



The Literacy Alliance

Literacy News

A quarterly publication of the Literacy Alliance

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Crystal Jenkins passed the GED exam in 2000 after studying at EWSC. Since then, she has earned a bachelors degree in Psychology and begun a dual licensure program at IPFW.

EWSC Grad Working Toward Master's Degree

Excitement grew as nearly 100 filled the chairs at Plymouth Congregational Church to celebrate East Wayne Street Center's GED graduates. The June 19 celebration recognized twenty-one Project Solve and Family Literacy students who earned their GED in the 2007-2008 program year.

As chairs filled and others were brought in, the hub-bub increased. Family and friends, young and old, peered around the room, shouted greetings, and waited for the graduates. They helped each other find seats. Children sat on laps. A patient toddler offered his milk bottle to his preschooler sister who pushed it away with a smile. Late arrivals began to look for places to stand.

The room stood and fell silent as the graduates filed in, but the excitement remained. Everyone knew what barriers the graduates had to overcome to be there. Some smiling, others visibly moved, the graduates proceeded to the front of the room.

Among the event speakers was Crystal Jenkins, an EWSC graduate from 2000. She described the circumstances that lead her to the podium. From an unstable home, she was sixteen when her first child was born. For the next three years, she had two more children while living "in the 'hood, struggling with roaches, rodents, bats, and break-ins." She struggled

to pay the bills and chased disconnect notices. Finally, she decided that her children deserved a better life. She started at EWSC in 1998.

EWSC's Family Literacy, according to Program Manager Diana Swayze, works to strengthen the entire family through four components - adult education, parent and child time (PACT) together, early childhood education, and parent support. The Literacy Alliance partners with EWSC and EWSC's Head Start to make the family literacy program possible.

From the beginning, Crystal said she felt comfortable at EWSC. She knew her children were taken care of while she went to classes.

When she passed the GED exam, Crystal thought the GED was as far as she'd get. "I didn't know you could go to college with just a GED." She thought she'd get a decent job in a factory or group home. However, staff from EWSC and the Educational Opportunity Center's Norm Newman talked to her about college enrollment and financial aid, and she realized the GED was just the first step.

Now, Crystal has a bachelor's degree in Psychology and is working toward a master's degree at IPFW culminating in dual licensure, marriage and family therapy/mental health counseling. Her children, twelve year old Tiera, ten year old

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Grad Works Toward Master's, continued from page 1

Kiera, and nine year old LaTavia, are doing well in school.

Tiera was at the June 19 graduation to hear her mother say, "You can make the decision about what you can and will do to reach your goals and dreams."



Juanita Curry receives congratulations from Crystal Jenkins and EWSC's Executive Director Joe Jordan at this year's GED graduation ceremony. Nearly 100 attended to honor the EWSC students who earned their GED this program year.

Addressing the graduates, Adult Education Teacher Melissa Hale assured them that earning the GED was "a first step in your lives." When asked who was going on to college, a majority of the grads raised their hands.



Junior League of Fort Wayne members unbox books they brought for this year's first Habitat for Humanity dedication on May 31. The Junior League adopted the Habitat project to promote reading in the home which The Literacy Alliance began last September.

Junior League members conducted a book drive and built shelves so that every new Habitat home this year can receive a starter library. Each new home library includes a dictionary, thesaurus, atlas, cookbook, family health guide, and gardening book along with numerous books for leisure reading.



Students go over their lessons at Autumn Woods Apartments. They are participating in The Literacy Alliance's initiative to help Burmese immigrants. Within its mission, The Literacy Alliance is working in any way it can to address the needs of Allen County's growing Burmese population.

TLA Helps Burmese Immigrants

As with other community service organizations, The Literacy Alliance has stepped up to address the needs of Allen County's growing Burmese population. Last year, about 600 Burmese immigrants joined the nearly 3,000 Burmese in the Fort Wayne area. This year, about 800 more are expected. Within its mission, TLA is helping any way it can, training ESL tutors, funding materials, and coordinating small group tutoring.

Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10:00 a.m., Burmese students gather at Autumn Woods Apartments where a one bedroom apartment borrowed from East Allen County Schools' Neighborhood Action Center serves as a small learning center. Through a translator, Literacy Alliance Volunteer Coordinator June Jordan and literacy tutors help them with rudimentary English and basic life skills. They learn how to speak and write their names and addresses as well as the days and months and basic foods.

The Burmese students have been on field trips to Safety Village and the Public Safety Academy where they learn about traffic, police, and firefighters. After studying grocery sale ads, they went to Scott's to become familiar with shopping for and buying essentials. The field trips also helped them increase their vocabulary, associating the objects and concepts of everyday life with their English names.

Save the date



STOMP

for Literacy



The Satek Winery Grape Stomp to Benefit The Literacy Alliance

Raise awareness & funds for The Literacy Alliance
Wear your stomping duds & help *stomp out illiteracy*

5:00 - 9:30 p.m.
September 27, 2008

The Satek Winery
6208 N. Van Guilder Road
Fremont, Indiana

Tickets available at The Literacy Alliance web site

www.fwliteracyalliance.org

For ticket and sponsor information

contact Brian at The Literacy Alliance
260-426-7323 or trlabrian@yahoo.com

Announcements

The next set of tutor training workshops will be held 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. on September 13 and 20 at the main branch of the Allen County Public Library. For more information, call June at The Literacy Alliance, 426-7323.

In July, The Literacy Alliance will hold intake sessions for its adult literacy programs. The evening and morning sessions are every Tuesday and last about two and a half hours. Adults interested in strengthening their basic skills or preparing for the GED exam must register for one of the sessions.

Adult Literacy Intake Schedule*

Morning Sessions

10:00 a.m.

- July 1 - WorkOne Office, Rudisill Plaza, 201 E. Rudisill
- July 8 - WorkOne Office, Rudisill Plaza, 201 E. Rudisill
- July 15 - WorkOne Office, Rudisill Plaza, 201 E. Rudisill
- July 22 - Pontiac Library, 2215 S. Hanna

Evening Sessions

6:00 p.m.

- July 1 - Hessen Cassel Library, 3030 E. Paulding
- July 8 - Tecumseh Library, 1411 E. State
- July 15 - Georgetown Library, 6600 E. State
- July 22 - WorkOne Office, Rudisill Plaza, 201 E. Rudisill

*Interested adult students must register for one of the sessions by calling The Literacy Alliance, 426-7323.

Thanks to Individuals & Organizations for Their Generous Support

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Brian & Karen Francisco

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PHP makes it simple, and is dedicated to improving the lives of our neighbors and friends in Northern Indiana.



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Interested in sponsoring a Literacy Alliance event?
Contact Brian, 426-7323 or trlabrian@yahoo.com

From the Director's Desk

The cover story of this issue is about Crystal Jenkins who exemplifies our mission. After studying for two years in the Family Literacy program at East Wayne Street Center, she passed the GED exam with the notion that she'll get better work and build a better life for her children. However, through encouragement from the staff of East Wayne Street and the Educational Opportunity Center, she learned that the GED was just a first step.

This year marks our twentieth anniversary. Whether as Three Rivers Literacy Alliance or The Literacy Alliance, we've always looked for methods to better serve adult students in Allen County. And changes in our programs over the years are a reflection of this. This year is no exception as we move towards the objectives of our 2007 - 2009 strategic plan.

To incorporate work readiness skills into instruction, we have begun a partnership with WorkOne. At its Rudisill Plaza location, WorkOne provides space and computers as well as resources for students' next steps, further education and job placement.

Related to this new partnership is a new intake process. Intake sessions are conducted at WorkOne and library branches where students receive an overview of Literacy Alliance programs and take an assessment test.

The partnership with WorkOne will include a fast-track learning center at WorkOne for adult students who score at the ninth grade level or above in the reading assessment test. They will prepare for the GED exam while WorkOne's system provides guidance towards further education and job placement.

So while our programs evolve, they continue to fulfill our mission. We continue to help adult students succeed at work, at home, and in the community.



Judith Stabelli, Executive Director



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The Literacy Alliance



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