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Literacy Pittsburgh has expanded its staff, service area, and programs over the past 40 years. We've grown from serving a hundred students to nearly 5,000 annually. What hasn't changed is the tenacity of our students, the warmth of our tutors, the passion of our staff, and the commitment of our donors and partners. We thank everyone who has made this 40th birthday milestone possible!

## A LOOK BACK AT 40 YEARS

Thank you for helping so many local workers, parents, and neighbors succeed.

As Literacy Pittsburgh celebrates 40 years of better lives through learning, we are grateful to all of the board members, volunteers, staff members, community partners, and donors who have helped make us the organization we are today.

From our humble start as a volunteer group run out of our founder's home to our current status as the region's largest literacy organization, our focus has always been to create better lives for our students. Throughout our history, we have consistently expanded our services and reach to better serve the greater Pittsburgh region.

Mary Yardumian, a literacy volunteer who was originally from Florida, founded what was then

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## SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS: 40TH BIRTHDAY EDITION

Meet some of the students whose lives you've changed over the past four decades.

**Walter** was reading a bedtime story to his four-year-old daughter Joanna when she said, "That's not the way mommy read it to me." Her comment prompted Walter to finally work on his reading skills, leading him on a remarkable journey.

Walter was the first student to serve on the board of Literacy Pittsburgh, and he also served

as a board member of ProLiteracy Worldwide. He traveled the U.S. to present workshops on adult literacy and addressed a Congressional Committee. In 2006, he became the first American adult literacy student to address South Africa's National Literacy Conference.

However, Walter's most meaningful achievement is



much closer to home: reading to Joanna's children—the same books he couldn't read to his own kids.

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Our founder, Mary Yardumian, initially taught people to read at her kitchen table in Mt. Lebanon.

Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council after moving to Pittsburgh. Her group of volunteers initially served 50-100 adult students.

On August 28, 1982, a nonprofit corporation was founded and the agency added a board of directors, an office, and a professional staff. The Council's first office was in the East Liberty branch of the Carnegie Library. Don Block, who served as Executive Director from 1984 to 2018, said the initial learning offerings involved one-on-one instruction in reading and adult basic education.

In the early 1990s, we created our first training for

English Language Learning tutors. At that time, there were no volunteer programs serving this population.

“We had a real niche to offer a flexibility other programs didn't have,” recalls Karen Mundie, former Associate Director for Literacy Pittsburgh.

With volunteer-led tutoring we could offer varied hours, one-to-one attention, and tutoring sessions near a student's home. Today, we help students from 100 countries gain English skills, learn American culture, study for the U.S. citizenship test, prepare for employment, and more.

Our early involvement with workforce development included the Employee Training Services program. These services, which launched in the early 2000s, helped companies enhance the skills of their workers, improving retention, morale, and results. We have recently worked with Rivers Casino, Paragon Foods, Giant Eagle, and UPMC.

“As we work with employers to upskill their workforce, we

are looking for ways to provide career paths for our existing students into companies offering careers that pay family-sustaining wages,” explains Chief Program Officer Lori Como. “It's a win-win for our students and the companies.”

A significant shift in service occurred in 2005 when the Pittsburgh Board of Education closed its Adult Literacy Program, leaving 1000 students without instruction. We worked to provide services for these students by opening our Downtown Center, hiring more full-time professional instructors, and delivering classes in

more formats and schedules.

We strive to be a leader in the field of adult education and the nonprofit sector. Since 1993, we have hosted an AmeriCorps program that provides talent to organizations throughout the city. In 2006, we were awarded oversight of a national project titled Literacy AmeriCorps, which operated in six cities across the country. We managed this program through 2012. In 2009, social service agencies approached us about establishing a similar AmeriCorps program that focused solely on international populations. The

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Founded as Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council in 1982, our first office was in the East Liberty branch of the Carnegie Library. We offered one-to-one instruction in reading and adult basic education. The agency served about 100 students that first year.

## 40TH BIRTHDAY

Continued from page 2

result was Compass AmeriCorps, an annual 11-month service experience that helps local organizations better serve immigrant and refugee communities.

