



The Literacy Alliance

Literacy News

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Improvements Continue at the Literacy Alliance

Student Karl Hartman speaks quietly and haltingly, giving thought to what he says. He is a 44 year old student who has worked with tutor Susie Fast for over two years.

A Monroeville native, Karl came to The Literacy Alliance to improve his reading which he has done with Susie's help. He likes to fish and play pool, and he enjoys reading a little bit of everything, particularly short novels and the newspaper.

Every week, Karl and Susie come to The Literacy Alliance computer lab where they work on KeyTrain software, figure things out together, and laugh at occasional mistakes.

The software is a good tool, Susie says. It works well with its ability to identify Karl's skill level then help him progress to the next level. They agree that KeyTrain has helped him to improve his reading, thinking, and computer skills.

Susie is from Fort Wayne and has waited tables for 45 years. She likes the work because it provides "an automatic connection with people of all types." For the past four years, she has been a community aid for Easter Seals-ARC. She believes that her experience as a one-on-one tutor will make it possible for her to help others.

One-on-one tutors like Susie go through training before they are matched with a student. The Literacy Alliance is



Tutor Susie Fast observes Karl Hartman as he does lessons on KeyTrain in The Literacy Alliance computer lab. They have been working together for a little over two years.

always working to improve that training in order to improve service to students. For example, the agency is currently participating in a pilot project conducted by the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFLE) and funded by Verizon.

Tutors from The Literacy Alliance attended two training sessions provided by NCFLE trainers. Based on recent research on how adults learn to read, the training covered methods for helping students with reading.

Meanwhile, Literacy Alliance staff attended an additional day devoted to diagnostic reading assessment. NCFLE staff trained them to administer, score, and interpret assessments of decoding skills, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Over the next six months the participating tutors will have assessments to pinpoint specific skill deficits that their students may have. Once a skill deficit is identified, tutors can select the appropriate methods introduced in training to help the student improve that skill. At the end of the six months, post-assessments will be done to determine the effectiveness of the methods.

The methods and assessments should improve Literacy Alliance tutors' ability to serve students, helping more to improve their reading.

Literacy Weekend a

Hundreds were entertained by stories, activities, and performances at the 2nd Annual Rally to Read at the Hanna-Creighton campus on September 23. Families who attended received free books and free lunch.

At the end of the day, three names were drawn for three reading rooms. Each room was for a particular age group, child, youth, and adult, and all contained chair, lamp, rug, bookcase with books, computer, and computer desk.

The four hour event to promote literacy was made possible with contributions from Comcast, Furniture-to-Go, Journal Gazette, Kiwanis, Managed Health Services, Reach Out and Read-Indiana, and Target.

Komet's Icy Eagle and Tick-Tock Reads A-Lot were there along with Allen County Education Partnership, Allen County Public Library, CANI Head Start, Citilink, City of Fort Wayne, First Steps, Fort Wayne-Allen County Department of Health, Fort Wayne Urban League, Hanna-Creighton/Renaissance Pointe Neighborhood Association, The Literacy Alliance, MLK Montessori School, PBS 39, RSVP, United Way of Allen County, and Wayne Township Trustee.



Volunteer tutors from around the area participate in a training session at the Huntington City-Township Public Library on October 21. It was the second of two sessions held as part of a National Center for Family Literacy pilot program funded by Verizon. Twenty tutors from the Huntington County Literacy Coalition, The Literacy Alliance, and Wabash County Literacy Connections participated.

Based on a National Institute for Literacy research survey, the training emphasized four basic components that are important for adult reading instruction: phonemic awareness and decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

The participating literacy organizations will use the reading instruction methods learned at the training sessions over the next six months. Pre- and post-assessments will be done to determine the effectiveness of the reading instruction methods.



Literacy Alliance Board Member Jim Davis (R) stands with his father Leo at the Carl D. Rolfsen Stewardship Award Luncheon on October 3 at the Grand Wayne Center. The Foellinger Foundation hosted the event to recognize local nonprofit board members. Organizations were requested to nominate one board member, and The Literacy Alliance nominated Jim for the time and talent he has given to the agency over the past 18 years.



a Great Time for All



Then on September 24, hundreds enjoyed a big screen showing of *Singin' in the Rain* at The Embassy Theatre. The Literacy Alliance's 2nd Annual Movie Event Fundraiser was made possible by Comcast and Turner Classic Movies.

Tapping to the title tune, students from Fort Wayne School of Dance began the event. For intermission, members of the Fort Wayne Children's Choir sang.

Literacy Alliance staff and board members were on hand to talk about The Literacy Alliance and how low literacy impacts the community. Everyone in attendance received a program containing literacy facts, sponsor ads, and movie trivia.



The
Musson
Family

Fort Wayne
Children's Choir

CELEBRATE
DANCE
The Fort Wayne
School of Dance



Literacy Alliance ESL student Hla Khaing displays his citizenship document at a ceremony in Lafayette on September 1. Hla came to the United States from Burma in 2000

Volunteer Corner

Originally from South Bend, Literacy Alliance One-on-One tutor Mary Anne Roach, her husband, and two daughters have called Fort Wayne home for a number of years. A gardener, painter, and avid reader, Mary Anne is a Legal Assistant for a distinguished law office in Fort Wayne.

