



The Literacy Council
of Lancaster-Lebanon



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Literacy & Learning
Success Centers

Lancaster | Lebanon

**The Literacy Council of
Lancaster-Lebanon**

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

September Celebrates Literacy

Cheryl Hiester, Executive Director

September is National Literacy Month—a month that shines a light on the importance of literacy and the impact that limited literacy has on people and communities.

September 8: [International Literacy Day](#)

September 16: [National GED Day](#)

September 16-20: [National Adult and Family Literacy Education Week](#)

It is hard to imagine that about 48 million adults in the U.S. read at or below a third-grade level ([ProLiteracy](#)). In Lancaster and Lebanon counties, about 104,000 adults struggle with basic literacy and English fluency ([PIAAC](#)).

The good news is that skills can be learned—no matter how old you are, and the Literacy & Learning Success Centers are here when adults are ready to build their skills for life at home, work, and in the community.

What Can You Do?

1. Let your legislators know about the importance of adult and family literacy education. It only takes a minute to send a message. By clicking the button below you can send a message to Governor Shapiro, your PA Representative, and Senator, asking them to support adult education in Pennsylvania.
- [Send a Message](#)
2. Explore the links to learn more about the state of literacy in our state, counties, and nation.
 3. Volunteer as a tutor or classroom aide. We have adult students waiting for a tutor. Please consider becoming a tutor.
 4. Help someone in need of adult basic education services find us. Help someone in need of adult basic education services find us.

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A Place of Welcoming

Jenny Bair, Program Director

One of the core values of our programs is to be a place of welcoming.

“We work hard to be a place where each person feels valued, safe, welcomed, and visible at The Success Centers.”

Why Is This Important?

Adult students, including those who access our programs, often must overcome emotional and social barriers to build the courage to walk through our doors. Fear of judgment, negative memories of school, and negative self-perceptions can prevent adults from connecting to educational services.

That’s why the Literacy & Learning Success Centers commit to being places of welcome, where people are greeted with an understanding smile and the reassurance that they are at a place where they are accepted and supported.

In addition to highlighting the importance of creating a welcoming place, an October 2023 article on the ProLiteracy website (www.proliteracy.org) provides three additional tips for instructors and tutors in helping students commit to and persist in adult education programs.

- Set a tone of understanding and adaptability in the classroom from day one. Empathy and a judgment-free zone are first, followed by empowerment. Remember, despite feeling uncertain, students had the courage to walk through the door. If they know there is a culture willing to adapt to changing needs, students become empowered to overcome obstacles and succeed in the program.
- Establish a plan of study based on students’ outside influences: their support systems, available nuggets of study time, attendance expectations, etc.
- Flip the classroom and let people learn from one another. If a natural mentor-mentee relationship occurs, recognize the value and voice encouragement. Students will find they all have different strengths and areas of expertise and that they can seek help from those who are experts in areas they are not.

Creating a place of welcome is more than just a nice thing to do; it just might be the first step to helping students persist and meet their goals.

Celebrate Literacy

(continued from cover page)

Top 10 Reasons You Should Advocate for Adult and Family Literacy Education:

1. If you are not at the table, you are on the menu. Governor Shapiro included a \$1 million increase in the Adult and Family Literacy line in the budget that did not make it into the final budget for the budget year 2024-2025. Our elected officials need to hear from us!
2. Sharing student successes puts a face on the numbers. Our students have stories worth celebrating and sharing.
3. Our students deserve to have their voices heard.
4. Our elected officials and their staff need ongoing reminders that we are here and that we are a key workforce development partner.
5. Legislators like to know about resources in their district that they can share with their constituents. When we take the time to let our elected officials know about our work, they can connect people in need to services.
6. Make friends before you need them—advocacy is relational—make connections and stay in touch. Advocating for adult education is not a one-time event but rather an ongoing process that builds greater awareness.
7. Our advocacy will help legislators make good and well-informed decisions. They need to hear from us.
8. Our advocacy ensures that our legislators are informed about the number of people in their district who struggle with basic literacy and that we offer programs that work.
9. We must work together to lay the foundation for future funding increases.
10. We will have a positive learning experience that can really make a difference.



