

The SPARK

CELEBRATING SUCCESSES SPARKED BY YOU!



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.

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SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS: YERALDIN

Expanding her
language and
job skills thanks
to you!

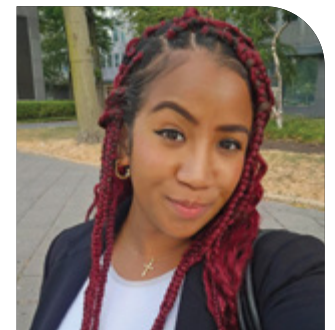
Yeraldin moved to the United States from Colombia in May 2022. She came here through a cultural exchange program called Au Pair. Yeraldin sought to expand her knowledge, experience American culture, and improve her English. Her now wife later joined her here through the same program.

"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 >>

YEAR IN REVIEW Continued from page 1

Our child-serving programs grew, as our new ERAS program completed a successful launch at Clairton Elementary and Catalyst Academy. Forty-three tutors worked with 111 students across the two schools, resulting in 90% of students making gains on the Core Phonics assessment. This impressive start has set the program up for expansion with generous support from the RK Mellon Foundation.

In recognition of our growing enrollment and waiting list, the PA Department of Education increased our contract, enabling us to add nine new positions to serve more students. While we welcomed those new positions, we said goodbye to our last class of AmeriCorps members since that program was not renewed due to changes in federal policy. We also said a fond farewell to Tutor Training Coordinator Roberta Hatcher, who retired at the end of June. Speaking of tutors, this past year saw a 4% increase in tutor recruitment and a modest uptick in tutor retention. Volunteer tutors

Our progress would not have been possible without the generous support of individual donors and corporate and foundation supporters who, combined, increased support by 26%. The number of donors who increased their giving more than doubled in the past year. Our donors and tutors not only gave generously to support our cause, they also advocated with us to oppose federal funding cuts and to support Governor Shapiro's proposal for a state funding increase.

Our advocacy has extended beyond budget concerns in the past year, as immigration policy and practices have meant an increased focus on ensuring students know their rights and are safe as they study with us. These changes sparked the creation of the Collaborative for Immigrant Impact (CII)—a coalition of 18 immigrant-serving organizations in the region who are working together to raise funds, share information, and coordinate services to ensure that an

The progress we've made this year—driven by the passion of our staff, the dedication of our volunteers, and the generosity of our supporters—has laid a powerful foundation for the future.

continue to serve about 35% of our student population, making them an essential part of our program delivery.

We had plenty of celebrations as well. Director of Communications and Marketing Maria Polinsky celebrated 20 years at Literacy Pittsburgh. We also celebrated a staff wedding, new homeowners, several staff attaining master's degrees, a doctorate, and three new babies!

Our commitment to growing and engaging our people was evident in our recognition as a 2025 Best Place to Work and our increased score on the Vibrant Index, which measures our inclusive workplace policies and practices. Finally, we made significant investments in upgrading security in our Downtown Center to ensure that our staff and students are safe.

ecosystem of immigrant support is maintained in the region. Literacy Pittsburgh is a proud and active member of CII.

As we close the chapter on 2025, we do so with deep gratitude and renewed determination. The progress we've made this year—driven by the passion of our staff, the dedication of our volunteers, and the generosity of our supporters—has laid a powerful foundation for the future.

With Appreciation,



Carey Harris, Chief Executive Officer

SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS: YERALDIN Continued from page 1

excited because not only were the English classes free, but they also offered many other services and had great flexibility.”

Yeraldin not only took English classes, but also strengthened her academic skills through our GED program. She most recently took our English for Job-Seekers class, which is sponsored by UPMC. She explains that this class was instrumental in helping her secure

her position at Dollar Bank.

“The classes helped me learn about American work culture and job industries, and improved my interview and job search skills,” Yeraldin explains. “Classes were always professional, dynamic, and focused on real needs. The teachers were excellent—always well prepared and encouraging participation.” •



Sometimes learning is fun and games! Thanks to the Jessie Games, Family Literacy students enjoyed an afternoon of fun games, prizes, and food. School-aged children received backpacks and school supplies. Partnerships like this are vital to the success of the Family Literacy program.

FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM EXPANDS

Our Family Literacy program was awarded an expansion grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Education to serve 11 additional families, bringing the total to 46 families. This expansion has allowed for the hiring of two additional full-time staff members and the establishment of a new teaching site in Carnegie. The expansion was long-needed. We have often been asked to serve other areas of town with our unique family-centered programming, but our capacity was limited. Expanding our services allows us to better meet students where they are and address their direct needs. Students are excited to remain in their neighborhood for class, making it easier to work around their busy schedules. •

UPMC AND LITERACY PITTSBURGH

A lasting partnership creating pathways to opportunity.

Since 2019, UPMC has been a valued partner of Literacy Pittsburgh, sharing a commitment to helping adults gain the language and career skills they need to succeed. What began as a simple request from UPMC's Environmental Services (EVS) team has grown into a powerful, long-standing collaboration.

UPMC initially sought support for EVS team members who were excelling in their work but faced challenges communicating in English with co-workers, supervisors, and patients.

Together, UPMC and Literacy Pittsburgh designed

Building on this strong foundation, UPMC and Literacy Pittsburgh launched a new initiative last year, UPMC's Pathways to Work program. This innovative effort helps unemployed and underemployed individuals—particularly immigrants—prepare for meaningful careers at UPMC and beyond.

More than 85 adults have participated in this new class, where they explore career options, build workplace English skills, practice interviews, create resumes, and meet directly with UPMC hiring representatives.

Notably, patient satisfaction scores increased on floors where staff had taken English classes, providing evidence that improved communication made a difference in patient interactions.



customized English classes tailored to the healthcare setting. These classes, held at multiple UPMC hospitals, focused on practical skills such as workplace vocabulary, small talk, and American workplace culture. Classes aligned with UPMC's core values.

Notably, patient satisfaction scores increased on floors where staff had taken English classes, providing evidence that improved communication made a difference in patient interactions. Employees, in turn, expressed pride in their progress and a deeper sense of connection and value as members of the UPMC team. Some team members earned promotions after completing the program. Cross-cultural communication workshops were also offered to supervisors and staff, fostering a more inclusive and understanding work environment.

Several students have been employed by UPMC, one entered a training program, and 31 others secured jobs with different employers. These outcomes highlight the program's success in breaking down barriers and building confidence and career readiness.

Literacy Pittsburgh and UPMC are currently exploring the development of a pre-apprenticeship program to connect students with career paths and apprenticeships in the healthcare field—one of the top employment interests among Literacy Pittsburgh learners.

With UPMC as a trusted partner, Literacy Pittsburgh is proud to help adults build bridges to careers, confidence, and brighter futures. •



LITERACY PITTSBURGH FACTS & FIGURES 2024-25

2024-25 REVENUE

Contributions

Corporations & Foundations	\$2,229,446
Individuals	\$554,809
Special Events	\$135,370
Total Contributions	\$2,919,625

