



The Literacy Alliance

# Literacy News

A quarterly publication of the Literacy Alliance

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## Student Overcomes Life's Challenges

Arriving early, as is her typical style, Joyce Williams takes her usual seat and logs on to her computer to start practicing her lessons. She is the student with the highest attendance rate, and has been going to Small Group since 2010. She always comes prepared, with her homework not only completed but expanded upon giving her as much practice as possible. She continually makes an effort to be a role model for other students, helps them when she can, and even delivers homework to them if they are ill and cannot be in class.

This is not her first time attempting school. As a young mother busy with her children and working numerous hours at her job, she took CNA classes. This was until a car accident injury caused her to discontinue classes. Later, Joyce took adult education classes at Anthis Career Center until she was in a serious city bus accident and had to end classes yet again. This time, though, she has made up her mind and is



*Joyce Williams signs onto a computer at the Monday/Wednesday Small Group Site, preparing to engage in another day of study. The Small Group Site uses computers to help students improve their basic skills at The Literacy Alliance. There are two additional Sites: one meeting Tuesday/Thursday evenings at the Main Library and the other Tuesday/Thursday mornings at The Literacy Alliance.*

not going to let anyone or anything stop her.

Although she may not have acquired her education early on, she has always seen the importance in earning a diploma. Her seven children are the light of her life, and she made sure they all earned theirs. All have graduated from high school and are working now. She beams when speaking of them. They and their children are proud of Joyce for going back to school. Her love of knowledge not only affects her family's education but extends further. She has inspired her oldest sister, members of her church, and many others to go back to school.

In Small Group, Joyce has discovered that she needs to have faith in herself. For example, throughout school, she always feared writing essays. Now on

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her assignments she is able to respond to questions with quite lengthy written passages. This new confidence carries to her home life as well. Joyce steps up and helps her grandchildren with their homework and is not even self-conscious when they are able to teach her something.

Joyce's Small Group site currently meets two days per week, as do the other Small Groups at the Literacy Alliance. Students work to improve their reading, language, and math skills. With the help of laptops, which were so new to Joyce she recalls struggling to even turn them on, students improve their typing, computer program usage, and Internet navigation, useful skills in today's world.



*A crowd enjoys the music of Madeline's Toybox at the Rally to Read on September 17. An annual event, Rally to Read is held at the CANI/Urban League/Pontiac Library/Citilink campus at the corner of Hanna and Creighton Streets. Two dozen organizations work together to make the event possible. It promotes literacy through fun activities such as story times at the library, free lunch, and a book giveaway at the Urban League along with the live music. Everyone in attendance has a chance to win a reading room equipped with a desk, chair, bookshelf, computer, rug, lamp, and books. Names are drawn at the end of the event, and four rooms are given away, one for preschoolers, one for children, one for young adults, and one for adults.*

# Students Start Off Another Strong Year of Learning

After a short break at the St. Hyacinth, Anchor Community Church, and New Haven Learning Centers, classes have begun a new program year. This is also true for the Small Groups at the Allen County Public Library, Euell Wilson Center, League for the Blind and the Urban League. Some of the sites have benefited from computer access in previous years. This year all will.

The Literacy Alliance is pleased to welcome back many returning students as well as countless new faces. There have been numerous orientations throughout the summer months and will be more to come throughout the year. This year, orientations are being held not only at Anthis but also at New Haven United Methodist Church.

The Small Group sites will begin this year wired just as last year, which aids students in numerous ways. Students at these sites work on basic typing skills which will increase confidence as well as open doors to job applications and opportunities once they are on the job.

They also use the computers to work on academic skills independently and in group settings. The Learning Centers, where students work on individualized learning plans, will also be wired with the new addition of laptops.

The laptops will travel between the sites to wherever they are needed. Students' learning plans are based on their scores on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), which can now be taken on the computer allowing teachers to have immediate access to results. Students will also begin the year with the ability to retrieve information for lessons via the internet.

With changes in the air--new students, laptops, additions in orientation location, and more--the staff is wired up and fired up for a successful new year! It is always an exciting time.

# Early Child Educator Supports Adult Literacy

Energetic, smiling Mary Musson greeted families as they arrived. It was the Rally to Read on September 17. Mary had brought students from her Ivy Tech class to help sign in the attending families.

Rally to Read is Mary's brainchild and the result of efforts by two dozen local organizations. It happens annually at the CANI/Urban League/Pontiac Library/Citilink campus, corner of Hanna and Creighton Streets. It provides a fun day for families, promoting literacy through such activities as stories at the library, music on the outdoor stage, and a book giveaway at the Urban League.

The event exemplifies Mary's dedication to literacy. A lifelong educator, Mary has taught all ages except infants. "Never infants. I think I always scared them." She became particularly interested in Early Child Education, however, in the late 1970's when she taught kindergarten. What draws her to the education of young children is that they are "always so straight forward, open like a book." She said, "I also like the action, the movement and children are so curious and interesting."

