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W A S H T E N A W L I T E R A C Y

Annual Report 2010 | 2011

# Literacy

## For 40 years in Washtenaw County ... Each One – Teach One



**The political climate** of the late 1960s and early 1970s helped a rising national interest in literacy as social justice to take root in Washtenaw County. Before that time, problems with literacy were associated with third world countries. However, in the early 70s, awareness of widespread illiteracy among adults in the United States propelled a new focus on literacy domestically (Guizzetti, 2002). In 1971, congregants led by Pastor Dean Tyson from Ypsilanti's St. Phillips Church (closed in 2002), began to reach out to adults who could not read. Interested community members Richard Townsend and Betsy Lawrence added expertise to the new Literacy Council of Washtenaw County. For the first few years, a handful of volunteers, a file cabinet and a mailbox were all that supported matches between two unknown adults over the phone – only the tutor and learner met face-to-face.

In the mid-70s the national Right to Read effort focused local attention on the passionate efforts of St. Phillip's congregants, and interest grew in the community. By 1976, the Friends of the Ann Arbor District Library stepped up as the first supporter outside of the church and an annual budget of \$2,000 allowed for expansion into the Laubach literacy methods. The tradition of training and support for tutors began.

1971-1975

Parishoners at St. Phillips Church in Ypsilanti launch and operate the "Literacy Council of Washtenaw County" by matching learners with adults willing to be tutors.

1976

Friends of the Ann Arbor District Library are the first contributors outside of the church, and the Laubach Literacy method of training tutors was implemented.

The so-called Laubach method was beginning to spread in America, even though it was well-established in developing countries. As a missionary, Frank C. Laubach developed a simple method to teach the Maranao people of the Philippines to learn to read and write. He also discovered the potential of volunteer tutors, as newly-literate Maranaos offered to teach illiterate family and friends. This one-to-one instructional approach became known as “Each One – Teach One.” Dr. Laubach’s adult literacy method demonstrated throughout the developing world that individuals could progress socially and economically through improved literacy and community members could learn to help each other.

During the mid-80s, the State began supporting the start of literacy councils in other Michigan communities, but Washtenaw Literacy, Michigan’s oldest literacy council, was taking off! The Ypsilanti District Library secured grant funding to support the first paid staff member in 1986, and provided office space in the basement of the main library. In 2002, Washtenaw Literacy moved to the new branch library on Whittaker Road.

Today, if measured by the number of learners served, Washtenaw Literacy is the largest literacy council in Michigan, as well as the oldest.



1981

Staffed entirely by volunteers for the first 10 years, Washtenaw Literacy serves 79 learners in this program year.

1985

Now called Washtenaw Literacy, all operations moved to the basement of the downtown Ypsilanti District Library.

## From the Executive Director



**For forty years**, Washtenaw Literacy has led a bold challenge against illiteracy. In 1971, a small group of parishioners from St. Philips Lutheran Church in Ypsilanti led by Pastor Dean Tyson responded to the new and alarming awareness that illiteracy among adults was not just a Third World problem, it was rampant even in America – and in our own Washtenaw County. State and Federal initiatives to improve literacy followed, and soon corporate America joined the movement.

By the mid-80s, many communities were establishing literacy councils with burgeoning public and private support, but the “Literacy Council of Washtenaw County” had already been providing services for fifteen years.

Since 1971, over 15,000 learners have been served through the passion and dedication of over 6,500 volunteer tutors. All of those learners and all of those tutors are neighbors in Washtenaw County.

Today, it is widely acknowledged that illiteracy is a common denominator for our community’s thorniest issues – homelessness, unemployment, poor health outcomes, family instability, recidivism, intergenerational illiteracy and lack of success in school.

In the next forty years, the challenge of eliminating illiteracy takes on new importance as the economy of Michigan shifts, and our learners have to move faster to find a place in this changing world. As has been the tradition, the Board of Washtenaw Literacy has responded with a bold challenge for a new time: to increase significantly the number of learners served. We can set this goal with confidence because we know from our history that the citizens of Washtenaw County are committed to improving literacy among our neighbors and therefore will continue to shape Washtenaw Literacy’s future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Goodman".