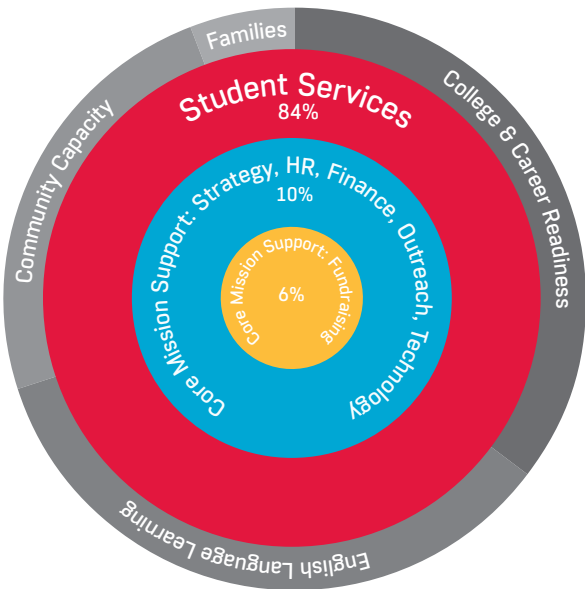
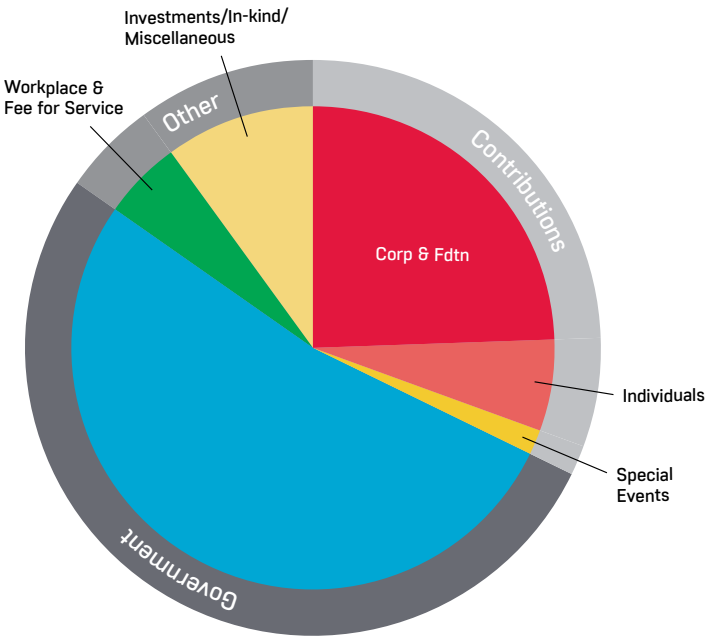
Government Grants

Total Government	\$4,760,903
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Other

Workplace & Fee for Service	\$473,068
Investments/In-kind/Misc	\$901,434
Total Other	\$1,374,502

TOTAL REVENUE	\$9,055,030
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2024-25 EXPENSES

Student Services

College & Career Readiness	\$2,248,374
English Language Learning	\$2,190,135
Building Community Capacity	\$1,529,895
Family & Children	\$366,630
Total Student Services	\$6,335,034

Core Mission Support

Management & General	\$730,627
Fundraising	\$432,569
Total Core Mission Support	\$1,163,196

TOTAL EXPENSES	\$7,498,230
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2024-25 PROGRAMS

CORE PROGRAM OUTCOMES



Employment
Outcomes
1,127



Became a
U.S. Citizen
40



Gained High School
Equivalency
79



Greater Confidence
in English
945



Entered
Postsecondary
Education
156



Increased
Reading/Writing/
Math Skills
685

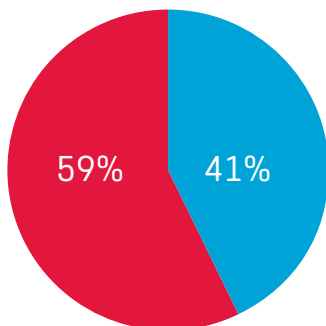


Advanced
Educational Level
968



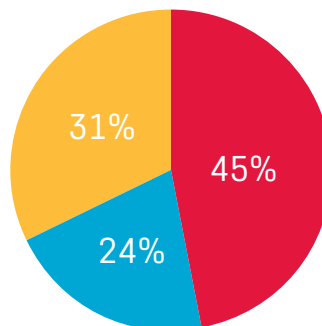
Average Hours per
Student
38.09

EMPLOYMENT UPON ENTRY



Employed **41%**
Unemployed **59%**

EDUCATION UPON ENTRY



Postsecondary **45%**
HS diploma **24%**
Less than high school
diploma **31%**

STUDENTS SERVED

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

Reading, writing, math
Workplace skills
High school equivalency
diploma prep
Digital skills

1,209

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

English classes
Citizenship prep
Immigrant support

2,510

CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Family literacy
School-based tutoring

419

BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Compass AmeriCorps

623

Note: Data includes outcomes related to a subcontract grant for adult literacy programs at Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania



SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS: MOHAMEDEN

**“I love Literacy Pittsburgh
and I owe them a lot.”**

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 enrolled 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 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 computer basics. 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 prepare for speaking in interviews and working with my colleagues,” Mohameden said. “I love Literacy Pittsburgh and I owe them a lot.” •

NEW COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS OFFERINGS

**From Accounting Essentials to College Pathways,
new classes prepare students for careers.**

Literacy Pittsburgh strives to deliver educational programming that creates stronger career outcomes for our students. We have introduced several exciting offerings during the past year.

