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ABSTRACT

This tool kit suggests various International Literacy Day activities to raise awareness of the issues of adult literacy and language learning, to connect local literacy programs with national programs, and to help achieve the National Literacy Summit goal by 2010. The kit is intended for individuals, programs, and organizations that want to call attention to their own efforts to promote adult literacy, language, and lifelong learning by celebrating International Literacy Day on September 8 of each year. Some of the suggested activities are as follows: initiate a local, regional, or statewide meeting to develop an action plan; take your case to candidates running for office and office holders such as governors and mayors; hold a press conference, student event, or issue a news release; create a celebration packet of materials to share with other programs. Samples of suggested activities made by organizations, plans made for the 2001 International Literacy Day, cover letters, literacy proclamations, press releases, guidelines for feature stories, and tips for writing media releases are provided. A model packet and a resource list are included. (MO)

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ED 478 968

International Literacy Day Tool Kit

NATIONAL LITERACY SUMMIT INITIATIVE

2003

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

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Dear Literacy Supporter:

The National Literacy Summit Initiative, a special project of the National Coalition for Literacy, is re-releasing this International Literacy Day tool kit, originally produced in 2002. We hope that the information and material in this tool kit will move individual communities and the Nation closer to achieving the Summit goal.

> By 2010 a system of high quality adult literacy, language, and lifelong learning services will help adults in every community make measurable gains toward achieving their goals as family members, workers, citizens and lifelong learners." (Source: "From the Margins to the Mainstream: An Action Agenda for Literacy," http://www.natcoalitionliteracy.org).

Carrying out International Literacy Day activities is one way to support the development of the nation's adult education and language system. International Literacy Day activities will help raise awareness of your program and the issues of adult literacy and language learning in your community. The National Literacy Summit Initiative views International Literacy Day celebrations as a means to connect local activities with national ones.

Please join us in celebrating International Literacy Day on September 8, 2003. We encourage you to use the suggestions, models, and materials in this tool kit to engage your community. Pick one simple activity, make a commitment toward a sustained literacy push, launch a program-based, community wide or state wide effort to celebrate International Literacy Day. Act now!

Sincerely,

Summit Task Force

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About This Tool Kit

The International Literacy Day Celebration Tool Kit is produced by the National Literacy Summit Initiative, 2003--a special project of the National Coalition for Literacy--funded by the National Institute for Literacy.

The Tool Kit was prepared as a service to the field and founded on the belief that local action will have national impact. You, your program, coalition, and commitment are the key to transforming the nation's adult education and language system into one that provides "high quality adult literacy, language, and lifelong learning services that help adults in every community make measurable gains toward achieving their goals as family members, workers, citizens and lifelong learners"--the National Literacy Summit's goal to be achieved by 2010.

Take a look at the Table of Contents to see how the tool kit is organized. You can see that the tool kit is not, necessarily, made to be read from cover to cover. For example, if you just need some ideas about how to celebrate International Literacy Day, you can go directly to that section, which is titled Suggested International Literacy Day Activities. Or, if you just want a sample of a press release or even a proclamation, they are provided in the Additional Samples and Tips section. Finally, if you need to see a sample of a total package of International Literacy Day materials because you are considering preparing one for your members or agencies, a complete sample package is provided. (Note that some of the items in this package are found in other sections of this document).

The Summit Initiative 2003, managed by a special Task Force appointed by the Chair of the National Coalition for Literacy, is pleased to provide this resource to you. Task Force members include:

Dale Lipschultz, Task Force Chair
Literacy Officer, American Library Association

Jean Stephens, Director
The Center for Literacy Studies: The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Edith Gower, Executive Director
National Alliance of Urban Literacy Coalitions

Cristine Smith, Deputy Director
National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy

Kathy Sikes, Director
Student Coalition for Action in Literacy Education, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Facts About International Literacy Day (History)

Source: International Reading Association Web site: http://www.reading.org/meetings/ild/fact_sheet.html

• International Literacy Day is celebrated each year on September 8th.

• International Literacy Day was first observed on September 8, 1967.

• The aim of International Literacy Day is to focus attention on the need to promote worldwide literacy.

• It is estimated that 800 million of the world's adults do not know how to read or write (two thirds of this number are women), and that more than 120 million children lack access to education.

• On International Literacy Day, individuals, organizations, and countries throughout the world renew their efforts to promote literacy and demonstrate their commitment to providing education for all.

• The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is the founder of International Literacy Day, and is responsible for appointing a jury to award international literacy prizes.

• Five literacy prizes are awarded annually on International Literacy Day. They are: The International Reading Association Literacy Award, the Noma Literacy Prize, two King Sejong Literacy Prizes, and the Malcolm Adiseshiah International Literacy Prize.

• The International Reading Association has sponsored the International Reading Association Literacy Award since 1979. The award is presented at the UNESCO celebration of International Literacy Day.

• The International Reading Association cosponsors an annual celebration of International Literacy Day in Washington, DC, which typically includes featured speakers, representatives from a wide range of governmental and non governmental institutions, members of the press, and invited guests.

• State and provincial councils and national affiliates of the International Reading Association often sponsor International Literacy Day activities and celebrations.

• Because International Literacy Day coincides with the beginning of a new school year in many countries, classroom teachers use this day to recognize the importance of literacy in the lives of both children and adults.

The National Literacy Summit Initiative's Suggested Activity Guide for Celebrating International Literacy Day/Month

Our Suggestions

This tool kit helps you with ideas and provides "how to's" to implement activities that celebrate International Literacy Day. In so doing, we can broaden and deepen the level of support and ownership in moving the Summit recommendations forward, in making organizational commitments, and in making a difference in literacy progress as a nation. Celebrate International Literacy Day!

Before launching into any endeavor that raises awareness of your program and the need for adult education and language services, it is recommended that you review how you currently "make your case" about literacy to your stake holders. Think about your written materials and "leave behinds." Specifically, to make sure your case is current take the following steps:

- Use as a reference, The Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy's (CAAL) publication, "Making the Case" which can be downloaded by visiting caalusa.org. Also refer to http://gseweb.harvard.edu/~ncsall/research/op_comings2.pdf , where you can find the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy's (NCSALL), "Building a Level Playing Field: The Need to Expand and Improve the National and State Adult Education and Literacy Systems." Both documents may help you improve and refine your case.

- Secondly, consider the advice of Sarah Watson, formally with the Literacy Office of the Governor (IL), who offers three suggestions that can help you strengthen how you make your case to show the impact of adult education. Sarah directs the Illinois Office on Literacy, which was created by Governor Ryan in 1999.

    - Combine statistics with a personal story/testimonial
    - Explain what's different as a result of spending X dollars
    - Be consistent in use and meaning of terms/language

- Third, make sure the statistics you use are current and can be verified. Visit nifl.gov, the National Institute for Literacy's (NIFL) Web Site where you can view or download literacy facts, literacy statistics about your state and region, and lots of other excellent resources to help you make your case.

Now that you've refreshed WHAT you're going to say, commit to carrying out one or more activities listed below as a forum to make your case.

1. Initiate a local, regional, or state wide meeting to develop an action plan that maps out where adult education and literacy will be in your state by the year 2010 (how it's going to get there and who will do what to make it so). Use Summit documents as a guide

(www.natcoalitionliteracy.org) and use the Summit name, logo, and planning format if you want.

2. Take your case and the Action Agenda (download it and make copies, www.natcoalitionliteracy.org) to all candidates running for federal, state, and local office to educate and inform. In particular, note the states where competitive Senate and Governors races are likely to occur. Work with all candidates and all parties to help them incorporate the (nonpartisan) literacy concepts in their "position on education."

