



The Literacy Alliance

# Literacy News

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Summer 2005

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## Family Literacy Graduate Goes to Ivy Tech

It drove Ida Smiley crazy, waiting for the results of her GED examination. She took it in May and wanted the results in time to attend a June 16 graduation party. Ida exclaims, "It took forever!" Because she'd missed out on graduation in high school, she wanted to participate in East Wayne Street Center's (EWSC) celebration at Plymouth Congregational Church. "If I didn't get the results in time, I'd have to wait for next year's graduation party."

Ida started at EWSC's family literacy program in September 2004. When she began, Ida explains, "I thought, 'This is going to be hard. I'll end up quitting.'" She had attended South Side High School where she felt teachers made her feel dumb. Not feeling comfortable with the traditional classroom environment, she'd skip class and eventually got so far behind she dropped out. She had attended the Anthis adult education program and mentions they "just did things in books." At EWSC, she soon found they worked in books and did group work in class. "People helped fill out financial aid forms and with tax preparation."

EWSC provides what Executive Director Joe Jordan calls emotional and tangible support. The EWSC staff helps students with studying and understanding what they have to learn.

Teacher Melissa Hale and Assistant Roy Williams gave her confidence. "They made it easy," Ida says, "and didn't make



*Ida Smiley attended the family literacy program at East Wayne Street Center and earned her GED in June.*

me feel dumb." The program provided childcare for Ida and routinely helps students with transportation.

The Literacy Alliance partners with EWSC and EWSC's Head Start to make the family literacy program possible. Joe Jordan notes that it is a successful partnership that other organizations could model. He explains that the collaborating organizations are focused on the client, "truly making a difference in the lives of so many families."

Ida and husband Elgin have four children, 11 year old Elgin Jr., 10 year old Jordan, 5 year old Jalen, and 3 year old Syeira. Pursuing her GED has meant a lot to her. What got her started were the financial troubles they were going through. She thought she could take a low paying job to make ends meet but realized she'd mainly be working to pay for childcare. Ida believed a better course would be to earn her GED which would lead to college and more substantial employment. "I want to build a life for our family and be a role model for our children."

EWSC's Program Manager Diana Swayze commends Ida's determination. "She is very focused and has a very positive attitude." Joe Jordan describes her as a delightful individual, "motivated and committed to herself and family." So it was no surprise when Ida finally learned that she'd passed the GED examination. She is now one of 18 EWSC GED graduates enrolled in college where she'll study office administration with a medical specialization.

# Adams Elementary

Beginning this school year, Adams Elementary has officially become an ESL school. Staff has welcomed children whose native languages are Spanish, Burmese, and Swahili/Somali Bantu. It was chosen in part because of The Literacy Alliance's ESL family literacy program there.

The welcoming process began last May when Adams hosted a rally for incoming ESL students on the thirteenth and an open house for parents on the eighteenth.

Ten Adams teachers attended the open house. The FWCS officials who attended agreed, it was the largest group of staff to be at an ESL orientation meeting. The open house began with a little history about ESL in FWCS and how the Fort Wayne ESL population has increased calling for an additional ESL school. Accompanied by a slide presentation, Adams Principal Brenda West shared what happens in the classroom and described Adams' friendly environment, noting the small class sizes and many family events.

The rally was more boisterous. All students and teachers attended. The guests of honor, approximately 30 ESL students expected to attend Adams in 2005-2006, sat in front. Literacy Alliance Site Coordinator Sandra Pacheco and Teacher



July 22 was moving day for Trinity Learning Center. Literacy Alliance staff and volunteers spent several hot hours moving boxes, filing cabinet, a chalkboard, and miscellaneous items to Anchor Community Church. Located in the same area as Trinity United Methodist Church, Anchor provides greater accessibility and air conditioning. Realtor Jan Sanner donated her Community Service Truck for the project. Pictured are (l-r) Lamont Cole, Karen Limkemann, Brian Schlichtenmyer, Roger Krupa, Curt Simon, and Kevin Shelton.

