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For Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County
Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County is a 501 (c) (3) New Jersey Nonprofit Corporation

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WHO WE ARE

In 1981, The American Library Association brought together national volunteer, private, and public sector organizations to organize the Coalition for Literacy. By the fall of 1986, local, state, and national programs had been planned. The largest was Project Literacy U.S. (PLUS), organized by the Public Broadcasting System and the American Broadcasting Company to support local community task forces against illiteracy. In 1987, Project PLUS Bergen County, now known as Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County, was founded.

WHAT WE DO

They say hindsight is 20/20. Looking back, we see clearly the impact we have had on the communities of Greater Bergen County. Thousands of our neighbors have benefitted from our programs.

Lourdes said, "My classmates were from different countries and we were all at the same point. We all wanted to learn English and it does not matter who you were or what you did in the past, we were standing in the same line."

Free English language elementary and secondary education is available to the entire American population, yet there is a gap for Americans who did not fully benefit from this system, along with foreign-born adults, new to this country.
Our tutoring program targets adults who cannot read, write, or speak English who need tutoring by trained volunteers, and for whom classes are not possible. Using trained volunteer tutors, Project Literacy helps foreign-born adults learn English, navigate the naturalization process, and learn American norms and values, with an emphasis on egalitarianism. Tutors incorporate civics lessons to improve an immigrant’s chances of passing the naturalization test to earn citizenship. Students are also taught about American national holidays, history, government, the legal system, and equal opportunity. Our tutors work with American born and foreign-educated students to prepare for the High School Equivalency examination.

July 2019 – June 2020:

In ordinary times, our mission is to increase the level of public awareness of the issue of adult illiteracy, to serve as a catalyst for initiatives and activities that increase the level of adult literacy and to promote literacy as a foundation for lifelong learning. Using trained volunteer tutors, we offer free 1-on-1 tutoring in Adult Basic Literacy – Reading and writing; English as a Second Language (ESL); Mathematics for the High School Equivalency exam. Tutors are matched with students based on time availability, geographic location, and level of the student. We have both quantitative and qualitative data that support our program design and implementation.

However, this year the Coronavirus has challenged us to continue to work towards our mission by adopting several “Distance Learning Resources” to help our students respect social distancing and continue learning during a time of health crisis and uncertainty. Methods employed include Zoom, Free Conference Call, Google Hangouts, and Skype. Our building was shuttered in mid-March and we have voluntarily been working from home ever since. We immediately started Zoom sessions, some informal and others more formal, some hosted by us, and some hosted by a tutor. To this day, various student/tutor combos meet every Wednesday at 10:00 and 5:00. We have added a weekly movie/discussion club, developed out of the students’ interest in reading great American literature. These sessions give them a sense of community while seeing familiar and friendly faces. It was a great morale booster. Although many of our tutor/student couples have managed to continue working together, others were not able to continue which creates a challenge for us to rebuild our teams, once the pandemic is cleared. We will need your support as we go forward.

The Coronavirus has impacted the number of students in our program. At June 30, 2020, our student body totaled 116 students, 71 of whom were matched with a tutor, and was a blend of economic backgrounds, diverse and inclusive, consisting of adults aged 25 – 59, all local residents who come from 25 different countries. Foreign-born adults represent 93% of our students; the
remaining 7% are American-born. Approximately 15% are low-to middle-income, while the remaining 85% are low to no income.

“When I came to America from Senegal, I wasn’t able to speak English. Now I can read and write. You can’t imagine how it feels. I feel so happy. My dream is to be a teacher someday. Thank you so much Miss Dorothy for helping me with English. God bless you.”
- Suzanne

This chart reflects the erosion of our student body because of the pandemic.

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>96/39</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>73/47</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>15/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>47/32</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>13/11</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>37/31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>143/71</td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>15/3</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>6/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>42/10</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>10/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>60/68</td>
<td>Korea</td>
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</table>

The pandemic has given us the opportunity to contribute in a unique way. New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy announced a program whereby foreign-licensed physicians living in the United States can apply for a “temporary emergency license” to assist in New Jersey during the Coronavirus pandemic and began accepting applications immediately. We provided several candidates from our student body. Ninety-three percent of our students are immigrants, including a dozen Turkish physicians of different disciplines who have come to us to learn English. Ten of these physicians have applied for the temporary license. One of our students is a geneticist at Columbia University. Three others are actively assisting in local hospitals while others are awaiting verification of credentials and placement from the state.

Looking forward, we see a need to rebuild our student body using a blend of traditional and modern means to deliver literacy to our neighbors in need, perhaps with an emphasis on digital inclusion.