Amy Goodman

1985

Michigan Literacy, Inc. publishes the award winning “Michigan Method” handbook LITSTART: Literacy Strategies for Adult Reading Tutors. Washtenaw Literacy’s first Executive Director, Donna DeButts, was a co-author along with Pat Frey.

1985

Statewide, there were just over 1000 adults being served by volunteer literacy agencies. By 1990, that number grew to just over 7,000. (Michigan Adult Literacy Initiative, 1990).

Literacy

**Welcome to our annual report**, celebrating our fortieth anniversary. On behalf of the Board, I would like to cast a very wide net in acknowledging those who have built Washtenaw Literacy, and those who are carrying the agency forward.

There are so many to thank for Washtenaw Literacy's strong beginnings and growth. It is remarkable that our earliest partners, the Ypsilanti District Library and the Ann Arbor District Library, continue to this day as primary partners. Also, our collaboration with Washtenaw Community College helps extend the College's reach as well as Washtenaw Literacy's. Our fifth Executive Director, Amy Goodman, continues the tradition of innovative leadership that was established by her four predecessors. We thank the generations of committed Board Members for their service. Finally, our generous community has always demonstrated strong support for literacy through consistent giving.

Most of all, I want to acknowledge the over 6,500 volunteer tutors who, over the last forty years, have stepped up to help another adult learn to read, write or communicate in English. These tutors' contributions continue to resonate through one adult's improved literacy for generations to come. I am certain each tutor could tell inspiring stories of their amazing learners.

I learned of a story about a man in his 60s, who walked by a group several times before finding the courage to finally make an inquiry. With his hat pulled down over his eyes, he said "I think I want to learn how to read." He didn't know the sounds of the letters of the alphabet, but he progressed and now inspires others within the group. He has now announced "I think I've outgrown your group!" Whether our learners go on to a better job, a better home, more effective parenting, or confident health management, our tutors and learners know the work of improving literacy improves our community.

Going forward, Washtenaw Literacy will continue filling the critical needs. And, as has been our tradition, we will pursue innovative and effective ways to deliver services where they are needed the most in Washtenaw County.



**Mary Jean Raab**

## From the President



1986

First computer, an Apple IIe.

1987

Beginning of three-year partnership with the Junior League of Ann Arbor.

1990

Washtenaw Literacy co-hosts a reception for First Lady Barbara Bush, a literacy champion, at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

## Program Stories



**College Now** is an intensive tutoring program at Washtenaw Community College that helps adults who do not have sufficient basic skills to enter a traditional GED program. Tutoring is customized for the specific goal of achieving a GED. Participants' skills are assessed at the outset, and after every 20 hours of instruction. Before tutoring, the average reading level was 4th grade. After 20 hours of one-to-one tutoring, the average gain was 2.25 grade levels. After another 20 hours of one-to-one tutoring, the average gain was another 2.65 grade levels for a final average reading level of grade 8.9. According to Bonnie Truhn, Adult Transitions Coordinator at WCC, "Participants in the College Now tutoring program who are persistent and committed to the process will make significant gains in their reading levels in relatively short periods of time with the individualized instruction of the highly trained tutors. The experience also provides a way for students to identify the tools and strategies that will help them become more proficient and skilled learners as they transition to the next phase of their education."

1991

Washtenaw Literacy welcomes the first two VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) staff members.

1992

Recognizing a need for free English as a second language instruction in the community, Washtenaw Literacy begins its ESL program.

### Washtenaw County Adult Education Collaborative.

Following a successful State of Michigan No Worker Left Behind demonstration grant, Washtenaw Literacy formed important program partnerships with Washtenaw Community College, Ann Arbor Public Schools Adult Education, Ypsilanti Public Schools Adult Education, Willow Run Public Schools Adult Education, Milan Public Schools Adult Education, and Chelsea Public Schools Adult Education. The Washtenaw County Adult Education Collaborative, a county-wide adult learning infrastructure, allows seamless service to adult learners as they transition from basic skills to post-secondary training and/or employment. The partnership results in more effective, economical and responsive program design and delivery. The one-to-one tutoring relationship Washtenaw Literacy brings to the partnership is the key to an effective literacy intervention with good outcomes. The one-to-one volunteer tutor model is the only way an intervention of this intensity can be implemented to scale, in any economic environment. Based on a review of six dropout prevention and college attendance programs for students at risk, incorporating personal bonds between students and teachers as a form of academic assistance helps adults perform well and overcome barriers to learning that were encountered in frontal classroom settings (Fashola & Slavin, 1998).