## Day of Caring at The Literacy Alliance

The Literacy Alliance benefited from the United Way of Allen County's Day of Caring on August 24. Dulin, Ward & DeWald employees John Barron, Network Services Manager, and Larry Cole, Network Engineer, devoted the afternoon to setting up The Literacy Alliance computer lab at 709 Clay Street.

Their efforts involved networking six computers and installing KeyTrain software. They strung patch cable from each computer to the switch. Once everything was connected and powered, they went through the laborious details necessary to establish a working network. Finally, cords were bundled and secured out of the way, and testing was done to insure students could access their KeyTrain assignments and print from any computer.

Day of Caring has kicked off the United Way Community Campaign since 1993. According to the United Way of Allen County's web site, <http://www.uwacin.org>, it began with 250 volunteers tidying up the YWCA campus. This year 2,094 volunteers worked in 65 teams on 70 projects. Throughout Allen County, it brings community volunteers face-to-face with local nonprofit and community organizations.



For United Way Day of Caring, John Barron (l) and Larry Cole (r) from Dulin, Ward & DeWald devoted an afternoon to setting up The Literacy Alliance computer lab at 709 Clay Street.

Through John and Larry's work, The Literacy Alliance is now able to serve more adult students. The previous lab consisted of three stand alone computers which in the 2003-2004 program year provided 112 instructional hours for 15 students. Last year, the computers provided 1,838 instructional hours for 116 students. The increased is attributed to the successful implementation of KeyTrain. Now more students can work with the software to strengthen their basic skills, improve their English, and increase their skills in job specific areas.

# Now ESL School

Molly Pederson greeted them at their seats. The students carried folders containing letters Adams students had written. Sandra and Molly would crouch down to be at eye level with each and ask, "What's your name? Where are you from? Can I read your letter?"

Once the whole school gathered and cheered, Principal West took her microphone to each guest of honor and asked his name. When he said it, the auditorium erupted with greeting. Some names were hard to pronounce and some were easy.

"What's your name?" asked Principal West.

"Ubar."

"Hel<sup>loo</sup>, Ubar!" everybody yelled.

Guadalupe hid her face and bashful smile. Another covered his eyes with his forearms. Everyone smiled and the smiles grew as the crowd's "Hel<sup>loo</sup>!" grew.

When all were greeted, Adams students were selected to accompany each new student to the cafeteria for cookies and punch, followed by a tour of the school.

## Announcements

*Tutor training workshops will be held 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. September 24 & October 1 at Fellowship Missionary Church and November 12 & November 19 at Educational Opportunity Center For more information call Kathleen at 426-7323.*

*Verizon announces a new resource will soon be available through the Verizon Literacy Campus (VLC), <http://www.literacycampus.org>. The VLC Discussion Forum will be open to all and provide a tool to support volunteers and literacy program staff. Participants will be able to respond anytime to any message posted on the forum or simply read the messages without commenting.*

*Literacy Alliance benefactor Dr. Geoffrey Randolph of Summit Plastic Surgery received the Community Leadership Association's 2005 Distinguished Leadership Award at the Leadership Fort Wayne Alumni Association's annual meeting on June 8. In 2001, he composed and produced "Isn't It Incredible" to benefit The Literacy Alliance. In addition, he visits local elementary schools to perform his original children's music that encourages literacy and supports arts education.*

*Dining at a Hall's Restaurant? Staying at The Guesthouse Hotel? Using Hall's Catering Services? Ordering a cake from Hall's "Takes the Cake"? Having an event at Lester's Banquet Hall? Just present the Hall's Community Partnership card when you pay your bill. A percentage of your purchase will be donated to The Literacy Alliance.*

*To obtain a card, contact Brian at The Literacy Alliance.*

## Did You Know ...

**Literacy skills are a stronger predictor of an individual's health status than age, income, employment status, education level, or racial/ethnic group.**

# TLA Student Closer to Employment Goal

Dalonna Woods' goal has been to work with youth at the Salvation Army. It was a goal she couldn't reach without her high school diploma or GED.

