



WASHTENAW
LITERACY
OPENS WORLDS.

Literacy Matters

Serving adults in Washtenaw County since 1971

www.washtenawliteracy.org ♦ 734.879.1320



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



**1 in 6
adults
can't read
this ad.**

**Or a poison label.
Or a ballot.**



WASHTENAW
LITERACY

Volunteer

Donate

Are you interested in volunteering with Washtenaw Literacy? Register now to attend one of our upcoming ABC's of Washtenaw Literacy Information Sessions to learn more about us:

♦ [Tuesday, April 2nd](#)
2-3pm
Chelsea District Library
221 South Main Street
Chelsea, MI 48118

Sheriff Jerry Clayton featured speaker for Support Literacy Now luncheon



Jerry L. Clayton, now serving his second term as Sheriff of Washtenaw County, Michigan will be the featured speaker at the annual Support Literacy Now luncheon to be held on May 13th in the Morris Lawrence Building at Washtenaw Community College.

This annual luncheon helps to renew awareness within the community surrounding the challenges associated with illiteracy. There are clear connections between literacy rates and crime prevention efforts beyond just Washtenaw County. Sheriff Clayton is acutely aware of these connections and how the need for literacy programs is crucial to the Sheriff's Department's effort to create safe communities.

Sheriff Clayton will speak about literacy as a means of crime prevention. The efforts of the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office are driven by its mission to "Create Public Safety, Provide Quality Service, Build Strong and Sustainable Communities". These efforts are directly correlated to improving literacy in Washtenaw County as studies of crime and literacy have found that between 60% to 70% of inmates in America's prisons are functionally illiterate. "Promoting literacy is 'root cause' crime prevention",

states Sheriff Clayton. "According to the Department of Justice, the link between academic failure and delinquency, violence, and crime is welded together to reading failure."

In addition to Sheriff Clayton, Washtenaw Literacy Executive Director Amy Goodman will talk about the organization's mission, particularly the impact adult illiteracy is having within the Washtenaw County community. She will highlight how several key partnerships within Washtenaw County, including current programming with both WCC and Ann Arbor Public Schools Adult Education, are making immediate and sustainable differences across Washtenaw County.

We invite you to attend the annual Support Literacy Now luncheon to hear more from Sheriff Clayton about the intertwined connection between illiteracy and recidivism rates within communities like Washtenaw County.

The Support Literacy Now luncheon begins at noon in the [Morris Lawrence Building at Washtenaw Community College](#). Attendees are encouraged to arrive at 11:45 to network with other area community leaders and learn about how they might become more involved in supporting this important cause. The luncheon closes with the opportunity to make a personal pledge to Washtenaw Literacy.

TO RSVP for the luncheon, please call Washtenaw Literacy at (734) 879-1320 or send an email to info@washtenawliteracy.org by April 29th. If you cannot join us on May 13th, consider making an online contribution [here](#).

Spotlight on a learner - Meet Anthony

Anthony, age 19, is a bright, young man with a very clear goal in mind - to get his GED so he can join the Air Force. He has family ties to the military and truly believes that a great career opportunity and financial stability wait once he can enlist.

In order to follow his dream of pursuing Aerospace Engineering or Construction Engineering in the Air Force, he has to overcome one very large obstacle - getting either a GED or a High School Diploma. He's met with a recruiter and knows this is the one non-negotiable requirement standing in his way.

In September, Anthony enrolled in classes at Washtenaw Community College in order to get his GED. He was directed to Washtenaw Literacy's tutors through the Skills Building program. He has been meeting with volunteer tutors from 1pm-3pm every Tuesday and Thursday for the last several months. There are five required sections to the current GED program - Reading, English, Social Studies, Math, and Science. Since starting the program last fall, Anthony has passed the first four tests and now only Science stands in his way! Anthony knows that before Spring Semester ends, he'll have achieved this major milestone.

Anthony attributes his recent academic success to the tutors who help and support him in the Skills Building classes. Working with his tutors has helped him to understand different concepts and work through problems. "Nancy is a great tutor," says Anthony. Math has been his biggest academic challenge but working with Nancy "helps make it easier to understand."