We have been equally dedicated to strengthening the field of adult education. From 1994 to 2012, we operated the Southwest Professional Development Center (SWPDC).

“The Center provided relevant training in the fields of adult education and family literacy for teachers, tutors and administrators in a seven-county region. The professional development was provided by highly qualified statewide trainers who shared best practices that benefited both the practitioners and adult learners in the programs,” explains Dr. Sue Snider, former SWPDC Coordinator

In 2016, Literacy Pittsburgh’s board of directors began an extensive examination of our agency in the context of today’s learning needs. We adopted a new mission of “better lives through learning”

and a vision of “a more inclusive and productive community driven by access to education.”

“We’ve always served a diverse group of people and were tried and true,” former Board President Gary Singery said. “We were looking for ways to be more cutting edge and more focused on growth, while looking for an even broader group of people who might have needed help.”

With an eye toward the community’s current and future needs, the Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council became Literacy Pittsburgh on May 2, 2018. We added a new logo, website, and messaging that was more reflective of our dynamic and forward-thinking organization.

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“While our core mission remains the same—to create better lives through learning with inclusive, welcoming literacy services for students—our new name and brand represent a



While our early focus was on teaching people to read, in the early 1990s, we expanded our program offerings for immigrants and refugees seeking to learn English. Today we help students from 100 countries gain English skills, learn American culture, study for the U.S. citizenship test, prepare for employment, and become more confident in their new home.

broadened scope. We have also become a workforce training and development organization,” Don Block explained at the time.

That same year Literacy Pittsburgh became the primary provider of literacy services in Beaver

“Carey wanted to get input from community leaders and find out what they needed and wanted in terms of workers and skills,” Gary Singery said.

That input led to the 2019 launch of our “Ready and Relevant” initiative.

County, expanding our regional footprint.

In late 2018, Don Block retired after 34 years of leadership, and Carey Harris was named Chief Executive Officer.

This effort embedded college and career readiness into all classes and tutoring instruction. A primary goal is to attract “fast track” students to help

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## 40TH BIRTHDAY

Continued from page 3

fulfill a need for middle skills workers.

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck in 2020, we moved quickly to engage students on digital platforms. Staff implemented new approaches and technology to keep students learning. We launched YouTube channels, Google Classrooms, instructional videos for volunteer tutors, virtual story times, and live Zoom classes.

“We responded immediately to student needs so they could

continue learning from home,” Carey Harris said.

Thanks to a grant from the BNY Mellon Foundation, we launched a tech lending library in September of 2020. We loaned Chromebooks so students without technology could learn remotely.

Even throughout the pandemic, Literacy Pittsburgh continued to work toward its goal of becoming a key contributor to the region’s workforce development pipeline. One example is teaching math for the trades within

the Builders Guild of Western Pennsylvania’s Introduction to the Construction Trades pre-apprenticeship program. That partnership spurred stand alone math for the trades classes with the Steamfitters helping aspiring apprentices brush up for the apprenticeship exams.

“We’ll continue to impact even more of our communities,” Gary Singery said. “I feel like we’ve only scratched the surface with workforce development.”

While we continue to grow, one thing that

will never change is our commitment to meeting students’ needs through innovative programs that are responsive to current demands.

“We’ve always been willing to make any necessary changes to help that student, and who that student was constantly changed,” said former Board President Louise Herrle. “We will continue to meet that student at any time, anywhere and teach them anything.” ●

*-By Tricia Bennett  
Contributing Writer*

## 40 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

### A Birthday Message from Board President Steve Sokoloski

Literacy Pittsburgh has touched countless lives over the past 40 years. I have been proud to volunteer with this fantastic organization since 2009, initially as part of the Leadership on Board program. Even in this relatively short time, I have witnessed exciting changes. Literacy Pittsburgh is constantly growing and adjusting its educational options to more effectively meet the needs of its students. We have a dedicated staff and board who are fully aligned to Literacy Pittsburgh’s mission and are driven by the success of our incredible students.

