

[No images? Click here](#)

## Give Big Pittsburgh Exceeds Goal



**Thank you to everyone who participated in Give Big, Pittsburgh! Because to you, we were able to raise \$12,710 – exceeding our goal of \$12,500.** If you weren't able to contribute yet, it's not too late to make a lasting impact on our students before the year ends.

Your generosity directly supports students like Janel who are working toward better lives through learning. “Halfway through the pandemic,” Janel says, “my job informed us that we were considered non-essential. I knew I needed to return to school and finish my education.” An internet search led her to Literacy Pittsburgh. Despite an initial low score on her entrance testing, her instructors encouraged her to persevere. “I pushed through and started excelling. I didn’t tell anyone I was going for my

GED until after I passed the test. I was ecstatic; I sat in the car and cried. ”



Today, Janel is attending Community College of Allegheny County's nursing program. This spring, she was invited to speak at Literacy Pittsburgh's GED Graduation Celebration, where she addressed a rapt, standing-room-only audience of graduates like herself. Her future plans include pursuing a master's degree in nursing.

If a year-end charitable gift is part of your holiday plans, please consider giving to Literacy Pittsburgh's annual fund. Your donation helps make it possible for students like Janel to access the support they need to achieve their dreams.

**Double your impact!** Thanks to a generous investment from a local family foundation, all gifts made by December 31, 2025 will be matched dollar for dollar. Your \$50 becomes \$100, your

\$250 becomes \$500, and your \$500 becomes  
\$1,000!

**DONATE NOW**

---

## Upcoming Career Pathways Classes

We have new Career Pathways sessions starting in January! Classes are open to the public. Please share these opportunities.

The registration deadline for all classes is December 11. Interested students should contact Vince at [vdestefano@literacypittsburgh.org](mailto:vdestefano@literacypittsburgh.org) or 412-350-9920

### Accounting Essentials

**Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm**

**January 6 to March 26**

**Location: Literacy Pittsburgh Downtown Center**

Prepare for the Intuit Certified Bookkeeping Professional certification.

### Customer Service

**Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm**

**January 13 to March 26**

**Location: Literacy Pittsburgh Downtown Center**

Those interested in customer service or administrative roles can hone their soft skills and earn a customer service certification through PA Women Work.

### English for Hospital Jobs

**Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm**

**January 12 to March 25**

**Location: Zoom**

English language learning students who want to work in hospitals as cleaners, cooks, or warehouse workers can improve their speaking and listening skills.

## Microsoft Excel Certification Prep Class

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

January 6 to March 26

Location: Literacy Pittsburgh Downtown Center

Participants will gain in-depth knowledge of Excel and prepare for MOS Associate certifications.

## Winter Issue of *The Spark!* Out Soon

**Winter 2025-26**  
ANNUAL REPORT ISSUE

- 4 2024-25 Outcomes
- 8 In Your Neighborhood
- 10 ERAS Tutoring to Grow
- 10 Meet Benjamin
- 11 Advocacy in Action

The  
**SPARK**

CELEBRATING SUCCESSES SPARKED BY YOU!

LITERACY  
PITTSBURGH



Former board member Karen Bolden and Abby Horn of the Department of Human Services were among the guests at our Open House, recognizing both Literacy Month and Adult Education and Family Literacy Week in September.

**THE YEAR IN REVIEW**

2025 was a year of bold strides, meaningful impact, and inspiring growth.

As we reflect on the past twelve months, we celebrate not only the measurable achievements—record-breaking student transitions to college and careers, expanded child-centered programs, and increased donor support—but also the spirit of resilience and innovation that fueled them. From launching transformative initiatives like the College Pathway Program and the Empowering Readers for Success tutoring model to strengthening our advocacy and community partnerships, this year has reaffirmed our commitment to empowering lives through education. The milestones we've reached are a testament to the dedication of our staff, volunteers, and supporters who continue to make our mission a reality.

This past year, 58% more students transitioned to postsecondary education or job training, 6% more students attained or retained jobs, and 41% more students attained their GED credential compared to the previous year. We enrolled 40% more students in career-focused classes and provided service coordination to 19% more students. Thanks to support from the Posner Foundation and Hillman Foundation, we built a College Pathway Program for our approximately 300 students annually who have college-going goals.

Continued on page 2 >>

**SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS: YERALDIN**

Expanding her language and job skills thanks to you!

Yeraldin moved to the United States from Colombia in May 2022. She came here through a cultural exchange program called Au Pair. Yeraldin sought to expand her knowledge, experience American culture, and improve her English. Her now wife later joined her here through the same program.

"What I like best about Pittsburgh is that it's a city full of opportunities," Yeraldin says. "It's very beautiful and there's always something to do. It has a strong and welcoming community."

Yeraldin currently works in customer service at Dollar Bank. She hopes to continue working in a bank or in a big company in a role related to international business, which she is studying through online classes at UNAD University in Colombia. She also dreams of having her own business one day.