Adriana's Story

Jane Myers, Volunteer Services Coordinator



My name is Adriana. I am 48 years old, a mother, an immigrant, a student, and a healthcare professional. I came to the U.S. eight years ago to give my son a better future. I had been a doctor and practiced Family Medicine in Cuba for 17 years, treating and helping people of all ages with various diseases.

My experiences in Cuba,

Venezuela, and Brazil exposed me to different cultures, languages, and backgrounds, and I realized that, in many ways, we are all the same.

When I arrived in the U.S., my main goal was to re-enter the healthcare profession, but I faced many challenges. I had to learn English from scratch and started English classes at the Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon in Lancaster. There, I not only learned English, but also English medical terminology

in the International Healthcare Professionals Program. I also learned about American culture, rules, and how American people are warm, welcoming, and fabulous. Every experience was a valuable learning opportunity for me, no matter how small.

One of my most significant accomplishments was graduating as a Registered Nurse with a BSN in 2021 after enrolling in the Second Degree Accelerated Nursing Program at Penn State University. This was a significant professional achievement for me. I learned English to do that. I had excellent teachers and tutors at The Literacy Council, and I thought that one day, I would like to give them back what they dedicated to me. Recently, I became a volunteer for LCLL to help other newcomers start their journey as smoothly as possible.

I have been working as a Registered Nurse in Lancaster City, where I am dedicated to giving back to my community. What I find most rewarding about life is the ability to help others. This has inspired me to further my education, and I am currently a Family Nurse Practitioner student at Millersville University.

The Value of Citizenship

Cathy Roth, Adjunct Instructor

I feel lucky to have been born a U.S. citizen. I have rights and freedoms others only dream about. Yes, I have responsibilities too. I learned about all of them first through my family and then thanks to my free education.

Some people are not as fortunate. There are places in the world where people cannot live their lives according to their religious and cultural beliefs, have easy access to education, or pursue their dreams and talents. Some of our students have come from places where they lived in abject poverty and danger and little hope for things to get better.

Many folks have come from great distances to find a new home in the United States. When they arrive in Lancaster or Lebanon counties, they find their way to the Success Centers to build their language and citizenship skills. They want to be part of their new country, and many seek to become U.S. citizens. Most Americans do not know what it takes to become a naturalized American citizen. There is a significant application

fee and a great deal that needs to be learned to go through the citizenship process. Applicants must also complete an interview showing they are of sound character. Imagine having to learn American history, understand the U.S. system of government, answer questions about your family, travel history, and affiliations. You must know who your representatives are and how to contact them. Imagine writing sentences dictated to you by the interviewer when your first language is not English.

Can you name three of the 13 original colonies, a native American Indian tribe, or two cabinet-level positions? Can you name one writer of the Federalist Papers? Could you match the names of Eisenhower, Woodrow Wilson, FDR, or Martin Luther King Jr. to their deeds? These are just a few examples of the questions new citizens must answer. The road to American citizenship is rigorous. The value outweighs the hurdles that must be jumped to embrace their new country as a U.S. citizen.



In Their Own Words

Meredith Aul, Adjunct Instructor

I was teaching "used to" to talk about a past situation or habit that is not true now. I asked students to write poems that follow the format of "used to be _____, but now I'm _____." I encouraged students to put ideas from their personal memories. There is quite a

bit of research on how poetry may present sentence structures in ways that students don't encounter in prose texts. Using such sentence structures can help English language learners develop a better understanding of conversational English syntax.

O. Foris, Ukraine

I used to be afraid my schools director, but now I own director school.

I used to run long distance, but now I go long distance.

Early I used to take a book in the library, but now I read book in smartphone.

I used to like watching TV, now I like to look at nature.

I used to walk but now I drive a car.

I used to service airplanes, now I'm afraid to fly on an airplane.

I used to live in Ukraine, but now I live in the USA.

The world used to be safe, but now the world has become explosive.

Previously we used to send a letter, but now you can arrange a video call.

We used to drink water from rill, but now we drink water from plastic bottle.

S. Alishanova, Ukraine

I used to live in Ukraine, but now I live in America.

I didn't use to know English, but now I'm learning to speak.

I used to live alone, but now I have a big family.

I used to go to the beach, but now I go to the park.

M. Lao

I used to farm every day, but now I stay at home.

I used to sleep early, but now I sleep late.

I used to go hiking or camping, every year, but now I can't go because I pregnant.

I used to do everythings, but now I do nothings.