Accounting Essentials: In September, we completed our first cohort of Accounting Essentials, an exam prep course for the official Intuit Bookkeeping Professional certification. Through the 12-week course, students delved into accounting for assets, liabilities, and transactions, as well as reconciling financial statements.

QuickBooks: Also in September, we launched the Intuit QuickBooks Online Certified User (QBOCU) certification prep class. This industry-recognized credential validates one’s skills in using the Intuit QuickBooks Online accounting software. Classes cover online administration of QuickBooks, bank accounts, transaction rules and receipts, and basic reports and views.

College Pathways: This program is designed to help students transition seamlessly from adult education classes to college. We launched three new courses: Thinking about College, Preparing for College, and Digital Skills for College. Other workshops will be offered on topics such as filling out the FAFSA, going on a campus visit, and accessing college services.

Career Pathways: Currently under development, this program will provide students with guidance on in-demand career options, as well as the necessary skills and how to acquire them. We seek business partners who will help students land a new job by attending career fairs, presenting about jobs they are hiring for, and volunteering to mentor students in their field. High-interest fields identified by our students include construction, healthcare, customer service, office administration, banking, and technology. If you are interested in partnering with us, please contact Lori Como at lcomo@literacypittsburgh.org.

We continue to offer Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certification prep classes in Excel and Word, along with many other beginner computer skills classes. Partnerships with PA Women Work and Jewish Family and Community Services make possible classes on communication skills, resume preparation, and interviewing. We offer a series of classes that prioritize students on our waiting list. These introduce them to valuable career skills while they wait to join a class or to be matched with a tutor. •

2024-25 INVESTORS

YARDUMIAN SOCIETY

Acknowledging individuals who invested \$1,000 or more in support of our students during the 2024-25 fiscal year.

Anonymous (3)
Scott and Leslie Baker
Sondra Balouris and Clifford Brubaker
Scott Bartlett and Joan Washington
Ritchie M. Battle
Ellie K. and Robert S. Bernstein
Donald and Mary Block
Phil and Karen Bolden
Browning-Dias Family
Bill Campbell
Tracy Certo
Lori Como
Danell R. Cooper
Nancy Crouthamel
Elliot and Beth Davis
Edward and Gail Denton
Wayne and Regina Desbrow
Ellen Duffield
James J. Elson & Kathleen D. Ryan
Mimi Fairman
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Ellen Freeman
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Cheryl Garcia & Family
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Drs. Maria and Francis Guyette
Carey Harris & Family
Patti and Stan Hasselbusch
Richard Heiser
Vicki Helgeson and Mark Kochvar
Louise Herrle and Godfrey Molyneux
Jackie Kalocay Hogg
Julia G. Kant
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Meryl K. Lazar

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Jennifer and Bill Rabold
Lauren and Ken Rice
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Pamela Ryan
Elizabeth Sarkisian
Anne Shaheen and R. Randall Tracht
Gary L. Singery
Andrea and Demetrius Smith
Patricia O. Smith*
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Jennifer and Terry Styran
Kathleen M. Sullivan
John P. and Elizabeth L. Surma
Susanne J. Wagner
Erin Weber
Maria and Tim Wesley
Liz Witzke-Baum and Allen Baum
Yaqi Wo

PATHWAYS TO THE FUTURE

Acknowledging individuals who have made a legacy gift to Literacy Pittsburgh.

Anonymous

Sondra Balouris and Clifford Brubaker
Donald Block
Jean Connelly*
Nancy J. Crouthamel
Carey Harris
James J. Harris*
Stan and Patricia Hasselbusch
Louise M. Herrle
Ellen Hildenbrand*
Patricia Prattis Jennings
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Rebecca Roadman
Lucy Russell
Elizabeth A. Smith*
Patricia O. Smith*
Dr. Philip and Dr. Susan Smith
Bertha G. Suter*
Naomi Thomas*
Marty Tian
Mary Yardumian*

**Deceased*

2024-25 CORPORATE AND FOUNDATION INVESTORS

Acknowledging cumulative investments of \$1,000 or more during the 2024-25 fiscal year.