Since the pandemic began, we have switched from face to face tutoring to distance learning – tele-teaching. Our tutor numbers have plummeted, mainly because half them have asked to be put on a waiting list until we get back to face to face. Some who are still working are using Zoom or Facetime and we want to encourage the tutors on the sideline to get back into the game and use Zoom so we will pick up that cost for them. We believe that funding could become available for distance learning. The advantages are that we can do groups and we can work anywhere in the world! We are now doing two to three discussion groups a week with tutors and students. It should bring many tutors back into the fold and even attract new tutors. Also, it’s a nice way to give back to our tutors.
Achievements over the Past Year: Our greatest accomplishment is having provided 7,644 hours of free instruction to 130 students for a value of $287,165. Our student body has averaged over 225 students every year. Further:

- We completely redesigned our website;
- We rebuilt and organized the student/tutor database, moving it to the cloud and allowing us to access it remotely;
- We completed the two 5-week tutor training sessions, one online, and provided tutor training to several local public libraries;
- Based on reviews from the public, we have been awarded the “Top-Rated” classification by Great Nonprofits in each of the past three years;
- To honor a long-time supporter, we created the “Robert C. Garrett Collection” of Adult Literacy Adult Interest, Low-Level Reading (High-Low) books for use by our students and tutors. Mr. Garrett is President/CEO of Hackensack Meridian Health.

Tutor Training

We recruit, train, and monitor volunteer tutors who provide free 1-on-1 adult basic literacy tutoring for ESL, reading & High School Equivalency. All tutors get 15 hours of tutor training sessions. Using The Guide for Training Adult Literacy Tutors – Listen, Speak, Read, Write, we then match the tutor with a student whose learning needs fit the tutor’s abilities. In order to maintain a high standard of tutoring, beyond the initial tutor training, we hold regular networking and “continuing education” sessions, including:

- Understanding the ESL Learner;
- An Evening and Afternoon of Sharing;
- Tech Talk with Jay;
- Techniques in Reading Methodology;
- Techniques in Writing Methodology.

We provided tutor training to ESL tutors in local public libraries, including a session on library services for immigrants. Some sessions were face to face and, since March, we have adopted Distance Learning Resources. These resources, tips, and platforms help our students continue learning from a distance during a time of health crisis and uncertainty, in particular, via Zoom.
FINANCIAL RESULTS

Unqualified Audit at June 30, 2020, performed by LB Goodman & Co., Fair Lawn, NJ.
Please visit our web site for complete reports at: www.project-literacy.org/financials.

Total Assets $68,833
Total Liabilities & Equity $68,833
Total Unrestricted Support & Revenue $138,770
Total Expenses $109,736
Net Revenue $29,034
Fundraising/Total Expenses 3%
Administration/Total Expenses 27%
Program/Total Expenses 70%

We feel we are well positioned for the future as we ended our fiscal year 2020 with an excess of $29,034 on revenue of $138,770, including $56,000 net from the October 2019 gala. Our annual fundraising Gala is an important source of funding for us yet we cannot plan on an event during FY 2021. We were fortunate to take advantage of unbudgeted COVID-related funding including a $4,000 COVID-related grant from the Northern New Jersey Community Foundation, a $5,000 COVID-related grant from Wells Fargo and the acquisition of an SBA PPP loan from Valley National Bank in the amount of $14,239.

“Literacy unlocks the door to learning throughout life, is essential to development and health, and opens the way for democratic participation and active citizenship.”
- Kofi Annan

That is how Project Literacy has contributed to greater Bergen County in the past. We hope you will support us in the future.
OUR SPONSORS
THE PROJECT LITERACY FUNDRAISING GALA

“Literacy for All Seasons”
October 11, 2019

The 2019 Project Literacy Humanitarian Award was presented at our annual gala to a long-time supporter, Robert Garrett, Chief Executive Officer of Hackensack Meridian Health. Mr. Garrett was the Honorary Chairman of Project Literacy’s Awards Reception Committee for six years from 1999 to 2004. The hospital has hosted several events for us and has been represented on our Board of Trustees since our inception.

At our gala this year, we saw a few true success stories—our students, an immigrant family who escaped a purge in their native country to find success—and a wonderful family singing activity—in this country. And, our student Jamilla, a young woman who, despite being born with a debilitating disability, is on her way to reaching her goal of a college education and a career. Yet, perhaps the most impressive is the story of a young man from Long Island who grew to become head of one of New Jersey’s largest employers and Project Literacy’s largest supporter. We honored all of them and the way their successes reflect what we do at Project Literacy—helping people attain their goals.

The Gala is a major source of funding for our programs as all proceeds are used to further our efforts to give the gift of literacy to our neighbors who confront life in Northern New Jersey without the ability to communicate effectively. Your contributions help Project Literacy’s mission to promote increased literacy for adults through the use of volunteers and in collaboration with organizations desiring to foster increased literacy.