3. Take your case and the Action Agenda (download it and make copies, www.natcoalitionliteracy.org) to your Governor, particularly if your governor is among those who noted literacy and/or adult education in his/her state-of-the-state address this year.

4. Identify and contact local and state people and groups who sponsor candidate forums and get your question about how candidates stand on adult literacy and language on the forum agenda. Often, newspapers, radio and television stations, and League of Women Voters sponsor candidate forums, among others. Be prepared to educate them. Provide them with a copy of your case and the Action Agenda (download it and make copies, www.natcoalitionliteracy.org).

5. Keep informed about federal policy and state trends. Commit to taking timely and persistent action over the long term as suggested in special posts to the Policy and Legislation page of the National Coalition for Literacy's Web site, www.natcoalitionliteracy.org.

6. Transform literacy's operating environment. Work with all political parties in your state to help them incorporate the adult education and language concepts into the State party platform's "position on education." (The party platform is the party's official "stand" on all the issues). "Literacy" is non partisan, meaning, it belongs in every party platform not just one of them. Find out each party's respective schedules and process for rewriting their platform. FYI: Currently the national party platforms, which are rewritten every few years based on input from the states, for the following political parties do not mention adult basic and language education in their education sections: Republican, Democrat, Independent American Party, Reform Party, Green Party USA, and Libertarian!!

7. Make a new friend (or two!). Many groups have published social or civic agendas, social priorities, positions, or platforms that explain their stands on issues of the day. Because literacy is a nonpartisan issue, work with all groups including but not limited to your local or state League of Women Voters, Unions, Urban League, special language-related or culturally-focused groups, health councils, faith-based groups, youth groups, and civic organizations. Make a special effort to connect with regional or state groups devoted to education (even though they are likely to be dominated by K-12 issues), including but not limited to teacher's unions. Get on the agenda and work to get your "language" about

adult education and language included in their published "stands" on the issues.

8. Ask your governor to work to get "literacy" on the National Governor's Association agenda.

9. Ask you mayor to work to get "literacy" on the U.S. Conference of Mayor's agenda.

10. Invite key officials to visit your program/attend a special event that you create including local and state public officials (your mayor, county supervisor, state senator, house member, governor) and/or federal officials including your member of Congress and your two Senators. (Be prepared to accept a staff surrogate). If there is a race for Governor, Congress and/or Senator, consider inviting all or some of the candidates.

11. Generate a mayoral or gubernatorial proclamation.

12. Communicate with local media by holding a press conference, student event, or issuing a news release. Be sure to have plenty of copies of your case and the Action Agenda (download it and make copies, www.natcoalitionliteracy.org) to distribute.

13. Create an event that includes the public.

14. Send letters to the editor. Include your case and the Action Agenda (download it and make copies, www.natcoalitionliteracy.org) as supportive documents to your letter(s).

15. Send letters to public officials that make your case and include a copy of the Action Agenda.

16. Encourage students to visit public officials to discuss your program the importance of achieving the Summit's goal. Be sure they have plenty of copies of your case and the Action Agenda (download it and make copies, www.natcoalitionliteracy.org) to leave behind.

17. Create a Celebration packet of materials to share with other programs using the North Carolina packet, provided, as a model.

Your commitment to celebrating International Literacy Day, month, or decade will make a difference!

Sample: International Reading Association's Suggestions

How Will Your School or Community Celebrate International Literacy Day?

Source: International Reading Association Web site: http://www.reading.org

Idea Starters:

• Organize a special event to take place in schools and invite key people from government, business, education, and the media to attend and participate. Ask an adult learner involved in a literacy program to give a testimonial. Rather than holding a formal symposium, consider asking students for creative suggestions for events.

• Establish a one-day hotline parents and community members can call if they have questions about reading education, learning disabilities, literacy programs, and resources. Staff the hotline with reading professionals and volunteers from local literacy organizations.

• Develop a short-term campaign around a certain time of year—such as summer—when children need extra incentive to read. To reach adults, target times when people need information most: tax season, before an election, when planning a vacation, etc. Offer resources and reminders, and reinforce the importance of lifelong learning.

• Have older students make books of their own that can be shared with younger students at their school on International Literacy Day.

• Form links with a school or educational group in another country and use this contact as a way to generate interest in your school or group's activities, while also helping promote literacy in other regions of the world. Letter writing campaigns, book collections, and other activities can generate interest among the media and the public.

• Conduct a readathon whereby individuals get sponsors and raise money for a community literacy program by reading.

• Create a partnership with a television or radio station, magazine, or newspaper. Approach them about joining forces on a specific project; don't just ask for coverage of one event. Remember that media outlets have an interest in promoting literacy, too.

• Approach a manufacturer in your region about helping your organization heighten awareness about a reading or literacy topic. A regional supermarket chain, for instance, might agree to print a literacy message on their shopping bags. A local dairy might agree to carry a series of tips for parents on their packaging.

• Invite a publisher to your classroom or school to discuss how books are developed.

• Approach a local bookstore about donating books for disadvantaged children or to use as prizes for reading awards at schools.

• Initiate an annual contest or award. Be creative—hold a writing contest for students or for senior citizens, a recognition award for the learning disabled student who has made the most progress, a contest for the best home video about reading, an award for the best literacy tutor in your state/province, etc.

• Think globally, act locally. The Internet is a great resource for communicating with people throughout the world. Tap into its potential as a tool for making global contacts.

Sample: North Carolina Literacy Resource Center's Suggestions

NORTH CAROLINA
LITERACY
RESOURCE
CENTER

International Literacy Day 2001: Twenty Ways to Celebrate Literacy

Celebrated annually since 1966, International Literacy Day calls attention to the global effort to promote literacy, and education as a central mission of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Here are twenty ways you – and your basic skills / literacy program – can enhance your observation of International Literacy Day 2001.

1. Use your newsletter to spread the word about the importance of literacy.
2. Sponsor a book fair, using the proceeds to enhance your program's outreach to learners.
3. Give a book as a gift. Include a note about the importance of literacy in adult life.
4. Establish a book discussion group with adult learners.
5. Form a reading promotion partnership with a nearby public library or another basic skills / literacy program.
6. Learn about and support local literacy projects of other programs in your area.
7. Sponsor book awards.
8. Organize an essay contest about "a book that changed my life."
9. Compile a calendar of community book and reading events. Share it with local media.
10. Sponsor a book-collecting drive. Give books to nursing homes, schools, adult literacy programs.
11. Create a library for adult literacy students to use.
12. Make a video that promotes literacy in families, at work, and in community life.
13. Contact your local newspaper with a story idea about your program. Provide enough detail that they are eager to write about you.
14. Sponsor book readings with local authors or local celebrities reading from their favorite books.
15. Attend readings at your local library or bookstore.
16. Publicize and distribute lists of recommended books for readers of all ages.
17. Take a field trip to a local literary landmark.
18. Make a collection of student writings. Get your local newspaper to review it.

19. Bring teachers, volunteers, and learners together to talk about favorite books.
20. Read books aloud with adult learners.

