



# LITERACY COUNCIL FREDERICK COUNTY, MD

EMPOWERING ADULTS THROUGH ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

## Literacy Council of Frederick County Newsletter

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CORNER

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US CHANGE MORE LIVES IN  
2015

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TUTOR?



Issue: 04

March 2015

### Executive Director's Corner-Laurie Fisher



*"Skills Matter."* If we ever need a reminder as to the critical importance of the Literacy Council's adult literacy programs to the wellbeing and health of Frederick County, the findings in a new report distributed by [ProLiteracy](#) are it. Earlier this week the U.S. Department of Education released the report [Making Skills Everyone's Business: A Call to Transform Adult Learning in the United States](#). The report began

with these two words - Skills matter and goes on to discuss in great detail about who has low skills in the U.S. and what are the consequences. When focusing on the challenge of low-literacy and the population we serve in Frederick County the numbers speak for themselves:

- One in six adults has low literacy skills (one in three has low numeracy skills).
- One-third are immigrants
- More than half are black or Hispanic: 35% of black and 43% of Hispanic adults have low literacy skills compared to 10% of whites.

So, what are the consequences? According to this report, "what adults know and can do - not just how many years of education they complete - strongly affects economic growth." Also, "Americans with low literacy skills are four times more likely to have fair to poor health." Equally powerful was the statement "Low skills damage a sense of community and shared democracy by limiting civic participation."

What also stands out are the positive outcomes to individuals and families, business and industry, and communities from investing in programs to strengthen literacy (and other) skills. Here are a few highlights:

- In the U.S., literacy and numeracy skills are strongly linked to earnings and employment status.
- Increasing parents' skills can improve education outcomes for their children, higher-skilled adults are healthier, with implications for their ability to work, parent and participate in their communities.
- States with better-educated workforces have higher economic growth and higher wages.

January marked the successful launch of a new pilot Tutor Training format that included a new "no obligation" 90-minute orientation session, followed by an on-line assignment utilizing resources from ProLiteracy and two half-day in-person training sessions. The goal is to be able to offer orientation sessions in multiple locations around the county to reach potential tutors in outlying areas, and to provide an alternative shorter format in addition to the traditional two full day face-to-face workshops. For more information, please call our office at 301-600-2066 or [e-mail us.](#)

Whether you are an adult served by the Literacy Council, a volunteer who helped contribute some of the 17,000 hours of your time last year, or a member of the Frederick County community, this report sends a powerful message and a renewed call to action on the impact of our individual and collective work on behalf of Frederick County and our entire country.

## New Literacy Council Class Teaches "Restaurant English" to Kitchen Workers

Kitchen workers from five Frederick restaurants are being taught English-language restaurant vocabulary as part of a new Literacy Council pilot class to make it easier for them to do their jobs.



### SAVE THE DATE!

#### Literacy Council's Annual Celebration of Achievement



We are pleased to announce that we have a date for next year's Annual Celebration of Achievement. It will be held Tuesday, May 12, 2015 (evening) at the Delaplaine Visual Arts Education Center. Please mark your calendars, more details will be available in the new year.

The workers are initially being taught the words that identify the equipment they use, such as oven, stove, deep fryer and refrigerator. Held weekly at Brewer's hour, the class is part of a new Literacy Council initiative to support the English literacy needs of employers and employees from Frederick area businesses.



"The focus is essential kitchen vocabulary," said Laurie Fisher, the Literacy Council of Frederick County's executive director. "Educational materials are being developed weekly tailored to the specific vocabulary needs of the workers and the restaurants."

The workers are young, mainly Latino and determined to learn. At one recent class, when given the opportunity to leave 10 minutes early because of inclement weather, they declined and opted for another round of pronouncing that day's new words.

Fisher said that learning English, in addition to helping workers do their jobs better, could help them be eligible to be considered for higher-paying positions at their restaurants. At the conclusion of the class the program will be evaluated to determine how to expand it.

The success of this new outreach effort depends on collaboration with the business industry and Literacy Council volunteers. Phil Bowers, the owner of Brewer's Alley and other area restaurants, has provided the room in which the class is conducted and encouraged his employees to attend. Mario Sanchez, the Chef at Isabella's Taverna and Tapas Bar, helps to recruit students and recommends essential vocabulary terms that should be taught.