The most surprising result of his experience with the WCC / Washtenaw Literacy Skills Building classes is that he's become a better thinker and that he's learned to "think things through". Anthony acknowledges using this new insight beyond the



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◆ [Friday, April 5th](#)
1-2pm
Ypsilanti District Library
5577 Whittaker Road
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

◆ [Tuesday, April 16th](#)
5-6pm
Corner Brewery
5577 Whittaker Road
Ypsilanti, MI 48198

◆ [Wednesday, April 24th](#)
7-8pm
Nicola's Books
2913 Jackson Avenue
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

◆ [Thursday, May 9th](#)
10-11am
Nicola's Books
2913 Jackson Avenue
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

"I volunteered with Washtenaw Literacy March 2010 to July 2010. I would like to thank you for all the help and knowledge Washtenaw Literacy provided me; My experience tutoring in Ann Arbor help me tremendously in my 25 months of service as a TEFL Secondary Peace Corp volunteer in Kyrgyzstan."

*~ Shannon Shulman,
former Washtenaw
Literacy ESL Tutor,
currently serving as a
Peace Corp Volunteer*

Upcoming Trainings and Workshops:

If you have attended any of our ABC's of Washtenaw Literacy Information Sessions, please consider registering for one or more of our recommended trainings or workshops:

◆ **Designer Tutor Training:**
our premiere 15-hour interactive training program

April 15th, 18th, 22nd, 25th, and 29th
6:30-9:30pm
Comcast Headquarters

◆ **ESL Group Tutor Training:**
Recommended 3-hour training module for group tutors

Monday, April 22nd
10am-1pm
NEW Center

◆ **Lesson Planning for New ESL Group Tutors:**
Recommended 3-hour supplemental training module for group tutors.

Monday, May 20th

classroom too. He spent the first thirteen years of his life living in a rough neighborhood in Chicago before moving with his family to the Ypsilanti area. He admits he didn't always think about how his actions could have larger impact. Now, after furthering his education and working with the tutors, he looks at problems from all angles and can see the impact of his different actions.

In between working towards his GED and dreaming of joining the Air Force, Anthony enjoys spending time with his friends, playing with his young nephews, and playing football. And, since his favorite team is the Baltimore Ravens, he's enjoying their recent win in the Super Bowl! Once he's done with classes and has earned his GED, he hopes to head to Texas for basic training. Then he looks forward to learning a new career and making good money. He hopes to build a career with the Air Force and maybe live near family in California, but also hopes to travel overseas, including to Germany, where he can drive "cool cars" on the Autobahn!

To read more about the partnership between WCC and Washtenaw Literacy, take a moment to read the [Washtenaw Voice Article](#).

Meet a tutor

Nancy Sylvester has been tutoring with Washtenaw Literacy since June 2011. During a recent WCC Skills Building tutoring session, Nancy took a few moments to answer some questions about why she tutors and how it impacts her life in such positive ways.

Q. There are so many wonderful agencies to volunteer locally, what made you decide to volunteer with Washtenaw Literacy?

A. *"I enjoy teaching, have a degree in Education and completed most of a Master's Degree in Reading, so working with Washtenaw Literacy seemed a natural place to volunteer."*

Q. What has surprised you to most about your volunteer experience with Washtenaw Literacy?

A. *"The dedication of the students is amazing to me!"*

Q. What is your favorite tutoring moment so far?

A. *"A learner asked me how to solve a rather complicated math problem. He said he had tried and tried, also asked his wife for help, but they couldn't figure it out. We worked it out together on the chalkboard, it took about fifteen minutes but he understood. When he tried a similar problem himself, the look of amazement and pride on his face when he solved it was priceless. I realized I get as much satisfaction from the learners as they get from me."*

Q. What has been the most challenging part of volunteering?

A. *"Juggling numerous learners in math who are at very different levels is challenging. I learned to come prepared with several different lessons to try to be ready for a variety of learning levels and subjects."*

Q. What do you carry around in your tutor kit?

A. *"I typically work on math with learners so I've put together worksheets on about a dozen different math topics such as decimals, percentages, Pythagorean relationships, algebra, geometry, plotting points, etc."*

Q. What were your favorite subjects in school?

A. *"My favorite subjects were Spanish and Math. It's fun to speak a foreign language and I like trying to solve problems in Math."*

Q. What would you tell someone who asked what it's like to work with adults struggling with illiteracy?

A. *"How rewarding it is to help others to help themselves!"*

Q. What's your favorite memory of reading?

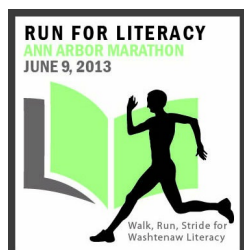
A. *"I LOVE to read, especially Stephen King!"*

Q. If you could design a perfect day, what would it include?

A. *"A long walk with my dogs; working on math with a learner who is trying to pass the GED Math test; dinner out with family and friends."*



Save the Date - Run for Literacy / Ann Arbor Marathon



Washtenaw Literacy's 2nd Annual Run for Literacy / Ann Arbor Marathon is June 9, 2013. We are recruiting both **individuals and teams** to participate. Please consider running or walking in the Ann Arbor Marathon and Half Marathon, 5K, or 1.2 Mile Kids Marathon to raise funds for Washtenaw Literacy.

