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## Celebrating Literacy and Advocating for Adult Education

September was a powerful month for Literacy Pittsburgh as we celebrated National Literacy Month and National Adult and Family Literacy Week with impact and purpose.

At our September 18 Open House, we honored our progress and recognized Adult Education Champions Governor Josh Shapiro and Senator Jay Costa, as named by the Coalition of Adult Basic Education (COABE). The event featured inspiring remarks from Board Member Yaqi Wo of PPG Industries and student Diana, both sharing heartfelt reflections on our mission. CEO Carey Harris highlighted our growing impact—rising student enrollment, improved employment outcomes, post-secondary transitions, and certificate attainment—while acknowledging the challenges ahead and our strategic path forward. Senator Costa accepted his Adult Education Champion award at the event while [Governor Shapiro shared a video message](#).

Earlier that week, Carey joined Program Manager Terra Teets and Program Coordinator Miranda Pino in Washington, D.C. for COABE's Flood the Hill advocacy event. They met with staff from the offices of Senator Fetterman and Representatives Lee, Deluzio, and Reschenthaler to champion federal investment in adult education. We proudly presented Adult Education Champion awards to Senator John Fetterman and Congresswoman Summer Lee, emphasizing that every dollar

invested in adult education yields a \$6 return in increased revenue and reduced costs.

With budget gridlock at both state and federal levels, your voice matters more than ever. **Stand with us** by advocating for public investment at the federal and state levels, recruiting volunteers, or making a financial contribution to support our work during these critical times.



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## The ABCs of QCDs: A Smart Year-End Giving Option

As the year draws to a close, many of our supporters look for meaningful ways to make a difference while also being mindful of tax-wise giving. One of those options is the **Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)**.

Nancy Crouthamel, a retired nurse and longtime Literacy Pittsburgh supporter, has found QCDs to be a simple and impactful way to give.

"I firmly believe in the mission and goals of Literacy Pittsburgh," Nancy shared. "Whether the goal is to improve literacy, help attain a GED, get a better job, or become a U.S. citizen, Literacy Pittsburgh has the staff and volunteers to help our students reach their ambitions."

Since turning 73, Nancy has chosen to make her annual gift directly from her IRA. Not only does this allow her support to go further, but it also helps her avoid additional taxable income from her required minimum distribution (RMD).

"It's a good way to give, there are many benefits, and it is so easy to do!" Nancy said.

### **What is a QCD?**

- If you have an IRA, once you reach age 73 you are required to begin taking annual distributions, which count as taxable income.
- By making a QCD, you can direct part or all of your RMD to Literacy Pittsburgh, tax-free.
- You may begin making QCDs as early as age 70½.

With one simple form from your financial advisor or retirement fund holder, your gift can go directly to Literacy Pittsburgh supporting adults and families across Allegheny and Beaver Counties as they build better lives through learning.

As always, we encourage you to consult your financial or tax advisor for guidance on what is best for your personal situation.

To learn more about QCDs and other smart giving options, visit [literacypittsburgh.org/smart-giving](https://literacypittsburgh.org/smart-giving).

For questions, contact Jabriya Hester, Development Manager, at [jhester@literacypittsburgh.org](mailto:jhester@literacypittsburgh.org) or 412-393-7646.

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## Celebrating Our Tutors and Students

On Thursday, September 25, more than 100 Literacy Pittsburgh volunteers, students, staff, and their families came together for an evening of celebration and community. The international potluck highlighted the rich diversity of our program and honored the accomplishments of the Volunteer and Community Program over the past year. During the ceremony, coordinators recognized outstanding tutors with the Lifetime Achievement and Rising Star awards. Thank you to everyone who joined us in celebrating, and we look forward to gathering again next year!





