



The Literacy Alliance

Literacy News

A quarterly publication of the Literacy Alliance

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Judith Stabelli
executive director
judith.stabelli@fwliteracyalliance.org

Brian Schlichtenmyer
editor
brian.schlichtenmyer@fwliteracyalliance.org

Phone: (260) 426-7323
Fax: (260) 424-0371

www.fwliteracyalliance.org

The Literacy Alliance Reaches Parents through Healthy Families

Every week, a case worker from Healthy Families visits Zakeya Franklin and her one year old son Noah. They cover questions that Zakeya may have. "I have a lot," she says. Since Noah is her first child, Zakeya's questions involve his development, and she credits her case worker with helping her understand where he should be. Also, the case worker plays with Noah and gives pointers on how to read aloud and make it fun.

Through programs such as Healthy Families, Healthier Moms & Babies, and Lutheran Social Services Case Management Initiative and Teen Parenting Programs, the Literacy Alliance reaches parents of preschool age children in their homes. It is called Read to Me at Home and includes partnerships with SCAN, CANI, Easter Seals-ARC, Lutheran Social Services, and Catholic Charities. The purpose is to get parents to read to their children everyday, fostering a love of reading and preparing them for school.



With a big smile, Zakeya and Noah Franklin pose for a recent portrait.

According to Zakeya, Read to Me at Home benefits them in a number of ways. The case worker brings children's books. The Baby Faces books are among Noah's favorites, and Zakeya mentions that he will look through the books in his crib. Always a reader, she has not had experience reading to children until her case worker showed her how.

Zakeya tries to read to Noah every night, at bed time or bath time. His favorite book is a small one about Goofy riding a bicycle, small enough him to hold while she reads.

Currently, Healthy Families serves about 900 families. Before or immediately after the birth of a child, case workers commence home visits with a family and will stay with them for up to five years. They assist families with life management and parenting which includes modeling appropriate play, reading, and interaction with the child.

Zakeya calls the visits very positive. "Noah loves his case worker," she states.

Ivy Tech Speaker Visits New Haven Learning Center

On October 5, Ivy Tech State College's Anne Michel visited the Literacy Alliance's bustling learning center at New Haven United Methodist Church.

Anne is Academic Affairs Community Outreach Specialist at Ivy Tech. She goes to all of the Literacy Alliance's learning centers a couple of times every program year.

Many students attend the New Haven Learning Center. They work in one big room with three groups of tables arranged horseshoe fashion and in three smaller rooms across the hall.

In one of these rooms Site Coordinator Nancy Smith worked one-on-one with a student, while about 40 students attended Anne's presentation in the big room. It was pizza night. Paid for and consumed by the students, the pizza went quickly leaving six large boxes on the counter. It took only a moment for them to settle around the tables, then Anne began.

She distributed Ivy Tech's catalog of degreed programs and described its contents. Upon receiving GED, she said, students find they might need to take more classes or earn a degree to reach their goals. With a handout listing the subjects and degrees, Anne explained the difference between Ivy Tech's Technical Certificate, Associate of Applied Science, and Asso-



Students at New Haven Learning Center leaf through Ivy Tech's catalog of degreed programs as Anne Michel describes the contents.

ciate of Science degrees. The handout also listed professions for which Ivy Tech has Career Development Certificates. Finally, Anne informed the students that Ivy Tech offers a free class to students who score 510 or higher on GED. For students who score 540 or higher are eligible for a scholarship. After the presentation, Anne remained to answer individual student questions.

Usually three or four students will approach her, says Anne. She mentions that students mostly ask about Ivy Tech's nursing program, because nursing pays well and has good benefits. With a smile, Anne adds that her visits are good for students because it gets them excited, talking about college and new goals to strive for after passing the GED examination.

Volunteer Corner

The Literacy Alliance is pleased to offer a new addition to the quarterly newsletter. We are calling it the Volunteer Corner and intend to highlight a volunteer each quarter.

This month, we salute Debbie Dunne. Debbie originally hails from Unionville, Connecticut but it was in New Jersey at the university where she met her future husband, Michael.

Five years ago, Debbie and their son Patrick (now 17) learned that Michael's corporation was relocating the entire family to Fort Wayne. Michael's reassignment was just the chance that Debbie needed to rethink her own professional growth. Debbie had completed a Bachelor's in Math Education, and taught math at the high school level. She thought about reentering teaching, but instead, decided to expand on her existing skills by taking on the role of personal financier with Thrivent, a financial firm in Allen County.

Tutoring with the Literacy Alliance was not her first dip into world of volunteerism. She'd volunteered with a number of agencies in New Jersey, but this opportunity with the Alliance was quite different. Debbie has now been working as a one-on-one tutor for exactly one year. When asked about her experience thus far, she commented that the most challenging issue was not to assume that individuals have a general knowledge on subjects. And when asked about what characteristics are important for tutors she responded that good listening skills, flexibility, creativity as well as the ability to carve out time for preparation are critical.

