

# Literacy Council of Frederick County, MD

*Empowering Adults Through English Language Skills*

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**Together, we can end illiteracy  
in Frederick County!**

8,000 students later...

## LCFC Celebrates 50th Anniversary

October 2013 marks the 50th anniversary of the Literacy Council of Frederick County, MD. Since its founding, its volunteer tutors have instructed some 8,000 Frederick County residents in reading and in speaking English. Their contribution has had a profound impact on Frederick County (see related article, "Why Literacy?"). The following is an abbreviated history of the organization.

In 1959 Church Women United members began a migrant ministry project to help seasonal workers who came to work in Frederick County each year. They soon discovered that many of the workers could not read and decided to add literacy to the project. In the fall of 1962, Kay Mackley was granted a scholarship to go to the Koinonia

Foundation near Baltimore for two weeks of training in the Laubach Literacy method of teaching reading. Dr. Frank C. Laubach, who had developed the method in the Philippines in 1930, was the president of the foundation.

In October 1963, a representative from Koinonia came to Frederick to train 19 volunteer tutors. The Church Women United effort was officially established and initially named Frederick County Laubach Literacy. Its founding mothers were Kay Mackley and Dolly Engle. Dolly Crum served as the first president. It was the second Council in Maryland, following by months Montgomery County's. By the time the first tutors were trained, the migrants had moved on for the year, but many of the women found local residents who needed their help. The Council

*See HISTORY - page 2*



*Make Plans Now To Attend*

## An Evening With DAVID BROOKS

*Be inspired by New York Times best selling author  
and one of America's best known journalists  
and commentators on a special evening  
in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the  
Literacy Council of Frederick County*

Weinberg Center for the Arts  
Wednesday, October 23, 2013  
7:30 p.m. Presentation: \$30.00  
6:00 p.m. VIP Pre-event Reception: \$75.00

Tickets Sale Proceeds Benefit LCFC



**1959** Church Women United members began a migrant ministry project that includes literacy. Council discovers thousands of adults are illiterate in Frederick County.



**1963** Organization officially founded by Kay Mackley and Dolly Engle. 19 Church Women United members are trained to become literacy tutors.



**1977** Council begins teaching English as a Second Language to help many incoming Southeastern Asian immigrants.



**1982** Council raises \$25,000 to secure its first permanent location in the new C. Burr Artz Library on E. Patrick Street.



**1982** Retired engineer, Norman Paul, begins tutoring local prisoners. He includes others at Hagerstown regional prison, teaching 400 people to read in the next 20 years.

*HISTORY – from page 1*

soon discovered that there were thousands of illiterate adults in Frederick County. By the time the migrant workers returned in the summer of 1964, the Council had arranged for use of the Children’s Room of the C. Burr Artz Library (then on Record Street) for tutoring several evenings per week, because conditions in the migrant camps were not conducive to learning.

The fledgling organization operated out of people’s homes, including the East Second Street basement of Dolly and Melvin Engle. In October 1974, arrangements were made for the Council to share the Sunday School Library of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, located in the Schaeffer Center on East Second Street. This, the Council’s first home, was dubbed “The Reading Center.”

The organization was hampered by having no local tutor trainers until Betty Seligmann was certified as a trainer in 1974. In 1977 the English as a Second Language (ESL) program was established to help the many incoming Southeast Asian immigrants.

As awareness for the issue of literacy continued to grow throughout the nation, it became common for community literacy programs to be housed in local libraries. Co-founder Kay Mackley was determined that LCFC would be located in the new library to be built on E. Patrick Street. Local library leadership told the Council it

could have a second floor office for \$25,000 (many other non-profits were vying for the space). Ruth Baird, a writer, helped launch the campaign with articles she placed in The Frederick News Post. In 1982 the Council moved to the new C. Burr Artz Library where it has remained ever since. In 1987, Frederick County Commissioners forgave the debt.

Program efforts were accelerating. From 1963 to 1982, the Council held 51 tutor training workshops, certified 627 tutors, and tutored 984 people.

