



The Literacy Alliance

Literacy News

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Three Rivers Literacy Alliance Changes Name

What was once Three Rivers Literacy Alliance is now just The Literacy Alliance.

The Literacy Alliance held a May 25 press conference at Fellowship Missionary Church to roll out the new name along with a new mission statement and logo, as well as announce a new Literacy Alliance initiative in association with Northeast Indiana Workforce Investment Board (WIB). The large room filled quickly as representatives from all the local media brought note pads, cameras, tripods, and equipment cases. Patty Weddle and Kathleen Randolph of the WIB also attended.

In the course of the press conference, Executive Director Judy Stabelli emphasized The Literacy Alliance's determination to assist adult learners in reaching their academic and professional goals.

The changes grew from Judy's participation in Institute for Organizational Effectiveness (IOE) seminars and a resulting strategic plan written by The Literacy Alliance Board of Directors in early 2003. The plan involved a marketing and branding review. An IOE grant allowed The Literacy Alliance to hire Ferguson Advertising which conducted research and helped The Literacy Alliance's Marketing and Fund Development Committee create a new logo, mission



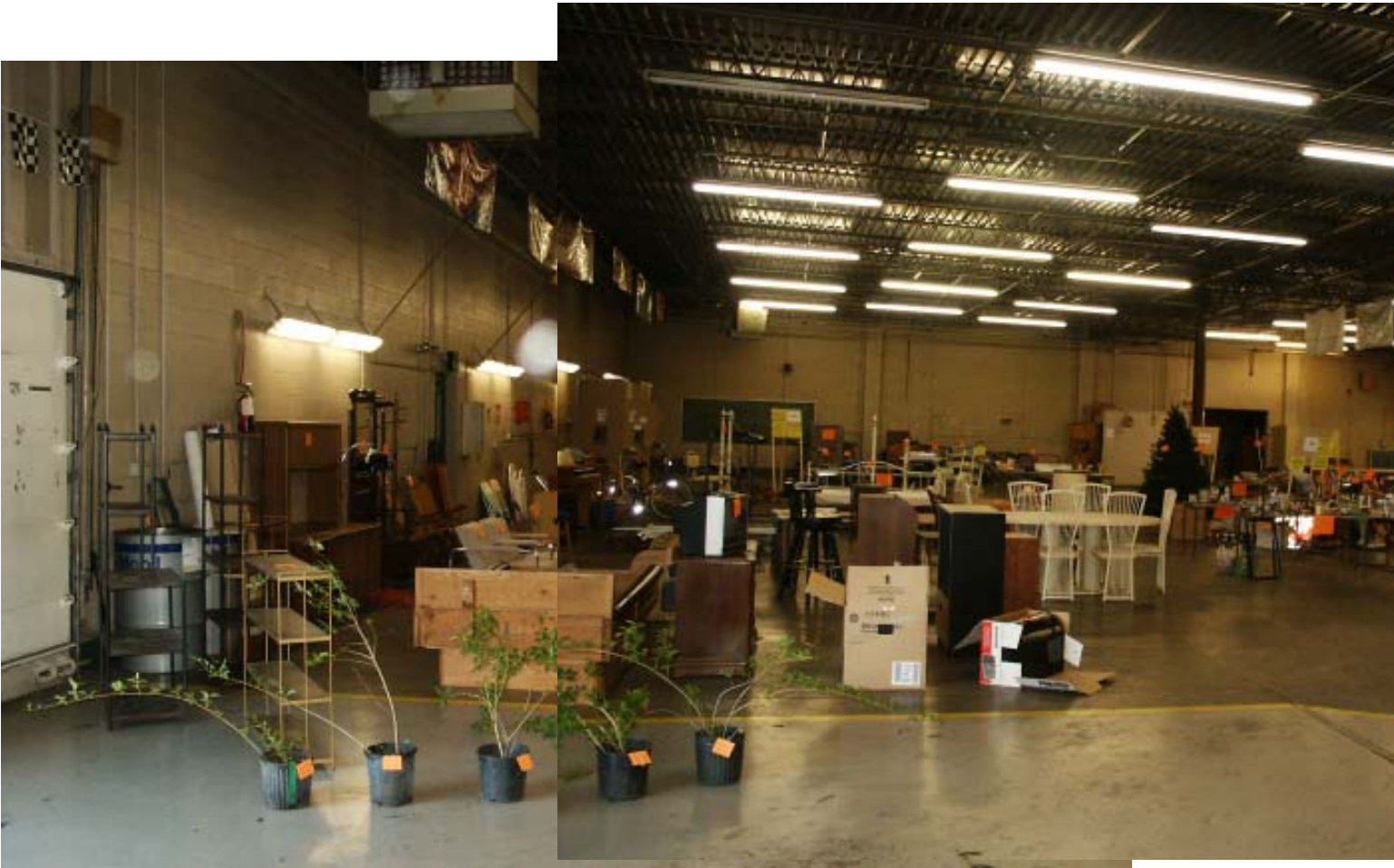
The WIB's President and CEO Patty Weddle speaks at The Literacy Alliance's May 25 press conference.