For an individual who has never participated in a tutoring project, Debbie makes it look simple. Over the course of this one year, she has assisted her one-on-one student to make vast improvements in her reading. More importantly, Debbie has inspired her to reach beyond what she thought she was capable of achieving.

Thank you, Debbie and all of the tutors out there, for your outstanding commitment to education. We could not do it without your help.

Family Literacy Begins Program Year in New Hanna-Creighton Facility



Participants of The Literacy Alliance's Family Literacy Program at CANI Head Start's new Hanna-Creighton enjoy supper in the adult classroom.



Parents and children work together in the children's classroom at the new CANI Head Start Hanna-Creighton facility.

Mark Your Calendar

December 17, 2004 - Barnes and Noble Book Fair Benefit - Present the enclosed "Bookfair Voucher" when you purchase your holiday gifts at the Jefferson Pointe Barnes and Noble, and a percentage of your purchase will be donated to the Literacy Alliance.

January 2005 - The Literacy Alliance will begin to collect donations for the Garage Sale Fundraiser. Donate anything that will sell at the Literacy Alliance's April 16, 2005 Garage Sale. For more information call Brian at 426-7323.

January 22 & 29 - Tutor training, 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM. For more information call Kathleen Benson Chaney at 426-7323.

February 16, 2005 - GED Graduation at 7:00 PM at the Scottish Rite Auditorium.

March 13, 2005 - *The Wizard of Oz* Movie Event at 2:00 PM - Bring the family to the Embassy Theatre and enjoy *The Wizard of Oz* on the big screen. Tickets are \$4.00 for 12 years and older. Children under 12 are free.

March 19 & 26 - Tutor training, 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM. For more information call Kathleen Benson Chaney at 426-7323.

Birch Bayh Visits EWSC



Former Indiana Senator Birch Bayh recently visited the Literacy Alliance's Family Literacy program at East Wayne Street Center.

Thank You!

The Literacy Alliance Thanks Individuals and Organizations for Their Generous Support.

Individuals

Margaret Ashbridge

Frederick A. Beckman

Martha J. Beugnot

John F. Bonsib

John & Mary Clarke

Virginia Coats

Charles & Joan Colligan

Kenneth & Stephanie Dunsire

Ned & Sally Edington

William & Sara Hatlem

Craig Hamilton & Linda Powell

Martha Hatch

Alice B. Hoffman

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Mary Ann Roach

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New Board Members

Joe Contrucci

Jimella Harris

Susan St. Clair

Barnes and Noble Host Book Fair

You can benefit the Literacy Alliance when you shop for your holiday gifts at Barnes and Noble.

On Friday, December 17, Barnes and Noble will have the Literacy Alliance Book Fair benefit. A percentage of all purchases accompanied by the Barnes and Noble "Bookfair Voucher" will be donated to the Literacy Alliance. The percentage will be based on the amount of sales, the more sales the greater the percentage.

Here's how you can help. On Friday, December 17, go to the Jefferson Pointe Barnes and Noble. Bring the "Bookfair Voucher" provided in this issue of *Literacy News*. Buy something for everyone on your holiday gift list and a little something for yourself, too. At the cash register, present the voucher and tell the cashier you want a percentage of your purchase to go to the Literacy Alliance.

To help you, representatives from the Literacy Alliance will be there to wrap all of your purchases.

If you have questions or want to help by distributing "Bookfair Vouchers" to your friends and family, call Brian at the Literacy Alliance, 426-7323

