacy Network. The value of this time is \$659,181 – nearly the same as our annual budget!

The average number of hours per volunteer has **increased 9.9%** in just one year, demonstrating excellent volunteer retention. The average volunteer gave 36 hours of her time last year, at a value of \$809 each!

Recent learner stories

"I Want to Learn This"

Your support leads to better employment for many adults in Dane County. For example, when Otis started working in the food service industry, he didn't need to know much about computers. Soon he realized he had to adapt to changes in the industry if he wanted to move up or find a better job.



"I wanted to get familiar with this computer thing," he explains. He signed up for tutoring through our Skills in Computers and Literacy for Employment (SCALE) program. He and his tutor, Linda, meet every week to work on skills like keyboarding and word processing, and he's grateful to have her help.

"If it weren't for her," he says, pointing to the computer and laughing, "I'd just be sitting here staring at this thing!"

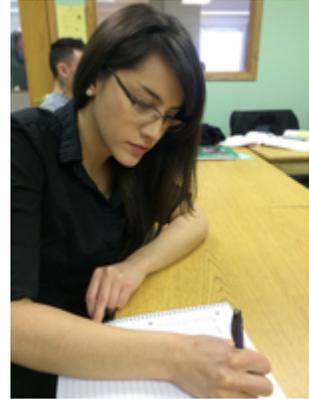
"He's great to work with," Linda says, clearly proud of the progress Otis is already making. "He comes to every class."

Otis has created a professional resume and is now learning to search for and apply for jobs online. He hopes all his new computer skills will help him reach his ultimate goal: to become a food service manager. He admits it's hard learning all these new skills, but he's committed.

"I'm giving it 100%," he says. "I want to learn this."

"When You Learn to Speak Another Language, You're Like a Child."

In a recent ESL class exercise, Diana and other students were instructed to "hire" one of two potential English tutors, based on hypothetical resumes. She clearly preferred the tutor with experience teaching children.



"When you learn to speak another language, you're like a child," she explained. "When I move here, I was 21 years old. I'm not a child, but it was difficult... I feel like a little girl. Learning, asking questions, making dumb questions, but for me it's important."

Diana came to the US from Columbia, and settled in Madison almost two years ago in order for her husband to attend dentistry school. She was immediately excited to expand her English skills.

"I want to speak English since I was 11 years old," she smiled. Diana currently works in a Mexican restaurant in Madison, but she's looking for another job. Thanks to supporters like you, she's on her path to success.

"Today, I have an interview," she said. When asked whether her ESL classes had helped prepare her for that job interview, she nodded. "Yes! I think I'm better than I used to be."

"I Need Good Communication"

One of the first things you will notice about Alejandro is his motivation and drive.

"In my company, the development is very professional. I need a license," he explains. Currently a vet tech in the livestock industry, he gained his professional education in Mexico but getting licensed in the US is more a matter of his English skills than his knowledge of animals.



"I need to pass the test and the veterinarians in the University have another test. It's very difficult and I need perfect English".

Alejandro began to learn English at Literacy Network last November, after living in Madison three years. Until recently, he was able to get by in his day-to-day life because he could always find people at work, the bank, and the store who spoke Spanish, his

native language. But now Alejandro has a new position at work which requires greater English usage. Because of your support he finds the help he needs in ESL classes. He knows continuing to improve means even better jobs in the future.

"I need really good English for communicate with my boss or other persons. If I get a better job I have more money, I can buy a good house, I can pay for children's school in the future. The life is more easy, more quality, a better life," he says, clearly visualizing his success. Alejandro also has other goals besides career advancement.

"The other big goal in the next five years is childrens with my wife. That's the big goal!"

"I Enjoy Learning"

"First, I want to speak and write English," Sergette says as she outlines her goals to you. "Second, study nursing. After that, I continue with medical law."

She arrived from Cameroon, a central African republic, two years ago. If learning English in her new community wasn't enough, she has two young children at home. Her 15yo daughter attends a French school in Cameroon.



