



The Literacy Council
of Lancaster-Lebanon

The Literacy Line

Winter 2022

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Literacy & Learning
Success Centers

Lancaster | Lebanon

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Lancaster-Lebanon

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The Literacy & Learning Success Centers, a service of
The Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon.

Welcome 2022

Cheryl Hiester, Executive Director



A new year presents opportunities to reflect on the past year and look ahead with anticipation of doing things better. For some of us, it's eating a healthier diet or exercising more. For others, it's getting a new job, learning a new skill, or taking up a new hobby.

For many of the learners at the Success Centers, it is taking on some very big educational goals. From learning to read through attaining a postsecondary degree, our learners

look at the new year as a new opportunity. It is a brave thing to do. Imagine starting school with a full-time job (sometimes more than one job), a family, no car, and limited English skills. Or imagine that you are reading at third grade level, but you are determined to get your high school equivalency diploma. It takes guts and commitment. I have such high regard for our learners who decide that now is the time. They make sacrifices. Not everyone makes it the first time or two. They may have to start again at a time that better suits their life circumstances. The learners at the Success Centers come from different places and have different experiences but the one thing they have in common is the drive to improve their lives through learning.

Reflecting on 2021 is bittersweet. The year started off with a frightening display of the impact of misinformation and the value of knowing how to find and understand evidence-based information. Misinformation has impacted people's health and safety and literacy plays an important role. Our students are learning how to read and process information critically. They are learning how to be "information literate" and challenged to verify things read on social media. On that note, digital literacy has become as essential as reading, writing, and math. In 2021, we added stand-alone digital literacy services to ensure that all adults have essential computer skills and know how to use technology in daily life. We helped more than 100 students who were digitally excluded get a computer and learn how to use it.

COVID-19 continues to present risks that outweigh the benefit of face-to-face services. While we are eager to resume a more robust face-to-face presence, our staff and students are finding ways to be excellent at remote teaching and learning. Looking ahead, remote learning options are here to stay.

So, welcome 2022! Our focus this year will be on diversity, equity, and inclusion; digital inclusion; and enhancing opportunities for career success for our students.

Mindfulness, Resilience, and Hope for 2022

Ilsa Powell Diller, Outreach & Resource Coordinator

How are you doing? No, how are you really doing? As we end the year 2021 and look into 2022, we are also faced with the reality that we are edging into two years of the COVID-19 pandemic. Like most people, I have felt, at times, that I have been on the craziest roller coaster that exists—with no way to get off! At times, like most people, I have been sad, depressed, angry, hopeful, adaptable, and resilient. All these experiences are normal considering the above-mentioned roller coaster.

I look for answers; I look for resources; I look for data; I look for hope. My husband works for a large health system, and I have watched him navigate and help others navigate the highs and lows experienced by healthcare workers as they push forward, and some days, just strive to survive the daily chaos.

In thinking about “them” and “how they do it,” the word intention comes to mind. People navigating the chaos need to be mindful of their environments, and to have any sense of balance and sanity, they need to navigate with intention.

What does this mean? In a recent *New York Times* article written by Emily Sohn, she **highlights four tips for resilience as we move into 2022:**

Tip # 1: Build a Strong Social Network

Social support and social interaction helps you handle stressful situations. Even though it has been difficult to be “social” during the pandemic, find ways to connect with people—and stay connected. It’s a perfect opportunity to be creative in how you communicate—safely in person, via phone or zoom, social media and texts. The most important factor is keeping human connection.

Tip #2: Find Moments for Optimism

It is so easy to wallow and focus on the negative—and let’s face it, there has been a lot of negative! But there are also so many things we have learned in the last 21 months. The incredible kindness of others, the glory of a beautiful sunset, the value and love of family and friends, the support from a stranger... Perhaps if we focus a little more on what’s positive it will give us the energy we need to keep moving forward with hope.

Tip #3: Interrupt the Stress Cycle

There is no doubt that we have experienced a type of stress with COVID-19 that we have never experienced before. And, we all know the detrimental impact chronic stress can have on physical, mental, and emotional health. This is where the word intention comes in again. Mindfulness, meditation, and slow, deep breaths are just some of the simple ways we can stop, slow down, and break the stress cycle. It may not always feel like it, but we can control how we react to stressful situations, but it takes practice!

Tip #4: Embrace the Shake Up

Part of continuing to navigate the path of the pandemic is to acknowledge the chaos, acknowledge the stress, and not be ashamed of anything you may be feeling or experiencing because of things being turned upside down with COVID-19. There should be reassurance in knowing that many, many people are experiencing the same things you are, and if you acknowledge it—if we acknowledge it, we can work through it together.