Anonymous (4)
Adams Foundation, Inc.
Allegheny Health Network
Amazon.com Services LLC
Ann and Frank Cahouet Foundation
The Ascienzo Family Foundation
The Birmingham Foundation
Paul and Dina Block Foundation

Maxine and William Block Fund
BNY Mellon Foundation of Southwestern Pennsylvania
Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney, PC
The Burke Foundations
Caboodle Technologies Inc.
Calvary Episcopal Church
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CINIC Chemicals America, LLC
Clark Hill
Clark Hunter Foundation
Comcast
The Cooper-Siegel Family Foundation
Dollar General Literacy Foundation
Double Eagle Foundation
Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters
Eat'n Park Hospitality Group
EQT Foundation
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Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania
Google, Inc.
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The Heinz Endowments
Hello Neighbor
Henderson Brothers Insurance
Highmark Wholecare
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Jefferson Regional Foundation
Laurel Foundation
Massey Charitable Trust
The Miramare Foundation
Mizuho Securities USA LLC
Mt. Lebanon United Lutheran Church
New Jersey Manufacturers Insurance Company
Novus Group LLC
Peter C. Dozzi Family Foundation
Pete's Pro Painters

We have made every effort to ensure that this list is complete and accurate. If we have inadvertently made an error, please call 412-393-7646 so that we may correct our records. We apologize for any omissions or errors. A complete donor list is available on our website at www.literacypittsburgh.org/public-documents.

2024-25 INVESTORS

The Pittsburgh Foundation
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
Pittsburgh Regional Transit
PNC Advisors Charitable
Trust
PNC Foundation
Posner Foundation of
Pittsburgh
PPG Industries, Inc.
Foundation
Rectenwald Brothers
Construction, Inc.
Donald and Sylvia Robinson
Family Foundation
Ryan Memorial Foundation
James M. and Lucy K.
Schoonmaker Foundation
Shadyside Presbyterian
Church
Smithfield Trust Company
Snee-Reinhardt Charitable
Foundation
South Hills Interfaith
Movement
Tulsa Community
Foundation
United Way of
Southwestern
Pennsylvania
UPMC
The Walden Trust

GIVING CIRCLE

Acknowledging individuals
who invested up to \$999
in support of our students
during the 2024-25 fiscal
year.

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Laurie Adatepe
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Djamila Ait-Menguellet
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James Fogarty
Vita Marie Fontana
Lynn and Steven Forman
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Beverly Goldwasser	Susan and Gene Jeffries	LaVoie	Reesha Meacham
Jordan Golin	Mikayla Jennewine	Trang Le	Linda Merriman
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Sam Gorsuch	Robert Jesionowski	Abigail Lee	Mark Meyer
Kimmer Graham	Abbie Johnson	Stephen Lee	Georgia Miller
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Pam Harris	Terri and Douglas	Emily Lippert	Michelle Handa
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Megan Hicks	Donna Kielar	Mannino	Patricia K. Nichols
David McL. Hillman	Sarah Kielar	Susan Mansueti	Marjorie Niedbala
and Neal E. Hilty	Laura Kieras	Beth Marcello	David A. Nimick
Kathleen Hoedeman	Catherine Kierzkowski	Susan Marcinko	Jessica Nolte
Richard Hoffmaster	Joycelyn Kiliany's-Borner	Adrian F. Marini	Marianne Novy
Benjamin Hogan	Martha Kimber	Kristin E. Mariotti	Loretta E. O'Brien

Cindy Ollendyke	Rehann Rheel	Marc Spiros	Cathy A. Wilkie
Orlidge-Ochoa Family	Jeffrey Rice	Jennifer Stark Feierstein	W. Thomas Wilkins
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Jessica Pena	Dr. Merrilee H. Salmon	Ed Tipton	
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Walter J. Peterson	Erin Sawyer	William Toland	
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Audrey Petrus	Stephanie and	Melia Tourangeau	
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Jackie Phillips	Christina Schessler	Kristen Tsapis	
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Miranda Pino	Tom and Carole Schroeder	R. Conan Tuite	
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Pamela Reddy	Ricardo Solis	Michael Widom	
Jim Reehl	William Southern	Henry Wilde	
Stacey Reibach	Patricia Spahr	Dennis and Christine	
Thomas J. Rekowski	Carol Spiros	Wilke	

LITERACY PITTSBURGH IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Last year, 603 tutors gave 22,711 volunteer hours to help students improve their English language skills and reach their math and reading goals. The support, encouragement, and friendship of our volunteers help students develop self-confidence and persevere when their learning journey seems long.

