



The Literacy Alliance

Literacy News

A quarterly publication of the Literacy Alliance

Winter 2006

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

WIC Family Benefits from Read to Me

Angela Ruiz's favorite book for her children is *Are You My Mother?* by P.D. Eastman. It's about a newborn bird in search of his mother, asking different animals and machines, "Are you my mother?" Born in Chile, Angela is a stay-at-home mom with five children and one on the way. Reading is important to all of them.

The Ruiz family receives books and read-aloud encouragement from the staff at Women, Infants and Children (WIC), a Read to Me - Reach Out and Read site.

The Literacy Alliance Read to Me programs promote reading to preschool age children. Targeting parents and caregivers of preschool age children, the programs provide books and information about the importance of reading to their children every day.

Angela goes to WIC every three months for her children under five. When asked how WIC has helped her family, she says, "Oh, my goodness, if it wasn't for WIC, I'd be *more* broke." She started going to WIC on Calhoun Street in 1995 when her first child was a baby.

According to the USDA, "WIC provides nutritious foods [through vouchers], nutrition counseling, and referrals . . . to participants at no charge. WIC serves low-income pregnant, post-partum and breastfeeding women, and infants and



Cabinets at the Calhoun Street WIC office hold Reach Out and Read books. WIC staff give a new book to parents and caregivers and encouraged them to read with their children every day.

children up to age 5 who are at nutrition risk." Though there is another WIC site on Main Street, Angela has always gone to the Calhoun Street location where Reach Out and Read has been since 2000.

At every WIC visit, the staff reminds Angela to read to her children 20 minutes a day and that doing so will get their growing brains functioning. The staff at all Reach Out and Read sites gives advice such as reading to children as early as possible, even before they're born. They recommend books and show parents and caregivers how to make sharing books fun and effective. Children's Care Center, Department of Health Immunization Clinic, Family Practice Residency Center, and Neighborhood Health Clinic are the other Reach Out and Read sites.

Angela read aloud while expecting her youngest. She notes that "he's very bright." Now expecting their sixth, her husband's mentioned that she hasn't picked up a book yet. "It's still early, but I intend to," she explains.

The Ruiz children like to read all kinds of books. "Especially those where you seek and find something in the illustrations. *Where's Waldo*, *I Spy*, and *Can You Find It*." Angela adds that they love Dr. Seuss and Walt Disney books.

Hundreds Enjoy GED Reception

About 400 attended The Literacy Alliance's unique fundraiser, *Celebrating Literacy Commencement Event*, on February 15, 2006, at the Scottish Rite Ballroom. All celebrated the accomplishments of GED graduates from the community who worked and dreamed of getting their diploma.

Participants enjoyed light refreshments and visiting with each other. Attending graduates received a gift bag from Target. Speakers included Literacy Alliance Executive Director Judith Stabelli, Board Chair Casey Schuerich, sponsor PHP's Marketing Director Vicki Johnson, and GED Graduate Rose Thompson.

Afterwards, the graduates along with their family and friends went upstairs to the Scottish Rite Auditorium for the Graduation Ceremony.



Casey Schuerich speaks at the Celebrating Literacy Commencement Event in Scottish Rite's Valencia Ballroom on February 15. The Literacy Alliance Board President congratulated the graduates and commended the family and friends who supported them. He concluded by recognizing the sponsors and volunteers who made the event possible.



Hundreds shared an opportunity to congratulate GED graduates from 2005. Those in attendance were the graduates, their families, and friends. All delighted in conversation and light refreshments.



The GED Reception was made possible with generous support from



The Literacy Alliance
Board of Directors

The Musson Family
in honor of
Lois Raber



Volunteer Corner

When you think of the word inspiration, what comes to mind?

Graduating GED students will say that it is their teachers, families, site directors, and tutors who inspire them. But isn't it safe to say that many a tutor was inspired by the students he assists?

Dave Worley would tell you, "Absolutely!" He will tell you that inspiration can be gained from a breathless sunset on Lake Wawasee or reading the composition of a budding writer struggling to complete his GED.

Dave, a math and computer tutor at Fellowship Missionary Learning Center, hails originally from Chicago. Self-described as a "tinkerer" of radios in his youth, he honed his electronics skills working in his father's business and continued this work in the Navy. With a Bachelors in Electrical Engineering, he began his professional life pursuing design work in electronics.