NC Literacy Resource Center, NC Community College System
800-553-9759
August 2001

How We Did It

International Literacy Day 2001: Four Urban Literacy Coalition Executives Describe Their Plans

From Catherine Thomas of Cleveland Reads

We have a lovely plaza across the street from our building, very central to the downtown area, to hold our Reading Rally at lunchtime from 11:30 to 1:30. I ask our city leaders, the mayor, superintendent, commissioners, etc. and local TV and radio personalities to read passages from their favorite children's books. Cleveland Reads supplies the books to the readers from a Browns grant. Starbucks gives free coffee and pastries while Borders gives out discount coupons that provide a 20% discount for any books purchased that day as long as the buyer purchases a book (selected from Cleveland Reads Recommended Book List), for an at-risk child. These books are then given to Cleveland Reads to distribute to children in the Cleveland elementary schools. This year we will celebrate freedom, peace and brotherhood. I will ask some of the readers to recite famous passages from history.

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From Gina Ficociello of the Literacy Initiative (Columbus)

The Literacy Initiative is working with a local photojournalist who went to NYC immediately following the WTC bombing. He will have his work displayed at a prominent art gallery for the month of September and will be making scheduled appearances. He has asked me to join him at those events in order to promote education as a remedy for prejudice and violence.

We have an event scheduled at the gallery on September 7th, and a special luncheon at the Columbus Metropolitan Club as well as a 4-7 event at a prominent downtown club. We will have photographers as well as representatives of the Islamic Foundation and of the City of Columbus as speakers. We are also working with local businesses (O'Charley's Restaurants, Cord Camera and possibly Borders) to promote literacy month.

Sandra Kawatski of the LaCrosse Area Literacy Coalition

The Newspaper Association of America (NAA) has produced a literacy tabloid for at least the last ten years. This is available to more than 1500 dailies across the U.S. Many literacy coalitions and councils usually advertise in this tabloid to be inserted in area papers on Sept. 8th or some time in September.

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From Roy Kaiser of the San Antonio Commission on Literacy

We no longer schedule something only for International Literacy Day. In the late 80's we had City Council proclaim a "Literacy Awareness Week," that included International Literacy Day. The following year we had City Council issue a proclamation declaring each September

as "Literacy Awareness Month." Our Commission on Literacy sponsors the Annual Literacy Awareness Business Breakfast, Annual Convocation of Literacy Service Providers and the San Antonio Run-Walk for Literacy that goes to support our G.E.D. Financial Assistance Fund. Literacy providers will host smaller events at their respective sites. So September is Literacy Awareness Month for us.

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From Darlene Kostrub of the Palm Beach County Literacy Coalition

This year we are having a Read-A-Thon on August 24th to focus on children's literacy. Then we are going to celebrate International Literacy Day on September 6th to get it done well before the Sept. 11th events may begin. We are having our Lawyers for Literacy group from the local bar association speak to about 20 classes at the Adult Education Center about the importance English, reading and literacy has had on their careers.

How We Did It

Virginia Adult And Continuing Education's (VAACE) Virginia Awareness Campaign

Note: Although this was an awareness campaign to promote the Governor's Literacy Proclamation conducted in 1999, this information is included here because so many of the suggestions and activities carried out by this group inform those who want to organize International Literacy Day Celebrations.

The following summarizes selected activities carried out by some of the Lead Agents in the 18 adult education regions in the state. (Lead agents, called RLCC's, are key adult education and language program administrators who volunteer to coordinate all service providers in the region).

REGION 2

"We copied the proclamation and sent it to every superintendent, legislator, and mayor in our region along with a letter inviting them to visit one of our classes. So far, one legislator (in addition to our arranged visit for State Senator William Wampler, 40th District) has replied and will be visiting.

We had a meeting with Senator Wampler in his office, shared the materials with him, and invited him to visit our family literacy program in Benhams, which he did on Monday, November 8. We invited the television station and the newspapers. The TV station did not show but both the Washington County News and the Bristol Herald Courier covered the event and published stories with pictures.

I faxed, just this past Friday, a letter with the proclamation to the editor of the Washington Co. News, the editor of the Bristol Herald Courier, and to WCYB TV. They were invited to attend our conference at the Bristol Conference Center this week and asked to write a story for their newspaper on what they learned from these key leaders at our meeting, to feature the conference on the television's Education Focus piece, and to cover it to be shown on the 6:00 am and pm or 11 o'clock news on WCYB.

We also sent PSAs to the radio stations and to the cable TV stations.

Washington County School Board, our fiscal agent, adopted the proclamation and will be presenting the resolution at the School Board meeting on Monday evening, November 15.

I attended a legislators meeting on Monday, November 8, at the Washington County School Board office which is an annual event. I spoke with Senator Puckett (38th), Johnson (House of Delegates 4th?), and Senator Wampler (40th) once again about November being literacy month and once again inviting them to attend classes."

Additionally, Regional Program Planner, Deborah Lowe:

- Conducted a live radio interview in Wytheville, 11/16/99
- Attended a Washington County legislators meeting on 11/10/99
- Had a television interview with WCYB, which aired 11/17-11/18
- Attended the Washington County School Board meeting where Rita Roper was recognized and Washington County endorsed the proclamation, 11/15
- Faxed PSAs to cable television channels and radio
- Secured the Visit of Senator Wampler to the family literacy program in Benhams
- Sent letters inviting mayors, legislators, and superintendents to visit adult education classes in November
- Secured the visit of WCYB TV to cover the RLCC Lead Agents Committee of Practitioners Conference, 11/17-11/19

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REGION 3

Region 3 integrated aspects of the campaign into their 1999-2000 work plan, goals, and performance evaluation system implying that the awareness raising and marketing aspects of this campaign now are core business for this region.

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REGION 5

Asked all teachers to call delegates, senators, mayors and supervisors, and invite them to visit their respective programs in the region.

Invited all delegates, supervisors, senators, and the mayor of Winchester to attend a Literacy Awareness Session.

TV Channel 6 aired a 35-minute talk show with LVA and the Adult Education Workforce Service.

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REGION 6

Provided copies of the packet to those who attended the state Regional Specialists meeting. Provided a copy of the proclamation to the Chamber of Commerce, Ken Plum, former director. Created the following listserv posting:

To: nla@world.std.com
Subject: NLA Info:Literacy Month
From: "Sue Barton" <sbarton@i-plus.net>
Date: Mon, 22 Nov 1999 23:12:11 -0500
Sender: nla-approval@world.std.com

This month Virginia's Governor declared November Literacy Month. We were encouraged by the state office to involve our local legislators in our adult ed. activities and classrooms.

We tried many avenues to reach our busy local legislators and the program that we finally settled on was one carried out by the students.

Two classes combined to celebrate literacy month and be honored by the teachers, administrators and fellow students. Students notified the local newspaper of the celebration. Discussions and interviews dominated the event where students learned and shared how important literacy is in all our lives. They invited the local Literacy Volunteers of America chapter coordinator to speak about student successes and struggles in their organization. One such success is the formation, initiated by one of the students, of a student support group.

Even though the legislators were unavailable to attend our classes, they will be able to read the article from the newspaper about our event. Human-interest articles are a powerful vehicle for public policy support and change, especially when the VOICES are the students themselves.

Sue C. Barton
AffilE8ted
sbarton@i-plus.net
Radford, VA 24141

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REGION 8
Held an open house and mailed letters of invitation. Plans to mail copies of the packet to other programs in the region.

Additionally, this region's activities, lead by Susan Erno, were featured on adult literacy's national listserv, copy of complete text below:

David Rosen writes:

> "Consider what you can do to make a meeting possible between a state or national legislator and a group of adult learners or graduates, one in which there is open, honest, comfortable discussion, in which students have a chance to talk about their goals, programs' strengths and weaknesses, how they would like programs to be held accountable, and what the range of learning opportunities needs to include.
>
> If you do arrange such a meeting, please post a message to the NLA list. Let us know what you did, how it worked out, what you think might have been accomplished, how students or graduates felt about it, how you felt about it."