She had spent time discussing with her daughters the value of sharing one's skills and giving back to one's community. She realized, however, that if she was going to talk about the importance of volunteering, that she needed to follow her talks with the "walk."

That experience prompted Mary Anne to volunteer with The Literacy Alliance. After a year and a half, she can be considered one of the agency's seasoned veterans.

Her first student needed help with basic reading. They worked together consistently and have seen improvements in his reading and pronunciation skills, an enriching experience for Mary Anne. She has found that she is more patient than she thought she was.

Patience and empathy is the advise Mary Anne offers to prospective tutors. "Often students just want to feel like someone understands. Even if they have difficulty grasping the reading part, students are keenly aware that you care about them."

Volunteers are the life-blood of this agency. For everything that they do, our grateful thanks go out to all volunteers.

Thanks to Individuals & Organizations for Their Generous Support

Individuals

Jane Beer
Kenneth & Stephanie Dunsire
Michael Holbrook
Vicki Johnson
Jeffrey & Alice Krull

Mary McDonald
Richard & Judith Miernyk
Michael & Mary Musson
Janell Sprinkle
Ann Wallace & Mark Troutman

Corporations & Foundations

Comcast Foundation
GE Foundation
Hall's Restaurants & Specialty Services
Physicians Health Plan
SG Online Entertainment Systems

Verizon Supports TLA Computer Lab

Verizon Foundation has contributed \$20,000 to The Literacy Alliance in support of its computer lab which helps adult students strengthen basic skills, improve their English, and enhance workplace skills.

“We are thrilled to receive the Verizon Foundation money,” said Executive Director Judith Stabelli. “Verizon has been a staunch supporter of literacy. This grant has allowed us to better serve adult students from our community.”

In the lab, adult students use KeyTrain software which provides assessments and lessons specific to workplace skills. “KeyTrain helps us crosswalk between education and employment,” said Karen Limkemann, director of adult instruction programs at The Literacy Alliance.

“Surveys show that students come to us so they can get better jobs,” said Elaine Gee, computer lab coordinator. “KeyTrain can help them do that, from the most basic to the most advanced levels.”

“Verizon Foundation supports and invests in the people and organizations working to improve the quality of life in our communities,” said Gale Y. Given, Verizon Great Lakes Region president for public policy. “This is an investment in a successful program that delivers literacy and technology training for the 21st Century.”



Henry electrician Nathan Awuah-Korang cuts a hole to run wire for new electrical outlets at Anchor Learning Center as part of this year's United Way Day of Caring.

UWDOC

For this year's United Way Day of Caring, Henry Electric volunteered to install three new electrical outlets at Anchor Learning Center in Anchor Community Church 1529 W. 3rd Street. Prior to the installation, the learning center relied on extension cords to power computers, monitors, and printers.

The main circuit panel may have been only 30 feet away, but Henry's electrician Nathan Awuah-Korang needed to thread wire through the ceiling and one wall. The learning center's computer room gained two quad outlets on opposite walls and in the main room, backed up to one of the quads, a double outlet was added.

This is the second time United Way Day of Caring has facilitated technical support for TLA. Last year, Dulin, Ward & DeWald provided technicians to network existing computers in TLA's computer lab.

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Giving Book Tree Benefits TLA & The Embassy

New to this year's Festival of Trees, November 22 - 28, will be the Giving Book Tree, a life-size book that will hold hundreds of donated preschool children's books.

To encourage donations, Barnes and Noble Booksellers will sponsor a fundraising program that will provide books for the Giving Book Tree and funds for The Embassy.

November 24 - 26, pick up a voucher at the festival. Use it for all of your Barnes and Noble book purchases, including preschool children's books to donate. A percentage of your purchases will be donated to The Embassy.

Bring your preschool children's books to deposit in the Giving Book Tree. They will be distributed to children in Allen County through The Literacy Alliance's Books for Kids program.

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Scott's Helps TLA

Scott's Food & Pharmacy is now supporting The Literacy Alliance through its ABC's for Education Program.

ABC's for Education allows people to help The Literacy Alliance by doing what they do every week, going to the grocery store!

Here's how it works. Just save the ABC's portion of your Scott's receipts and mail them to The Literacy Alliance every month. They can be used to purchase books, computers, audio/visual materials, & Scott's Gift Cards.

For more information, contact Brian at 426-7323.

From the Director's Desk

If you have followed the Literacy Alliance over the last few years, you know that we take pride in the quality of instruction that we provide. That quality is borne out in the strong learning gains that we report in family literacy and our learning centers.

The National Center for Family Literacy tutor training pilot project that you read about in this issue is another opportunity for us to improve instruction—this time for our literacy tutoring matches.

Adults who come to us for help know that they do not read well enough to accomplish their work, family and personal goals. They have struggled through life experiences and may have developed a variety of ways to cope. Each is different, though, and we adapt our instruction individually to address a broad range of skills and needs.

The training is based on a research survey conducted by an adult reading group convened by the National Institute for Literacy. The group identified four basic components of reading that are important for adults: phonemic awareness and decoding, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. The new focused training and assessments help us to better identify proficiency gaps in the basic components and to choose appropriate instructional activities

I hope that you will share in our excitement as we begin using these new strategies. Each adult comes to us, not only with the knowledge that they need to improve their reading skills, but with a compelling reason for doing so. With our new skills, we hope to help them make steady progress toward those goals.



Judith Stabelli, Executive Director



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The Literacy Alliance



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