"When I first moved here, I was looking for English classes because I didn't have



a job yet and wanted to make good use of my time," Yeraldin explains. "I found Literacy Pittsburgh. I was so

Continued on page 2 >>

**BETTER LIVES THROUGH LEARNING**

The annual report issue of our print newsletter will be landing in your mailbox soon. Learn about student outcomes, review financial information, find out what has been happening in your neighborhood, and meet some of our amazing students!

## Pathways to the Future: Make a Lasting Impact with a Legacy Gift

As the year comes to a close, it's a natural time to reflect on the impact we've made together at Literacy Pittsburgh and consider ways to create a lasting difference. Generous supporters like you are the foundation of our work, and smart giving provides a way to extend that impact well into the future.

A legacy gift allows your commitment to better lives through learning to endure beyond your lifetime. By including Literacy Pittsburgh in your financial or estate plans, you can make a meaningful and lasting difference while prioritizing your loved ones and personal goals.



PATHWAYS  
TO THE FUTURE

Literacy Pittsburgh

Ways to give include:

- Gifts in your will
- Beneficiary designations from retirement funds, insurance, or donor-advised funds
- Donations of appreciated stocks or mutual funds
- Qualified charitable distributions from retirement accounts

Supporters who make planned gifts are recognized through **Pathways to the Future**, our program honoring donors whose gifts ensure

Literacy Pittsburgh's mission continues for generations.

As you reflect on the past year and plan for the year ahead, consider how a legacy gift can help build a brighter future for our learners and our community. For more information, contact Jabriya at 412-393-7646 or [jhester@literacypittsburgh.org](mailto:jhester@literacypittsburgh.org)

## Spotlight on Success: N'Gnyoh



*N'Gnyoh displays her certificate of completion at the conclusion of her UPMC Pathways to Work course.*

N'Gnyoh recently landed a position at UPMC through our Pathways to Work collaboration.

This program, launched last year, builds on a partnership started in 2019. Pathways to Work provides a preliminary recruiter to help unemployed or underemployed adults facing barriers in their job hunt. The recruiter provides support and advice on resumes, interview tips, skill assessment, free training opportunities, and guidance on UPMC jobs and UPMC Health Plan applications.

Earlier this year, N'Gnyoh heard her husband's friends talking about how much help they received



from Literacy Pittsburgh, and decided it was time to continue her education. Her goal was to improve her English skills and join the workforce. She is currently enrolled in our English language learning program and plans to take digital literacy courses soon.

When N'Gnyoh learned about the UPMC Pathways to Work program, she jumped at the opportunity. She emphasized that the skill assessment and application assistance were particularly helpful for her. She discussed the three steps: skills analysis, building and editing her resume and application, and prepping for the interview. She talked about the interview process, and her worries, saying, "I tried to stay calm and take all the advice from my workshops." [Keep reading](#)

---

## **Bidwell Training Center Offers Our Students Hands-On Learning**

Literacy Pittsburgh students often aspire to attend college and trade schools to pursue additional education after working on their reading, math, English language, or digital skills in our classes. One school that has accepted many Literacy Pittsburgh students is Bidwell Training Center here in Pittsburgh. Bidwell has been training students for over 50 years. It offers a hands-on, face-to-face learning approach that gives adults the opportunity to obtain meaningful employment. Bidwell's programs include training for Medical Coding, Medical Assistant, Chem Lab Tech, Horticulture, Culinary, and Pharmacy Technician. Classes are full-time and are offered during the day. Bidwell's program is free of charge, thanks to Pennsylvania state government funding, and donations from private companies and individuals.

Prospective students must have a high school

diploma or high school equivalency and pass a reading and math entrance exam. This is where Literacy Pittsburgh comes in. We offer math brush-up classes to prepare students for the entrance exam. Of course, GED prep classes for students pursuing their high school credentials and English classes are also a pathway into Bidwell's classes.

You can learn more about Bidwell Training Center [at their website](#).

---

## Sign Up for Our Next Introductory Tutor Training

[Learn more](#) about becoming a volunteer adult literacy tutor and register for training.

### Saturday, December 6

**11:00 am – 1:00 pm**

Dormont Public Library  
2950 West Liberty Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15216

### Sunday, January 11

**2:00 pm to 4:00 pm**

Mt. Lebanon Public Library  
16 Castle Shannon Blvd.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15228

### Thursday, January 15

**9:30 am to 11:30 am**

Literacy Pittsburgh's Downtown Center  
411 Seventh Avenue, Suite 525  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

---

## Test Your Knowledge: December

Many of our students learn American history as part of their studies. Find out how well you know events that occurred during December.



**TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE**

Support Literacy Pittsburgh with your purchase of comfy tees, cozy sweatshirts, and other cool merch. 10% of each purchase will help our students to succeed. Visit our merch store.

**VOLUNTEER****DONATE****ENROLL**

Share

Tweet

Share

Forward