Charlottesville Adult Education students recently invited local legislators to visit their Basic Skills/GED/ESL classes. Last Thursday, Delegate Mitch van Yahres, our state representative, spent the morn students wrote letters to individual legislators telling about themselves and the importance of their education. All students were a bit nervous about having a guest. They talked about what they would do in class and some wrote presentations.

Here's what happened: in each class, Del. van Yahres gave a brief summary of what he does as a legislator. In the Basic Skills/GED class, he met with each student, shook their hands and talked with them about their education. Students then had an opportunity to ask questions- these ranged from putting prayer in schools to increasing teachers' salaries to more funding for adult education/ESL classes and how to lobby-write letters, call, etc. The students felt that Del van Yahres understood their needs. Many heads nodded when he talked about the value and necessity of education. He also took time to listen both to questions in a large group and then informally during the luncheon. Many ESL students were pleased to have a conversation about their issues and brought up the fact that they have a lot to offer the community in terms of teaching others about different cultures, becoming part of the workforce, and volunteering. They also made clear that this class was for more than just learning English; for many it is their link to the community.

The lunch brought everyone together; there was sushi, kim chee, and enchilada casserole alongside turkey, collard greens, and pumpkin pie. Adults who had never lived outside of Charlottesville met adults from Bosnia, Venezuela, Korea, etc. They shared food and conversation. This was the beginning relationships for these classes.

What impact did this have on our program? Some teachers are already planning the next inter-class meeting. An ESL teacher is thinking about Community Outreach field trips and speakers for her class. An ESL newspaper Class will be offered next semester to provide an opportunity for students to both go out in the community to gather information and come together to publish a paper to be used by all students.

The original intent was to raise awareness and develop relationships with legislators so that when funding issues arise, they would have many faces to put with adult education. The student letters may have an impact; it's too soon to tell. Many students have already received replies from legislators. The next step is to present to the school board. They, too, have received many letters, and some students have expressed an interest in speaking to the board.

We all learned from this experience in more ways than we imagined.

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REGION 10

Materials were handed out at the RLCC meeting to all members. Articles were published in two local papers. Region 10 RLCC lead Agent, Stacy Wright, appeared on two local talk shows on cable, completed a newspaper interview, spoke to our regional economic development group, spoke to a VEC workplace committee, and called to confirm receipt of PSA announcements which were aired on at least 4 radio stations in our region. Stacy also mailed packets to all of the legislators in her area and spoke with three of them as a result of this information.

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REGION 13

"First, we issued a press release with a tie-in to a new WIA partnership our regional adult education program has established with the VA Employment Commission.

Second, our RLCC is using some of its budget to run paid ads in the local paper during November, publicizing the coming of the GED 2002 and the state 800 number for the GED, Get Ready initiative.

Third, I have sent portions of the packet, along with a cover letter and the earlier mentioned press release, to our local paper's editorial page editor, asking his assistance in highlighting Virginia Literacy Month. (By coincidence, I learned at the Awards Luncheon on Tuesday in Richmond from the keynote speaker's address-president of Media General, Richmond's largest newspaper publisher (?))-that the Virginia Press Association is sending the proclamation to all newspapers in the state with encouragement to highlight Virginia Literacy month in some way.

Fourth, communication to local (newly elected) state senators and delegates about our program(s), informing them about our classes attended by so many of their constituents. As program administrator, I will be giving to selected teachers the addresses and office phone numbers of the delegates and senators, asking them to invite them to classes to talk about how state government operates."

RLCC Lead Agent, Joyce Hamilton, wrote (and the newspaper ran) an editorial for the Free Lance-Star, Fredericksburg; the same newspaper featured an editorial highlighting the importance and impact of the Spotsylvaninia adult education program, and the newspaper ran a third editorial provided by an inspired citizen.

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REGION 18

RLCC Lead Agent, Maureen Dooley, winning the Adult Education Teaching Excellence Award, generated a huge newspaper story. Additionally both papers ran a 25th anniversary story on her program and the newspapers carried a student story (this student won the Jeannie Beliles Award).

Sample–Cincinnati Event Cover Letter

September 17, 2001

Dear "Fountain Square Reads" participant:

We are thrilled that you are able to join us for our first annual "Fountain Square Reads" event, Friday, September 21st. We feel that this will be a great way to raise awareness for literacy and have fun in the process!

Please remember:

Where:	Fountain Square, downtown Cincinnati At the stage
When:	Friday, September 21st We will meet at the square at 11:30 – 11:45 AM
What:	Reading a selection from your favorite book or poem The selection must be no longer than 2 – 3 minutes

Enclosed you will find a copy of the day's program and a Literacy Network brochure for your review. Please do not hesitate to call with any questions you may have.

I look forward to seeing you Friday!

Sincerely,

Stephanie M. Graves
Executive Director

Sample–North Carolina Literacy Resource Center Cover Letter

August 3, 2001

To: Directors of Basic Skills Programs
Directors of Volunteer / Community Based Literacy Organizations

From: Mary Dunn Siedow, Ed.D.
Director, NC LRC

Subject: International Literacy Day

Each year since 1966, International Literacy Day has been celebrated on September 8. The event is seen as a way to promote literacy around the globe. For about ten years, North Carolina basic skills / literacy programs have promoted literacy during the entire month of September.

The following materials may be of assistance to you as you plan International Literacy Day and NC Literacy Month observances.

- A copy of *Literacy in North Carolina*. Until the new National Assessment of Adult Literacy is completed, this publication has the most current literacy estimates for NC.
- Three fact sheets with information about basic skills / literacy in North Carolina. These new fact sheets represent the combined effort of NCCCS Basic Skills staff.
- The familiar "Basic Skills Fact Sheet."
- A photocopy of Governor Easley's "Literacy Month" proclamation. Official copies are available for a small cost from the Office of Citizen Affairs (919-733-2391). Call for information.
- "Twenty Ways to Celebrate Literacy." This information sheet contains ideas that you can use to promote literacy in your community during September.
- A list of Basic Skills / Literacy Program Contacts in community colleges, volunteer and community based organizations, and libraries.

We encourage you to use International Literacy Day and North Carolina's Literacy Month as an opportunity to work in partnership with other basic skills / literacy organizations in your community. Contact your local media soon to suggest ways to feature your accomplishments and those of others in your community. Help us follow the effectiveness of literacy awareness activities by sending copies of publicity from your community to NC Literacy Resource Center.

c. Community College Presidents
Senior Continuing Education Officers

CC01-150
Paper copy

Sample–North Carolina Governor's Proclamation

LITERACY MONTH

2001

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the need for a highly literate citizenry increases as North Carolina moves toward an increasingly technological future; and

WHEREAS, more than 20 percent of North Carolina's adults experience literacy issues that impact severely on their lives and families, their ability to work productively, and their full participation as citizens and residents of our state, and

WHEREAS, North Carolina's community colleges, volunteer and community-based organizations and libraries provided basic skills / literacy services to 154,786 adults during the 1999-2000 program year, including 17,445 who received adult high school credentials, 36,924 who learned English as a second language, 12,945 who participated in literacy programs in workplaces, and 3,551 parents who attended family literacy classes with their children; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Community College System, North Carolina Literacy Resource Center, and North Carolina Literacy Association work with the North Carolina Press Association and local media to sponsor observances of *Literacy Month* by inviting newspapers, television and radio stations to join in highlighting the economic and societal importance of literacy;

NOW, THEREFORE, I Michael F. Easley., Governor of the State of North Carolina, do hereby proclaim September 2001 as ***LITERACY MONTH*** in North Carolina, and urge my fellow citizens to learn more about the importance of literacy and to become involved with literacy in their communities.