A. Naghit, Moldova

I used to live in Moldova, but now I live in America.

I used to live with my husband, but now I have a big family.

I used to dream of visiting Mexico, but now I'm going to vacation in Mexico.

I used to work a lot, but now I'm sitting at home.

I didn't speak English before, but now I'm learning English.

I used to eat everything, but now I eat healthy.

I used to read a lot, but now I watch more videos.

T. Ferej

When I was young, I used to get angry easily, but I don't now.

I used to expect something from people, but I don't now.

I used to think people are like me, but now I realize they are not.

I used to get angry when I see something bad, but I don't get angry now when I see something that don't concern me.

If I get angry, I try to calm down and control myself not to get wrong.

D. Hernandez-Sanchez, Cuba

I used to work in a story (store), but now I work in a restaurant.

I used to go to the disco, but now I go to the park.

I used to be at home early, but now I'm gone to the gym every day in the morning.

I didn't use to drive, but now I drive every day to work.

I used to play soccer, but now I watch soccer on TV.

In my country, I used to eat Cuban food, but now I eat healthier food.

I used to speak Spanish, but now I'm learning English.



Celebrating Flor: Embodying Student Persistence in the Face of Life Events

Steve Hess, Program Supervisor



Adults participating in Adult Basic Education (ABE) activities do so for various reasons. These reasons may include improving their language and workforce skills to get a job, maintain the job they have, or get a better job. They may also desire to earn a degree or certification, or it might also be to accomplish personal goals.

We know that life events often occur that make it necessary for students to put these goals on hold, step out for a time, or drop out completely. Understanding what motivates students to persist enables us to better serve them and help them overcome the barriers that all too often end journeys before they begin. Flor's story of persistence shines a spotlight on what is possible.

Flor Gonzalez came to the United States eight months ago from the Dominican Republic. In the Dominican Republic, she worked at Scotiabank for several years. She came to the United States to have more opportunities and to provide a better future for her son.

Flor began taking face-to-face Level 1 ESL classes at the Lebanon Literacy & Learning Success Center in April of 2024. At that time, she was pregnant with her second child, yet she came to every class as her motivation to learn centered on her desire to communicate better with others, expand her knowledge, and have better employment opportunities. Throughout the past few months, as her pregnancy progressed, Flor continued to consistently come to class, actively participate,

complete homework assignments, and support and serve as a role model for her peers. Her dedication, hard work in and out of the classroom, and unwavering focus on achieving her goals resulted in her successful educational gains so that she will now enter Level 2 in September, putting her one step closer to meeting her personal goals.

As Flor gets ready to give birth in September, she plans to continue her learning. She will take remote classes with the hope of returning to face-to-face classes at some point in the future. Flor's future plans include becoming bilingual and studying for a professional career. To help others stay motivated and continue studying English when life events happen, Flor provided the following words of wisdom:

"There will always be obstacles in life, but when we have a goal, we must stay focused on achieving it with effort and discipline. We must be persistent and think about the next thing we will achieve if we take the first step."

Flor's story embodies the mission of the Literacy & Learning Success Centers of The Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon—to provide opportunities for success through lifelong learning and learning for life. Flor embraces these opportunities and inspires possibilities. As her first instructor in her journey to reach her goals since coming to the United States, Flor has shown me that the impossible is nothing. She reinforces the powerful role that adult education programs play in providing equitable opportunities and access for adults to have the skills to transform their lives, sustain their families, and strengthen their communities. She highlights what can be. Most importantly, she embodies the power of persistence.

Imagination Library

Since 2009, The Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon has been an affiliate of Dolly Parton's [Imagination Library](#). Imagination Library is a book gifting program that mails high-quality books to children from birth to age five. As an affiliate, we enroll children in the program and pay for a portion of the cost of books and shipping.

During the past 16 years, more than 2,000 children have enrolled in the program. The Literacy Council started Imagination Library to fulfill the legacy project of Agnes McClintock. Agnes was a producer at WGAL when she covered a story about the first Imagination Library in Pennsylvania in Hanover. When Agnes

learned that she was terminally ill, she decided to invest her assets in bringing Imagination Library to her community. The Literacy Council was honored to bring her dream to reality. We started our program in one zip code, Agnes's hometown of East Petersburg. We are now serving 18 zip codes.

A very special thank you to our partners who make this program possible.