statement, brochure, annual report, newsletter format, and website.

Board Members agreed that The Literacy Alliance is less of a mouthful. Also, the consensus was that when people look for literacy services in the phone book they will be more apt to look under the L's for "literacy." The new logo, a stalk growing tall from an open book, is more symbolic of the agency's work. The new mission statement focuses on the what, why, and how of the agency's work. Despite all the changes, however, Judy stressed that The Literacy Alliance is essentially the same organization with phone number, staff, location, and partnerships unchanged.

The Literacy Alliance's new initiative involves the agency's implementation of KeyTrain software in its adult education programs. A local trailblazer in its use, The Literacy Alliance can help adult students beyond the GED, providing levels assessment and instruction in specific job skills. And yet KeyTrain has broader uses. Students can strengthen their basic skills in language and math. They can prepare for GED examination. ESL students can work on their English skills.

In this *Literacy News* issue, an article further describes the KeyTrain software and its uses.



A composite picture shows The Literacy Alliance Garage Sale in ITT Technical Institute's automotive area on May 21.

The Literacy Alliance recognizes the following. Without their support, this first Garage Sale Fundraiser could not have been possible.

Fort Wayne Community Schools
Home Depot, Lake Ave.
ITT Technical Institute
Kroger, E. State Blvd.
Jan Sanner #1 Advantage Realtors
Physicians Health Plan
Rotary Club, Downtown
Starbucks, Covington Rd.
& All Our Volunteers

The Literacy Alliance Raises \$2,000

On May 22, shoppers drifted among the merchandise which nearly filled ITT Technical Institute's automotive area. They browsed gently used, donated items including furniture, books, and clothing. A few commented on the antique Martha Washington Cabinet. Others marveled at the old Royal typewriter. Children climbed into the canoe and tried every exercise bike. All were participants in The Literacy Alliance's first Garage Sale Fundraiser.

Planning for the event began in late February when Patricia Mozley offered the ITT facility on Coldwater Road to The Literacy Alliance for a fundraiser. At the time Pat was director of ITT and chair of Downtown Rotary's literacy committee. Rotarians were invited to donate merchandise and time. Literacy Alliance board member Janell Sprinkle chaired the Garage Sale subcommittee and marshalled resources from fellow board members as well as Literacy Alliance staff.

Dozens of volunteers donated merchandise which was collected in April and May. Jan Sanner #1 Advantage Realtors



The Garage Sale

provided a 20' box van for hauling the merchandise to TTT. It required three truckloads to bring hundreds of items. Fort Wayne Community Schools and PHP loaned tables. Additional volunteers worked two days to arrange and price the merchandise.

Though it was a windy Saturday that threatened rain, shoppers enjoyed music and concessions as they sought bargains indoors. The Literacy Alliance faced stiff competition from neighborhood garages sales held the same day. Volunteers and shoppers remarked on how many garage sales and signs they had seen on the way to The Literacy Alliance Garage Sale. Throughout the day, 40 volunteers answered questions, received cash, and helped customers with their purchases. Eventually, the exercise bikes, canoe, and Martha Washington Cabinet sold as did nearly \$2,000 worth of other merchandise.