Sample–Virginia Governor's Literacy Proclamation

Virginia Association for Adult & Continuing Education (VAACE)
Virginia Awareness Campaign

Governor's Proclamation

Certificate of Recognition

By virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution in the Governor of the commonwealth of Virginia, there is hereby officially recognized:

VIRGINIA LITERACY MONTH

WHEREAS, literacy is defined as the fundamental building block of all learning and is essential to the growth and success of every citizen in our great Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, literacy consists of a set of skills that includes reading, writing, math and critical thinking, and these skills are required to accomplish a variety of tasks, as well as contributing to our great Commonwealth of Knowledge; and

WHEREAS, parents are their children's first teacher, preparing their children to learn and succeed in school and their environment; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's Standards of Learning help to ensure that young students across the Commonwealth master all academic areas, including reading; and

WHEREAS, a literate workforce is essential to our great commonwealth today and in our future and affects our economic development along with competitiveness among other national markets; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Literacy month will encourage and promote literacy and lifelong learning across our great state;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, James S. Gilmore, III, do hereby recognize November 1999 as VIRGINIA LITERACY MONTH in the COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA, and I call this observance to the attention of all our citizens.

James S. Gilmore
Governor

Anne O Ottera
Secretary of the Commonwealth

Sample–Cincinnati Press Release 2001

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contact: Stephanie M. Graves
Executive Director
The Literacy Network of Greater Cincinnati

"FOUNTAIN SQUARE READS"

In an effort to celebrate and raise awareness for International Literacy Month in September, The Literacy Network of Greater Cincinnati will be hosting its first annual "Fountain Square Reads" on Friday, September 21, 2001 from 12 noon until 1:00 p.m.

Local celebrities and public figures such as Channel 19 anchor man Jack Atherton, Cincinnati Enquirer columnist Laura Pulfer, and mayoral hopeful Courtis Fuller will be at Fountain Square in downtown Cincinnati to participate in five-minute readings from their favorite works of literacy.

Reading participants and Literacy Network fund drive co-chairs Tim Stautberg, V.P. Communications, The E.W. Scripps Company and Jim Wiseman, V.P. External Affairs, Toyota Motor Manufacturing North America, Inc. agree on the powerful impact of literacy on our community.

"The public and private sectors must work together to help improve the quality of life for our residents with reading difficulties" says Stautberg. "The Literacy Network of Greater Cincinnati plays an important role in helping adults in our community strengthen their reading skills, enabling them to more fully participate in the local economy and in the education of their children and grandchildren. This investment will yield lifelong results."

Wiseman agrees. "Toyota feels very strongly about promoting literacy", he says. "We think it is directly related to a person's quality of life and to a community's economic health. Increasing our literacy rate is crucial. Quite simply, I can't think of anything more important to Cincinnati's future well being."

Since 1988, the Literacy Network has served as a contact center for adult literacy, providing a full-time referral hotline (621-READ) for prospective tutors and learners. The Network acts as an umbrella agency for over 80 sites in Greater Cincinnati where adults may go to improve their basic education and literacy skills. The Network also maintains a resource library, provides tutor training, and establishes new literacy and basic skills programs. For the past seven years the Network has offered classes for adults with dyslexic-like symptoms and in 1998 expanded to serve children with these symptoms as well. The Children's Basic Reading Program, an unduplicated service in Greater Cincinnati, is a two-year after-school program for

children ages 7-9.

The Literacy Network of Greater Cincinnati is located at 19 Broadcast Plaza, Suite 103, 635 W. 7th Street, Cincinnati, OH 45203. For more information about volunteer or learning opportunities, or how you can help support the Network, please call 621-7323 (READ).

Sample–Press Release Template

Virginia Association for Adult & Continuing Education (VAACE)
Virginia Awareness Campaign

Press Release
Preparation time, 30 minutes

Instructions
On your agency's letterhead, copy this press release format and fill in your local program information according to the instructions for each paragraph (and closing), below. Mail/fax to your local newspaper and to your local radio (and TV station of you have one). Call each media who will receive a copy of your press release to give them a "heads up" to expect it.

=======
NEWS RELEASE
(Fill in Date)

CONTACT
(Fill in Name/Title)
(Provide phone/fax/e-mail)

(YOUR AGENCY NAME) CELEBRATES VIRGINIA LITERACY MONTH
Governor's proclamation encourages and promotes literacy and lifelong learning across the Commonwealth

FIRST PARAGRAPH
(City) - (Your name/title and Your Agency Name) announced his/her enthusiasm for Governor Gilmore's recent proclamation that November is Virginia Literacy Month. Gilmore's proclamation affirms that, "Literacy is the fundamental building block of all learning and is essential to the growth and success of every citizen.:

SECOND PARAGRAPH
(Your name/title), (Agency Name), (Your Quote).

"Your" QUOTE: Sample
The following quote sample may be used word for word if you choose. It should comprise the second paragraph of your news release: (Name, Title) remarked that, "this nation was founded by and depends upon a literate and informed citizenry. Yet one in five adults in Virginia do not have the basic skills needed to succeed at work or succeed in preparing their children to learn. Governor Gilmore's proclamation is an opportunity to inform the people of (City/county Name) about excellent local program(s) and their results, and to celebrate the Commonwealth's commitment to adult literacy and lifelong learning."

THIRD PARAGRAPH

Provide a program statement that describes what happens to students as a result of receiving the program's education services including improvements in work-, family-, or citizen-related skills/attitudes or behaviors. Conclude this paragraph with a quote from a student, after securing the student's permission, that reinforces your statement about what happens to students as a result of being in your program. Use the inclosed document, "Communicating: What to Say" to help you develop this paragraph. OR,

Program Statement Sample

You may choose to use the sample below to craft your third paragraph. Fill in the blanks. Insert your program's name, edit the education service type, provide the numbers and percents achieved by your program services for your program's outcomes. NOTE: Market research shows that using both whole numbers and percents is key to effective communication.

Of the (number of students in your program) adult education and literacy students who received pre-GED and GED instruction at the (your program's full name) last year:
(#) students, or (percent), got jobs
(#) students, or (percent), passed their GED
(#) students, or (percent), report that they help kids more often with homework
(#) students, or (percent), improved their reading, math, and communication skills that will help on the job, with their families and in our community

CLOSING

(Agency Name) is celebrating the Governor's proclamation by inviting the public to learn more. Use the last sentence to explain how the reader/listener can learn more about your program or about adult literacy in your city/county.

Communicating: What to Say

Virginia Association for Adult & Continuing Education (VAACE)
Virginia Awareness Campaign

Who is this for?
Program administrators, teachers/tutors, and students

What should be said?
All public communications about Virginia Literacy Month (November) including speeches, press, statements, press releases, PSAs, and interviews should reflect the spirit of Governor Gilmore's proclamation which is, "Virginia Literacy Month will encourage and promote literacy and lifelong learning across our great state."

Proclamation sub-themes:

- Literacy is essential to the growth and success of everyone
- Literacy skills contribute to "our great Commonwealth of Knowledge"
- Parents are children's first teachers; parents need to be prepared in order to prepare children to learn and succeed in school--thus achieving standards of learning
- A ready and teachable workforce is essential to "our great Commonwealth" and its future for economic development

These are positive, upbeat messages that cast literacy as a partner in achieving Virginia's ambitions.

