



The Literacy Council
of Lancaster-Lebanon

The Literacy Line

Spring 2023

In this issue...

- 2** Learning Never Gets Old
- 2** Volunteers are Life-saving
- 3** A Matched Pair
- 4** The Power of Why, How, and Other “WH” Questions
- 4** ESL English Classes for the Fun of It
- 5** HiFlex Approach
- 5** Internationally Trained Medical Professionals
- 6** PAACE Conference 2023
- 7** Introducing the Newest Success Centers Staff



2



Literacy & Learning
Success Centers

Lancaster | Lebanon

**The Literacy Council of
Lancaster-Lebanon**

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www.literacysuccess.org

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

Welcome Spring!

Cheryl Hiester, Executive Director

Despite a rather mild winter, spring feels especially sweet this year. As the lingering presence of COVID-19 grows a bit more distant, we are continuing to experience the impact. It's been challenging for so many individuals and families. Like a long-awaited warm spring day when you come outside and see your neighbors, I am feeling that vibe at The Success Centers. More face-to-face classes and meetings feel so good, and I have been grateful that we can get together.

I find myself focusing more and more on gratitude these days. I am thankful to be working with such an amazing staff, board, and group of volunteer teachers. I am grateful for our partners, especially IU 13, who make our success possible.

I am thankful for our students. We are working with a highly diverse student body who come from all over the world. Many of our students have faced (or are facing) significant adversity in their lives. Adults who were not able to complete school because of difficult family circumstances are working hard to get their high school diploma. Refugees from countries fraught with unrest, violence, and war are settling in and learning English to prepare for their new lives in a new home. Immigrant students seeking a new life with new opportunity facing unexpected hurdles persevere and focus on their goals. I am in admiration of their fortitude and courage.

Brittany Foose, an adjunct instructor with The Literacy & Learning Success Centers, teaches a beginning level English class. A few months ago, she taught a lesson on expressing feelings. Her students know very little English. She taught them the vocabulary needed to express feelings of being happy, sad, angry, worried, etc. As Brittany writes, "Earlier this year, I had mostly Afghan students; currently, many of my new students are Ukrainian and Russian evacuees. For these students, they've recently experienced premigration and postmigration traumatic events, so I feel it is important for students to learn how to talk about their emotions.

We also learned how to talk about what we're thankful for. Here are some of things my students shared:

- I am thankful for my children.
- I am thankful for safety.
- I am thankful for nature.
- I am thankful for my family.
- I am thankful for my teacher.
- I am thankful for my English class.

I am grateful for the opportunity to support our students in their journey to meeting their personal, career, and community goals."



Learning Never Gets Old: A Tutor Story

Maribel Torres, Program Coordinator

There are many inspiring stories about senior citizens who continue to make a positive impact in their communities, and the case of 82-year-old Fe is no exception. In a society that often views aging as a burden or a time of decline, Fe's willingness to volunteer proves that there is still much to be accomplished and much to be gained from a life well lived.

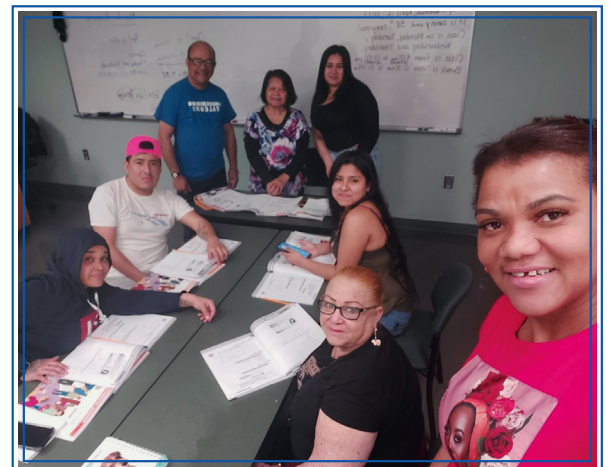
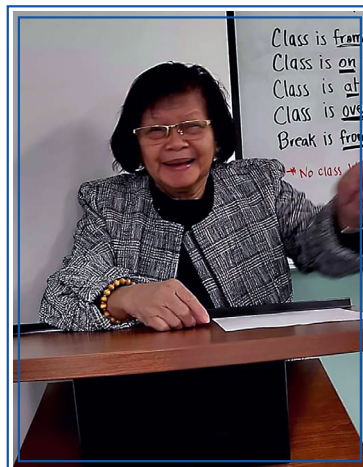
When I initially thought about calling my friend Fe to see if she would like to serve as a volunteer tutor for adult students at The Literacy Council, I fully expected her to respectfully decline my offer. After all, Fe was retired and had also faced some medical issues in the past. Fe had already served her community by working as a substitute teacher for many years. Prior to that, she had worked as a chemist in her native home of the Philippines. However, I totally underestimated her determination and desire to continue serving her community.