In July 1982, Norman Paul, an engineer retired from Johns Hopkins, became a certified tutor, beginning “a second career” that would span 20 years. His efforts began at the old South Street Jail where he tutored students four days a week, later moving to the Frederick County Detention Center when it opened in 1984. When two of his students transferred to Roxbury Correctional Institution (RCI) in Hagerstown in 1984 and wanted to continue their lessons, Norm dedicated another two days per week to tutoring there. Norm began spending more of his time at RCI, where he continued individual tutoring and also began classes in math, English, ABE, GED, and college prep. In 1990 he launched a project in which inmates who had achieved literacy tutored other inmates. In 2001 alone, 68 students were tutored. Twenty attained their GED’s and five received 8th grade diplomas. In the course of 20 years, Norm brought literacy to at least 400 people. In 2001 he was given the first Elizabeth H. Seligmann Award for his achievement and dedication to literacy. Norm continued

tutoring the incarcerated until 2002, shortly before his death.

By its 20th year, the Literacy Council of Frederick County, MD (LCFC) had attained a regional reputation. In June 1983, LCFC hosted the Laubach Literacy Action Northeast Regional Conference at Hood College. Dr. Robert Laubach was in attendance. Later that year at the 20th anniversary meeting, founders Kay Mackley and Dolly Engle were honored. In 1984, following 20 years of service, Dolly retired as LCFC Treasurer.

Sadly, Melvin and Dolly Engle died in November and December 1984. Many memorial donations were made to the Council. Dolly had always had a special interest in the westernmost counties of Maryland, which were without literacy programs. The Council established the Engle Memorial Fund, using most of the donations to fund an outreach effort primarily in Washington, Allegany, and Garrett counties. In May 1985, a letter titled *Literacy Exchange* was mailed to 600 churches, organizations, Chambers of Commerce, and individuals, offering LCFC assistance. As a result, Garrett and Washington counties each formed Literacy Councils with LCFC support, and tutor training workshops were conducted in Allegany County. Over 100 tutors were trained by LCFC trainers in the three counties until volunteer trainers were mentored and certified there. In later years LCFC volunteers also trained tutors in Carroll County, Loudoun County, and two Pennsylvania counties.



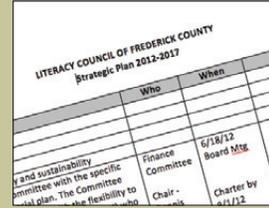
**1985** Council begins an outreach program to help establish literacy programs in Garrett and Washington counties. Also trains tutors in Allegany, Carroll, and later Loudoun, and PA.



**1985** New Readers Express, a support group for Literacy Council students was formed and continued on for some 15 years.



**1992** LCFC is recognized nationally, winning the Outstanding Special Initiative Award at the Laubach Literacy Action National Awards for Excellence.



**2012** LCFC's first Five Year Strategic Plan is completed with goals that include growing the organization and hiring of an Executive Director by 2017.

*HISTORY - from page 2*

In 1990 the *Literacy Exchange* worked with Debby High at Hood College to produce *Simply Good*, a cookbook for low-level readers.

In about 1985, a student support group calling itself New Readers Express was formed. It continued for some 15 years, facilitated by tutor/student coordinator Betty Seligmann. In addition to their monthly meetings, the group often held fundraisers to help finance their attendance at national conferences.

In December 1987, volunteer Betty Seligmann was selected as the first Frederick County "Maryland, You Are Beautiful" individual for her 20 years of volunteer service to LCFC. In April 1988, LCFC was 1st runner up for the JC Penney "Golden Rule Award," a recognition of exceptional service. In May 1988, LCFC was a "Best in Maryland" finalist for community contributions, an award sponsored by the Public Relations Society of America.

In the early 1990's, the Literacy Council received a request from Maryland Correctional Institution-Hagerstown to train inmates to tutor other inmates. That program is ongoing with occasional training of new inmate participants.

In 1991 Sister Mary Jerome McGinley of the Provincial House in Emmitsburg was certified as a tutor. She went on to establish the Marguerite Naseau Literacy Center at Provincial House, a satellite location of LCFC for 10 years.

In 1992 the Council was recognized

nationally for its efforts to increase literacy west of Frederick County. It was one of three organizations selected nationwide in the Outstanding Special Initiative Award Category of the 1992 Laubach Literacy Action National Awards for Excellence. The Governor proclaimed May 18, 1993 as Literacy Council of Frederick County Day in Maryland.

On May 18, 1998, the speaker for the annual meeting was John Corcoran, an internationally known literacy advocate who sought help for his own illiteracy at the age of 48. He is the author of *The Teacher Who Couldn't Read*.