Scott Grove, Grove Public Relations LLC, initiated the contact with Bowers and assists veteran Literacy Council volunteer instructor Denise Dertzbaugh, a retired school teacher who conducts the class. Sarah Matthews, another Literacy Council volunteer, helps design the

### Seasons of Wonder - Escape the Ordinary!

Check out the next Frederick Reads events: March 23 & 24: Author Ann Patchett with NPR's Maureen Corrigan



### Volunteers Needed!

We are seeking volunteers

interested in helping work on several new initiatives in the coming months.



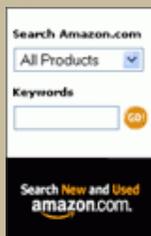
Contact [staff@frederickliteracy.org](mailto:staff@frederickliteracy.org) to find out more!

Join Our List



#### DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that there is an easy way to help the Literacy Council and do your online shopping at the same time? Amazon.com has a program to help nonprofits where a portion of your monies will go back to the organization designated. To help LCFC, you need only use this link



to get to the Council's Amazon page when you want to do your online shopping. The rest is automatic and painless! Thanks for supporting LCFC.



instructional materials each week prior to the next class based on guidance from Denise and Mario.

## Tutor & Student Highlights



Scott Kiser, a retired National Weather Service meteorologist, is dedicated to a mission in his new role the past several months as a volunteer tutor for the Literacy Council.

He wants his students, including Rocio, to learn to speak and understand better English "because I don't want to see them get ripped off. I ask my students, 'Did you have any problems? Was anyone offensive?'"

He is concerned that some people are unkind to immigrants learning to speak English and may try to take advantage of them. If he succeeds as a tutor, he said, Rocio, his current student, will assimilate more easily into the community. He hopes his warmth and commitment to helping her learn English "will show that Americans can be welcoming and caring."

"I want her to be comfortable and successful," he said. "She certainly has the ability and the desire to learn."

Rocio, in addition to attending tutoring sessions with Kiser, is attending language classes at Frederick Community College. She has put her developing English skills to the test by taking a job at Popeye's. There, she must understand and speak English well enough to serve customers in a fast-paced environment.

"And she's getting her driver's license," Kiser said. "She is not holding back."

Rocio, who is from Mexico, said she is driven by a desire "for a better future" and wants to develop the ability to communicate easily in everyday transactions. "I need to learn English," she said, noting that her classes with Kiser have led to a better understanding of the language. She is still working on her speaking skills, which are a key focus of her weekly classes.

## Literacy Council Partners with Second Chances Garage



The Literacy Council is joining as a Partner Agency with Second Chances Garage (SCG), a ministry of volunteers that provides affordable vehicles to low-wage workers "making their way toward self-sufficiency" and receiving assistance from an SCG program partner.

SCG makes necessary repairs to donated vehicles and then places them with successful applicants referred by partners,

now including the Literacy Council. The goal is to provide vehicles to accepted individuals or families within three to six weeks after a referral from a partner has been reviewed.

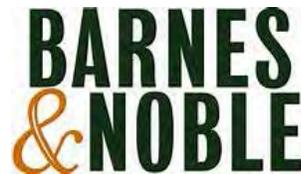
All vehicle recipients must be employed, at least part-time, and must be legal Frederick County residents. They must also be 25 years of age, though exceptions can be made for younger workers with children. To ensure that applicants can afford vehicles, partners making referrals must review each person's budget and submit a copy with the application. Each partner submits an application with appropriate documentation and a money order or cashier's check for \$786.40 to Second Chances Garage. The amount covers the SCG program fee and Motor Vehicle Administration costs.

Applicants referred by the Literacy Council will work with a Council volunteer to make sure they comply with all program requirements. The Council has also agreed to help promote the SCG since it depends on vehicle donations and volunteer mechanics.

### Holiday Book Drive a Big Success!



Thanks to a wonderful partnership with Curious Iguana and Barnes & Noble Booksellers and coordination by Diana Halleman, the Literacy Council's annual Holiday Book Drive was an amazing success. Over 800 brand new books were delivered to the team at YMCA of Frederick County Head Start program for use with more than 282 students and their families. Some of the books will be given to the children to take home and some will be used in special programming throughout the year.