Fe was initially offered a one-on-one volunteer tutor position, but our needs quickly changed to needing a classroom tutor for several students. Fe did not hesitate to take on the challenge and has been meeting with the students twice a week. She devotes time to work with them on their goal of improving their English language proficiency. Her patience, encouragement, and support have made a real difference in their

lives. Her positive outlook on life and sense of humor help as well!

Fe's impact extends beyond the classroom. By setting an example of generosity, hard work, and compassion, she inspires others to give back to their communities and to make a positive impact in the world. An example of this is her inspiration to her own children who also volunteer and are involved with their communities.

Fe's example is a reminder of the power of education, the importance of giving back, and the potential for growth and fulfillment in all stages of life. Her dedication to helping others learn and grow is a testament to the power of education and the importance of lifelong learning.



Volunteers are Life-saving for a Teacher

Rita Nutter, Instructor

I have two volunteers that help me in my beginning English class. I could not do the work without them! Dotti Seitz helps me on Mondays and Wednesdays, and Marlene Usdin helps me on Tuesdays and Thursdays. My class has gotten rather large. Today there were 21 students attending. That is a large number of students to teach with Zoom. Sometimes my helpers will take students one-on-one into a breakout room and carry on a conversation with the student. This is good practice for the students and helps me understand what the students know and don't know. And my helpers keep me posted

on who is expecting a baby, and who got a new job, etc. Sometimes we will break up the class into two groups. I will take the newer students and give the volunteer the more experienced students. Working in the smaller groups gives the students more opportunity to practice speaking. I would be overwhelmed without the help of my volunteers. I would suggest that if you are thinking about it, please look into volunteering at The Literacy Council. You can work with a teacher, or you can work with only one student if you prefer. The students are so appreciative of the help. It is very rewarding.



A Matched Pair

Jane Myers, Volunteer & Tutor Services Coordinator

Madelaine arrived at The Literacy Council at the beginning of the pandemic. She had been laid off from work and decided it was time to get her High School Equivalency (HSE). Although I tried to discourage her, she was adamant about doing the math section first. Brenda was a new tutor. When I asked her about tutoring math, she was apprehensive, but she agreed. I mailed Madelaine's materials and met Brenda in the parking lot of the strip mall in Willow Street. We were masked.

On October 10, 2022, Madelaine passed the GED math test. On March 3, 2023, she passed the final section of the GED test and earned her HSE. Madelaine taught me a lesson. As educators, we often think we know what is best for our students. I discouraged her from starting with math, and I was wrong to do so. This, however, is not my story. Please read Madelaine's—in her words.

“ For many years I have been attempting to get my GED. Not a day of regret went by since I dropped out in the ninth grade. During COVID I lost my job and found myself sitting at home and in deep depression. I went from a hard-working woman to doing absolutely nothing. The world was shut down and I thought to myself, what can I do that I always put aside? My GED! I started to Google places near me, and I found The Literacy Council. I went in for a test and was offered a tutor for math and that's when I met Brenda.