Am I looking forward to 2022? Yes, I am. Not because I expect an “all clear,” but because I know there are resources and methods and people dedicated to making sure we have the tools to be mindful, resilient, and hopeful as we move into the New Year. Is it a choice to approach 2022 with this mindset? Absolutely! And one I hope many others will embrace.















Services in Our Community

Cathy Roth, Adjunct Instructor

This month, my class has been studying community. The text focuses on volunteering for a community agency as a way of deciding if this type of work is a good career choice. The grammar focus was on the use of *could*, *would* and *should*, as well as identifying words that indicated a sequence in stories about volunteers going about their duties. As with any unit, I have been making sure students were familiar with related vocabulary such as enthusiasm, responsibilities, commitment, coordinators, and routines.

Last year when I taught the same unit, I had asked students to do a report – researching local community agencies and explaining to the class how volunteers helped with each agency’s mission. I created a PowerPoint with information about The Literacy Council and IU13. I threw in a few clipart pictures of animal shelters and fire stations. I assumed an intermediate level class could do so fairly easily. I was mistaken. They did not seem to be familiar with community agencies. They could not give examples of projects they would be willing to do to help the community.

Human Service Agencies: Do you know if your community has these?

Lemon St	Lemon St	Lemon St	Lemon St
 	<p>Community College</p> <p>IU 13 Education center</p> 	 	 <p>CareerLink</p>
Willow St	Willow St	Willow St	Willow St
<p>Community Action Program CAP Housing and redevelopment</p> 	<p>Literacy Council</p> <p>Good Will Thrift store</p> 	<p>Senior Center</p> 	 <p>Public Assistance Agency Pa State</p>
Chestnut St	Chestnut St	Chestnut St	Chestnut St.
<p>Library</p> <p>City welcome center</p>	<p>Nursing Home</p>  		<p>Community Hospital</p>  <p>CHURCH WORLD SERVICE</p>
Oak St	Oak St	Oak St	Oak St

Next, I prepared a map and asked students how many of the agencies on the map they recognized. Hugo, who had been here 13 years could identify five, Emily who had only been here three years knew just one and it was The Literacy Council. Since then, I have been introducing them to the 211 information number and visiting local websites online using Zoom to help them become aware of such services. I have sent them additional readings on WhatsApp, shown them an Ellis Island Museum video, and explained I would love to volunteer there if I lived in the area, because I am interested in my ancestors’ arrival to America. I am hopeful that this approach will help my students learn a lot more about the agencies and services in our community.



International Medical Students Graduate from PSU Nursing Program

Brittany Foose, Student Services Coordinator



On December 17, 2021, students of the Penn State Harrisburg Second Degree Nursing Program were pinned as graduates of the nursing program. Six students from the Literacy & Learning Success Centers were honored in this celebration: Farba Faye, Tamara Favier, Adriana de Prieto, Yurima Verdecia, Enmanuel Sotomayor, Jesus Rodriguez, and Yeisy Alderete Palacio.

After successful completion of the NCLEX licensure exam, these students will start working at local hospitals, such as Lancaster General Hospital.

We are so proud of our students! We also wish to say thank you to the faculty and staff at PSU Harrisburg and our volunteers for their continued support of our International Medical Professionals Program.

In the Spirit of Muddling

Jane Myers, Volunteer & Tutor Services Coordinator

December 21—Winter Solstice—the shortest amount of daylight. In many cultures, lights are part of winter celebrations, such as Hanukkah, Kwanza, and Christmas, brightening the shorter, colder days. At the Literacy & Learning Success Centers we continue our focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and honor the many cultures, religions, and celebratory practices of the students who walk through our doors, and certainly brighten our days. In their classrooms, when we talk about celebrations, we not only teach them the traditions of holidays celebrated in America, like Christmas, we also ask them to teach us about the important holidays and traditions of their countries.

Holiday traditions have certainly been challenged in the past two years! A few weeks before Christmas, I was driving into Lancaster thinking about what to write for the winter newsletter while listening to the holiday tune, “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas” on the radio. First sung in 1944 during WWII, which seems like ages ago, the message transported me from the nostalgia of the past to the promise of a bright future—despite the challenges.

“Someday soon we all will be together, if the fates allow. Until then we’ll have to muddle through somehow.” What timely words. In March 2020, we at the Literacy & Learning Success Centers learned about “muddling” through. We learned Zoom, how to create and keep digital files, and more importantly, we learned how to keep our adult learners engaged. Volunteers jumped in with us, and, although our world had changed, we knew what had to be done to keep our program running smoothly.