Tutors and their students are managed by one of eight area offices throughout Allegheny and Beaver Counties. We asked program coordinators to share what their area has been up to over the past year. From new initiatives to goals achieved to conversations that span the globe, each entry showcases Literacy Pittsburgh's involvement in your local community.

We have grown from the kitchen table of our founder into the largest adult literacy tutoring program in the state. Your steadfast support has propelled our organization and our students to exciting heights. Thank you!



NORTHSIDE—OHIO RIVER

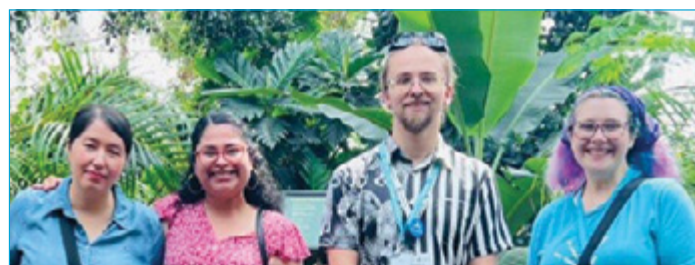
We have established a new partnership with the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh to support residents in achieving their educational and career goals. Participants will have access to the CyberBus 2.0—a state-of-the-art mobile learning lab equipped with workstations and internet connectivity that brings educational resources directly into the community. As a partner, Literacy Pittsburgh will provide GED preparation, math and reading support, English language learning, and career and student services across Housing Authority communities in Allegheny County. This initiative marks a significant step forward in providing equitable, accessible learning opportunities.

JEFFERSON—MON VALLEY

Volunteer Shawn Chattin's group at the Hilltop recently decided to pause classes due to safety concerns for students and adopted a more community-based approach. Through a WhatsApp group, Shawn extends opportunities for his students to connect and practice their English in real-life situations. From farmers' markets to community clean-ups to a Halloween party, students can continue to engage with one another while fostering deeper community connections.

BEAVER

Currently, Beaver boasts about 90 students and 18 tutors, including several first-time tutors who were enrolled during this program year. Thanks to their support and that of our on-staff GED instructor, our classes are full to bursting! We currently run four packed GED classes and four large English language learning groups. We have been privileged to honor the ongoing success of our "super tutors" as well. Henry Wilde was featured in an article in *The Spark* earlier this year, discussing his contributions to adult education since joining the program in 2019, and Barb Wilde was nominated for a tutor award at the recent Volunteer and Community Programs celebration for her work facilitating the English language acquisition of over 70 students since 2019!



SOUTH HILLS

The South Hills welcomed AmeriCorps Member Thomas Rainbolt as a community English language learning instructor this past year. Thomas served as instructor to 62 students across three unique evening classes in the South Hills and online. Offerings included a foundational beginner class at Iglesia Sion Church in Greentree, an online intermediate class, and an advanced grammar class at the Dormont Public Library. Thanks to Thomas' service, community classes, and the dedication of all South Hills tutors and students, the South Hills ended the year with record-breaking student outcomes across the board.



SQUIRREL HILL

Yaroslava and Ilya came to the United States from Ukraine over two years ago. They arrived not knowing any English and found their way to Literacy Pittsburgh. After full days of hard work—Yaroslava works as a home health aide and Ilya installs drywall and wallpaper—they attend class with their tutor, Erin, two days each week. Erin, too, finds time in her busy schedule as a graduate student to meet with her students. Bit by bit, Yaroslava and Ilya are improving their English. It has been amazing to watch their language improve and to get to know them better and better. Yaroslava and Ilya are setting the example for their daughters—one in high school and the other who started at CCAC this past semester.