In addition, be prepared to cite local "need" statements. Be sure to know the sources of local statistics, as well as sources of the numbers and percents you may cite. You may be asked to provide the source of your information. For city and county figures about literacy levels use the enclosed resource, which is a copy of Virginia literacy levels indicated by city and county taken from the source document, "The State of Literacy in America: Estimate at the Local, State, and National Levels," National Institute for Literacy, 1998. For further information about the document contact the Web site (www.nifl.gov).

General statistics on literacy and how it relates to unemployment, crime, welfare dependence, poorly performing school children, etc., also help you make your case especially if they are put in a local context. A good source for general statistics is the National Institute for Literacy's home page (www.nifl.gov).

How to develop your Core Message
It is recommended that you develop a simple and direct core statement about your adult education program. Memorize it and make a point to convey it in all that you, your students, and your teachers/tutors say and write about Literacy Month. Use it with "need" statements.

Your core message should be specific, demonstrate a positive outcome, and (always) put

numbers in context (provide both the whole numbers and the percents). It is recommended that you prepare a similar statement using the example below. Replace the program name, the education service types, and the numbers and percents with those of your own program.

EXAMPLE
Of the 200 adult education and literacy students who received pre-GED and GED instruction at the Loring Nicollet Bethlehem Community Center last year:

- 10 students, or 5 percent, got jobs
- 12 students, or 6 percent, passed their GED
- 40 students, or 20 percent, report that they help kids more often with homework
- 120 students, or 60 percent, improved their reading, math, and communication skills that will help on the job, with their families, and in our community

Use your Core Message
Use your core message in press releases, PSAs, letters to the editor and elected officials, public presentations, interviews, and in feature stories. Samples and guides for all these communication vehicles are enclosed.

Communicating: How You Say It

Virginia Association for Adult & Continuing Education (VAACE)
Virginia Awareness Campaign

Who is this for?
Teachers/tutors, students, and administrators

Why is student communication effective?
Student stories/testimonies demonstrate your program's positive impact on their lives.
Student interviews or public remarks are an effective means to convey your program's results.

Born to speak/write?
No. Most of us, whether administrator, teacher/tutor or student, are absent natural speaking and writing ability. We stumble, ramble, convey vague thoughts and mutter. Effective speakers/writer are practiced and deliberate while appearing to be spontaneous and relaxed. They typically have mastered the following principles of effective communication. They:

- Know the facts
- Know the purpose
- know the audience
- Prepare
- Focus on the issue or point
- Speak/write concisely and directly
- Draw on personal experience
- Convey a personal touch
- Are time sensitive and know how long it will take to speak/how many pages to write
- Listen well if there are questions and respond briefly and honestly (including I don't know)
- Are relaxed and use eye contact/audience contact
- (Use humor, which is good but difficult for beginners)
- Practice/edit
- Practice/edit
- Practice/edit

Golden rule: Never authorize anyone to speak/write on behalf of your program unless you know exactly what will be said or written.

OK then, who Should Speak?
Identify a student who was empowered by your program (likely, a graduate of your program), who communicates well and who has achieved success as a result of your program (perhaps employment success). Additionally, this person will have demonstrated mastery of the process listed above in "Born to speak/write?" You should know this person well enough to be sure of what they will say.

Learning effective speaking/writing principles is a fitting assignment. Your teachers and tutors can develop student speaking and writing ability and they can identify who has mastered those principles.

Recommended Student Communication Activities

- Student-generated invitations to public officials inviting them to attend your program's Literacy Month Event
- Student-generated invitations to public officials inviting them to visit your program
- Student requests to meet with public officials including preparation for speaking at the meeting
- Student letters to the editor
- Student speaker(s) at your Literacy Month Event
- Student-centered feature story with your local newspaper, radio station, ant TV station
- Student-generated letters to public officials supporting Literacy Month and describing how programs like yours changed their lives.

Guidelines for Feature Stories by Adult Learners and Program Staff: Ten Steps to Success

Virginia Association for Adult & Continuing Education (VAACE)
Virginia Awareness Campaign

Prior to arranging for media to feature a story on adult learners or on your program, use the two information pages titled, "Communicating: What to Say" and "Communicating: How to Say It" to prepare what will be said and decide who will say it. (Each page is provided in this package).

The guide is for use by the person/people who will deliver or "be" a feature story. For program staff, mentally supplant "student and their personal stories and results" with "your program and its collective results" throughout the guide.

1. Create a practiced, winning story. The best feature stories follow an outline that:
   - States the problem
   - (Student) describes how it affected their life
   - (Student) identifies what the program did to remedy the problem
   - (Student) finishes with how the programs services changed their life
   - Provides full contact information about the program including full name, address, phone, and e-mail

2. Engage the interest of the specific media person detailed to prepare feature and special interest stories. Call and set an appointment.
   - Call the city editor to arrange for an interview with print media
   - Call the news director to arrange for an interview with radio
   - Call the assignment editor to arrange an interview with TV.

3. Make sure appropriate program staff, teachers/tutors, and students have the following information:
   - The media person's name
   - The time and date of the appointment
   - The full street address and phone number of the place of the appointment
   - Confirmation that the student knows how to get to the location and has transportation available on that day to do so. plan to arrive 15 minutes early.

4. Provide information to the media person in advance of the interview including program information and a student bio.

5. Dress well but comfortably and simply for the interview so that the focus is on what you SAY not what you look like. To keep the attention on your message (not on your looks):
   - Nothing (hair, skirt, pants) should to low or too high; too tight, too baggy or too bulgy.

- Nothing (hair, skirt, pants, perfume/cologne, and makeup) should be too dazzling, patterned, overpowering, or bold.
- Buttons shouldn't burst, zippers shouldn't pull, and sock tops should meet pant cuffs (when seated).
- Be confident. Don't fidget, jiggle, or wiggle--pick, pluck, or poke.

7. Respond in whole sentences without ahs, ums, er-ahs, wells and "ya knows."

8. Stay focused on the purpose of the interview (determined well ahead of time during preparation). Be positive. Don't blame, exaggerate, know it all, be sarcastic, giggle, or chew.

Ask the media person what time and the date the story will be aired, played, or published. (If your story is live on the air, bring a cassette to the interview and ask the interviewer for a copy of the interview prior to the session).

10. Relax and enjoy. You have something important to say!

Media Tips:
Some Tips for Writing News Releases

Source: International Reading Association Web site:
http://www.reading.org

Good news releases take time and effort, but getting your message across clearly to the press can lead to excellent coverage of your event. Here are some tips for writing effective news releases.

• Allow enough time for the press to respond to your announcement and prepare for your event. Try to mail news releases at least two weeks before the event.

• State your message simply, without a lot of "educationese" or jargon.

• Make sure to include vital information such as time, place, and location of the event, plus the name of a contact person with phone number and e-mail address.

• State clearly who is sponsoring the event and who will benefit from it.

• State clearly the costs of the event, if any, and give information about who may attend.

• Double-check phone numbers, the spellings of people's names, and dates and times that appear.

• Keep it short, use wide margins, and double space the text.

• Proofread the news release carefully, and ask someone else to look it over for you to make sure the information is complete and makes sense.

• Make sure that the contact person listed on the news release is aware that his or her name and phone number are being provided to the press.

• Make sure your group's full name and its address, phone, fax, and e-mail are clearly identified.

• Give a quick summary of what your group does somewhere in the news release. This is often the concluding paragraph.

• Make sure that each envelope has the correct name and address of the media contact, and that it includes an accurate return address.

• Make sure every envelope has the correct postage.