Brenda took the time to work with me and understand my way of thinking and understanding. She was always patient and kind. She was flexible with me and my busy life. She was my biggest supporter. During our studies we both had ups and downs in our everyday lives. But we never gave up although I wanted to many times. She gave me breaks if she had vacation or something to do, but we were at it for 2 1/2 years. I decided to take my weakest subjects first because I knew if I pass them, I'll pass the others. I took one subject at a time a few months apart or when there was availability. I have my GED and I am so thankful for my tutor Brenda and the Literacy Council for helping me accomplish one of my biggest goals. ”

From Brenda:

“ When COVID arrived and the world shut down, life suddenly became radically different. As a former teacher, I had often entertained the idea of volunteering with The Literacy Council. However, I felt as though I didn't have time to devote to tutoring in the midst of family commitments and work obligations. COVID unexpectedly presented me with more than enough time to pursue tutoring with The Literacy Council. When asked what subjects I would like to tutor, I easily responded with “any of them.” A short time later, I found myself in the parking lot of Kendig Square with mask on, ready to social distance, and meet Jane with a GED book in hand. After receiving the GED practice book and the name of my first student, the learning journey began. Madelaine and I were both new to Zoom so we learned how to communicate and connect during those initial weeks. What impressed me most about Madelaine was her unwavering focus upon her goals. Over the next 2 1/2 years Madelaine and I spent many hours learning and connecting over the computer screen. Madelaine's persistence, dedication to her goals, resiliency, and motivation pushed her through many months of working and learning. During this time, I had the privilege to walk alongside Madelaine when her two grandsons were born, she secured a new job, she underwent a major surgery, and we both grieved family losses. Madelaine pushed forward every day to reach her goal of passing all four GED tests. Math came first—then science, social studies, and language arts. With each test, we celebrated both successes and, at times, disappointment. I consider it a great privilege to know Madelaine and to have journeyed with her to obtain her GED. Her enduring hope and optimism to reach her goals is truly inspiring! ”

“Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.”
-Helen Keller

The Power of Why, How, and Other “WH” Questions

Kat Ludow, Student Services Coordinator

We have spent the last few weeks of class learning and reviewing all the “WH” questions in the Level 2 class that I am fortunate enough to teach. These questions are the most common in the English language and what I feel as a teacher the foundation of understanding the world for a non-native speaker. To understand the context of these questions is setting one up for the small successes that can connect the dots to navigating a new life with self-agency and confidence.

The “Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How” is something that we spend weeks on. Who do you call if you have an emergency? What are your goals in learning English? When will you be ready to take the next step towards the next goal? Where can you go to find the resources to accomplish those goals?

Why and How are always at the root of all these other questions. The answers for “Why do you want to learn English?” are the driving force to these amazing students’ concrete answers. Despite the adversities they have had to overcome to get to this point or those that they still must endure daily, the responses are solid and simple.

- “I want to learn English to become a citizen so that I can vote.”
- “I want to help my children with their homework and talk to the teacher.”

- “I must learn English this is my new home. There is a war in my country, and I can never go back again.”
- “I need to learn English so that I can get a better job. I want to have a better life for my family.”
- “I was not allowed to learn in my country because women are not given this. I want to learn to read because here I am allowed.”

There is so much conviction, will, and determination in their answers and this is the driving force that keeps a teacher going within adult education. “How” can we bridge that gap from one simple answer to a goal manifested? “How” can a lesson be created to build the language skills that gives one the tools to live out these goals?

The funding of adult education for these classes is the only way to keep any of this going. Just as the definition of success is so individual for all of us. After all, something small to one is everything to another just as every penny given to adult education is...everything.

Adult education is the continued celebration of success every day. From the radiant smiles of pride when a student says, “Teacher I did it! I got the job” or “Yes. I want to read it.” to “I am a US Citizen now! I passed the exam.” These victories and success belong to them, and yet they reflect on us all.

ESL English Classes for the Fun of It

- Inference Cards: One of our new favorite activities. The students work in pairs to use their observational skills.
- Food review in a Bingo style game.
- Game Day is coming up. We will be playing Taboo, Boggle, and other games to help practice our English.

For more information about classroom games and activities, contact Lauren Swartz at lauren@literacysuccess.org.

HiFlex Approach to High School Equivalency

Amanda Ruth, Volunteer & Tutor Services Coordinator

This year, I started trying out a new way to reach my high school equivalency students. Many of my students were enjoying online classes but as we continued to work our way through the program year, more and more students were requesting an in-person class. Thanks to a grant from the Forest Path Foundation, we were able to purchase state of the art online teaching equipment for our classrooms, allowing us to simultaneously teach people in person and at home, giving our students the option to choose their preference.

