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## The Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon

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## **The Literacy Council is Moving Just in Time for Back to School –Cheryl Hiester, Executive Director**

On September 5, 2017, The Literacy Council will open its new office at 407 Lafayette Street. We will be located in the Education Building behind Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church. This new home will provide classroom and meeting space, offices for staff and plenty of room for tutors and students. We are very excited about the new location of our headquarters, and look forward to being a part of the blossoming southwest revitalization community.

For more than 20 years, The Literacy Council has leased space from Lancaster Newspapers (LNP). LNP has been our partner in promoting lifelong learning and learning for life by providing affordable lease space for our programs. We are very grateful to LNP for the many years of supporting our vision that all adults have the skills they need to transform their lives, sustain their families and strengthen their communities.

## **Employability in the 21st Century: Doing Hard Work on Soft Skills**

**–Bobbi Hurst, Student Services Coordinator, Lancaster**

Now, more than ever, employability in the 21st century goes beyond academic and technical skills. A 2010 survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers ranks COMMUNICATION number 1 among a job candidate's "must have" skills. Essentially, these communication skills are an integral part of what we call soft skills, people skills, or generally speaking, employability skills. The workplace poses significant challenges to communication because there are so many different forms to consider such as:

1. Verbal – sounds, words, language and tone
2. Aural – listening and hearing
3. Non-verbal – facial expressions, gestures, body language and posture
4. Written – memos, reports, emails, blogs and text messages
5. Visual – signs, symbols and pictures

Let's isolate one spoke on the soft skills wheel, namely, non-verbal communication. Above and beyond what we say or write, wordless communication often proves to be the most important; what people SEE can be more memorable than what they hear or read. Consider some of the non-verbal and visual signals we use to communicate with others and ask yourself the following questions:

1. Facial expressions – Are you smiling, frowning, smirking or scowling?
2. Posture – Are you slouching or sitting upright? Is your head up or down? Are your arms crossed or relaxed and open?
3. Eye behavior – Do you make eye contact? Are you looking with interest and affection or with disinterest and hostility? Do you roll your eyes or look around acting bored?
4. Touch – Are you using a firm or a limp handshake?

*continued on page 2...*



## Student Spotlight

### Tomas Orlando -Jonile Miller, Office Manager, Lebanon

Tomas Orlando has been in the United States for five years. A very regal man, he was an attorney in the Dominican Republic before coming to Pennsylvania. Today he works in an Amazon warehouse as a picker. Tomas started attending evening ESL classes in 2014. At the time he started classes, he worked in a chicken factory in Fredericksburg with many other immigrants. Tomas worked 10 hour shifts, but still made it to class when he wasn't working overtime. Tomas also encouraged his relatives to attend class with him. His attendance and achievement in class were excellent.

Tomas was very helpful in class. If he understood a term

or concept before the other students, he helped them to understand what was being taught. As time went on, the other students looked to him as a class leader, sometimes bypassing the teacher and asking him their questions directly.

Tomas' test scores improved enough to move on to the next class level. He attended an ABE class until he obtained the Amazon job, which changed his schedule

and availability for classes. He is now working with a tutor on his day off and his English is improving daily. Tomas is also studying for his citizenship test and will soon be ready to meet that goal. When that day comes, we'll be happy to celebrate his swearing in with him!



Tomas (red shirt, center) working with fellow adult learners.

### Illiteracy: A Local Study in Lebanon -Cathy Roth, Student Services Coordinator, Lebanon

Last spring, the Lebanon office of The Literacy Council was contacted by Antonio Cruz, a college student working on his degree in Anthropology at Ashford University. Antonio asked if he could use information gathered at The Literacy Council as the basis of his research project which focuses on the impact of illiteracy on adults. He hopes to better understand the dilemma of illiteracy and the efforts to mitigate the problem at a local level.

Antonio is observing classes in Lebanon, and interviewing students and staff during July and August. He

will examine how individuals perceive the impact of illiteracy and low literacy on their lives, and how they cope as they navigate the processes involved in accessing help. He will be examining such questions as: Have these adults been able to see themselves as successful members of the community?

Antonio will be sharing his research notes with us regularly. We are very interested in the research and data he collects, and how it could potentially impact and help the adult learners we serve in our community and beyond.

