



THE LITERACY COUNCIL
OF LANCASTER-LEBANON

The LiteracyLine

Spring 2016

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Reflecting on 30 Years with The Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon - Cheryl Hiester, Executive Director

In 1985:

- Gasoline was \$1.09 per gallon.
- A movie cost \$2.75.
- A U.S. postage stamp cost \$0.22.
- The Eastern half of the U.S. was hit with the one coldest winters on record.
- Coke introduced New Coke.
- The Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon was incorporated as a nonprofit organization.



On May 23, 2016, The Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon will turn 30! Back in 1985, the first board of directors was formed and space was donated by the Lebanon Senior Center and the Neff School in Lancaster. All activities were conducted from those offices by Ruth Morehead and Jean Henry. Funds were raised by “passing the hat” at board meetings that were held at the board president’s home. There were no paid staff, 34 volunteers and 50 students were served that year.

Today, The Literacy Council maintains offices in both downtown Lancaster and Lebanon. We have 9 full time staff, 5 adjunct teachers and 140 active volunteer teachers. Funding comes from the PA and U.S. Departments of Education, United Way of Lancaster and Lebanon Counties, grants and contracts, foundations and fund raising events such as “An Evening of Matched Pairs.” We are serving nearly 1,000 learners a year in more than 50 locations throughout Lancaster and Lebanon Counties. This includes instruction in large groups, small groups and student/tutor matches.

There is still so much more to do! Did you know that more than 65,000 adults living in our service area struggle with the most basic academic skills? Some of them have lived here all of their lives and were not able to complete school. Others graduated but did not keep up with the skill demands of a changing society. Many of our students moved to our community from other countries as immigrants and refugees. Several of our foreign born students are highly skilled with professional degrees from their native countries, but are not able to reclaim their careers due to language and credentialing barriers. By connecting with a wide range of businesses and service providers, we are able to leverage resources beyond our own to build stronger and more connected programs.

Help us celebrate our 30th year of service to Lancaster and Lebanon Counties by helping us achieve our mission of providing opportunities for life-long learning and learning for life, and our vision that all adults have skills to transform their lives, sustain their families and strengthen their communities.

Our organization strategies for the next three years are to:

- Create a culture of outreach, advocacy, community engagement and collaboration.
- Create a culture of accountability and student achievement.
- Create a culture of philanthropy.
- Create a culture of life-long learning.



A Reality Check – Jane Myers, Volunteer Services Coordinator

I teach a class of high level English language learners. Most of them have a high school diploma from their native countries, and many of them have college degrees and were professionals before coming to the U.S. Because their skills are so high, I sometimes forget that they may not know some of the “real” vocabulary and culture of this country.

A few weeks ago, one of my students, a woman from Cuba, told the class that she had gone to a restaurant for breakfast and ordered eggs. When the waiter asked how she wanted them prepared (scrambled, over light, sunny side up, or dipped), she was embarrassed to not have an answer. After some class discussion, it was decided that I would prepare a lesson on dining out. We discussed restaurant vocabulary for 1.5 hours. When I thought everything had been covered, a student asked about food allergies. How could I have missed that one?!

After much lesson reflection, I concluded that talking about the menu, food, and preparation was not enough. It was time for a field trip. I contacted the Columbia Diner to make certain a large group could be accommodated, and then presented my idea to the class. Although it was not mandatory, all but two students (they were ill) participated. To my delight, the diner had reserved a table. Thirteen students and myself discussed the breakfast menu, table manners in the U.S., and the various foods we had ordered. When the waitress presented our checks, we talked about tipping in the U.S. and in their native countries.

All of the students expressed their appreciation for the experience. As I was getting into my car, a Haitian student stopped and hugged me. He told me that it had been one of his best moments since coming to the U.S. And, it was certainly one of my best teaching moments.

“English is the key.” – Linda Cullen, ESL Services Coordinator

Jim O’Connor’s ESL students always quote his mantra with gusto, “English is the key.” Jim teaches his students that English will open the door to higher education, a driver’s license, a car, a job, and a good life.

In Linda Cullen’s level one class, students work on the listening and speaking phrases they will need immediately. For example, a student can say “bathroom?” with palms up and shoulders raised.

Thanks to Jim, The Literacy Council has taken ESL students to the next level. Jim’s level two students write, “Where can I find the men’s room? Where *did* I find the men’s room? Will I *ever* find the men’s room?”