North Carolina's Literacy Resource Center's International Literacy Day Packet (2001)

The following packet of materials was sent to Directors of Basic Skills Programs Directors of Volunteer / Community Based Literacy Organizations and was prepared by Mary Dunn Siedow, Ed.D. Director, NC LRC in August 2001.

August 3, 2001

To: Directors of Basic Skills Programs
Directors of Volunteer / Community Based Literacy Organizations

From: Mary Dunn Siedow, Ed.D.
Director, NC LRC

Subject: International Literacy Day

Each year since 1966, International Literacy Day has been celebrated on September 8. The event is seen as a way to promote literacy around the globe. For about ten years, North Carolina basic skills / literacy programs have promoted literacy during the entire month of September.

The following materials may be of assistance to you as you plan International Literacy Day and NC Literacy Month observances.

- A copy of *Literacy in North Carolina*. Until the new National Assessment of Adult Literacy is completed, this publication has the most current literacy estimates for NC.
- Three fact sheets with information about basic skills / literacy in North Carolina. These new fact sheets represent the combined effort of NCCCS Basic Skills staff.
- The familiar "Basic Skills Fact Sheet."
- A photocopy of Governor Easley's "Literacy Month" proclamation. Official copies are available for a small cost from the Office of Citizen Affairs (919-733-2391). Call for information.
- "Twenty Ways to Celebrate Literacy." This information sheet contains ideas that you can use to promote literacy in your community during September.
- A list of Basic Skills / Literacy Program Contacts in community colleges, volunteer and community based organizations, and libraries.

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c. Community College Presidents
Senior Continuing Education Officers

CC01-150
Paper copy

NORTH CAROLINA
LITERACY
RESOURCE
CENTER

National Literacy Facts

According to the 1992 *National Adult Literacy Survey* (*NALS*),

> "Literacy is using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential."
>
> Some 20-22% of adults in the nation require serious literacy instruction. Another 30% need some assistance with literacy.
>
> Adults demonstrating the greatest need for literacy services are likely to have less than a high school education, to be unemployed or under-employed, to be living in poverty, and to shrink from participation in civic actions such as voting.

The National Institute for Literacy estimates that:

> Forty-three percent of people with the lowest literacy skills live in poverty, 17 percent receive food stamps, and 70 percent have no job or a part-time job.
>
> Workers who lack high school diplomas earn only about one quarter as much as do workers with bachelor's degrees.
>
> Participation in adult literacy programs is related to such positive outcomes as increased employment, higher earnings and voting.

Research reported in the journal of the American Medical Association indicates that helping low literate parents improve basic skills has a direct and measurable impact not only of their lives but also on the lives of their children.

North Carolina Literacy Facts

According to estimates based on the *National Adult Literacy Survey* (*NALS*), 22 % of North Carolina's adult population perform at the lowest literacy level, and another 30 % perform at a "below adequate level" in information processing skills.

North Carolina ranks below the national average in skills level of the population. Only nine states and the District of Columbia have more adults than North Carolina at the lowest *NALS* level.

(Source: *Literacy in North Carolina*, NC Literacy Resource Center, 1998)

According to the 2000 Census, 20 percent of North Carolina's adults over the age of 25 have not completed high school. This is a decrease from 32% in 1990 and 35% in 1980.

NORTH CAROLINA
LITERACY
RESOURCE
CENTER

North Carolina Basic Skills / Literacy Program Information

In North Carolina, basic skills / literacy services are provided by public and private organizations. North Carolina's 58 community colleges enroll adults in a full range of Basic Skills classes, from Adult Basic Education through Adult High School (AHS) / General Educational Development (GED). More than 50 volunteer programs, libraries and community-based organizations work with adults in one-to-one tutoring and small group instruction.

Adult Basic Education (**ABE**) is a program of instruction designed for adults who lack competence in reading, writing, speaking, problem solving, or computation at a level necessary to function in society, on a job or in the family.

English as a Second Language (**ESL**) is a program of instruction designed to help adults who are limited English proficient achieve competence in the English language.

Compensatory Education (**CED**) is a program to compensate mentally disabled adults who have not had an education or who have received an inadequate one. The program requires specialized diagnosis and consists of specially designed curriculum.

General Educational Development (**GED**) is a program of instruction designed to prepare adult students to pass the GED tests that lead to a high school diploma equivalency.

Adult High School (**AHS**) is a program of instruction offered cooperatively with local public school systems to help adults earn an Adult High School Diploma.

Workplace Basic Skills is a program to improve the literacy skills needed to perform a job and at least partly under the auspices of an employer. Although some programs are offered in specialized workplace labs on college campuses, most of them are offered at the worksite.

Family Literacy is a program with a literacy component for parents and children or other intergenerational literacy components.

Each year, growing numbers of adults advance their skills in North Carolina Community Colleges and in the 30 volunteer and community organizations that receive federal funds through the NC Community College System. In 1999-2000:

- 154,786 adults were enrolled in basic skills / literacy programs. Of these, the majority were enrolled in Adult Basic Education programs, followed by Adult Secondary Education (Adult High School and GED), and English as a Second Language (ESL).
- 17,445 adults earned Adult High School diplomas or GEDs.
- 12,945 employees participated in workplace literacy programs conducted at work sites through partnership agreements with over 280 employers.
- 36,924 adults enrolled in English Literacy (English as a Second Language) programs.
- 3,551 parents and their children participated in comprehensive family literacy programs.
- 6,000 adults were enrolled in compensatory education classes.
- 1,124 homeless adults participated in Basic Skills classes.

The 1999-2000 program year brought a new National Reporting System (NRS), requiring states to develop and meet program performance measures. North Carolina basic skills / literacy programs met or exceeded all of the state's performance measures in this first year of the NRS. In fact, North Carolina exceeded national averages on all but one of five performance measures.

Community colleges offer opportunities for adults to learn in a range of settings -- places of work, homeless shelters, and other community locations -- in addition to college campuses. In fact, some 70% of Basic Skills classes are held in off campus locations.

NC Community College System operates 77 GED testing centers through its 58 community colleges, making the GED accessible in each of the state's 100 counties.

Volunteers in community-based organizations, libraries and community colleges provide literacy instruction to more than 7,000 adults each year. Each year more than 2,400 volunteers donate an average of three hours per week to tutoring adults. Conservatively calculated at $5.15 per hour (the minimum wage) for 40 weeks, these volunteers contribute $1,483,200 to North Carolina every year.

Integrating basic and academic skills into the contexts of adults' family lives, work, and community acknowledges the value of learning as a life-long experience. Contextual learning expands the individual's employment opportunities, encourages intergenerational transfer of literacy from parents to children, and increases participation in communities.

Literacy and Employment

According to the National Bureau of Labor Statistics, demand for workers with education beyond high school is increasing. Many occupations require 14 years of education – high school plus industry related skills. Graduates of community / technical college programs, and bachelor's degree programs have higher projected growth rates than those requiring a high school diploma or less.

Each year, the number of adults earning high school equivalencies grows. In 1999-2000, 17,445 adults earned a GED or Adult High School diploma in North Carolina community colleges.

North Carolina employment possibilities are expected to continue to grow, largely in white collar and service areas. Blue-collar jobs will grow at a slower rate, and agricultural jobs are expected to decline.

North Carolina's community colleges are leaders in preparing workers for jobs in the future. Occupational education programs provide industry specific skills; Basic Skills programs provide workplace literacy education.

In 1999-2000 community colleges Basic Skills programs conducted workplace classes in over 280 workplace sites, serving 12,945 employees.