### Employability in the 21st Century (continued from front page)

5. Space – Are you invading other's space or maintaining a comfortable distance?
6. Tone – Are you being sarcastic or understanding? Are you expressing anger or acceptance?

I suspect you could think of numerous other forms of non-verbal communication that you have demonstrated, both intentionally and unintentionally – the list goes on and on. Of course, this is just the proverbial “tip of the iceberg” relative to employability skills.

An informative website to continue your research is <http://cte.ed.gov/employability>. This site explores connections among employability, academic and technical skills. It helps to define employability skills in a work context – “the interpersonal skills and personal qualities that enable

individuals to interact effectively with clients, coworkers and supervisors.” The interactive framework is comprised of nine key skills and is a great resource to guide the assessment and instruction of employability skills.

Also, check out: *Soft Skills to Pay the Bills – Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success*, Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor. You can download the entire document (PDF) from the U.S. Department of Labor website. There is a multitude of hands-on and engaging activities in the six key skill areas, the first of which is COMMUNICATION.

Doing some hard work on soft skills, along with a firm handshake, good eye contact and a smile, will impact successful employment in the 21st century.



## **Partners Make a Difference—Jenny Bair, Program Director**

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### **The Challenge**

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Adults who need basic skills support reside throughout Lancaster and Lebanon Counties. The challenge is providing opportunities for learning that are accessible to students who live in communities outside Lancaster and Lebanon cities.

### **The Solution**

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By collaborating with school districts, libraries, employers, and other community partners to provide High School Equivalency (HSE) classes in areas such as Columbia, Elizabethtown, Ephrata, and Paradise, The Literacy Council has expanded services and has helped people access the supports they need.

### **The Impact**

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In program year 2016-2017 alone, The Literacy Council served over 65 students in our community partner classes who would otherwise not have had access to the educational opportunities that will help them reach their goals.

### **The Community**

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The classes provided by our community partnerships

help students improve their skills, build their confidence, and achieve their goals. But, the impact is much greater. The classes are also a place where people make friends, create a family, and strengthen the community. One example that comes to mind is from our Columbia HSE class.

When I met V. on the night of registration, I sensed that there was something special about her. There was a kindness that she exhibited despite the hardships she had endured. Over the course of the semester, I came to learn that her compassion was greater than I could have imagined.

She celebrated the successes of her classmates with joy, she encouraged her classmates, she explained concepts, and she offered advice. She helped wherever she could. Her help and support reached beyond the classroom.

When a classmate found herself and two pre-teen children to be victims of episodic homelessness, V. opened her home to them and gave them a place to live. V's act of charity allowed her new friend to stay in the community and continue her journey toward an HSE diploma and a better life. I can't think of a better living example of The Literacy Council's mission and vision for student success in the classroom, with family, and in the community!

## **Satellites of Literacy –Jane Myers, Volunteer Services Coordinator**

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From July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017, The Literacy Council instructors and volunteer tutors in Lancaster County met with adult learners to help them improve their literacy skills. Not only do they meet with students at The Literacy Council, but they meet throughout the county. Here's a glimpse into the map of adult learning throughout the county.

In Lancaster city, in addition to the groups and one-on-one instruction at the Queen Street location, there is an afternoon ESL class at Tec Centro, and an evening class will be added to this location in August. Tech Centro, 102 Chester Street, offers various levels of ESL classes, with a central focus on vocational English for Career Pathways.

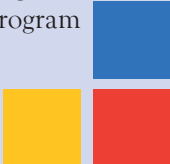
Elizabethtown Brethren in Christ Church is a hub of ESL activity on Wednesday nights, and in September, a High School Equivalency class will be added. Elizabethtown is also the site of an afternoon High School Equivalency class located at Doug Lamb Construction Co. These classes have been running for five years and two years, respectively.

Ephrata Library, which serves our northern end of the county, hosts two ESL groups and two High School Equivalency classes, while Columbia and Paradise hold evening High School Equivalency classes serving the west and east ends of Lancaster County.

There is a group of ESL learners at the Mountville Library who are instructed through team teaching. This program, which has been in place for over 15 years, has served many students through various instructors.