Following a two-year relocation, LCFC moved into new offices at the renovated C. Burr Artz Library in March 2002. LCFC began receiving annual support that year from the Nora Roberts Foundation.

In June 2002, the Council established the Betty Seligmann Literacy Endowment Fund at the Community Foundation for the purpose of supporting the operations of the council. At annual meetings held in 2005, 2006, 2010, 2011, and 2013, Caroline Gaver, Joyce Routzahn, Alice Brouillet, Elizabeth Derr, and Kate Bufter received the Elizabeth H. Seligmann Award for their long-term service to the organization and the community.

In March 2011, LCFC hired a 30-hour per week Office Manager/Volunteer Coordinator, Diana Halleman, allowing the office to be open on a regular basis

In 2011 an Ausherman Family Foundation grant allowed LCFC to engage a consultant to conduct an organizational assessment and

help formulate the first Five Year Strategic Plan, completed in May 2012. Goals included expanding the organization to serve more students and hiring an Executive Director by 2017.

In November 2012, Caroline Gaver was the recipient of the Wertheimer Fellow for Excellence in Volunteerism Award, given by the Community Foundation of Frederick County. The \$10,000 award was designated for the Betty Seligmann Literacy Endowment Fund.

In 2013 another Ausherman Family Foundation grant allowed LCFC to engage a marketing and fundraising consultant to help establish LCFC's first marketing, awareness, and fundraising campaign. An additional grant from the Randall Charitable Trust paid for the production of the new marketing materials, targeted to reach more than 100,000 Frederick County residents.

On October 23, 2013, LCFC will celebrate its 50th anniversary with an event at the Weinberg Center for the Arts featuring a special presentation by nationally known political and social commentator David Brooks, who is giving his time to appear.

It is the hope of the LCFC family that this event will serve to raise public awareness of the issue of illiteracy, and re-launch the organization with more volunteers, partnerships, and resources in the 50 years to come.

# Why Literacy?

## Because it affects us all



**W**hy do we focus on literacy? Many socioeconomic problems are solved when adults can read, write and speak English. When individuals learn how to read, write and speak in English they are more likely to lift themselves out of poverty, contribute to improved health care costs, and find and keep sustainable employment.

Individuals at the lowest levels of literacy have a higher rate of unemployment than the national average—14.5 percent in 2011.

Statistical analyses have shown that legal immigrants who are English proficient earn between 13 to 24 percent more than immigrants who are not English proficient, which positively impacts the economy given that legal immigrants make up close to 16 percent of the civilian labor force in the United States (statistics provided by ProLiteracy).

According to various studies conducted in the past decade, approximately 9.5% of the Frederick County population lacks basic prose literacy. Some 6% are those whose first language is English. The remaining 3.5% are those whose first language is not English (very likely the number is higher with Frederick County's increasing immigrant population). Of the approximately 180,000 adults (16+) in Frederick County, 17,100 have literacy issues.

Many issues created by illiteracy have an affect on us all. Specifically, illiteracy results in unemployment or underemployment with the inability to advance in a job. Lower paying jobs result in a lower tax base. From the standpoint of economic development, a population with a poorly educated workforce limits the types of businesses that will have an interest in locating in Frederick County. Community-wide, illiteracy also results in greater use of emergency health care services, welfare and social services, and typically leads to increased crime. Equally important is the fact that the children of illiterate parents are typically low scholastic achievers, because they did not have the benefit of academic support from their parents (night time reading, assistance with homework, etc.). The communication divide that is created between illiterate parents and their English-speaking children also diminishes an adult's ability to fully be a part of their child's life.

While these factors are detrimental to a community, illiteracy has the harshest affect on those who are illiterate. Illiteracy significantly reduces the chances for a fulfilling life. For those who are American born and have literacy issues, their problems often stem from learning disabilities that were never addressed or provided for in the public school system. Many are ashamed of their inability to read, choose to keep it a secret, and do not seek help.

Conversely, lower income, foreign born, non-English speaking residents are often

isolated and unaware of available literacy programs, may not think they have the time or ability to learn, or believe that English As a Second Language programs are government operated and have concerns about deportation.