Who knows what 2022 will bring? Whatever it may be, I see our staff and volunteers continuing to help our adult learners improve their skills for High School Equivalency (HSE), jobs, better jobs, post-secondary, training programs, English language proficiency, and self-improvement.

Arriving home, I checked my email before starting to write this article. A tutor shared that her student had just gotten a full-time job with benefits. This student came to us with very little education and is working on getting a GED. Her new employer told her that she had acquired very good English skills. This is just one example of many success stories. Although our world has changed, I believe the future, although different, will be bright at the Literacy & Learning Success Centers.

Although not all of us “hang a shining star upon the highest bough,” let’s look to the highest star in the sky and have a bright, happy, and healthy 2022.

Self-advocacy and American Traditions

Brittany Foose, ESOL Coordinator

My Level 1A class has been learning how to advocate for themselves. I've focused a lot on functional language for my students, because I want them to feel safe in their environment and be able to express their needs in their limited English. We've learned how to say things like, "I need (help, a doctor, medicine, a mask), please." A particular emphasis is talking about going to the doctor's office. I've taught my students phrases like, "I don't speak English. I speak.... I need an interpreter, please." I value my independence and my autonomy, and I try to pass on the same favors to my students.

Also, many of my students just experienced their first Thanksgiving, so my Level 1A class learned how many Americans celebrate Thanksgiving: eating turkey around the table with their family. We also learned how to talk about what we are happy for. Here are some of their answers:

- I am thankful for my granddaughters.
- I am thankful for my son.
- I am thankful for my friends.
- I am thankful for my family. They give me a lot of love.
- I am thankful for my teacher.
- I am thankful for everything God has given me.

Teaching my students measures for self-advocacy and traditions of an American holiday are just two examples of helping new language learners focus on life skills while also learning about traditions in their new country. To me, these are examples of what we mean by lifelong learning and learning for life.

Welcome Kat!

Jenny Bair, Program Director



Kat Ludlow joined The Literacy Council team on October 25, 2021.

Kat comes to us from a varied background which includes teaching English as a second Language overseas. She brings energy, a desire to help and learn, and genuine caring for people.

We are happy to have Kat join our team as an instructor and program coordinator. Keep reading to learn a little bit about our newest team member.

Hometown: Marietta, PA

Childhood Dream Job: anthropologist

First Job: picking peaches for an orchard (age 15)

Education: BA in Anthropology and Women's Studies

Movie: *The Bicycle Thief*

Book: *My Many Colored Days* by Dr. Seuss

It helps children understand the power of emotions and gives a visual representation to how they might be feeling when they may not have the words to express it.

Guilty TV Pleasure: Old Westerns


Hobbies: Hiking; painting; hanging out with my daughter

Music of Choice: 70s punk rock, classic jazz, or old country

How do you live The Literacy Council Mission?: Learning to roll with what life hands you – every day or during moments within the day we are faced with challenges or adversity. You choose how you will grow through it or how it will define you or hold you back.

Community Partner Highlight: Tec Centro

Megan Goerner, Student Advisor

TEC CENTRO  The air was quite cold on a late fall morning. There was frost on my car window, but it has now been melted away from the heat I have blasting from the vents. I am running a little late, but not so late that I am in a bad mood. Then at Queen and Chestnut streets, a car stops at the red light. As I sit there, the light turns green but the car ahead of me does not move. I see a little boy, maybe 10 or so, get out of the car. He goes over to the corner where a man is sitting in a wheelchair with a cardboard sign. The boy takes a nice warm blanket and drapes it on the man's lap. I watched all this forgetting about the traffic, and the light, and being late.

I am so thankful to be part of The Literacy Council where we “drape blankets on the laps of others” every day. We help individuals, with very little, gain education and skills that will help generations to come. I also know that there are many other organizations in our city that do amazing work for our community. One such organization is Tec Centro. Tec Centro is an amazing organization that provides education and low-cost training to those struggling in our community with underemployment or unemployment. They offer workforce training in the health field, construction, culinary arts, and other areas. Their services not only prepare individuals for the world of work, but they have employment services to match individuals with jobs in our community. I want to thank Tec Centro for being a resource in our community that “drapes warm blankets”.

