



The Literacy Alliance

Literacy News

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Single Father of Two Earns the GED[®]

Twelve years and twenty jobs ago, Josh was a senior at New Haven High School when Ashton was born. "I didn't finish so I could take care of my newborn son." He believed it was more important to get a full time job than to finish school.

Now a thirty one year old father of two, Josh Doctor talked about his work history. It was "minimal job by minimal job, making as much as I could working part time." One of his favorites was working at the lumber yard. He drove the delivery truck and forklift. But after almost three years, when Ashton was ten and Alivia eight, he was laid off. He began the process of looking for another job. He submitted to Life Inc. an application that was not accepted because he didn't have a high school diploma.

At about that time, "out of the blue," Ashton asked him why he never finished high school. "After explaining for about an hour," Josh decided to get his GED[®]. It was "hard to do anything being a single parent with no education." He didn't want his children to think it was OK to not finish high school.

At WorkOne Josh picked up a pamphlet for continuing education programs and learned about The Literacy Alliance.



Josh Doctor passed the GED[®] Tests in August after eighteen months of study at the New Haven Learning Center. As a single father of two, he had to take care of his children, hold down a job, and work on subjects that he hasn't worked on for twelve years.

In January 2008, he began at the learning center in New Haven United Methodist Church. His first night there, Josh completed a battery of assessment testing. "It was frustrating," he said, "Looking at all the questions and not remembering fractions, reducing fractions, scientific notation, and the difference between complete sentences and sentence fragments."

"Trying to use skills and remember facts I hadn't used for twelve years" was an ongoing challenge for Josh while he was at the learning center.

Another challenge was his work, doing home deliveries for FedEx. The work was part time and not very steady. He was essentially on call, and often the call came at 4:00 a.m. It wasn't just a matter of getting around at that hour but he needed to arrange to get the children to school.

Friends and relatives helped, including his girlfriend who continues to study at the New Haven Learning Center.

Through the assessment testing his first night there, Josh and his teacher at New Haven could see where his reading, math, and language skills were in relation to where they needed to be for the GED[®] Tests. His teacher then created

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Student Passes Driver's Test

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for Josh an adult learning plan, a course of study that would bring his skills up to GED® level.

Once he worked through the plan and his teacher determined, through further assessment testing including the GED® Practice Tests, that Josh was ready, he took the GED® Tests on August 19, 2009. A month later he learned that he passed.

After Josh contacted Life Inc. to tell them he now had the GED®, they considered his application and offered him a full time job.

Announcements

The Literacy Alliance continues to have intake sessions for its adult literacy programs. Morning and evening sessions are available. Each session lasts about two and a half hours. Adults interested in strengthening their basic skills or preparing for the GED® Tests must register for one of the sessions by calling The Literacy Alliance, 426-7323.

The Literacy Alliance welcomes new volunteers. New board members are Jeremy Reidy and Paul Spoelhof with past members Bonnie Rogers and Casey Scheurich returning. New literacy tutors include Cynthia Barnes, Muriel Downey, Amanda Goff, Sue Hammond, Ruth Hicks, Rem Johnston, Eric Larson, Cendy McPeak, Clare Patano, and David Rezits.

Volunteer opportunities are available at The Literacy Alliance. Tutor adults in reading, writing, math, and basic English. Help answer phones and track volunteer hours. Collect books and shelves for Habitat home libraries. To volunteer, register online at www.fwliteracyalliance.org or call Laura at 426-7323.

The September 26 annual Rally to Read drew hundreds who received free books and free lunch. Participants were entertained by stories, activities, and performances. At the end of the event, names were drawn for four reading rooms. Each room was for a particular age group, child, youth, teen, adult, and all contained chair, lamp, rug, bookcase with books, computer, and computer desk. More than twenty local organizations collaborate to make the event at the corner of Hanna and Creighton Streets a success.

Josephine Rodriguez keeps busy driving to bible study a couple of times a week and on Sunday to church where she sings in the choir. She also hikes the River Greenway for exercise.

On Tuesdays, Josephine attends The Literacy Alliance's small group site at the library where students strengthen their reading, writing, and typing skills as they work with computers. It is one of two small group sites administered by The Literacy Alliance. The second site meets Tuesday mornings at the Fort Wayne Urban League.