With wife Bette, Dave has made Fort Wayne his home since 1972. He enjoys photography and sailing. Sunsets on Lake Wawasee are one of the benefits of sailing. He also enjoys woodworking and repairing items in the home.

Volunteering has been a staple in Dave's life with The Literacy Alliance being the most recent of his volunteer endeavors. He has served in Kiwanis, Circle K in college, and United States Power Squadrons which promotes boating safety. He came to the agency in January 2002 after seeing an advertisement in the newspaper describing its tutor training program. Since he was between job assignments, he thought it looked like an excellent opportunity. After four years, he wishes he had known about The Literacy Alliance sooner.

"Get ready for a personal and a very inspiring experience," says Dave when asked about tutoring. Some students will "really test your dedication and others will make you glad you volunteered."

"The one thing they all have in common," he adds, "is a very strong, adult-driven desire to get ahead by obtaining their GED. And *you* will have the privilege of helping them achieve this goal."

To Dave and all volunteers at The Literacy Alliance, thank you for the inspiration you provide on a daily basis.



Adult students hit the books. While these moms and dads study in the great room at Hanna-Creighton Head Start, their children attend classes in another room. The Hanna-Creighton Family Literacy site has 35 adult students. "More than ever," says Site Coordinator Aura Cuevas, "they want to improve their English so they can prepare for the GED." Family Literacy includes instruction for the adult students and their children along with parent and child (PAC) activities and parent support. Other Literacy Alliance Family Literacy sites are at Adams Elementary and East Wayne Street Center.

Announcements

On December 20, The Literacy Alliance was awarded accredited status by ProLiteracy America, the US Programs Division of ProLiteracyWorldwide.

This year's Komet Hockey Report Card Night was a sell-out again this year. The February 4 game against the Elmira Jackals was attended by 10,462. Students with an "A" or "A Equivalent" on their report card received FREE admission to the game. At the start of the game, Comcast presented a \$7,500 check to The Literacy Alliance, a donation based on the number of "A" students attending.

The Literacy Alliance welcomes returning volunteers Carolyn Buckmaster and Deb Hoile and new volunteers Melaine Innocent, Asha Patel, Damon Pierce, Hope Rabi, Amanda Scherschel, and John Swigart.

Literacy Alliance staff will serve breakfast to Literacy Alliance volunteers at the second annual Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast, April 21 at Sears Pavilion from 9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

The next set of tutor training workshops will be held 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. April 22 & 29, 2006 at Educational Opportunity Center, 3000 S. Wayne Avenue. For more information, call Kathleen at 426-7323.

In 2005, 65 Literacy Alliance students passed the GED exam, more than ever before. The previous record of 55 was achieved in 2003. In 2004, 47 earned their GED.

Thanks to Individuals & Organizations for Their Generous Support

Individuals

John D. Auld
Rachel E. Blakeman
Heather Blickendorf
Robert & Margaret Bliss
Phyllis A. Borg
Ralph & Clara Bracht
John Brennan
Kevin & Sherry Britt
May Rose Ceccanese
Arthur & Carol Cislo
John & Mary Clarke
John Crawford
James R. Davis
Charles & Judy Dick
B.A. Dildine
Margaret A. Dirkes
Ann Eckert
Carolyn S. Fast
Brian & Karen Francisco
Elizabeth Frederick
Tertuliano & Marcia Giraldo
James B. Griffith
Jeffrey C. Halter
Martha J. Hatch
William & Sara Lee Hatlem
Dennis & Joan Headlee
Paul & Deborah Helmke
William & Marva Herx
Alice B. Hoffman
Noel M. Hupp
Michael & Shelly Jensen
Kevin & Vicki Lee Johnson