Learning Centers Conclude Another Program Year

It was business as usual until a few minutes after 10:00 AM at St. Hyacinth Learning Center. Remarkably quiet, students worked on their studies. The only sounds came from keyboards in the computer room and tutors in the main classroom. The tutors spoke quietly.

It was the last day of the program year. Site Coordinator Deb Hetrick clipped and numbered little pieces of paper for a drawing. She listed the numbers with their corresponding prizes on a master sheet then summoned the students to the main classroom where donuts and juice were ready.

As students put their studies away and moved toward the refreshments, the quiet evaporated. Conversations and laughter took its place. "I hope we get this when we come back," said a student with a smile as she sat with her donut and juice.

Prizes this day and throughout the program year included coupons donated by local businesses. Burger King, Edy's Ice Cream, Fort Wayne Parks & Recreation Department, Fort Wayne Wizards, Lassus Bros. Handy Dandy BP, Marco's Pizza, New Haven Parks & Recreation Department, Pizza Hut, Putt Putt, and Wendy's have given coupons to the Fellowship, New Haven, and Trinity Learning Centers as well.

Thank you! Thanks to the Individuals

*Doris Albertson
C. Phillip Andorfer
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William Herx
R.M. Howard
Diane Humphrey
John & Angele Judd
Dale & Virginia Kremer Lutz
Wilda Gene Marcus
Patty Martone
Doris Mather
Patsy Matthews
Martha Moore
Aloyse Moritz
Cynthia Pflueger*

The week of June 28 was the last of the year for all of The Literacy Alliance's Learning Centers. Each had different activities to celebrate the end of the year. At Trinity Learning Center, Site Coordinator Elaine Gee took the teachers and tutors out for a year end get-together, giving them a chance to review the year. Fellowship Learning Center participants had a farewell event for teacher Greg Anderson. Along with sandwiches donated by Subway and a cake, everyone shared pot-luck. At New Haven Learning Center, Site Coordinator Nancy Smith and staff brought food for everyone. They held a drawing to give away donated items, too.

During the program year, all Learning Centers brought in speakers to talk to about relevant topics such as job interviewing and applications. They saw student gains and graduations. There were changes as well. All Learning Centers lost teachers this year.

The Site Coordinators agree that, despite the changes, things ran smoothly. Centers cooperate and accommodate students' varying needs. Getting jobs, needing childcare, changing schedules could require that students move from one Learning Center to another. Students moving from one setting to another or adding a new teacher can be traumatic. It takes awhile for students to settle in and for teachers to get to know the students. In all cases, this year, students blended in and showed gains.

Things ran smoothly despite the changes, and all concerned developed a sense of community. Mothers brought baby clothes for mothers-to-be. Students having garage sales offered the clothes in best shape to fellow students who may have needed them. All shared information about job openings. Elaine states that she saw many friendships develop throughout the year. Every Site Coordinator saw students help each other at every session and observed a lot of cheering and encouragement.



Students and tutors enjoy donuts and juice at St. Hyacinth Learning Center on the last day of the program year.

individuals and organizations for their generous support.

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Thomas Blessing
Ryan Duval
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Robert Salloy
Linda Swisher
Kristol Tucker
Herman Tucker
Timothy Tucker
Thomas Tucker



The Literacy Alliance's Casey Schuerich and Judy Stabelli accept the Excellence in Education Award from the WIB's Patty Weddle.

KeyTrain Brings Recognition to The Literacy Alliance

On July 9, The Literacy Alliance received the Northeast Indiana Workforce Investment Board's (WIB) Excellence in Education Award. The award resulted from The Literacy Alliance's implementation of KeyTrain software supplied by the WIB. Other recipients of the Excellence in Education Award were high schools, Harding, Heritage Jr./Sr., and Leo Jr./Sr.

Executive Director Judy Stabelli and Board Member Casey Scheurich accepted the award at the WIB's Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony. About 150 people, WIB members and partners as well as award recipients, attended the buffet luncheon at Hall's Guesthouse on Washington Center Road. The WIB's Chair Jack Price led the meeting then handed out the awards which President and CEO Patty Weddle presented. Other award categories were Corporate Citizenship, Excellence in Overcoming Barriers, Excellence in Linking Workforce and Economic Development, and Excellence in Public Policy. Job Works was recognized as the WIB's service provider for people seeking employment.