- Working with Molly Maid, Durham Technical Community College teaches workplace ESL and GED classes in a program that has become a national model for the Molly Maid company and other state GED programs.
- Community colleges are working with the NC Department of Transportation to provide workplace literacy classes.

Work related literacy activities are part of Basic Skills classes and literacy tutoring sessions across the state.

- Compensatory education programs assist adults with mental retardation in developing basic skills. These programs, emphasizing functional activities learned in the context of work, enable adults to practice job related skills, explore employment opportunities, and shadow paid workers.
- In addition to teaching basic literacy skills, Adult Basic Education classes incorporate work-focused activities such as job applications, resume writing, and reading safety information.

Literacy and Families

The better educated the parents, the greater the likelihood that children will succeed in school, go on to college, and achieve higher levels of literacy as adults. Parents', especially mothers' education levels are determinants of school persistence and achievement. The Journal of the American Medical Association (2001) supported the assertion that increased parental involvement is essential to preventing academic failure in disadvantaged students.

In 1999-2000, some 3,551 parents and their children participated in 39 comprehensive family literacy programs in North Carolina. Twenty-three of these programs are supported with federal funds through the Even Start program. Comprehensive family literacy programs are comprised of four components: adult basic education, parent time, childhood education, and parent and child interaction. Community college Basic Skills programs deliver adult education and parent time components and oversee parent and child interaction. Schools systems and early childhood programs partner with colleges to provide age appropriate instruction for children.

In addition to the comprehensive family literacy programs, other basic skills / literacy programs infuse family focused literacy activities into their curricula. Students in Basic Skills classes and literacy tutoring settings learn math in the context of family budgeting. They learn to read and respond to information coming from their children's schools. They experience a sense of accomplishment when they read to their children or help them with homework.

The North Carolina Family Literacy Consortium, funded through a US Department of Education Even Start Statewide Family Literacy Initiative grant, is engaged in a two year project to establish a coordinated system of family literacy services in the state. Task forces are working to develop performance indicators for comprehensive family literacy programs, to construct a professional development credential system, and to identify and disseminate family literacy resources. The Consortium, housed in the North Carolina Community College System, is bringing together educators, business leaders, agency heads, and members of the general public.

North Carolina's family literacy programs have access to important resources. MOTHEREAD, Inc., a Raleigh based organization, introduces family themes into family literacy and early childhood education programs. The North Carolina Center for Family Literacy, a division of the National Center for Family Literacy in Louisville, KY, focuses on training, policy development, leadership and advocacy for comprehensive family literacy programs across the state.

Literacy, Community and Language Learning

North Carolina's communities are changing. Agrarian communities are becoming suburban; the increasing presence of technology is changing the ways people live together. A growing sense of respect for others leads us to see others, even those who have physical or mental disabilities, as valued contributors to our communities.

North Carolina is experiencing significant immigration, particularly from Spanish speaking

countries. In 2000, 378,963 (4.7%) of North Carolina residents were Hispanic as compared to 76,726 (1.2%) in 1990.

Newcomers to the United States want and need to learn English, making English as a Second Language (ESL) program the fastest growing Basic Skills program. In 1999-2000 36,924 adults participated in (ESL) programs in North Carolina Community Colleges, volunteer and community-based organizations, an increase from 31, 634 in 1998-99.

North Carolina Community College System receives federal funding to administer special "English Literacy / Civic Education" grants to basic skills / literacy programs. In 1999-2000, fifteen basic skills / literacy programs used these grants to develop curriculum, create a video for negotiating community systems, and design kits of resource materials on community services.

Literacy "Hotline"

NC Literacy Resource Center maintains a toll free number to provide information and referral services. Call 1-800-553-9759 for literacy assistance anywhere in the state.

Literacy "Program Finder"

NC Literacy Resource Center maintains a database listing contact persons and program information for basic skills / literacy programs. Enter NC LRC's WWW site at http://www.nclrc.state.nc.us and follow the links to " Program Finder Database" where you can select from a menu of program options.

Literacy Contacts

To learn more about basic skills / literacy in North Carolina, contact one of the following state level resource persons. Use the accompanying list of program contacts to contact local program contacts.

NC Community College System (919-733-7051)
- Dr. Randy L. Whitfield, State Director of Basic Skills
- Dr. Delane Boyer, Coordinator of Adult High School / GED
- Patrick K. Pittman, Coordinator of Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language
- Linda K. Ray, Training Specialist
- Dr. Mary Dunn Siedow, Director of NC Literacy Resource Center
- Sillar G. Smith, Coordinator of Compensatory Education
- Katie J. Waters, Family Literacy Consortium Coordinator

North Carolina Literacy Association (910-276-7007, 888-454-7323)
- Patrica Bush, President

NORTH CAROLINA
LITERACY
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International Literacy Day 2001
Twenty Ways to Celebrate Literacy

Celebrated annually since 1966, International Literacy Day calls attention to the global effort to promote literacy, and education as a central mission of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Here are twenty ways you – and your basic skills / literacy program – can enhance your observation of International Literacy Day 2001.

1. Use your newsletter to spread the word about the importance of literacy.
2. Sponsor a book fair, using the proceeds to enhance your program's outreach to learners.
3. Give a book as a gift. Include a note about the importance of literacy in adult life.
4. Establish a book discussion group with adult learners.
5. Form a reading promotion partnership with a nearby public library or another basic skills / literacy program.
6. Learn about and support local literacy projects of other programs in your area.
7. Sponsor book awards.
8. Organize an essay contest about "a book that changed my life."
9. Compile a calendar of community book and reading events. Share it with local media.
10. Sponsor a book-collecting drive. Give books to nursing homes, schools, adult literacy programs.
11. Create a library for adult literacy students to use.
12. Make a video that promotes literacy in families, at work, and in community life.
13. Contact your local newspaper with a story idea about your program. Provide enough detail that they are eager to write about you.
14. Sponsor book readings with local authors or local celebrities reading from their favorite books.
15. Attend readings at your local library or bookstore.
16. Publicize and distribute lists of recommended books for readers of all ages.
17. Take a field trip to a local literary landmark.
18. Make a collection of student writings. Get your local newspaper to review it.
19. Bring teachers, volunteers, and learners together to talk about favorite books.
20. Read books aloud with adult learners.

Resource List

The Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy's (CAAL) broad mission is to help advance adult literacy in the United States. Download "Making the Case" and other great resources: http://www.caalusa.org.

National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL). In December 2001, NCSALL published "Building a Level Playing Field: The Need to Expand and Improve the National and State Adult Education and Literacy Systems" (Comings, et al), a paper outlining the type and extent of need for adult education and literacy services nationwide. It includes statistics on the scope of the need for adult literacy, how many adults are receiving adult education services, and recommendations for what can be done to expand and improve services. It is available free by downloading from http://gseweb.harvard.edu/~ncsall/research/op_comings2.pdf

The National Coalition for Literacy serves as the umbrella organization for the advancement of literacy in the United States. Its special project, the Summit Initiative, is supported by the U. S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education and the National Institute for Literacy. Download "From the Margins to the Mainstream: An Action Agenda for Literacy" in Adobe Acrobat format and view national policy updates: http://www.natcoaltionliteracy.org.

The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) is a federal organization that shares information about literacy and supports the development of high-quality literacy services so all Americans can develop essential basic skills. Download literacy facts, literacy statistics about your state and region, and lots of other excellent resources: http://www.nifl.gov.

U.S. Department of Education. Download the U.S. Department of Education's Strategic Plan, 2002-2007. See Goal 5 for its adult education and language priorities: http://www.ed.gov.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

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