Josephine began at the library site in June to prepare for the Indiana driver's test. She needed to work on her reading and writing skills as she had failed the test twice.

For site coordinator Sean Shryne, Josephine is a model student. "In addition to the resources at the small group site, she uses computer based resources at home. She puts in the time and does her homework which is crucial to making progress."

On October 13, Josephine passed the test and received her license. "I had a big smile on my face." According to Sean, "she was really excited when she came to class." She stood before her fellow classmates and encouraged them not to give up. She explained that with persistence and study she reached her goal. "If I can do it, so can you."

Passing the test and gaining a driver's license, Josephine's been able to remain independent and continue her activities. Not having her license would have meant sitting at home and depending on her grown children to take her places.



Josephine Rodriguez attended the Allen County Public Library small group site regularly. Her goal was to pass the BMV's driver's test and gain her license. In October, she did it.

Burmese Students Receive Certificates



Volunteers Deborah Carr, Joan Lewis, Noel Maze, Corinne Toth, and Sandra Vance pose with proud Burmese students who received certificates at a November 5 celebration. They are celebrating the end of this year's first session at The Literacy Alliance's Burmese site at the League for the Blind and Disabled.

Everyone received cake. Students received the certificates for showing improvement in their English language skills and attending 75% of the class meetings.

The Burmese classes at the League are a continuation of The Literacy Alliance's Burmese effort which began a year and a half ago. In addition to location, changes since last program year include a schedule designed to control intake and improve students' individual progress.

In previous years, explained volunteer coordinator Laura Taliaferro, students were allowed to attend at any time for any duration. The result was a sieve-type movement of students, an environment that hindered learning. New students arrived every week and needed orientation and assessment. The literacy volunteers and current students had to take a step back to bring the new students up to speed. At the same time, some students would stop attending. The unstable environment made class preparation nearly impossible.

The schedule for 2009-2010 involves three fourteen-week sessions. Three of the weeks are devoted to intake. After those three weeks, classes are closed until the next session. Based on assessments, students are placed in groups according to their skill levels. Literacy tutors work with each group to improve their English skills and facilitate progress.

Thanks to Individuals & Organizations for Their Support

Individuals

Farrukh & Asima Adhami

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Robert & Margaret Bliss

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Virginia Coats

Lillian Embick

Dave Ferguson

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Report Card Night Benefits The Literacy Alliance

The Fort Wayne Komets and Comcast are sponsoring Report Card Night again this year at the Memorial Coliseum. Students with an “A” or “A Equivalent” will be admitted FREE to the Turner Cup Champions’ match against the Port Huron IceHawks at 8:00 p.m. on February 5, 2010. Eligible students should get their tickets early in advance at the Coliseum box office.

Comcast will be making a donation to The Literacy Alliance for every “A” student who attends the game.



From the Director's Desk

News since our last newsletter is about more changes for the agency. The Literacy Alliance board has begun a new way of doing business. It results from a board development process that restructured committees, changed meeting schedules, and enhanced communication to increase board involvement and effectiveness. Adult education in Indiana has been aligned with workforce development activities bringing a new way to deliver services and receive funding. What it means for The Literacy Alliance has yet to be seen. We are meeting weekly with partners in our region to address those changes while continuing to meet the needs of adult learners in our community.

In this issue of *Literacy News*, The Literacy Alliance presents more stories about adult learners who achieved academic goals leading to personal successes. Josh Doctor worked for eighteen months at the New Haven Learning Center while holding a job and taking care of his children. When he passed the GED® Tests, Josh landed a job where before they wouldn't consider his application without a diploma. Josephine Rodriguez studied at the Allen County Public Library small group site to improve her reading so she could pass the test to get her driver's license. The certificate holders from the Burmese small group site at the League for the Blind and Disabled attended for fourteen weeks and with the help of volunteers made gradual progress in basic English. They are but a few of the many helped by The Literacy Alliance.

As demonstrated by our outcomes and described in *Literacy News*, we are here to help adult learners reach their academic goals. The Literacy Alliance is their first step to higher aspirations. While we recognize our students' achievements, the demand for our services grows. Revenues for the current fiscal year are uncertain with real concern that we will not have sufficient funds. Your contributions are vital to support our work.



Judith Stabelli, Executive Director



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