A few months ago, I put the equipment to use at the Lebanon CareerLink. Since March 2020, my math class was online. In January, we were ready to try a class located in Lebanon with an online option for anyone who was not able to travel to the Lebanon CareerLink.

After some technology-related hiccups, we were well on our way to success. My students were both patient and gracious as I got kicked out of my own class, could not see my camera, had to restart the whole set-up, along with a few other hurdles. They offered me help along the way and were happy to tell me when things were working and, more importantly, when they were not.

My class numbers had a huge boost. I went from having about five students online in the 2022 fall session, to having five or six students in-person and another seven+ online. It was a much-needed boost in morale. The students who had been with me got the benefit of coming in if they were having tech troubles or were looking for a face-to-face class, and the new students coming into my class were able to integrate themselves in both areas as well.

One of the students who started with me in the fall was able to take and complete her GED tests and earn her high school equivalency. Before she took her last few tests, she was able to come in and meet the class in-person and make a connection with other students. Two other students that started with me in January were able to take their GED math tests and pass! They have since moved on to the other subjects and are hoping to be finished by summer.

We still have our struggles; some days the screen gets glitchy or turns off. Other days my tablet does not want to connect, but all-in-all it has been a wonderful return to the classroom for me and the students. As our team builds our technological muscles, the HiFlex option will enable us to serve more students and allow our students greater flexibility.

Internationally Trained Medical Professionals Help Fill the Shortage in US

Cathy Roth, Adjunct Instructor

As I have personally visited hospitals and rehab facilities in recent months while taking care of a loved one, I can attest to the fact that there is a critical shortage of medical professionals. One of the solutions to the critical shortage is to help internationally trained medical professionals reclaim their careers in their new home. There are hundreds of medical professionals in our service area who are not able to work as doctors and nurses because of language and credentialing barriers.

Learning English is the first steps. Many medical professionals who come to the US are seeking ways to either learn or improve their English so that they can gain the education and credentials needed to re-enter their profession. Lorena, from Peru, attends my English class. She was a surgeon in a trauma center in her country for 10 years. Although she is currently working at

Walmart, her first goal is to become a medical assistant for Penn State Hershey Medical Center. She is an excellent student and hopes to improve her English so that she feels comfortable in an interview and can gain employment at the hospital. She eventually wants to go back to trauma surgery.

The Literacy & Learning Success Centers have been working with foreign-born medical professionals for several years. In classes targeted specifically for them, they learn English medical terminology, prepare for exams and post-secondary degrees, and get assistance with job resources and career placement. This volunteer led program founded by Dr. Daniel Weber, has worked with more than 90 medical professionals. For more information about the Program for International Medical Professionals, please contact Cheryl Hiester at cheryl@literacysuccess.org.

PAACE Conference 2023

Ilsa Powell Diller, Outreach & Resource Coordinator



**Adult Education
Meets the Moment!**

For the first time ever, the PAACE (Pennsylvania Association for Adult Continuing Education) Conference was held in Lancaster! Over 250 adult educators from across the Commonwealth gathered at the Lancaster Marriott for two days of professional development and networking, with Mayor Danene Sorace welcoming everyone to Lancaster City. Members of our staff presented several workshops. Jenny Bair collaborated with Josh McManness, Lora Zangari, and Jessica

Barnhart of IU 13, to present a workshop on fostering team resilience in adult education programs. Amanda Ruth presented a workshop on creating a thinking math classroom. Megan Goerner, with Patricia Barnes of IU 13, presented a workshop on identifying ways to recognize and respond to students who have experienced trauma. Cheryl Hiester presented a workshop with Joe Murzyn of One+Strategies on impact through effective lobbying and advocacy.