- Pequea Valley School District and the Rotary Club of Paradise
- Lancaster Rotary South
- The Lebanon Kiwanis Club



Student Success Story: Avery Beckham

Deb Linton, Adjunct Instructor



Avery Beckham recently accomplished the goal he set in 2015 which was to receive his high school equivalency (HSE) diploma. The staff at the Literacy & Learning Success Centers are very proud of him for his hard work and perseverance throughout the process of attaining his goal.

Avery stopped attending high school during tenth grade in 2012. Determined to meet his goal, Avery attended high school equivalency preparation classes at IU13 Community Education at CareerLink from 2015 to 2019, during which time he passed all the HiSET exams except math.

In December 2021, an acquaintance recommended that he contact the Success Centers. He began his

math classes in January 2022, quickly advancing from level one math to level two math class. In addition to attending classes, Avery spent many hours outside of classes studying math from websites and other online resources.

In April 2024, Avery passed the math HiSET exam, completing his HSE equivalency requirements. He participated in the HSE celebration on June 11, 2024. His next goal is to take the SAT exam and apply for admittance to either HACC or Millersville University. He is unsure of a career choice at this point but is confident it will become clear to him as he progresses through the courses he takes.

IU13 Community Education and the Literacy & Learning Success Centers work together to provide many options for adults who want to get their diplomas. To learn more, please visit our website, www.literacysuccess.org, or call 717-295-5523.



Student Accomplishments

Lauren Swartz, ESL Instructor

We concluded our program year with a picnic and celebrated our accomplishments for the year.

- J was able to get a new job.
- Magdeleine was able to purchase a car.
- H bought her mother and siblings a home in their country.
- E and Samar completed teacher training classes.
- A found a new, more challenging job.
- Flor can understand better and faster when people speak to her in English.
- H completed homework every week and always demonstrated her commitment to learning.
- D passed her citizenship test.



EXTRA GIVE™

NOVEMBER 22

EXTRAGIVE.ORG

On November 22, donate online at ExtraGive.org and your generous gift will go even further thanks to the Stretch Pool and prizes from the Community Foundation and many extraordinary sponsors.

LET'S GO THE EXTRA MILE TOGETHER!



SUPPORT OUR ORGANIZATION!

DIRECT LINK TO THE LITERACY COUNCIL'S PAGE:

<https://bit.ly/3RJsdZD>

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

Providing opportunities for success through lifelong learning and learning for life.

Vision

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

Values

A place of welcome – We work hard to be a place where each person feels valued, safe, welcomed, and visible at the Success Centers.

Trust and integrity – We do what we say. Our students, colleagues, community partners, funders, and donors entrust us to fulfill our mission and we believe that it is our duty to be worthy of that trust.

Inspire possibilities – Our programs inspire adults to realize their chosen potential. Our programs meet adult learners where they are and help them set and meet their goals. We commit to success for our students, staff, volunteers, and the program.

Staff

Meredith Aul, Adjunct Instructor

Jenny Bair, Program Director

Shawn Gaffney, Adjunct Instructor

Megan Goerner, Program Supervisor

Steven Hess, Program Supervisor

Cheryl Hiester, Executive Director

Mitchell Hiester, Program Assistant

Evan Ippolito, Instructor

Deb Linton, Adjunct Instructor

Katherine Ludlow, Instructor and Program Coordinator

Jane Myers, Volunteer Services Coordinator

Rita Nutter, ESL Instructor

Ilsa Powell Diller, Outreach and Resource Coordinator

Cathy Roth, Adjunct Instructor

Monica Shannon, Receptionist/Program Assistant

Lauren Swartz, ESL Instructor

Taylor Thomas, Program Coordinator

Debra Totten, Digital Navigator

Board

The Literacy Council is governed by a volunteer board of directors. 2024-2025 board members:

Chad Burgess, President

Erik Cianci, Vice President

Stephanie Stauffer, Secretary

Philip Heckert, Treasurer

Scott Cole

Ashley Garcia

Martha Guaigua

Cheryl Hiester*

Tim Steffen

*(Non Voting)

Volunteers Needed

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

To get started, contact:

Jane Myers,
Lancaster and Lebanon Success Centers
jane@literacysuccess.org



STANDARDS FOR
EXCELLENCE

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

The official registration and financial information of The Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon, LVA, Inc. may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

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

–Zig Ziglar