In addition to classes, there is one-on-one tutoring at all of the above sites as well as in Lititz, Mount Joy, Strasburg, Manheim, Manheim Township, Willow Street, and Quarryville.

From July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017, thanks to all of the literacy sites, instructors and volunteer tutors, 452 students have been served and 12,181 hours of learning have been logged in the Lancaster area! We're looking forward to more satellite success in the 2017-2018 program year!



## **Imagination Library: Promoting Family Literacy in Lancaster and Lebanon Counties -Ilsa Powell Diller, Outreach and Resource Coordinator**

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library first began in 1995. Dolly initially started this program to foster the love of reading for children and families in her home state of Tennessee. Dolly's idea was to make sure that preschool children (ages 0-5) received quality, age-appropriate books, mailed to their homes each month. Her goal was to get kids excited when the books arrived at their homes, help them build a wonderful library, and help families get books for their children, regardless of their income.

Imagination Library quickly grew in popularity, and by the year 2000, the program was available for any community who wanted to replicate what was originally started in Tennessee. The program now reaches children and their families across the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Through this program, thousands and thousands of children are being reached each month, and the positive impact is evident. Statistics and independent reports have shown the Imagination Library program has drastically improved early childhood literacy,

and also increased scores on early literacy testing ([www.imaginationlibrary.com](http://www.imaginationlibrary.com)).

The Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon is an Imagination Library Affiliate, and we currently administer programs in Annville, East Petersburg, Willow Street, Columbia, and Lebanon. Grant funding and partnerships have given LCLL the opportunity to continue offering the Imagination Library program to children and families in our communities. It is our hope, that through continued support, Imagination Library will continue to thrive and grow, reaching as many eligible children as possible in our two-county service area. If you would like to learn more about the Imagination Library Program or the Dolly Parton Foundation, visit their website at [www.imaginationlibrary.com](http://www.imaginationlibrary.com).



## **Integrated Education and Training: A New Spin on Basic Skills Education -Linda Cullen, ESL Student Coordinator**

A \$300,000 grant was awarded to the South Central Workforce Development Board (SCPA Works) to design and implement rigorous, high-quality, integrated education and training programs which will combine basic-skills instruction with training for a specific occupation or industry, beginning in the fall 2017. SCPA Works will partner with the Lancaster Workforce Development Board, Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13, The Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon, Harrisburg Area Community College, and the Career and Technology Centers in Lancaster and Lebanon counties. This project will target education and training programs in Lancaster and Lebanon counties for occupations designated "high priority," and where data indicates higher dropout rates from training programs.

"The integrated education and training (IET) model is a promising practice across the country that we believe will greatly benefit South Central PA residents," said South Central PA Works CEO Jesse McCree. "By providing adult education and literacy services concurrently with contextual workforce preparation activities, we can help build strong career pathways that lead to better economic mobility."

The Literacy Council will partner with South East Lancaster Health Services (SELHS) and The National Institute of Medical Assistant Advancement (NIMAA) to provide medical assistant training. NIMAA prepares students to work in integrated, team-based, primary care centers. SELHS will provide the skills training through a partnership with NIMAA, and The Literacy Council will embed a basic skills instructor in the classroom. The first group of students will be medical doctors who are refugees, and want a chance to reclaim a medical career in the U.S. A medical assistant certificate is a great place to start on that career path.

All of the students are learning English as a Second Language (ESL) and in a traditional program, they would have to put off skills training until their language skills were more developed. By having an ESL teacher embedded in the skills training classroom, students who need extra help can start the skills training, shortening the amount of time they must spend in training so that they can get jobs faster.

I am very excited to be part of the new program and look forward to teaching in September!



## 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 lifelong 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. 2017-2018 board members:

Richard Frerichs, President  
Ashley Garcia, Vice President  
Eric Luckenbaugh, Secretary  
Dave Diffendal, Treasurer

Scott Cole	Andrew Race
Martha Guaigua	Heather Sharpe
Cheryl Hiester*	Sandy Strunk
Sreeni Jakka	Marlene Usdin
Mary Edith Lechlitter	

\*(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.

**407 Lafayette Street, Lancaster, PA 17603 (Please note our new address)**  
**243 Schneider Drive, Lebanon, PA 17046**