Using Schoology in the Virtual Classroom

Amanda Ruth, Volunteer & Tutor Services Coordinator

At The Literacy & Learning Success Centers, digital learning has not only become a permanent option for adult learners, it has also become a strategic focus of excellence for the Centers to provide optimal online learning experiences for our students. With this focus in mind, I started looking for ways to work around some of the technology glitches that were happening with my students. IU13 students could not access Google Classroom, nor could any of my students that were using emails that were not linked to a Google account. Unless students used a secondary device, and often that meant that they were trying to complete their assignments on teeny, tiny little screens, they were forced to try and keep track of and organize all the links I was sending. This also became a problem when I was trying to get a link out to the students, and they had logged in late or had an internet issue that logged them out of our meeting. Along came Schoology, and its plethora of different options, to save the day!

Through our work with IU13, I was able to start building my Schoology class and learn about the different tools I could use to make my workload more manageable. I was able to post links in Schoology that I wanted students to access during class, and they were still able to have the link easily accessible to them after class. In addition to helping my students get organized, I was able to better organize myself because I could send students to Schoology to find missed work or materials instead of swapping emails. Once I started using assessments with my students, I realized that things were going to start moving quickly!

The assessment feature on our new learning management system gave me the option to have students show me their skills in bite size chunks. Once we covered a skill, I was easily able to use questions, similar to what they would see on the TABE test, to test their knowledge and give them some experience with the new material they learned. I could use the same options to have students practice GED or HiSet test questions without having to give them an entire practice test to complete.

No one likes to ask, but everyone always wonders, when is our next class? Do our classes follow the school districts' schedule, or are we going rogue? Another helpful feature I found was the ability to create events that post to the Schoology calendar for the class. This helped students when it came to planning for classes around the upcoming holidays, without me having to repeat myself. They felt secure in knowing exactly when their next class was, and I was sure that there was a way for them to know when they needed to meet with me.

There are many other features that make Schoology a great addition to my classroom, as well as integrations with the numerous resources that have become available to us. I am happy to have access to Schoology to help make teaching, both virtually and face-to-face, a manageable task that is interactive and ever changing, just like the learners we are serving.

The Literacy Line

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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

Success through Lifelong Learning and Learning for Life

Vision

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

Values

Empowerment – Our programs empower adult learners to set and meet goals to become the best version of themselves.

Success – Provide an environment of collaborative learning experiences, community partnerships and education innovations that allows our students to acquire the deep skills required to achieve the next step in their life goals. Our volunteers, staff, and board members are empowered to recommend changes that will foster the success of all our stakeholders.

Respect and Integrity – Our compassionate and caring approach and interactions are highly respectful of diverse backgrounds and cultures. Our integrity rests in our word, our deeds and actions to ensure trustworthiness and confidentiality.

Sustainability – The Literacy Council will make sound governance, program and fiscal decisions that honor the organizations ability to grow and thrive so that more adults in need can access our services. Our volunteers, staff, and board members are encouraged to actively advocate for adult education, lead by example and continuously refresh their skills to provide the highest quality experiences for our students.

Board

The Literacy Council is governed by a volunteer board of directors. 2020-2021 board members:

Eric Luckenbaugh, President

Aliina Hirschhoff Hopkins, Vice President

Willa Freer, Secretary

Erik Cianci, Treasurer

Chad Burgess

Scott Cole

Ashley Garcia

Star Gibbs

Martha Guaigua

Philip Heckert

Cheryl Hiester*

David Kindermann

Erika Nava

Stephanie Stauffer

Charity Welch

*(Non Voting)

Staff

Jenny Bair, Program Director

Brittany Foose, ESOL Coordinator

Megan Goerner, Student Advisor

Cheryl Hiester, Executive Director

Mitchell Hiester, Program Assistant

Kat Ludlow, Student Services Coordinator

Jane Myers, Volunteer and Tutor Services Coordinator

Ilsa Powell Diller, Outreach and Resource Coordinator

Rita Nutter, Instructor

Amanda Ruth, Volunteer and Tutor Services Coordinator

Monica Shannon, Program Assistant

Debra Totton, Digital Literacy and Navigation Coordinator

Adjunct Instructors

Meredith Aul

Steve Hess

Cathy Roth

Lauren Swartz

Volunteers Needed

Take action today and join us. We need volunteers to teach basic education skills.

To get started, contact:

Jane Myers,
Lancaster Center
jane@literacysuccess.org

Amanda Ruth,
Lebanon Center
amanda@literacysuccess.org



STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

The Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon is accredited under the PANO Standards for Excellence®

United Way



The Literacy & Learning Success Centers are supported by United Way of Lancaster and Lebanon Counties, and serve as the lead agency for Collective Impact projects. In Lancaster County, Integration Services for New Americans. In Lebanon County, Pipelines and Pathways to Success.

"When obstacles arise, you change your direction to reach your goal; you do not change your decision to get there." –Zig Ziglar