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## Removing Barriers Helps Students Focus on Goals

A barrier is anything that challenges or prevents a student from attending or focusing on their educational goals. At Literacy Pittsburgh, the Student Services Team is responsible for helping students address and overcome these challenges with the help of external programs and partnerships. Student Services consists of three teams: Service Coordination, Career Services, and Immigrant Services and Connections (ISAC), all of which work interdependently to serve our students across varying areas of need. Service Coordination is responsible for addressing barriers related to housing, food, utilities, childcare, and other essential needs. This article outlines our most frequently used programs and how you can support them! [Keep reading](#)

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## Literacy Pittsburgh Receives Best Place to Work Award





Last month, CEO Carey Harris and Marketing and Communications Director Maria Polinsky attended the Best Places to Work celebration at PNC Park hosted by the Pittsburgh Business Times. This is the third time that our staff has earned Literacy Pittsburgh a Best Place to Work designation!

Staff complete a survey about organizational culture and working environment. While we are proud of this honor, the Best Places to Work Survey is a valuable tool for benchmarking our strengths and identifying areas for improvement year over year.

Our staff members are inspired by the work we do and take pride in being part of our team. They feel that people treat each other with respect, and they understand how their job helps Literacy Pittsburgh (and our students) achieve success. [Keep reading](#)

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## ERAS Tutoring Pilot Successful



Empowering Readers for Success (ERAS) is a partnership with OpenLiteracy to help elementary students strengthen reading skills. The program uses a science of reading curriculum developed by the University of Florida Literacy Institute. Modeled partly on the Oasis Intergenerational Tutoring program, ERAS offers one-on-one and small group support without age requirements for tutors. Volunteers use pre-created lessons, eliminating the need for planning, and meet with students twice a week. [Keep reading](#)

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## New Certification Class: Accounting Essentials

We recently completed our first Accounting Essentials class, an exam prep course for the official Intuit Bookkeeping Professional certification. This certification, especially when paired with the QuickBooks certification, can open the door to a career in bookkeeping. Our first QuickBooks prep class is in session now.

Many of the nine students in first Accounting Essentials class began with no prior academic knowledge of bookkeeping. Through the 12-week course, they delved into accounting for assets, liabilities, and transactions, as well as reconciling financial statements. Our Chief Financial Officer Cheryl Garcia made herself available to the class to provide practical knowledge of these concepts and answer questions. At the end of the course, as with all our certification preparation courses, students had the opportunity to take the exam with a voucher provided by Literacy Pittsburgh, which is valid for two attempts. [Keep reading](#)

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## Spotlight on Success: Mohameden



Mohameden came to the United States from Mauritania in 2023 and started taking English classes at Literacy Pittsburgh a few months after he arrived. "I decided to move and live in the United States of America in order to change my reality and achieve my dream for the future," Mohameden explains.

"I decided to enroll [at Literacy Pittsburgh] firstly because it is free, and I do not have the money to pay for my studies. Secondly, I knew that it would help me and would be my path towards achieving my goals."

Mohameden started at level 1 English and has advanced to level 5. He has attended digital skills classes in typing and basic computer. He is currently enrolled in Business English to help advance his skills. This class covers more advanced topics such as pronunciation, business writing structure, vocabulary, and presentation skills. Mohameden has also taken advantage of many of Literacy Pittsburgh's career services offerings such as college information sessions and job coaching.



In August, he was hired by UPMC Environmental Services, providing patient transport.

“Literacy Pittsburgh helped me deal with others linguistically. It helped me prepare for speaking in interviews and working with my colleagues in the hospital,” Mohameden said. “I love Literacy Pittsburgh and I owe them a lot.”

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## Sign Up for Our Next Introductory Tutor Training

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

### In-Person Workshop

Monday, October 13

10:30 am – 12:30 pm

Literacy Pittsburgh Downtown Center

411 Seventh Ave Ste. 525

Pittsburgh, PA 15219

### In-Person Workshop

Saturday, November 8

11:00 am – 1:00 pm

Green Tree Public Library

10 W. Manilla Ave.

Pittsburgh, PA 15220

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## Test Your Knowledge of October

From holidays to Sputnik to a Supreme Court milestone...see how much you know about the month of October.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

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