I have so many wonderful memories of my time with Literacy Pittsburgh, but my favorite is the GED graduation ceremony. Being in the presence of so many talented, determined and hard-working students who have overcome so much adversity gives you an amazing feeling that just can’t be explained.

Congratulations, Literacy Pittsburgh, on 40 years of serving the Greater Pittsburgh community!



Board President  
Steve Sokoloski

## PAST BOARD PRESIDENTS

We are honored to recognize those individuals who have guided the organization over the past 40 years in service of our mission of Better Lives Through Learning.

Mary Yardumian - Meliza Jackson - Tim Bierria - Bob Croneberger - Jane Klivans - Louise Herrle - Jennifer Fox Rabold - Marshall Wunderlich - Eliza Nevin - Martin Fritz - Jackie Kalocay-Hogg - Gary Singery - Kathleen Sullivan

## A BIRTHDAY ODE

Marsha Kennedy has been a Literacy Pittsburgh tutor for 37 of our 40 years. We asked her to share some thoughts and she responded with an inspiring poem about her tutoring journey.

### AN ODE TO MY TIME AS A TUTOR

One or two inches, that's all that I've got  
To tell you my story and the highlights—a lot!  
Thirty-seven years I've been at this, ya know;  
Can't possibly be, I'm only "sixty or so!"  
Sixty-some students and not enough time;  
To let anything out would seem such a crime!  
I began tutoring basics, as we all did way back—  
Helping students get jobs, go to college; we were  
on the right track!  
Then came this request from my coordinator  
named Mary,  
"Help this Polish priest with his English!"  
I said, "You're kidding! That's scary!"  
But I took a deep breath and gave it a try.  
And it wasn't scary! He was such a sweet guy!  
One thing he taught me and I now watch my  
step—  
If any student speaks Russian, I never ever say  
"yep!"  
And that was the start of my tutoring ESL—  
Helping students learn English, fit in and excel!  
But there have been some moments, like the one  
that I had  
When a student came in and said, "I need the  
words that are bad."  
Her grandkids said things she didn't quite  
understand,  
So our lesson that day took a whole different  
plan!



Longtime tutor Marsha Kennedy wishes Literacy Pittsburgh a Happy Birthday: "Forty years of excellent work! Forty years of building better lives! Celebrate well!"

I closed the room's door and then took my seat  
And listed bad words that I knew, without being  
discreet.  
Flexibility's key, I teach what each student  
needs!  
Shopping or gardening: "Are those flowers or  
weeds?"  
We have baked, crafted, and eaten great  
gingerbread places;  
We've made wreaths, candied apples, colored  
eggs with weird faces.  
We have talked so much about food, weather and  
trips!  
We had baby showers, parties, and we love going  
to Phipps!  
Happily I watched as two took an oath—  
Became U.S. citizens—I was so proud of them  
both!  
We share hopes and dreams, laughter and tears;  
No wonder that I've lost count of the years! ●

—Kennedy

# BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

We loved receiving birthday wishes from our students, tutors, partners and friends throughout this past year! Submit your own birthday greeting (with a pic!) to [pr@literacypittsburgh.org](mailto:pr@literacypittsburgh.org) to be featured on our social media.

“You’re a fantastic resource in our community to help and a partner to help us build a better community in which to live and work. On behalf of everyone at United Way, I want to wish you a very happy birthday celebration and many more. Forty looks great on you!”

Bobbi Watt Geer  
President and CEO  
United Way of Southwestern PA

“Literacy Pittsburgh should be extremely proud of all it has accomplished over 40 years and will accomplish going forward. The organization is a true community treasure. Happy Birthday!”

Will Martin  
Former Board Member

“It was a privilege for me to be trained by the founder of Literacy Pittsburgh, Mary Yardumian, when I began working in another adult education program in the region. Then, in 1984, she recruited me to become the first executive director of the organization. What a joy it was to be part of the growth of the organization for 34 years and to see it develop into one of the nation’s leading adult education agencies. Best wishes to all the students, board members, volunteers, and staff members as we celebrate 40 years of lifting up adults and families through education.”