1993

Three full time staff members serve 187 learners.  
Added office at NEW Center, giving Washtenaw  
Literacy a presence in Ann Arbor.

1996

Stephanie Wagner, Executive Director.

L I T E R A C Y

## Partnerships



Washtenaw Community College

University of Michigan Health Service

Eastern Michigan University Institute for the Study of Children,  
Families and Communities

Stone High School

Jewish Family Services

Parkridge Community Center

SOS Community Services

Literacy Coalition of Washtenaw County

Ypsilanti District Library

Ann Arbor District Library

Ann Arbor Public Schools Adult Education

Ypsilanti Public Schools Adult Education

Willow Run Public Schools Adult Education

1997

Ann Reindel Flucke establishes an agency fund  
for Washtenaw Literacy at the Ann Arbor Area  
Community Foundation.

1998

Pamela Bogart, Executive Director.

- Milan Public Schools Adult Education
- Chelsea Public Schools Adult Education
- Parkway Meadows
- Cranbrook Senior Housing
- King of Kings Church
- First Presbyterian Church
- United Methodist Church of Ypsilanti
- U of M nurse-managed Maple Meadows Outpatient Clinic
- First Steps Washtenaw
- First Steps Ann Arbor Arrowwood Hills Cooperative
- Washtenaw County Jail
- Milan Correctional Facility
- Michigan Prisoner Re-entry Initiative (MPRI)



1999

Washtenaw Literacy Mentor Program founded by then-volunteer Alison Austin.

1999

Board members & volunteers start World in a Basket auction.

2000

Chris Roberts, Executive Director.

## Highlights of 2010-2011



- Through **Eastern Michigan University's Institute for the Study of Children, Families and Communities**, Washtenaw Literacy was awarded capacity-building funding and support as an agency with a mission and work that contributes to the economic recovery of Michigan.
- Highly qualified volunteers, Washtenaw Literacy's Mentor team, enhance training, support and communication with hundreds of tutors. Through support from the **Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation**, the specialized Mentor team the proper level of support needed for success and retention in a volunteer-based tutoring program.
- Women who are isolated by language barriers learned to support their adopted community through volunteer work with area nonprofit agencies through support from the **James A. and Faith Knight Foundation**.
- As a **literacy leader in Michigan**, Washtenaw Literacy has been able to support the establishment and development of literacy initiatives in Westland Community Library, Livingston United Way, Plymouth Literacy, Novi Library and Milan Federal Correctional Facility. As a result, the tutor training capacity, infrastructure and tutor-learner support programs in these communities is stronger.
- Teen mothers improved their literacy by learning effective reading techniques when reading aloud to their babies through support from the **Ann Arbor Kiwanis Club**.
- Low-income, low-literate adults attained, maintained, or improved employment as a result of participation in our one-to-one tutoring program through support from **Washtenaw County**.
- Through support from the **Washtenaw County Community Action Board**, Washtenaw Literacy has taken leadership in supporting the Literacy Coalition of Washtenaw County.

Washtenaw Literacy establishes a satellite office at Washtenaw Community College.

2001

2002

Tutor Learner Resource Center opens at NEW Center. Washtenaw Literacy moves to its current location in the brand new Whittaker Road branch of the Ypsilanti District Library.

**Literacy is the common denominator** for addressing many of the challenges our society faces, resulting in higher levels of educational achievement, family-sustaining employment, stable housing, improved health management, and stronger communities.

Adult education is under fire. Eight years ago, State and Federal funding for Michigan was \$80 million, last year it dropped to \$18 million and next year the number will be even less. In Michigan, funding per adult learner is less than \$20 per year and falling (Michigan DELEG, 2010).

The “Each One – Teach One” model of traditional literacy councils is a proven way to bridge the gap between the need – which is increasing, and the resources – which are decreasing. Literacy councils are assuming a fundamental role in challenging the alarming crisis of low-skilled adults in our communities throughout America (ProLiteracy America, 2009). As state and federal funding decrease, funding supplied at the local level will become even more critical.