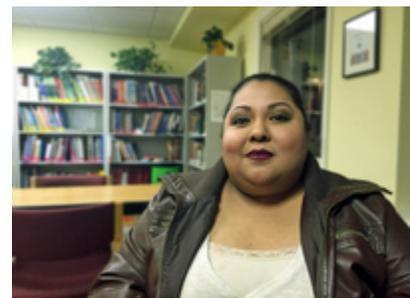
"This year, I want her to come here," she says of her eldest. To help pave the way, Sergette is taking two ESL classes a week and insists her older daughter speak to her in English. She's a strong believer in showing her children the importance of learning and education. Your support helps to expand literacy programs for parents -and spell success for their children.

"School is very important," she asserts enthusiastically. "Is my vision. I enjoy learning."

"I like to help other people"

"My goal is to get a GED," Maria tells us. "Study to be a kindergarten teacher."

Even during her first few English classes, Maria showed a passion for teaching by helping her fellow students, despite her own limited vocabulary. There's that day in our lives when a sign points us in a direction we were meant to follow. For Maria, that day



came after 10 years in Madison when she drove by the Literacy Network and finally decided to learn English. She enrolled in an ESL 1 class and it was then the instructor noticed her willingness to jump in and help without being asked.

Eventually, she proved to be a valuable teacher's assistant, not only in her own class, but in others as well. Along the way she became a tutor and with her quick smile and cheerful attitude, she has the gift of putting a student's mind at ease.

"I like this program," she says. "I like to help other people." If teaching is about giving, Maria is the type of young woman who has much to offer. She has only been on this new path for a year, but early returns indicate a bright future.

Lupé Learns English for Work

Lupé has worked for the Courtyard Hotel in Middleton for almost eight years. She's done well-she's now a housekeeping supervisor. However, her limited English has sometimes made her job hard, especially when she has to speak to hotel guests on the phone.



"I scared when the phone ring," Luna says. "I scared because I think I no understand everything."

Things have gotten easier for Lupé since she started taking Workplace ESL classes last fall. She's now in her second semester of the course, which meets twice weekly and helps local employees of North Central Group (a local hotel management company) learn English skills that are directly relevant to their jobs.

Lupé enjoys the class. Her teachers, Robin and Marie, describe her as an "incredibly driven student" who always works hard during class. "She's very willing to help whenever we ask her," they say. "She likes being able to help her classmates."

Lupé says the classes have helped make communicating with guests and coworkers easier. She's not as afraid to answer the phone, and she finds it much easier to speak with the maintenance crew. Lupé 's new goal is to become a housekeeping manager- and to continue taking classes to improve her English.

"Now I thirsty for more learning and more learning," she smiles.

"I want to buy a house"

When Mamadou talks of his native Guinea in West Africa, he shakes his head. "The economy is no good. Fighting every day. If you do demonstration, they go to your house. It's bad."

Like many immigrants, he made his way to New York City. He describes his experience there as, "busy, busy, busy." It was on these big city streets where he bumped into a fellow countryman, whose car had license plates from a place Mamadou had never heard of: Wisconsin. Talk turned into an invitation and Mamadou soon found himself living in Madison, a place he prefers.

"Quiet. Nice people," he says of his new community. His friend found him a job and now three years later, Mamadou wants to be a citizen and plant his roots here. He came into Literacy Network in January to register for the free Citizenship class to improve his English and US knowledge. He also has dreams beyond buying house and citizenship.

"I want to go to school. I get better job," he says, hopefully. While Mamadou has accomplished much, he admits his next journey has just begun.