Patty describes the WIB's mission as business driven, training and preparing employees to meet business needs. This is where KeyTrain comes in.

KeyTrain is an instructional component of WorkKeys. WorkKeys profiles occupations, setting skill levels needed in nine areas to successfully work in those occupations. WorkKeys also serves as tool for assessing employees and job seekers' skills. Employees and job seekers then use KeyTrain to bring their skills up to the necessary levels. As Patty says, KeyTrain pro-

vides a "skills upgrade" for the jobs people hold or intend to hold.

KeyTrain's implementation at The Literacy Alliance, libraries, and WorkOne sites serves the WIB's mission to prepare the entire workforce for the ever changing workplace. In today's society, Patty says, "Technology requires that all of us be lifelong learners.

The Literacy Alliance finds broader uses for KeyTrain in adult education. It can be used to prepare students for the GED Examination. Its lessons in beginning language and math help students who need to strengthen basic skills and even ESL students who want to improve their English. The software engages students with questions relevant to the workplace. Pretests in all areas adjust automatically to match the student's skill level. Literacy Alliance students respond enthusiastically to KeyTrain. After a few weeks, many have already shown gains.



The Literacy Alliance's Scott Hendershott and Karen Limkemann demonstrate KeyTrain software.

Announcements

The Literacy Alliance welcomes Karen Francisco to the board. She joins current board members James Davis, William Herx, Vicki Lee Johnson, Casey Schuerich, Joe Shade, Jr., Janell Sprinkle, Douglas Stephens, Laura Taliaferro, Brian Thomason, and Jean Vrabel.

September 8 is International Literacy Day. According to UNESCO, the day is a "timely reminder that we should not take literacy for granted. It is also an occasion to applaud the work of literacy tutors, extension workers and volunteers whose patient and persistent efforts make such a difference to people's lives."

The Literacy Alliance will hold a tutor training workshop September 18 and September 25, 8:45 AM - 1:45 PM, at ITT Technical Institute on Coldwater Road. Call Kathleen at 426-7323 for more information.

From the Director's Desk

This letter comes to you under a new masthead with our shortened organization name, The Literacy Alliance. Although we have a new look, we are still the same organization with the same programs and the same staff. Our focused mission of teaching adults keeps us on track as we begin a new school year and re-open our classroom-based adult instruction program.

I like to focus on positives when I speak publicly. I don't like to write repeatedly about problems. In fact, I looked at the tone of previous letters before drafting this message. Sadly, as a sign of the times in our non-profit world, those previous letters have reflected our struggles to maintain programs amidst serious funding shortfalls, and we are not yet out of the woods. With reluctance, we have had to respond to decreased support of our Learning Centers by re-opening just three of our four centers when the school-year began in early August.

Trinity United Methodist Church Learning Center's re-opening has been postponed. Without certainty of support for the entire school year, we cannot make a commitment to students, staff and our operating partners by opening the classroom.

At the present time, we are using the term "postponed," because we are pursuing alternate sources of funding.

With that said, I can now turn to the good news. We now have outstanding outcomes data from the adults who studied in our Learning Center classrooms last year. Of the 279 adults who completed at least 12 hours of instruction, 92.8% demonstrated measurable gains in language and/or math basic skills. This increase of 4% over last year is a direct result of efforts to improve instruction so that students see gains and stay in the program rather than becoming frustrated and leaving.

Let me go on to more good news. We continue to be excited about the possible uses of the KeyTrain software provided to us by the Northeast Indiana Workforce Investment Board. We saw one young woman increase two grade levels in basic skills after just a couple of weeks of study using KeyTrain. Another sent us an enthusiastic note of thanks after we were able to set her up with internet access from home to the KeyTrain web site. We have found that the beginning language sections intrigue adults learning English as a new language.

The good news, the strong outcomes, and your encouragement and financial support keep us going despite the continuing challenges.

Judith Stabelli
Executive Director



The Literacy Alliance

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