Washtenaw Literacy founders and early supporters boldly confronted illiteracy. Forty years later Washtenaw Literacy leadership continues that challenge with one single goal: to serve **2,800 learners per year by the end of fiscal year 2015.**

## A Strategic Foundation for the Next 40 Years



2005

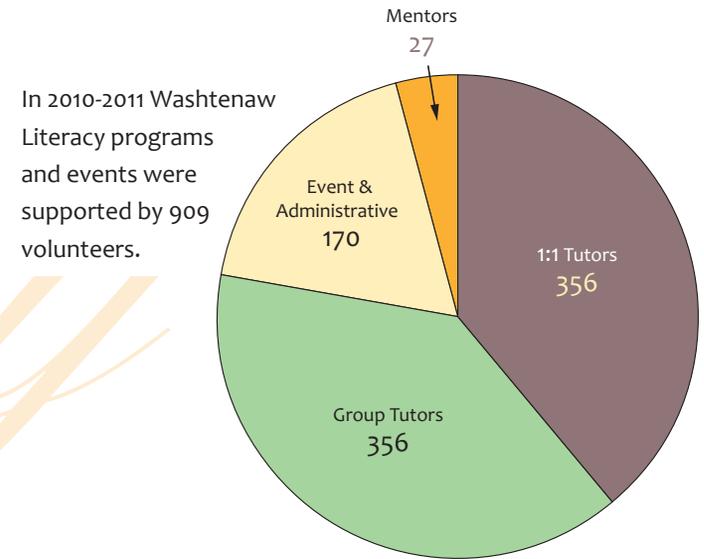
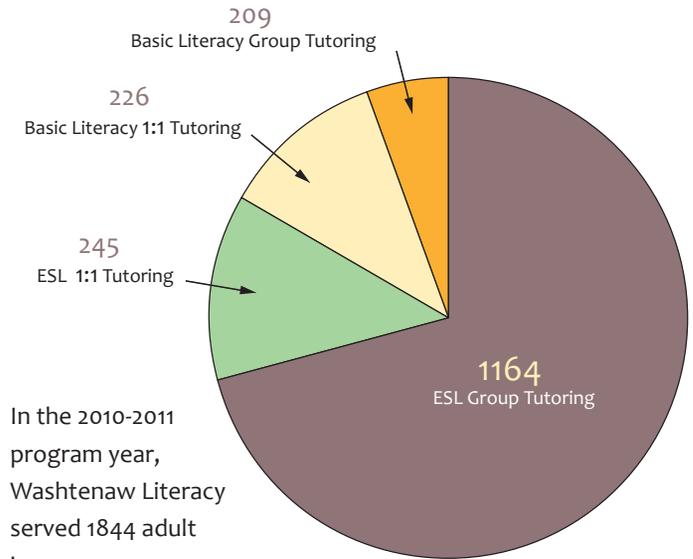
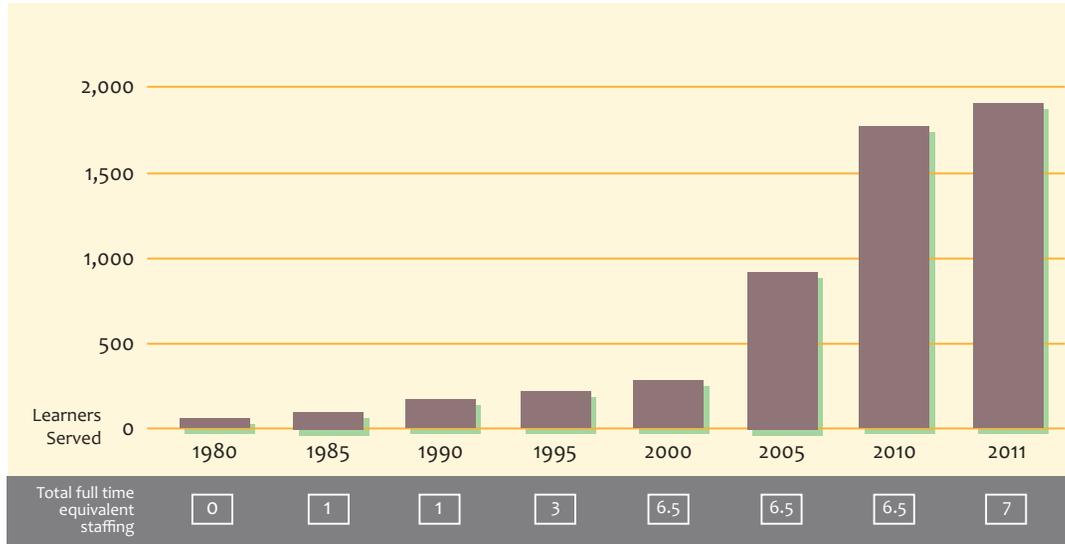
Washtenaw Literacy Mentor Team launches Power Tutoring. Over 100 participants attended the inaugural event.