Mary has taught and directed Early Child Education programs in many places, Illinois, Washington, Ohio, Virginia, and Hessian-Oldendorf and Bonn in Germany. Originally from Decatur, Illinois, she moved to Fort Wayne when her husband Mike, who retired from the US Air Force in 1993, found work at Magnavox. Here, she has worked as director of CANI's Head Start program then as director of the Martin Luther King Montessori School. Currently, she teaches Early Child Education classes at Ivy Tech.

As director of CANI Head Start, Mary became involved with The Literacy Alliance through its family literacy programs. She considered bi-lingual family



*Mary Musson (L) pauses for a picture with students from the Early Child Education class she teaches at Ivy Tech. She and her students greeted the families who attended the annual Rally to Read event on September 17 at the Hanna-Creighton Campus.*

literacy for CANI Head Start and was aware that, with the East Wayne Street Center Head Start, The Literacy Alliance was offering a family literacy site. When The Literacy Alliance opened English as a second language family literacy at St. Patrick's, Mary said, "I volunteered to begin the program as the ESL teacher. We did a lot of charades! I loved it."

In addition to Rally to Read, Mary has been involved with the PTA in her children's schools, the Fort Wayne Association of the Education of Young Children, and Sunday school teaching, kindergarten through first grade, at First Wayne Street United Methodist Church. She served on The Literacy Alliance board and donates regularly to the agency.

When asked why a person who has dedicated her life to early child education would support an adult education organization, Mary explained, "I am involved in the literacy of adults because of the direct correlation between the education of adults and their children." Children's educational attainment corresponds with that of their parents, especially their mother. When parents have a good education and value reading and learning, they transfer it to their children. Also, they are better able to be directly involved in their children's education.

# Thanks to Individuals & Organizations for Their Support

## Individuals

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Robert & Jane Wuthrich  
Thomas & Jane Zachman

## Organizations

Edward Wilson Foundation  
English, Bonter, Mitchell Foundation

## Announcements

Family Video donated ten Thanksgiving turkeys to Literacy Alliance students. This is the second year for this giveaway. Each class held a drawing to determine who received a turkey. Winners then claimed their turkeys at the E. State Family Video, 3606 E. State. Literacy Alliance staff and students thank Family Video for this generous contribution.

Adults interested in strengthening their basic skills or preparing for the GED<sup>®</sup> Tests must register for an orientation session. Call The Literacy Alliance, 426-7323.

The Literacy Alliance welcomes new volunteers Cynthia Barnes, Tanvi Chhatiawala, James Hopkins, Deborah Morse, Diana Pascoe, Missy Pilgrim, Barbara Stedje, Therese Leone Unger and returning volunteer Muriel Downing.

Volunteer opportunities are available at The Literacy Alliance. Tutor adults in reading, writing, math, and basic English. To volunteer, register online at [fwliteracyalliance.org](http://fwliteracyalliance.org) or call Laura at 426-7323.

Literacy Alliance staff congratulates John More. The literacy volunteer received The Journal Gazette's Golden Pen Award in April for his March letter to the editor about gridlock in Washington.

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### Did you know?

If you're an IRA owner who must take a required minimum distribution (RMD) in 2011, you can avoid some or all of the resulting income tax liability by donating a portion of it to charity. A qualified charitable distribution (QCD), also known as an IRA charitable rollover, can not only save you income taxes, it can help minimize your taxable estate, and fulfill your philanthropic desires. Through December 31, you can make tax-free transfers (of up to \$100,000) directly from your IRA to qualified charities.

# From the Director's Desk

I'm glad to report that all Literacy Alliance classes are full this year. Some of what's new is related in the page two article, "Students Start Off Another Year of Learning." Laptops, Internet access, and online resources are being used more than ever. Online assessments and remediation tools have enhanced service delivery. For example, with online remediation tools like WIN (Worldwide Interactive Network) and ITTS (Instruction Targeting TABE Success), students with online access at home can work anytime on reading, math, and language. If they don't have access at home, they can use library computers and still work outside of class.

We have new and expanded basic English language classes. EACS's new family literacy site at Southwick Elementary has a Literacy Alliance teacher supported by a state civics grant. We've also placed a teacher in Vera Bradley's classes targeting employees who need basic English instruction. Our Burmese classes at League for the Blind have been able to expand with support from FWCS Continuing Education, now serving English Language Learners at the beginning levels.

What I've described and what's described in this issue would not be possible without support. In addition to financial support for teachers and supplies, FWCS Continuing Education has been a longtime partner, providing guidance and resources so that together we can serve as many adult students as possible. Also, we benefit from the United Way. Donations garnered from its annual campaign, which is currently underway, help support The Literacy Alliance's Learning Centers and Family Literacy.

Those are just two of many organizations that make our work possible. At this time of giving thanks, I would be remiss if I didn't give thanks to them and all who provide financial and in-kind support. So, many thanks to them. . . . And thank you, too, for your continued support by reading *Literacy News* and, when possible, sending a donation.



Judith Stabelli, Executive Director



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