Jim is devoted to his students. Need a ride to school? Help to fix your bike? Need advice on how to file an insurance claim? Jim’s students know they can go to him

for assistance. Why? “Because they are my people,” he says simply.

Lum Guyung from Myanmar started working on his GED shortly after arriving here two years ago. Jim spent hours broadening Lum’s vocabulary and general knowledge. He recently passed all his GED tests, and has applied for the automotive program at Stevens (Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology). Jim helped him complete his financial aid materials, and Lum will take his placement test on April 20th. “He has not been accepted at Stevens, and I am cautiously optimistic he’ll be admitted,” said Jim. “Lum is bright and very motivated.”

Jim O’Connor personifies perseverance and patience. Jim stays by his students as they struggle with frustrations, leap massive obstacles and at last share the joy of success.



Jim O'Connor with his ESL students

Last Stop on the Road to GED Success – Bobbi Hurst, Student Services Coordinator

The first two stops on the road to GED success fueled computer and keyboarding skills, as well as general study skills and strategies. You became a whiz on the computer, you studied the content with materials and strategies suited to your learning style, and your Official Practice Tests (OPT's) predicted you will get a passing score. The OPT score report and the diagnostic will keep you securely in the driver's seat on this journey. Remember, you can't have too much practice or too much confidence.

It's time to make the last stop and fuel the final leg of your journey. The following strategies will contribute to GED success and should be considered equally as important as academic skills. First, register for only one test at a time. Test taking is physically, mentally and emotionally draining, so you will want at least a few days or weeks to re-fresh for the next test. The data suggests that test-takers are most successful using this strategy. Second, get plenty of rest for at least two or three nights before the test and eat nutritious meals, especially the one before going to the testing center. Your brain needs rest and energy to

function at its highest levels. Third, arrive at the testing center about 15 minutes early to acclimate and receive final instructions. Being late creates stress and that will interfere with your ability to relax and think clearly. In addition, you may be prevented from actually taking the test if you arrive too late.

You've mapped out your GED destination with three important re-fueling stops along the way. Now, you are at the computer and ready to click the start button. Before you do, there are a few extra drops of fuel that you should squeeze into your tank to establish a strategic mind set before beginning the test. Remember, time is generally the biggest enemy of students taking the GED – it will deplete your fuel before reaching your destination. Don't be a perfectionist and accept the fact that you will have to guess on some questions, because answering every question gives you the best chance for success. And finally, have no fear of not passing the test. You will have multiple opportunities to re-take a test, so eventual GED success will be right around the corner.

Congratulations, Jonile!

On April 1, 2016, Jonile Miller, Office Manager at the Lebanon office of The Literacy Council, was awarded the Dr. Kathryn Towns P.R.O.B.E. (Potential Reentry Opportunities in Business Education) Founder's Award at an event held at the Hershey Country Club! The award was developed to honor Dr. Towns, recognizing graduates of P.R.O.B.E.'s career development program who have demonstrated personal and professional excellence, provided service to improve the quality of life for others, and have captured the spirit of Dr. Towns' vision of empowerment of others and development of human potential.

As a result of receiving the P.R.O.B.E. Founder's Award, Jonile was also asked to speak on WHYF 720 AM Holy Family Radio in Shiremanstown, during their fundraising telethon. Jonile chose to take the opportunity to mention her work at The Literacy Council, including the mission and vision for what we do and who we serve.

Once again congrats on your award, and thanks, Jonile, for all you do for The Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon.



Transitioning ESL Students to College

– Cathy Roth, Student/Teacher Services Coordinator, Lebanon

How do English language learners transition from an English as a Second Language (ESL) Program to college credit courses? Sometimes they do so with great difficulty. They may pay for non-credit courses, repeating them several times in order to reach college level proficiency. This is both time consuming and expensive!

This year, The Literacy Council is providing assistance in the form of an ASE (Academic Skills Enhancement) class on Monday afternoons in Lebanon. From 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM, Cathy Roth is available providing phonics with a pronunciation focus, teaching academic vocabulary, and stretching vocabulary in context as students read both fiction and non-fiction. Students are then given seats in the program, www.meritonlinelearning.com, in order to practice new vocabulary, especially homonyms and words with multiple meanings. In class, they are also being challenged to compose basic sentences using picture prompts, and then add adjectives, adverbs and clauses to clarify and enhance their reader's experience. The goal is to shorten time in non-credit courses so that students can advance to a college level of proficiency, and get on a career track.