William & Virginia Johnson
John & Angele Judd
Gerry & Linda Kaufman
Habib Khorshid & Patricia Shields
James & Janice Koday
Jeffrey & Alice Krull
David & Doris Lawson
Dr. Jerry L. Mackel
Joan C. Martin
Anthony & Patricia Martone
Doris Mather
Mary A. McDonald
Alfred & Carol Moellering
Evert & Susan Mol
David & Linda Molfenter
Aloyse Moritz
Michael & Mary Musson
Neva C. Nill
Maurice & Germaine O'Daniel
Arthur & Anna Parry
Pamela Pellegrine
Evelyn S. Petgen
Barth Ragatz
Paul & Rosemary Reszel
Josephine Rothberg
Joseph & Kathy Schenkel
Casey Schuerich
Carol J. Shedd
Dr. Zoher & Shahnaz Shipchandler
David & Ann Silletto
Thomas Skillman & Barb
Wachtman
Darryl Smith

Janell Sprinkle
Sara L. Sprunger
Douglas & Jodi Stephens
Ryland & Laura Taliaferro
Mary Ann & Thomas Tector
James R. Toone
Jean & William Vrabel
Caroline Wanstall
Devin & Brenda Willis
William & JoAnn Wyatt
Philip Wyss & Jennifer Dailey

Corporations & Foundations

Allen County Christmas Bureau
Arnold Foundation
Paul Clarke Foundation
Comcast & Comcast Foundation
Ernst & Young
Foellinger Foundation
Fort Wayne Jewish Federation
Don R. Fruchey, Inc.
Hall's Restaurants & Specialty
Services
ITT Industries Employees
Lincoln Financial Group
Foundation
Oldenkamp Foundation
Physicians Health Plan
M.E. Raker Foundation
Time Services
Verizon Foundation
Wells Fargo Community Support

Choice.

Many people, even highly literate people, often have trouble understanding their healthcare coverage.

Keep it simple. Choose the best.



Ask your employer about PHP group healthcare insurance.

8101 West Jefferson Blvd., Fort Wayne, IN 46804
(260) 432-6690 or (800) 982-6257
www.phpni.com

**YOUR
NAME
& LOGO
HERE**

Call Brian at
The Literacy Alliance
426-7323.



**Read to us, and
we'll read to ours**

Read to us 20 minutes every day, and we'll be ready for school. We'll graduate and succeed. And we'll read to our children.

The Literacy Alliance promotes reading to children every day.

You can help. Call 260-426-7323.



It's so simple!

Present the card when paying your bill for any Hall's service at any Hall's location.

And Hall's will donate 5% of the bill to The Literacy Alliance.

Cards are available from Brian at The Literacy Alliance, 426-7323.

From the Director's Desk

As a Literacy Alliance supporter, I hope that you will share our pride in two recent accomplishments.

Late in December, after more than a year of work by board members and staff The Literacy Alliance received notice of accreditation by ProLiteracy USA. The organization meets 16 standards that cover instruction services, student and volunteer recruiting, tutor training, personnel management, organization planning, board oversight and financial management. Documentation of our practices was scrutinized during a whirlwind visit by a reviewer in November that also included program observation and a meeting with members of the board.

In anticipation of the review, we spent most of 2004 updating our personnel policies and re-writing position descriptions so that we are in compliance with federal and state labor laws. We also instituted an annual review of each of our program areas that measures services against our mission and takes a look at outcomes and resources needed to continue.

We continually strive for excellence in services. The accreditation was confirmation that we are achieving that goal.

Our second accomplishment was producing the largest ever number of GED graduates in one year. In 2005, 65 individuals who studied in Literacy Alliance Learning Centers and Family Literacy sites successfully passed the GED exam. On February 15, we celebrated their accomplishments with a reception at the Scottish Rite Valencia ballroom that preceded the city-wide GED graduation.

The number of graduates is even more remarkable when one considers that the actual number of individuals studying in Literacy Alliance Learning Centers has declined in the last couple of years. Fewer new seats are available as a result of more adults staying longer and putting in more hours of study. Staff members and tutors have worked to focus instruction so that each student's GED study plan targets the specific skills needed for a passing score. Also, Literacy Alliance programs are structured to provide supporting services for adults for whom going back to school represents a significant struggle. Individual tutoring, child care and transportation assistance help overcome some of the barriers our students face.

Rising GED numbers, increasing hours of study per student and increasing percentages of adults achieving measurable gains are yet another confirmation of our efforts to deliver quality programming. Our adult learners and our supporters who value a literate community deserve no less.



Judith Stabelli, Executive Director



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

The Literacy Alliance



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Fort Wayne, IN
Permit no. 124