If you would like to organize a team, please email us at RUN@washtenawliteracy.org. For complete information on organizing a team, registering as an individual runner, or becoming a corporate sponsor for this event, please go to the [Run for Literacy](#) page on our Website.

1-2pm
NEW Center

◆ **Designer Tutor Training:**
our premiere 15-hour interactive training program

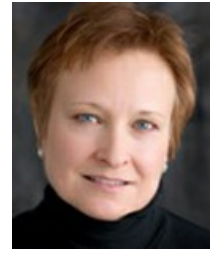
June 24th, 27th, July 1st
9am-4pm
Washtenaw Intermediate School District

"I just want to say, Washtenaw Literacy means a lot in my life. I am now reading and writing better compared to where I was. And, I will love to continue to work with Washtenaw Literacy, and I thank God for giving me lovely people to tutor me."

**~ Mabel Martin,
Current Basic Literacy learner with Washtenaw Literacy**

From The Director: The New GED, New Challenges for our Learners

The GED is the most widely accepted high school equivalency test. Taking and passing the GED is an important stepping stone for adults without a high school diploma, allowing them to attend college, enlist in the military or qualify for jobs that would otherwise be out of reach. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2012), GED certificate holders had mean monthly earnings of \$3,100 in 2009; those with some high school but no diploma or GED certificate had mean monthly earnings of just \$2,400.



New Challenges for Low-Skilled Adults. The GED will undergo a major revision, and the new version will be effective January 1, 2014. The new GED will be significantly more rigorous, and will be offered in a computer-based format only. Additionally, the costs to take the GED will skyrocket. Learners may have completed some of the GED subtests, but as of January 1, 2014 those scores will be wiped from the record and everyone must start again with the new test.

There is no doubt that a new GED test will be harder for many adults to pass. Especially at risk for failure will be those students who have very limited literacy or English-language skills. Lower-skilled adults already are essentially disenfranchised from many federally funded adult education and workforce training programs, and, however valuable in other ways, a more rigorous GED test will further limit their chances. Everyone should have an opportunity to learn and to earn a meaningful credential that leads to a family-sustaining job. Adults with low literacy or very limited English proficiency will need significantly more time in adult literacy and basic education programs in order to take and pass the new GED test than others with higher skill levels.

Washtenaw Literacy Rises to the Challenge. Washtenaw Literacy offers specialized programs for adults whose goal is to complete a high school credential. Through partnerships with the adult education community in Washtenaw County (Washtenaw Community College, adult education programs from Ann Arbor, Chelsea, Milan and Ypsi/Willow Run, Michigan Works! and the Washtenaw Intermediate School District), our services fill important gaps as a county-wide network collaborates to improve high school graduation rates and access to post-secondary job training.

Pathways to Literacy is an example of one intensive program Washtenaw Literacy offers to support 16 to 24-year-olds who are at risk of dropping out of high school, or to support completing credits or a GED for drop-outs. This program is funded by the Washtenaw Coordinated Funders (Washtenaw County, City of Ann Arbor, United Way of Washtenaw County and the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation).

For the last eighteen months we have taken leadership in aligning our programs and training with the Common Core Standards, the basis for the new GED. Washtenaw Literacy is the first literacy council in Michigan to make these revisions and train tutors to align literacy tutoring. As a result, our tutors are making a significant difference in the success rate. In important programs with Ann Arbor Adult Education, Ypsi/Willow Run Adult Ed and Washtenaw Community College Adult Transitions.

Moreover, tutors are excited! One tutor writes, "This placement is better than I could have imagined. It adds a sense of purpose to my life, which is exactly what I need. Hopefully, it is also helping these hard-working students achieve their goals. I sincerely hope that Washtenaw Literacy will continue to support the Ypsilanti Adult Ed program."

The number of families in poverty has increased dramatically in just the last few years; the forces keeping them there are complicated. Illiteracy and low basic skills have always been a significant factor in poverty. With increased job demands, and significantly changed opportunity to earn a high school credential through the GED, Washtenaw Literacy is working hard to make sure no one is left behind.

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