Frederick County is home to many large engineering, science and medical corporations that employ foreign professionals. Very often, the professionals bring family members with them who cannot speak English, but would have a much more fulfilling existence here if they did.

The overall quality of life and economic prosperity in Frederick County would be higher with a population that is 100% literate. More people would be employed in higher paying and perhaps more fulfilling jobs. The County tax base would increase. A more educated workforce would attract more desirable employers. County health, social and police services would be less utilized. Finally, literate parents would likely be more successful in raising their children – and their children would very likely be more successful in school.

Because the issue of illiteracy affects us all, the Mission of the Literacy Council of Frederick County is to assist adults in attaining the reading, writing and English-speaking skills needed to achieve personal goals and integrate more fully into the community.

## Program Coordinator Update



**Keri-Ann Henson**  
Basic Coordinator

As we celebrate our 50th Anniversary at the Literacy Council of Frederick County, I am humbled by the dedication and time that our tutors and students put into their lessons. I completed the Basic program section for the ProLiteracy annual report in August. We lost a few students, but have gained new ones as well, giving us a total of 17 partnerships in the Basic reading program. In the past year, one of our students received his driver's license, another student made significant progress in his reading and secured a promotion at work while another individual is returning to the council after a few years living out of state. He contacted our office before moving to ensure that he would get a tutor - now that is dedication!

On a personal level, I have started working at Frederick Community College in the adult basic education program and hope to start teaching at the start of October. In the meantime, I have been working on completing two modules. One is titled "The Adult Learner and Effective Instruction" and the other is on "Concepts of Teaching and Learning within Adult Education". I find I am learning a great deal about the needs of adult learners and key ways to motivate and retain students. Once I complete my training and get my foot in the door teaching, I look forward to sharing my resources with tutors. Also, I have been able to observe FCC's intake process which has been very interesting and again has given me ideas for our own system for assessing new students.

I am excited about all of the new material and opportunities for the Basic program and would encourage anyone who is interested in volunteering to contact our office.



**Freida Pryor**  
ESL News

As of mid-September, there were 69 tutors working with 149 students, 98 individually and 51 in 5 groups. There are 14 people waiting for a tutor.

Monthly In-Service programs will resume on September 25, and continue on the last Wednesday of each month at the LCFC office.

One of our ESL tutors, Catherine Coundjouris, has graciously agreed to become an assistant ESL coordinator. We are starting to put together a publication of dialogues called *Everyday English Conversation* and will provide copies to all the ESL tutors as we complete each section.

We have added a new series, *Phonics For All Ages*, to our shelves. This is an EXCELLENT resource for both Basic and ESL tutors to use along with our other series for extra phonics practice. I continue to send pertinent materials/links to all tutors and now also to students whom I have emails for. There are so many great learning sites online that can be used at home or on any computer. And we continue to have 24-7 access from ANY computer to our free newspaper "News For You" online. It is an excellent teaching tool. All ESL tutors and students have been given the ID and Password.

I will be in the office on Thursday mornings for one-on-one appointments with active tutors to help with their concerns, answer questions, aid in finding teaching materials, etc. So if you'd like to meet with me, please contact me for an appointment.

Thanks for all your work with your students. You are making a difference!



**Denise Dertzbaugh**  
Conversation Class News

The Conversation and Pronunciation classes for the new school year are in full swing! We have many new students and many who have returned from last year. At the present time, we have seven countries represented, which makes for some very interesting discussions. It is a great opportunity for students to make friends and connections. They enjoy talking informally to each other which also improves their listening skills. The atmosphere is very informal and comfortable.

We welcome new students at any time during the session. Conversation class is from 10:00 until 11:00 and Pronunciation Class is from 11:00 until 12:00 on Thursday mornings. Students may come to either class or both classes. If you have a student who you think would like to join us, please contact the Literacy Office for more information.

## Thank You, Melanie!

Many thanks to our most recent newsletter editor, publicity chairman and Corresponding Secretary, Melanie Gettier, who is taking a hiatus from the council due to family and work obligations. Melanie has volunteered with the council for 15 years, and this was a difficult decision for her. We thank her for all her years of dedication and good work, we wish her well, and we hope that she will have the time to come back soon!

**Give the holiday gift that will change someone's life forever!**

Make a donation of time or money to the Literacy Council.