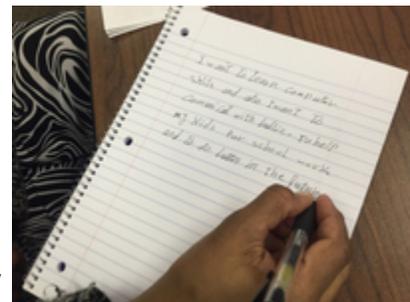


"I want to sell more of my fashion"

When Amani, a middle-aged woman from Sudan, flips through images of her creations on her smartphone, it's easy to believe in her dream. They are beautiful and colorful abaya, a traditional garb of richly embroidered material that covers a woman from head to ankle with only her eyes showing. If there's anything standing in her way, it's her English and computer skills.

"Yes," she says, "I need to improve myself." She came to Literacy Network five years ago to learn English so she could feel more comfortable in her new city. Amani comes from a small village and the small town vibe of Madison suits her style. Every day she walks her three school-aged children to the bus stop. She continues to take ESL classes at Literacy Network and now that she's received her driver's license, she brims with a sense of freedom and possibility.

Ultimately, she says, she'd like to open an online shop. As if conjuring her future fashion empire, a smile creeps across her face. "Someday," she says. "Someday."



"Now I Can Feel Free"

When Mario Cantu de Leon, 51, moved to Madison in 2011 he and his wife started a business cleaning houses. They wanted to expand their business to office buildings and commercial clients, but Mario's limited command of English made that difficult.



He came to Literacy Network to take classes and was paired with Ruth, a volunteer tutor. They met every week, working on pronunciation, everyday conversation, even how to draft business contracts. Mario appreciated how Ruth's lessons were tailored to his specific needs, which ranged from pronouncing the "TH" sound to navigating social and professional conversations. As his English improved, so did his business.

"Doing business is a lot better now because I can understand clients better," Mario said. "I can explain more to them over the phone. I can feel more happy because now, my clients, we can talk about each other. Sometimes my clients ask me about my life, my kids, my car. We can talk about more topics."

Ruth, a retired UW-Madison law professor, shared ideas on how to grow his business, helped him draft contracts and suggested books for him to read about commercial cleaning businesses.

"Working with people with literacy issues enriches your life and makes you understand your community in a whole new way," Ruth said. "It's inspiring to watch people meet their goals."

Recently, Mario was thrilled to land his first commercial client, and acknowledged how much his life has changed for the better now that he has a firmer grasp on English.

"When you want to explain something and you don't have a way to explain this to someone, it's a wall," Mario explained. "But, now it's more open. This opened the doors. Now I can feel free."

Board members

Name

President: Maureen Miner, Wisconsin Alumni Resource Foundation, Director of Human Resources

Vice-president: Rich Birrenkott, Tricor Insurance, Vice President, Employee Benefits

Secretary: Erika Rosales, Educator Outreach Specialist at WIDA Consortium

Treasurer: Patty Stockdale, Wisconsin Public Radio Association, Accountant, retired

At-Large members:

- Karen Bender, Forward Health Group, Inc, Director, HR & Admin Svcs
- Renee Boyce, Findorff, Director of Human Resources
- Anna K. Canty (M3 Insurance, Account Manager)
- Fred Gants (Quarles & Brady LLP, Partner)
- Dr. Lynea D. LaVoy (Madison College, Program Director, Hospitality Management)
- Dwayne McMillen (Home Depot, Inventory)
- Dr. Dipesh Navsaria (University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics)
- Diana Tatili (American Cancer Society, Senior Representative)

Financial Statement

2015 Audited Financial Statement

SUPPORT AND REVENUE

| | Unrestricted | Temporarily Restricted | Total |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| United Way | \$ 252,659 | | \$ 252,659 |
| Contributions | \$ 134,584 | \$ 902,985 | \$ 1,037,569 |
| Special Events | \$ 52,020 | | \$ 52,020 |
| Other grants | \$ 159,878 | | \$ 159,878 |
| Program services fees | \$ 109,450 | | \$ 109,450 |
| Investment return | \$ (679) | \$ 393 | \$ (286) |
| Other revenue | \$ 1,742 | | \$ 1,742 |
| Total revenue and support | \$ 709,654 | \$ 903,378 | \$ 1,613,032 |