Born in Chicago, Dalonna grew up in Fort Wayne and lived two years in Paris with her father where she received a high school diploma. Unfortunately, the diploma was lost in the move back to the U.S., and Paris was unable to find a record of it.

Dalonna began her preparation for the GED examination at Fellowship Learning Center last January. Math was her weakest subject, and she kept at it. "If I had questions," she says, "I'd just ask." She progressed steadily. By June, she was ready. Fellowship's Site Coordinator Nancy Smith calls Dalonna Woods a "poster child for learning center classes . . . Her skill levels rose with every test."

At Ivy Tech, she took the GED examination. She felt confident that she'd pass. Her confidence was bolstered when she went to the BMV for a learners permit. Circumstances there cut the time she had to take it to less than ten minutes. She aced it. Dalonna became certain she did well on the GED examination. Last week of July, she learned she'd passed it.

Dalonna already does volunteer work with youth. She has taught first aid at teen camp in Bedford, Indiana. She teaches Sunday school and serves as Sunday school greeter. She works with the character building program on Thursdays.

Going to character building herself inspired Dalonna to work with youth at the Salvation Army. "I got a calling from God," she explains, "to go into ministry." The character building program, she adds, involves "working with 9th - 12th graders, similar to Girl Scouts, and is biblically based."

Now that she has her GED, Dalonna will be able to go to the Salvation Army's offer training college in Chicago with her husband. She describes it as being "essentially a seminary college, training students in business, the ministry, and social services."

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

## **Individuals**

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How many adults  
at the lowest  
literacy levels?

40,000,000 Americans  
700,000 Hoosiers  
33,586 in Allen County

Numbers brought to you by  The Literacy Alliance

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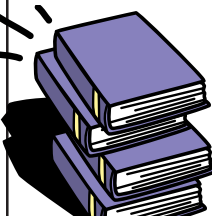
Here is a chance for your organization to support The Literacy Alliance. You can publish your logo and catch phrase along with other important information in the *Literacy News*. The *Literacy News* reaches 3,500 homes and business four times a year.

For more information, contact Brian at The Literacy Alliance, 260-426-7323.

**The Hanna-Creighton Action Group  
Invites YOU to Attend ...**

### Rally for Reading at Hanna-Creighton

Reading      Games      Workshops  
Drama      Prizes  
FREE Food      Music



Saturday, September 24  
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
Throughout the Hanna-Creighton Campus

To Sponsor the Newsletter		
	1 - 2 Issues	3 or More Issues
5.00" x 4"	\$300	\$240
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3.25" x 3"	\$150	\$120
3.25" x 2"	\$100	\$80

# From the Director's Desk

Watch for literacy in the media this month! Results of the National Adult Literacy Survey will be released in conjunction with UNESCO International Literacy Day on September 8. We hope that you will join us in a new community celebration, Rally for Reading at Hanna-Creighton on Saturday, September 24.

It's back to school time, not only for our children but also for the adults in Literacy Alliance programs. After a July break, we began a new program year for our Learning Centers and Family Literacy. Although it's still a bit early for us to analyze last year's data, a few things are clear. First, despite a 10-week delay in opening one learning center due to a funding shortfall and a resulting decrease in total number of adults registered, we saw an increase in the percentage who demonstrate language and math skill gains!

In years past, we reported the number of adults that we served and, as that number gradually increased each year, we were pleased with our efforts. More recently, though, we have come to realize that the number of students that we serve is not nearly as important as ensuring that those who are served are able to benefit from services. In some instances, because demand has grown but program dollars have not increased, that has meant limiting enrollments so that our staff and volunteers can provide quality instruction for every student. Our outcomes this last year demonstrate that our strategies have worked.

With your continued support, we will continue to improve the quality of our services. Your contribution to United Way of Allen County campaign benefits the Literacy Alliance.



Judith Stabelli, Executive Director



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The Literacy Alliance



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