PITTSBURGH EAST

The Pittsburgh East neighborhood is home to Hello Neighbor, a local refugee resettlement organization that has been helping Literacy Pittsburgh reach refugees with little to no spoken English. Hello Neighbor has volunteers who train as Literacy Pittsburgh tutors and then work one-on-one or in small groups. Without this partnership, many of these students might not have been served. This partnership creates rich opportunities for students and tutors to connect with each other – and their families. One tutor met her student's mother over FaceTime. "How often, as an adult, have you introduced your parent to someone?" she explained. "My student's mother is in Afghanistan. Honestly, I don't know the exact words my student used. But I heard the pride in her voice, and I saw her mother's face in response."



PITTSBURGH WEST

In Pittsburgh West, we continue to strengthen relationships with community partners Andrew Carnegie Free Library, Carlynton School District, and Iglesia Sion, allowing for the expansion of learning opportunities and services for our students. The classes taught by volunteer David Temple remain a highlight. Over the past four years, David has helped approximately 150 students improve their English skills. Beyond language learning, the classes have been instrumental in building community among our students and fostering a sense of belonging.

NORTH HILLS

Mariana earned her GED credential and began college this year to pursue her goal of becoming a nurse. Her parents and brother also benefited from Literacy Pittsburgh's programs with her parents taking English classes and her brother also studying for—and earning—his high school equivalency diploma. They are just one example of the many students in the North Hills who have earned a GED credential this past year, improved their employment prospects, or went on to postsecondary education.

Interested in learning how you can become a volunteer tutor? Visit literacypittsburgh.org/volunteer.

Help an adult in your community learn English or improve their reading, writing and math skills. No teaching experience is needed—your patience and encouragement are far more important! Free training is provided.

ERAS Tutoring Program Shows Promise

Children achieved significant reading gains in the pilot phase.

Empowering Readers for Success (ERAS) is a partnership with OpenLiteracy to help elementary students strengthen their 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-to-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.

Over the past 1.5 years, ERAS has piloted programs in the Clairton School District and Catalyst Charter Academy, as well as after-school programs at Faison and Lincoln schools within Pittsburgh Public Schools. So far, ERAS has served 111 students with the help of 43 tutors. Results show significant reading gains for the children, while volunteers value the structure and guidance provided.

With new grant funding, Clairton will implement the curriculum schoolwide, while tutoring will continue. ERAS will also expand at Catalyst Academy and we plan to add schools in Woodland Hills, Wilkinsburg, and Duquesne City districts. Additionally, we will pilot lessons with low-literate English language learners in our adult education program.

The program receives rave reviews from tutors and schools. One tutor wrote, “This program is very positive, and I walk away feeling I have made an impact each time I am there. The other tutors I have met seem to have that positive feeling of working with the kids too. We are lucky to have found this program to volunteer with in our area.” •

SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS: BENJAMIN

Ben began meeting with a math tutor at Literacy Pittsburgh’s Beaver County site in April 2025. A residency issue pushed him out of his high school during his senior year. He hit roadblocks when looking for a job and was denied several times because he didn’t have a diploma.

Ben has overcome many hardships, moving out of his parents’ home at 16 and facing serious health problems. However, his attitude, drive, and intelligence shine through. He embraces advice from a friend, “Always bet on yourself. If you don’t, who else will?”

Ben says that the best part of having his high school credential is that it demonstrates that “I am smart. I am able to do this. I do know what I am doing.”

He earned his GED in June 2025. Ben says that the best part of having his high school credential is that it demonstrates that “I am smart. I am able to do this. I do know what I am doing.” Beaver County Program Coordinator Callie Angelo is helping him apply to Penn State Beaver. Ben hopes to work in game development and wants to be the first member of his immediate family to graduate from college.

“No matter what you’ve been through, there will be people who will help you,” Ben says. “I can’t imagine where I’d be without Callie, Literacy Pittsburgh, and all their resources.” •



This past May, Literacy Pittsburgh hosted our annual GED Graduation Celebration at Point Park University. We were thrilled to welcome 25 of 42 recent graduates from the last program year. In true Literacy Pittsburgh tradition, we concluded the event with an open mic session. Family members, friends, and supporters lined up to share their pride and words of encouragement.