Hackensack University Medical Center and, by extension, Hackensack Meridian Health, have been a major player in our success and no honor is sufficient to demonstrate our gratitude.
AWARDS RECEIPTION

At our annual awards reception, we honor our neighbors and supporters who contribute to our mission to increase the level of public awareness of the issue of adult literacy and to serve as a catalyst for initiatives and activities that increase the level of adult literacy.

Awards are made for Student of the Year and volunteer Tutor of Adults, as well as for community groups, companies, businesses and service organizations. We accept nominations for recognition of excellence in adult basic literacy (ESL, HSE, Adult Basic Skills). The event celebrates volunteers from public libraries throughout Bergen County and organizations who are dedicated to excellence in adult basic education.

In 2019, we honored:

Community Literacy
Volunteers of the Year
North Jersey Friendship House

Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County Tutors
David Laveton ESL
Heidi Varon ESL
Jeanne Mancision ESL
Kate Mowlem Basic literacy Skills

Bergenfield Public Library
Theresa Wright Tutor

Dixon Homestead Library, Dumont
Rennie Rieger, Tutor

Maurice M. Pine Public Library,
Fair Lawn
Barbara Barker, Tutor

Special Recognition for
Project Literacy Students of the Year
Ronald Scheriff – tutor Judith McKill
Joyce Figueroa – tutor Martha Scannell
Lamelle Pulley – tutor Joan Slywka
Aynur Oksuz – tutor Carol Raff

Reading “IN THEIR OWN WORDS”
“Pandolfi’s – Pupils – Prose”
Rosanna Smith
Muhammed Aydemir
Extrapolated data in this report are based on 2018-2019 Annual Member Surveys completed by member organizations for their activities over a 12-month period.

**Students**

**Gender**
- 65% Female
- 35% Male

**Age**
- 16-18: 10%
- 19-24: 12%
- 25-34: 25%
- 35-44: 48%
- 45-59: 10%
- 60+: 4%
- 61+: 1%

**Entrance Levels**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Literacy/HSE Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning reader (0-3rd grade)</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing reader (4th-5th grade)</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate reader (6th-8th grade)</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced reader (9th-12th grade)</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**English Language Learners (ELLs)**

- 51% Able to read and speak some English
- 13% Able to read some English but not able to speak English
- 17% Able to speak some English but not able to read English
- 19% Not able to speak or read English

- 68% of ELLs are literate in their native language

**Top 5 Sources of Student Referrals:**
- Family Member or Friend
- Library
- Another Student
- Organization’s Website
- Another Agency or Literacy Organization

- 33% of students have smartphones

**Instructors**

**Gender**
- 74% Female
- 26% Male

**Method of Instruction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Instruction</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-to-one</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small group instruction</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom instruction</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 25% of programs use one-to-one and classroom instruction
- 48% of programs use one-to-one and small group instruction

**Instructor/Volunteer Activity**

- Instructional Hours: 4,608
- Non-instructional Hours (prep, training, etc.): 1,295
- Hours that were volunteered: 3,557

- The average instructor retention rate is 84%

Using Independent Sector’s value of volunteer time ($25.43 per hour), volunteers donated more than **$85.9 million** worth of time in adult literacy programs nationally. This equates to **$90,478** per program.

**233,529** STUDENTS served by member organizations in 2018-19

**91,392** INSTRUCTOR/VOLUNTEERS provided services to students in 2018-19

Programs utilizing paid instructors increased 4% since last year.
48% of programs held fundraising events last year. Bringing in an estimated total of $15.4 million nationally—an average of nearly $34,000 per program.

- The average cost per student for 2018-19 was $931
- The average program budget is $229,000 annually

58% of programs saw an increase in public awareness about their organization due to traditional media or social media presence.

83% of programs maintain or participate in social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn)—an increase of 34 percentage points in 8 years.

83% of programs have a board/advisory group. The average number of members is 10.

36% of programs receive federal and/or state funding.

32% of all funding comes from governmental sources.
DONATE!

Please fill out and mail the form below. Or, you may donate online at:

https://www.project-literacy.org/donate-1

If your employer participates in a Matching Gift program, your gift could double or triple. Please contact us at read@project-literacy.org for more information. Checks payable to Project Literacy should be mailed to 355 Main Street, Hackensack, NJ 07601

Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County is a 501(c) (3) New Jersey Corporation.

Thank you for supporting Project Literacy!

I will make my tax-deductible gift by:

[  ] Enclosing a check payable to Project Literacy
[  ] Visa       [  ] MasterCard       [  ] American Express       [  ] Discover

Credit card information:
First Name ___________________ Middle In. ___ Last Name________________________________________
Credit Card # ________________________________
Sec. Code: ___________________ Expiration Date: ____________________
Signature ________________________________________________
My gift is in memory/honor of _________________________________________
Please provide contact information for honoree if you would like an acknowledgment sent.
PERSONNEL 2019-2020

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Tutor/Reading Specialist

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