## Volunteer Tutoring Offers Amazing Personal Fulfilment

by Kathleen Rodkey

I have worked with The Literacy Council of Frederick County since March of 2009. When I retired, I wanted to give back to the community by volunteering but didn't have any idea what I wanted to do. I saw an advertisement in the Gazette for literacy tutors and cut it out. I am an avid reader, got an A in my English Honors class at Frederick Community College and wrote three books, but I certainly didn't feel qualified to teach someone how to read and write. Within a couple of weeks, I found myself in a workshop held by other volunteers of the Frederick Literacy Council to train tutors. These wonderful people, some with 30 years of experience in tutoring, conducted one of the best classes I have ever attended. The Literacy Council uses the Laubach method of teaching, emphasizing phonics training in combination with simple word recognition. This is the way I learned to read, and my grandchildren marvel at how quickly I can get through material and thoroughly comprehend what I have read.

A week after completing the workshop, I was presented with three student cases. I chose to be part of the group of tutors teaching English speaking people how to read as opposed to the group that teaches English as a second language.

As I had never taught before, I felt I would have a better chance of succeeding if the person I was tutoring understood English. I meticulously studied all three files and was fine with all three, but one case in particular caught my attention. How could a 40-year-old male be in the position of never having had a driver's license? How did he possibly get through life without being able to read? Obviously, he was having serious problems dealing with it all because he had tried to commit suicide. I learned later on that he had been profoundly abused as a child. It took four years, including two years to learn to read, two years to prepare to take the MVA permit test, and 36 failed tries at taking the written/computerized test before my student got his Learner's Permit. The challenge of attending the MVA mandated student driver education course was overwhelming, but he prevailed and passed the two-week course. He aced his driver's license test with flying colors the first time he took it. We are now working on his second goal of getting his GED.

My student tells me every time he sees me, "I can never thank you enough for what you have done and continue to do for me." I respond, "No, I can never thank you enough for what you have done for me." I have never felt so fulfilled in my entire life. The icing on the cake is my friends at the Literacy Council have supported me through recent tough times with a serious family illness. When a person volunteers, they give of themselves without the expectation of getting anything in return, but what I have received from the Frederick Literacy Council staff and my student is priceless. Thank you.

## Discounted Internet Service for Kids

Internet Essentials from Comcast

If you have students with children at home who are eligible to participate in the National School Lunch Program, they may qualify for *Internet Essentials* from Comcast. This program was created to help families get affordable Internet at home, so more children and more families have the opportunity to succeed — in school and in life. This affordable program is priced at \$9.95 per month plus tax, with no price increases, activation fees or equipment rental fees. Find out if your student's children are eligible. Visit [InternetEssentials.com](http://InternetEssentials.com) or call 1-855-8-INTERNET

## We Need You! Become an LCFC Volunteer

### ESL Program

Freida Pryor, ESL Coordinator, is in need of short term assistance with research, clerical and data entry projects. Some of these projects will last only one week, others longer. Specific tasks would include compiling a list of internet sites that tutors can easily access for Conversational Everyday dialogues; researching and composing a set of dialogues for use when phoning a physician; general data entry on LCFC office computer.

### Board of Directors

LCFC is currently seeking two individuals for seats on its Board of Directors. Individuals with experience in development, fundraising and marketing are specifically sought. Candidates should be available to attend five board meetings a year (the 3rd Mondays of January, March, June, September and November) as well as an annual meeting in May and to work on committees. Please send a brief biography listing your experience, special skills, and why you would like to serve to Caroline Gaver, President, Board of Directors, [info@frederickliteracy.org](mailto:info@frederickliteracy.org). For more details about LCFC, visit our website, [www.frederickliteracy.org](http://www.frederickliteracy.org), or call our office at 301-600-2066.

### Tutor Trainers

Trainers to instruct tutors are very much needed. If you have been tutoring for awhile, or if you have general training experience, please consider becoming a tutor trainer. LCFC would like to conduct trainings more frequently and need additional trainers to do so. We will teach you what you need to know. Currently we hold workshops on Saturdays, but if you are interested and are available at other times, we would like to add workshops on weekday evenings.

### Tutors

As always, we need more volunteer tutors! There is a constant waiting list of students (particularly of ESL students) who desire our services. LCFC will provide all the needed training. Tutors, if you have friends who you believe would be suited to teaching, encourage them to do so.