ADULT EDUCATION ADVOCACY CONTINUES

Your voice restored Congressionally appropriated funds, but our work is not done.

At the writing of this report, approximately half of Literacy Pittsburgh's annual operating budget is at risk due to federal and state budget impasses. These funds are essential to providing our student population with life-changing programs.

Our advocacy at the federal level took on new urgency in the spring due to the cancellation of the AmeriCorps contract, the President's proposed skinny budget that eliminates adult education funding, and the temporary freeze of Congressionally appropriated adult education funds. While the AmeriCorps program has been dismantled across the country and the temporary freeze was lifted, we are still fighting to retain federal adult education funds, which represent Congress's commitment to Title II of its Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). These funds represent about a third of our budget, enabling us to serve approximately 1,600 students and supporting dozens of staff positions.

Thank you to our many supporters who helped us advocate by sending emails and making calls—we led Pennsylvania in grassroots mobilization. Please keep it up! Our plight captured significant media attention—with coverage from WESA, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Public Source, and the *Tribune-Review*. While the fight is not over and the threats to our federal funding continue as of this writing, we are grateful for the support of Congresswoman Summer Lee, Congressman Chris Deluzio, and Senator John Fetterman for advocating for investment in adult education.

In fact, the importance of advocacy has been front and center over the entire past year. We started the year advocating for increased state investment in adult



Senator Jay Costa accepts COABE's Education Champion Award at Literacy Pittsburgh's Open House in September.

at the Pennsylvania House Education Committee in September. His testimony, along with dozens of letters of support from community partners and employers, led Governor Shapiro to include an increase in his budget address in February. He also specifically noted the importance of adult education in his remarks (tinyurl.com/ShapiroLPspeech). Governor Shapiro's advocacy led us to nominate him as an Adult Education Champion, an award given by the national association Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE).

Literacy Pittsburgh is pleased to have many state policymakers as champions for our work and increased state investment, especially Senator Jay Costa (also recognized as a COABE Adult Education Champion), Senator Lindsay Williams, Senator Devlin Robinson, Representatives Aerion Abney, Lindsay Powell, Arvind Venkat, Robert Matzie, and the Allegheny County Democratic House Delegation, along with Representatives Natalie Mihalek and Jeremy Shaffer among others.

We are grateful every day for the community of partners, volunteers, elected officials, donors, and institutional investors who stand with us in this work. We are buoyed by your steadfast support and remain committed to doing everything we can to advance the cause of better lives through learning in any and all circumstances. •

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.

STRATEGIC PLAN MID-POINT CHECK IN

Exciting successes show an organization ready, relevant, and sustainable for navigating the future.

Literacy Pittsburgh has made amazing progress during the first year and a half of our strategic plan. We have exceeded nearly every goal we set for this stage of implementation, most notably student accomplishments:

- Employment outcomes up by 43%
- Postsecondary transitions up by 20%
- GED attainment up by 4%
- Students obtaining digital skills certifications up by 114%

In addition, we made strides in boosting our infrastructure and programmatic offerings:

- Created supplemental classes for waiting students
- Debuted a course catalog so students could see and understand their options
- Launched the College Pathways Program for students with this goal
- Piloted ERAS (Empowering Readers for Success), an innovation in our school-based tutoring program that we plan to scale during the next two years

- Grew staffing by 19% and increased compensation; restructured staff to provide stronger supervision and support for student learning initiatives
- Implemented safety procedures at our Downtown Pittsburgh teaching site

A multifaceted approach to funding helps to ensure the sustainability of these efforts into the future:

- Increased private giving to operations by 37% through contributions from individuals, foundations, and corporations
- Strengthened our long-term sustainability with investments to help us with cash flow, emergencies, and long-term savings

We look forward to the next 18 months of our strategic plan, even as the current climate creates uncertainties for funding, opportunities for immigrant students, and our country's safety net. Nevertheless, we will persist firmly in the knowledge that our work changes lives and that we are ready, relevant, and sustainable for navigating the future. •

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411 Seventh Avenue, Suite 525
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
(412) 393-7600
www.literacypittsburgh.org

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