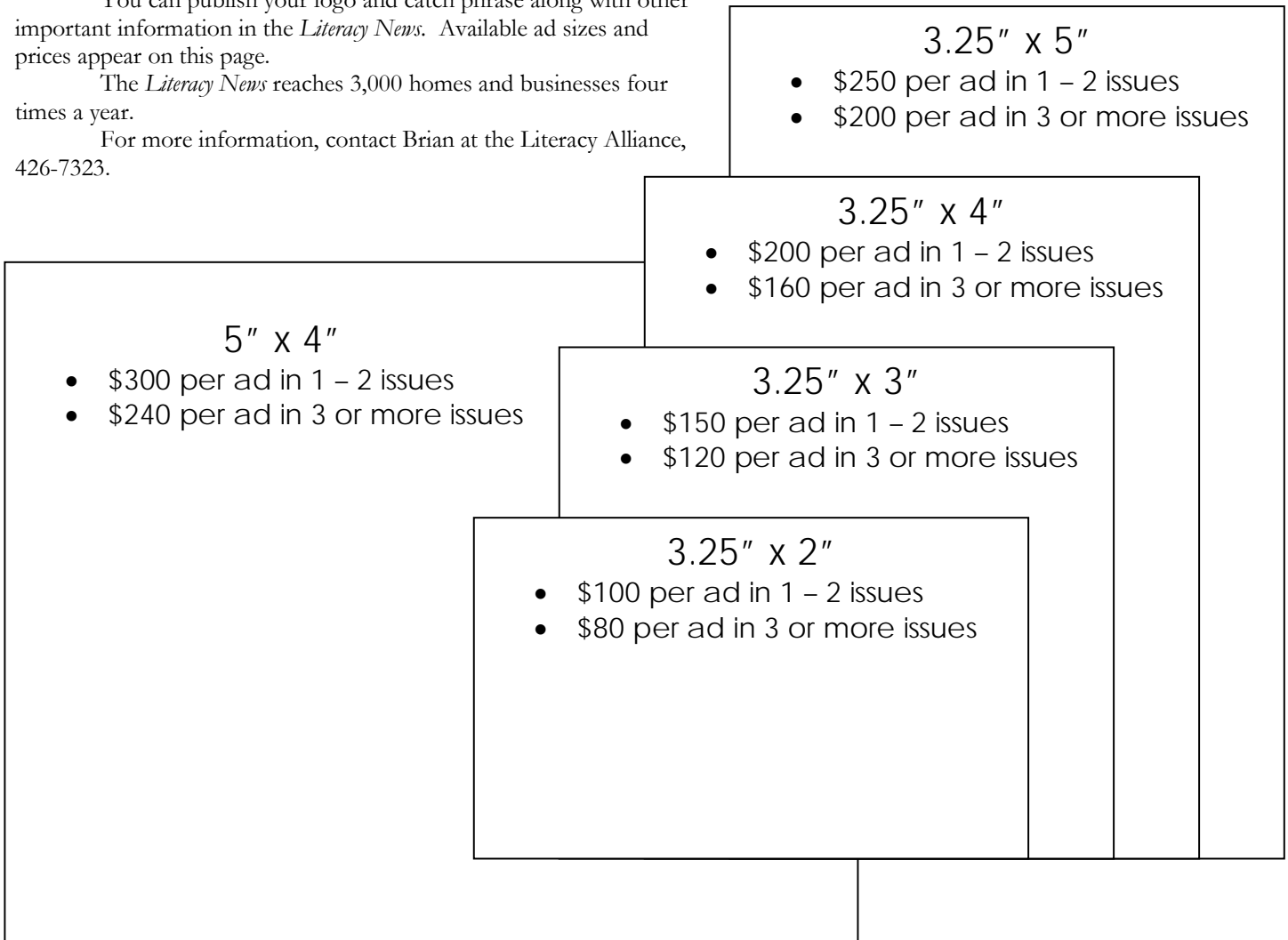
The Literacy Alliance Offers Sponsorship Opportunities

Here is a chance for your organization to show support for the Literacy Alliance.

You can publish your logo and catch phrase along with other important information in the *Literacy News*. Available ad sizes and prices appear on this page.

The *Literacy News* reaches 3,000 homes and businesses four times a year.

For more information, contact Brian at the Literacy Alliance, 426-7323.



From the Director's Desk

Early in November I was a guest of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation at the National Association for the Education of Young Children annual conference in Anaheim. In nearly every workshop, the presenters noted the now accepted fact that the early years are a critical time for brain development—development that includes the emergent literacy skills that are essential for success in school. A child entering school who hasn't had those skills nurtured and encouraged will most likely not ever make up the resulting deficits in early reading skills.

As their child's first teacher, parents must be capable of providing that support in their child's early years. In many sessions, I heard about the difficulty of working with parents whose skills are not strong enough to support their children or who do not speak English well enough to communicate with their children's teachers.

As our community places high emphasis on programs for children, it is important that we remind folks that parents must be able to provide a foundation upon which early education programs can build. We need to support programs that offer English as a New Language instruction for immigrant and refugee parents. We need to offer reading, writing and math instruction for parents who did not complete high school or who, though they were granted a diploma, recognize that they don't read well enough to help their children with schoolwork.

You have been incredibly generous in your response to our appeals so that The Literacy Alliance can provide these services. The dollars contributed by individuals in our last fiscal year, surpassed the total of any previous year. And we have more good news! We have been able to re-open the learning center at Trinity United Methodist church thanks to a three-year commitment from Comcast Foundation. Twenty one adults have completed entrance assessments and are now working on basic skills in reading, writing and math.

*These adults join the 151 others studying at our three other centers, **more than half of whom are young adults, 25 and under, who will be stronger parents having attended our programs.***

May the spirit of the holidays be with you and your families. May your celebration be more joyous with the knowledge that you have been a part of ensuring that all children will live with capable, nurturing parents.

Judith Stabelli, Executive Director



709 Clay Street, Suite 100 · Fort Wayne, Indiana 46802

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