The YMCA of Frederick County Head Start program is a federally funded program serving 3 & 4 year olds in seven locations throughout the county and promotes

school readiness of young children from low-income families through supporting the mental, social, and emotional development of children. It provides children and their families with health, nutrition, social, and other services that are responsive to each child's/family's ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritage.

In years past, the Literacy Council has provided books from the drive to Children of Incarcerated Parents, Advocates for Homeless Families and other nonprofit organizations. The drive usually takes place from early November through mid-December and new books are collected to encourage literacy in the early years and among families. To learn more about how to participate in this year's drive or to share information on it with your church or civic clubs, please contact the staff at 301-600-2066 or via email at [staff@frederickliteracy.org](mailto:staff@frederickliteracy.org).

### Featured Resources for Tutors & Students!

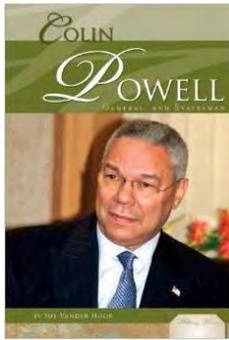


Thanks to Freida Pryor a program has been set up with MidAmerica Books where Freida, Diana Halleman and Catherine Coundjeris review boxes of

books sent by the company throughout the year. This results in free shipping of any books the Literacy Council purchases, free Kindles, and now 10 free e-books (normally \$33.00 each) with each review. The e-books will be available to all tutors and students 24-7 from ANY computer!!! The Literacy Council can choose those we want on our account for our use. Freida will be sending the IDs and passwords out to all tutors as soon as the e-books are available. She also can choose reading level and topic! It is SO important that we encourage our students to read on their own for pleasure. It also offers an opportunity for students to read with their children at home. Freida Pryor, ESL Coordinator

Note: These hard-cover books all have a label on the cover indicating that they are for borrowing only. If a tutor or student wants to buy one, they can purchase it through the office and we can order it for them.

### Highlights for Instructional Development - Lesson Ideas by Sherry DeFrancisci, Adult Basic Education Coordinator



The instructional material we are highlighting this month of March is the biography, Colin Powell General and Statesman. The lesson plan ideas include skills such as capitalization, usage of *-ing* words and root words as well as a focus on acronyms. Students will give oral reports of information in sidebars to improve pronunciation and speaking skills. Students will exercise reading comprehension through writing skills by using direct quotes as writing prompts and completing sentences with the correct words. Catherine Coundjeris, Assistant ESL Coordinator.

One of my favorite resources for teachers and students would be the website: [www.englishclub.com](http://www.englishclub.com).

They have lessons, games, quizzes for every level from 1st grade to advanced levels. They even have a section marked business English. It is my go-to site if I need to grab some quick extracurricular materials or practice materials for my students or if I'm looking for a fresh approach to teaching a particular topic.

### United Way's Prosperity Fair



Thanks to LCFC tutor and board member, Sandy Doggett, for participating in a special "Prosperity Fair" in January at the Bernard Brown Center to help share information about literacy programs and services. The event is part of the [United Way's Prosperity Center and Financial Literacy Coalition](#) of agencies working to help improve the financial stability of Frederick County's residents who are among the working poor who are struggling to meet their basic needs. Coalition organizations will be promoting resources for the community, including free tax preparation assistance through [Volunteer Income Tax Preparation Assistance \(VITA\)](#).

### 2014 Annual Appeal & Unity Campaign Thank You!



Thank you to everyone who supported LCFC with a donation to the Unity Campaign in November.

Your donations will help us to expand our services to reach the 1 in 10, or 17,000 Frederick County adults who are functionally illiterate. Last year our volunteers provided over 17, 600 hours of their time providing individualized instruction to 254 adults to help them improve their reading, writing and English language skills. This is a 119% increase from 2011, and the need continues to grow. Our goal is to help 300 people in 2015.

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We welcome submissions from our volunteers and students. Please [email](#) them to us.

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