2009

Amy Goodman, Executive Director.

L I T E R A C Y

# The Growth of Washtenaw Literacy

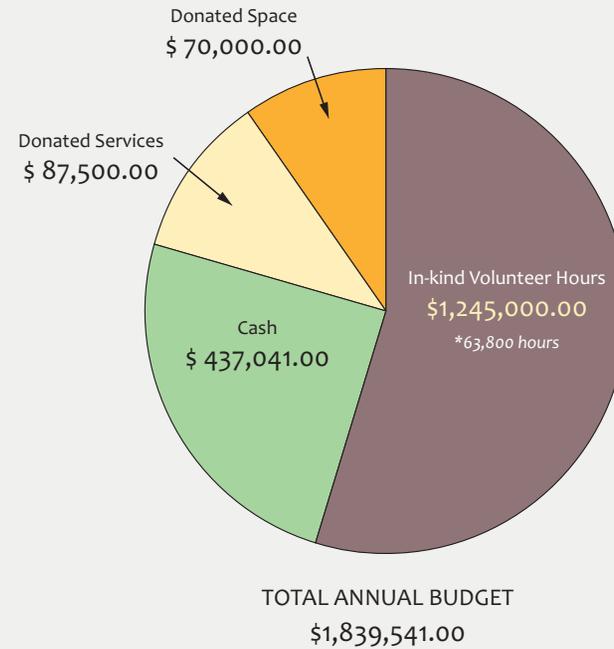


*Literacy*

# Cash Financial Statement

INCOME	
Grants	\$78,685.00
Donations	\$175,510.00
Events	\$25,903.00
Fees	\$3,017.00
Service Contracts	\$93,797.00
Literacy Coalition Pass Through	\$58,995.00
Interest & Dividend	\$1,340.00
Gain or Loss on Investment	\$(206.00)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$437,041.00</b>
EXPENSE	
Program Services	\$237,050.00
Management	\$69,631.00
Fundraising	\$98,748.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$405,429.00</b>

## Washtenaw Literacy In-Kind and Cash Budget



Major In-Kind Donors include Ypsilanti District Library, Washtenaw Community College, ProQuest, Edwards Brothers, PHIRE Branding, Comcast, Somberg Design, Jacek Spiewla and over 735 literacy tutors.

Because of our low overhead, every dollar invested in Washtenaw Literacy returns over four dollars in service to the community.

# Some of Our Learners' Accomplishments:

1. I am improving my literacy or English skills 100%
2. I am making progress toward my goals 96%
3. I am more involved with my community 55%
4. I am more successful at work 61%
5. I feel more confident 94%

## GOALS

Communication:

- Improve pronunciation 57%
- Improve conversation skills 41%
- Understand spoken English better 33%
- Able to use the telephone 24%
- Increase vocabulary 61%

## Employment

- Get a job 16%
- Get a better job/position 14%
- Perform current job better 20%
- Fill out applications 22%

## Education

- Enter Adult Education, college or other educational program 22%
- Work on coursework 10%
- Work on computer skills 27%

## Personal

- Vote 27%
- Know more about American culture 12%
- Get a driver's license 12%
- Read forms/prescriptions from the doctor 24%
- Improve self-esteem/ confidence 63%
- Improve life skills (banking, grocery, doctor, post office . . .) 39%

## Reading

- Read to children 37%
- Be involved in child's education 29%
- Spend more time reading 65%
- Understand what I read 67%

## Writing

- Improve spelling 71%
- Write more often 63%
- Improve quality of writing 67%

*Literacy*

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**MISSION**

To provide free literacy instruction customized to the needs of adults throughout Washtenaw County, utilizing a trained network of volunteer tutors.

**VISION**

To eliminate illiteracy in Washtenaw County.

*Washtenaw Literacy 2011 Major Supporters*