Don Block  
Executive Director 1984-2018

“HAPPY BIRTHDAY AND MANY MORE!  
Literacy Pittsburgh is an important organization for immigrants. With English language learning and other support programs, immigrants and their families can live their dreams. One of my students told the class that without this opportunity she would be just another lonely immigrant.”

Karen McGrath  
Volunteer Tutor

“Happy 40th birthday to an organization that has always had the best interest of their learners at heart. Over the years, Literacy Pittsburgh has expanded its base and now encompasses many literacy programs, both for adults and children, which makes it a much more multi-faceted program. Literacy Pittsburgh’s willingness to expand, change with the times, adapt and adopt new programs, apply for grants and train new teachers, exemplifies its mission and ensures success for all of its learners. Here’s to 40 more successful years!”

Dr. Sue Snider  
Former Staff Member

“It has helped me to improve my English. And make my day to day life in the US easier. I would like to find a job and improve my English. Thank you for the great work you do. Happy Birthday, Literacy Pittsburgh!!!!”

Amparo  
Student

# LOOKING AHEAD TO OUR NEXT BIRTHDAY AND BEYOND

CEO Carey Harris reflects on Literacy Pittsburgh's distinguished history and its exciting future serving the Greater Pittsburgh community.



Literacy Pittsburgh CEO  
Carey Harris

When I came to Literacy Pittsburgh in 2018, I sought to build upon the agency's distinguished history as a leader in adult literacy and the Pittsburgh region.

For 40 years, we have delivered high quality, high impact instruction so that adults can grow as workers, parents as neighbors. One of my first actions as CEO was to convene a group of community

leaders to discuss Literacy Pittsburgh's role in the community. I found that our skill building programs position us as a vital partner in our region's talent development system. Our Ready & Relevant initiative piloted new courses and curriculum designed to increase career awareness and give students the tools to succeed in the workplace.

enter the construction, health care, or technology sectors.

We are teaching computer skills to hundreds of adults across the region—essential skills for success in the workforce. From Microsoft Office to Google Docs to online safety and job search techniques, students are gaining the skills they need to advance

and employees has been overwhelmingly positive with gains in retention, clear communication, customer satisfaction, and career growth.

Through our new Student Services Department, we are providing career exploration and planning support to more of our adult learners. Partners like Jewish Family and

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**This growth and change would not be possible without your support over the years. Thank you for investing in better lives through learning.**

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We continue to build on this foundation. Our new Workforce Development Department connects adult education and job training programs for those seeking to

their careers.

Employers are hiring us to develop customized training for employees to help retain and grow their workforce. Feedback from both managers

Community Services, Pennsylvania Women Work, CareerLink, and CCAC are working with us to ensure students have

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## Literacy Pittsburgh Board of Directors

### President

**Steven Sokoloski** Highmark Health

### Immediate Past President

**Kathleen M. Sullivan** Clark Hill

### Vice President

**Scott Bartlett** PPG Industries

### Secretary

**Andrea Clark-Smith** UPMC

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**Danell R. Cooper, CPA** KidsVoice

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**Nancy J. Crouthamel** Civic  
Volunteer

**Ellen Duffield** Highmark Wholecare

**Ellen Freeman** Freeman  
Immigration Law Group

**Emmanuel George** Covestro

**Richard M. Heiser** FedEx Ground

**Tom Hitter** University of  
Pittsburgh

**Kevin Kinross** Carey Group

**Gianinna Mercado** UPS

**Katie O'Connor** Buchanan  
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**Jared Miller** GAP

**Tina L. Myles** Pressley Ridge

**Katy Rittle** Duquesne Light

**Rebecca Roadman** University of  
Pittsburgh

**Lucy Russell** University of Pittsburgh

**Bill Southern** Block Communications

**Jen Styran** Carnegie Library of  
Pittsburgh

**Erin Weber** Raymond James

**Karen R. Worcester** Hope Gas

# 40<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY BASH

August 28 — Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium





Nearly 400 students, volunteers, staff, and friends joined us for a day at the zoo featuring special animal guests, games for the kiddos, and a buffet lunch to celebrate 40 years of Better Lives Through Learning!



## SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS: 40TH BIRTHDAY EDITION

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**Idario** was an agricultural engineer in his native Brazil until his son, Artur, was diagnosed with a life-threatening illness that required him to seek specialized care in the U.S. When Artur's condition worsened, Idario realized that he would not be able to return home after treatment.

He needed to learn to speak and understand English. "Without English," he said, "I couldn't understand the doctors. I couldn't express my opinion. I couldn't work." Idario and his wife enrolled at Literacy Pittsburgh and met regularly with a tutor who provided English

instruction and helped them research jobs, health insurance and prescription drugs.

With his improved skills, Idario found a full-time position. Artur is doing well, and thanks to his hard work and the help of his tutor, Idario is able to provide for his family. "It was really difficult in the beginning," he said. **"Learning English was everything for us."**



**Gladys**, a native of Cameroon, Africa, had little formal education and spoke almost no English when she enrolled at Literacy Pittsburgh. Gladys attended classes while working two menial jobs and caring for her family. Learning the English language was her first priority. **Once her English skills grew, she set her sights on earning a GED credential.** In 2010, she accomplished that goal and began training to become a nursing assistant. She chose to put her plans on hold to ensure her son, DeKlerk, had an opportunity to attend college.

With his mother's support and inspiration, DeKlerk earned a degree in biochemistry from Temple University, the first step toward a medical degree. Gladys has not given up on her dream either. She hopes to continue her studies and become a licensed practical nurse.



**Michelle**, a single mother of five, quit school in tenth grade. At age 18, she suffered a stroke and had to learn how to walk, talk and read all over again. She entered our Family Literacy program in 1995 to pursue her GED® credential. **Michelle struggled to keep up with the class but came early to catch up and stayed up late studying every night after her children went to bed.** Because of her perseverance, she earned her high school equivalency diploma and went on to enroll in a business training program.

**Karmel** grew up in the United Kingdom, where she lived most of her life in the foster care system. She faced situations that no child should ever have to face. Karmel was never permitted to attend school, but she didn't let this stop her. She taught herself to read and write with the only books in the house...the Bible and a set of encyclopedias.

After Karmel married, she moved to Pittsburgh and was quickly connected to Literacy Pittsburgh. She began studying for her high school credential in 2017, attending class four days per week.



**In July 2018, a mere ten months after she enrolled at Literacy Pittsburgh, Karmel earned her high school equivalency diploma, and enrolled at CCAC, achieving a 4.0 GPA.**

“My ultimate goal in life, the reason why I have bettered myself and have gone through school, is so I can give my future children the childhood I never had,” Karmel explains.

**Jeffrey** dropped out of school in the 11th grade after missing too many days of school. He joined the military, served in Vietnam, and held down good jobs—but he always that secret. **“I felt like a fraud for 29 years because I told people that I had a high school diploma,” he explained.** In 1997, he called Literacy Pittsburgh for help. After several months of study with volunteer tutor Suzanne McLaughlin, Jeffrey passed his GED exam in April 1998. He then received a partial scholarship through a partnership linking Literacy Pittsburgh to the University of Pittsburgh, and entered college.

He pursued a degree in social work with a goal of becoming a youth counselor, a role he informally assumed in his daily contacts in his work and in his community.



**Hindreen** and her family were driven from their home in Iraq by ISIS and resettled in a refugee camp. She wrote articles about their suffering, and when ISIS threatened to kidnap her daughter because of her writings, Hindreen and her family fled the country for the United States.

**The adjustment was difficult. “In Iraq I had been a writer, a leader of a women’s group, a voice for change. I could move people,” she explains. “Here, I was nothing.”**

Hindreen improved her English speaking and listening skills, learned how to write a resume, and how to apply to school. She graduated from CCAC and went on to pursue her bachelor’s degree with a goal of becoming a doctor like her father.