Third Annual “Matched Pairs”: A Great Success - *Ilsa Powell Diller, Outreach & Resource Coordinator*

On Sunday, April 10, 2016, the third annual “An Evening of Matched Pairs” fundraiser for The Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon took place at the Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square. Restaurateurs from 18 different eating establishments provided delicious food that was thoughtfully paired with either wine or beer by wine enthusiast, Dave Diffendal. Three former students from The Literacy Council: Lucy Gomez, Fernando Garcia and Sylvie Bonin were featured chefs for the evening.

The evening included a cocktail hour, raffle, silent auction, live auction, tastings, and dancing. Over 100 businesses donated items that were part of the silent or

live auctions. Attendees thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and many discussed attending the event again next year. Preliminary numbers indicate that this was by far the best year in terms of raising funds to support all aspects of teaching and learning that are offered through The Literacy Council. The exact amount raised will be shared in a later newsletter.

Next year’s event date is already set, so mark your calendars: **Sunday April 2, 2017, Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square.** We certainly hope that all who joined us at the event this year (guests and restaurants), will be back again in 2017!



Some of the wonderful donations for the silent auction.



Staff members Jane Myers and Bobbi Hurst greet arriving guests.



Delicious tasting from The Spring House Brewing Co.



Fruit and cheese display by Linda Cullen.

Lessons Learned From Networks for Integrating New Americans Initiative

The Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon has been the Lead Agency and collaborative partner in the Networks for Integrating New Americans Initiative. The link to the Final Report (below) provides an inside look at the successes, challenges, and accomplishments of this project. As Silja Kallenbach, Vice President, World Education states: “This publication features the work and lessons learned by five local networks as they planned and implemented immigrant integration services and activities with adult education in a central role. The report highlights the critical role that network development played in enabling community organizations to effectively tap into and coordinate their respective capacities.”

View the report here:

http://worlded.org/WEIInternet/inc/common/_download_pub.cfm?id=16503&lid=3

The Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon

We serve the people and communities of Lancaster and Lebanon Counties; working in partnership with multiple stakeholders, including but not limited to nonprofit agencies, educational institutions, business and industry employers, governmental staff, and organizations. Key to our success is a network of highly qualified volunteers, professional staff, and a supportive community.

Mission

Promoting life-long learning and learning for life.

Vision

Adults have skills to transform their lives, sustain their families, and strengthen their communities.

Values

- **Quality** – Our high-quality programs and services are rooted in evidence-based practices and offered in an encouraging and caring environment.
- **Goal-Driven** – Our programs and services demonstrate results that support the education students need to successfully transition to the next step of obtaining their life goals.
- **Respect and Integrity** – Our compassionate and caring approach and interactions are highly respectful of diverse backgrounds and differences. Our integrity rests in our word, all deeds and actions that ensure trustworthiness and confidentiality.
- **Leadership** – Our staff, board members, volunteers, and students are engaged and are actively advocating for adult education. Our responsibility to continually enhance our own leadership skills will keep us prominent in the field.
- **Innovative** – Our effective partnerships, strategic approaches, and being open to possibilities allow us to respond creatively to our work.
- **Collaborative** – Our willingness to build strong relationships and alliances with others that support our mission ensures commitment to serving our community and the betterment of society at large.



The Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon is a partner agency of the United Way of Lancaster and Lebanon Counties.

Board

The Literacy Council is governed by a volunteer board of directors. 2015-2016 board members:

Derek Dissinger, President
 Julie Rhoads, Vice President
 Eric Luckenbaugh, Secretary
 Robyn Dougherty, Treasurer

Ashley Garcia	Martha Guaigua
Cheryl Hiester*	Sandy Strunk
Dave Diffendal	Scott Cole
Frank Byrne	Richard Frerichs
Marlene Usdin	* (Non Voting)

Staff

Jenny Bair, Program Director
 Linda Cullen, ESL Services Coordinator
 Karey Getz, Program Assistant
 Cheryl Hiester, Executive Director
 Roberta Hurst, Student Services Coordinator
 Jonile Miller, Office Manager, Lebanon
 Jane Myers, Volunteer Services Coordinator
 Ilsa Powell Diller, Outreach & Resource Coordinator
 Cathy Roth, Student Services Coordinator, Lebanon

Volunteers Needed

Do you want to make a difference in someone's life and in your community? Please consider tutoring an adult student. Tutors are needed to teach basic education skills including reading, writing, mathematics, English language, and GED preparation. We provide training, all materials, and technical support. For more information in the Lancaster area, please call 717-295-5523. For more information in the Lebanon area, please call 717-274-2554.