PAACE Award Winners from the Success Centers

**Dr. Daniel Weber,
PAACE Outstanding
Volunteer of 2023**

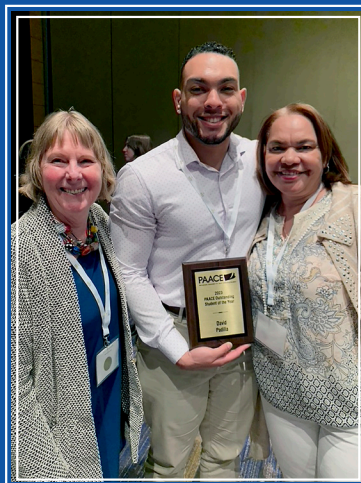
Thank you for all you do, Dan!



Dan is pictured with his wife, Nina, and former student Adriana.

**David Padilla, PAACE
Outstanding Student
of 2023**

David was nominated by his tutor, Wendy Clement.



David is pictured with his mom and Wendy.

**Josh McManness,
PAACE Outstanding
Leadership of 2023**

Congratulations Josh!

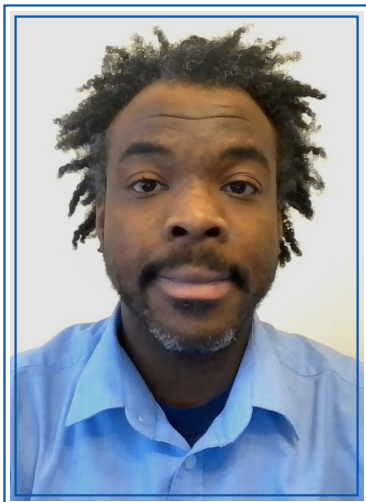


Josh is pictured with his parents, daughter, and Loice Byler (IU 13 staff member).

Introducing the Newest Success Centers Staff

Jenny Bair, Program Director

Meet Darrill Ersery!



Hometown: Chicago, Illinois

Childhood Dream Job: Archeologist...lots of time spent at the Field Museum

First Job: Photo lab at a CVS

Education: Temple University, BA in History

Movie: Too many, but Tampopo is up there

Book: *The Grapes of Wrath*

Guilty TV Pleasure: Taskmaster

Hobbies: Reading, taking walks, gardening, cooking (and eating), ceramics

Music of Choice: Hip-Hop and Jazz

How do you live The Literacy Council Mission?: Success through lifelong learning and learning for life. Even before joining The Literacy Council, I believed in this idea. Every day I try to challenge myself to learn or experience something new. Whether it be through reading or going out into the community and meeting new people, I try to learn more about the world around me. There's no age where someone stops learning and because of that, every day is an opportunity to become a better person.

Meet Taylor Thomas!



Hometown: Waldorf, Maryland

Childhood Dream Job: Veterinarian

First Job: Office Administrator

Education: B.A. in Anthropology, Women and Gendered Studies with a minor in Political Science from the University of Delaware

Book: *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini

Guilty TV Pleasure: Bad Movies and K Dramas

Hobbies: Ceramics, dancing, and adventures with friends

Music of Choice: Everything, my playlist is International!

How do you live The Literacy Council Mission?: I live the mission by being kind and patient with the people I meet. I encourage questions and refuse to let anyone give up on themselves.

Last chance to join the fun
and support adult literacy!



May 22, 2023
Lebanon Country Club

<https://bit.ly/LinksForeLiteracy2023>

The Literacy Line

8

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

To promote success through life-long 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.

Staff

Jenny Bair, Program Director
Darrill Ersery, Program 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
Erika Otthofer, Adult Student Assessor
Amanda Ruth, Program Coordinator
Monica Shannon, Program Assistant
Taylor Thomas, Program Coordinator
Maribel Torres, Program Coordinator
Debra Totton, Digital Literacy and Navigation Coordinator

Adjunct Instructors

Meredith Aul
Brittany Foose
Steve Hess
Deb Linton
Cathy Roth
Lauren Swartz

Board

The Literacy Council is governed by a volunteer board of directors. 2022-2023 board members:

Aliina Hirschhoff Hopkins, President
Erik Cianci, Vice President
Scott Cole, Secretary
Philip Heckert, Treasurer
Chad Burgess
Ashley Garcia
Martha Guaigua
Cheryl Hiester*
Stephanie Stauffer

*(Non Voting)



STANDARDS FOR
EXCELLENCE

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

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

Maribel Torres,
Lebanon Center
maribel@literacysuccess.org

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