# LITERACY PITTSBURGH THROUGH THE YEARS

Because of you, we have a rich history of accomplishments and growth in service to the Greater Pittsburgh community.



Mary Yardumian begins teaching people to read at her kitchen table in Mt. Lebanon.



The first Executive Director, Don Block, is hired.

1970s

1982

1984

1986

Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council is incorporated as a nonprofit organization.



Plays a key role in the passing of the first bill to provide state funding for adult and family literacy.



Awarded national oversight of Literacy AmeriCorps, which operates in six cities around the country.



OASIS Tutoring, which serves high-need children in grades K-4 in five districts, becomes a Literacy Pittsburgh program.

2006

2011

2013

2014

Receives the Literacy Leadership Award given by the National Coalition for Literacy.



Establishes a young professionals board to engage new people with our mission.





Literacy AmeriCorps program is launched to increase the capacity of local organizations to meet community needs.



Receives the Wishart Award for Excellence in Nonprofit Management, given by the Forbes Funds of The Pittsburgh Foundation.

1993

1995

2002

2005

Launches Families for Learning, which combines adult literacy, early childhood education and interactive learning activities.



Teaching center opens in Downtown Pittsburgh in response to closing of Connelley Technical Center.



Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council becomes Literacy Pittsburgh; service area expands to Beaver County.



Ready & Relevant initiative launched to enhance role in talent development system.

2018

2018

2019

2020

Carey Harris named as Chief Executive Officer.



YouTube channel launches to reach students during pandemic; achieves worldwide reach with 87,000 hours watch time to date.



# ACROSS THE DECADES

Faces may change, programs may grow, but our commitment to the success of our students remains at the center of all we do. Here are some excerpts from 40 years of agency newsletters.

August 1983

## **DON'T HAVE YOUR HOMEWORK? PAINT ROCKS!**

Although he said he wouldn't recommend such punishment for GPLC students, when he taught reading as an Army artillery officer Dr. Joseph Brennan told his students that those who didn't learn the Dolch Word List would pull duty painting parade ground rocks!

Dr. Brennan, who has since gone on to gain much teaching expertise, now directs Duquesne University's Reading Clinic. The many useful remedial reading tips he shared at the July 16 continuing education meeting were much appreciated by participants.



December 1987

## **WORKPLACE LITERACY**

Literacy in the workplace has garnered a great deal of attention this year, and GPLC is playing important role in the campaign.

A group of factory workers at the H.J. Heinz plant on the North Side are now learning basic skills with a GPLC teacher. The class is designed to make employees more successful in their work, as well as to provide basic reading and writing skills.

Earlier this year GPLC provided a new service to Equitable Gas Company. The company was concerned about customers with low reading skills, so it asked us to edit some of its customer correspondence for readability.

Winter 1990

## **VOLUNTEER PROFILE: DITTA LIPKIND**

Devoted, creative and entergetic are three worlds that come to mind when describing Ditta Lipkind.

Ms. Lipkind joined GPLC as a tutor three years ago, after retiring from a career in physical therapy. She became acquainted with GPLC's program while exploring volunteer opportunities she could pursue upon retirement. She had a list of ten volunteer opportunities to choose from and GPLC "was at the top of the list."

"There was no doubt in my mind about what I wanted to do, I was glued to the field, the art of teaching," she explained.

August 1991

## **LITERACY BILL BECOMES LAW**

On July 25 of this year President Bush signed into law the National Literacy Act of 1991. This bill is the most important piece of literacy legislation in the past twenty-five years. It commits the federal government to new initiatives in adult education.

The bill establishes a National Institute for Literacy which will provide research on making literacy programs effective. It also calls for state and regional literacy resource centers.

Fall 1995

## **GPLC LAUNCHES NEW FAMILY LITERACY SERVICES**

Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council has been named as one of fifteen agencies in the nation to participate in a special project with the National Center for Family Literacy. Beginning this month, GPLC will begin a comprehensive Family Literacy program in the Northview Heights section of Pittsburgh.

Spring 2004

## REFUGEES LOOK TO GPLC FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

Throughout 2004, approximately 180 Somali refugees from a Kenyan refugee camp will settle in the city's East End and Manchester neighborhoods. The group includes adults and children, most of whom speak little or no English. GPLC and the Allegheny Intermediate Unit will provide English as a second language classes for the refugees.



Summer 2009

## GPLC GRADUATE NAMED OUTSTANDING ADULT STUDENT

Diane Jordan, a Literacy Council GED graduate, has been named an Outstanding Adult Student by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. There are nine statewide honorees.

Ms. Jordan is the young mother of three children. For her, attaining a GED involved setting up a system of childcare and support plus overcoming her own negative attitude about education and goal achievement. Given these obstacles, even her own family was not optimistic about her success, she said.

Diane persevered, however, and earned her GED in July 2008. She began a training program to help her prepare for a job as a certified nursing assistant (CNA). She's also thinking of a possible career as a registered nurse.

Summer 2010

## KOREAN UNIVERSITY PARTNERS WITH GPLC

In July, 19 students from South Korea's Gwangju University will improve their English language skills at Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council's Downtown Center and throughout the city. The students, who are studying to become elementary school teachers in their native land, are participants in the GPLC Language Institute.

The formal curriculum, coordinated by GPLC Program Director Lori Keefer, is based on the skill of conversation. "The University wanted us to focus on verbal communication skills: speaking, pronunciation, giving presentations, and listening," she explained.

Spring 2013

## STUDENTS MOVE ON TO JOBS AND HIGHER EDUCATION

With the help of volunteers and donors like you, GPLC students are moving on to jobs and higher education in greater numbers than ever before. The agency is helping students plan what they will do after they graduate from our programs.

One of our students, Peggy, after years working as a nursing assistant, was asked by her employer to get a GED. She received her high school equivalency at GPLC and was headed back to a low-wage job when we asked her about becoming a licensed practical nurse. We found a training program that will let her work full-time while attending school, and she will earn the LPN credential in 18 months.

**Spotlight**  
on *Success*

**Built with Volunteers** Literacy Pittsburgh was founded as an all volunteer organization and volunteers remain vital to the success of our students, even as our professional staff has expanded. Volunteers serve as tutors out in the community and as classroom aides at our teaching sites. Learn how you or a friend can help our students succeed at [literacypittsburgh.org](http://literacypittsburgh.org).

Sharon meets with her tutor Katie Doyle. Sharon is proud that better skills mean she can help her grandchildren with their homework.



## LOOKING AHEAD

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the tools, skills, and plans they need to move forward.

An essential part of growing the impact of our programming is including and welcoming people with diverse backgrounds and perspectives. As part of our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) plan, we are

implementing new human resources systems to protect against bias and support the equitable advancement of students and staff alike. We are working to strengthen our organizational culture with continuous feedback loops from students, staff, and volunteers. We are enhancing training and support for our staff so that we are a

place where everyone can thrive.

It's been meaningful to learn so much about the history of this wonderful organization over the past year. We evolved and grew over time to better meet the needs of the community. Similarly, we are growing in size and sophistication commensurate with the many challenges

and opportunities ahead as we head into our next 40 years. This growth and change would not be possible without your support over the years. Thank you for investing in better lives through learning. I am grateful for your continued commitment to the success of our wonderful students. ●

# LITERACY PITTSBURGH

## OUR MISSION

Better lives through learning.

## OUR VISION

A more inclusive and productive community driven by access to education.

## OUR VALUES

- We believe that all people deserve the opportunity to learn in a place where their strengths are celebrated.
- We respect all people and their ability to shape their own lives.
- We have a duty to earn the trust of everyone we work with.
- Our collective well-being depends on welcoming diverse cultures and perspectives.
- As a leader, we embrace the responsibility to innovate, model best practices, and grow.



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A copy of the official registration and financial information for Literacy Pittsburgh may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling toll free, within PA, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

