One in eight Washtenaw County adults is barely literate. The wealth of educational resources in our community can make this crisis hard to see. An impressive number of college educated adults living in our county means that in the last statewide study of adult literacy, Washtenaw County adults had the highest mean proficiency level in Michigan. Yet among the highly literate college graduates, over 27,000 of our neighbors cannot read a prescription bottle or fill out a job application.

Our community needs adult literacy instruction to thrive. Illiteracy is a hidden cost of living we all bear. Low literacy costs the national economy $225 billion a year in lost productivity. Low health literacy costs the U.S. health care system $58 billion annually. Half of all children born to illiterate parents grow up to be illiterate adults, continuing this costly cycle. When adults improve their literacy skills they become more productive employees, more engaged parents, and more responsible health care consumers. The opportunity to teach adults ready to learn is one we can’t afford to miss.

Washtenaw Literacy’s programs began in 1971 and have a near 100% success rate. Adults studying with us improve literacy skills in the context of their own lives. Achievements include getting a job or promotion, opening a bank account, reading prescriptions, helping children with schoolwork, moving out of homelessness, becoming a U.S. citizen, volunteering with local nonprofits, and voting for the first time.

Adult literacy instruction is a key piece of ending illiteracy in our community. Washtenaw Literacy is proud to be a founding partner of the Washtenaw County Literacy Coalition. Its members work to improve literacy services for all ages.

**Women of all cultures** find a supportive learning environment at four women-only ESL tutoring groups. (sponsors: James A. & Faith Knight Foundation, Michigan Women’s Foundation)

Students in the Washtenaw Community College pre-GED program receive classroom assistance. (sponsor: Washtenaw County) Group tutoring and computer-based instruction is offered on WCC’s main campus.

Washtenaw County Literacy Coalition writes the Blueprint to End Illiteracy in Washtenaw County. (sponsors: Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, James A. & Faith Knight Foundation)

One hundred and fifty-two volunteers are trained as one-on-one tutors. (sponsor: Comcast)
LEARNERS RESULTS

Communication Goals
- Improve pronunciation ............................................................ 76%
- Improve conversation skills ........................................................ 80%
- Understand spoken English better ................................................. 69%
- Use the telephone .................................................................. 56%

Reading Goals
- Spend more time reading .......................................................... 61%
- Understand what I read ............................................................ 80%
- Read stories ....................................................................... 79%
- Read books ........................................................................ 66%
- Read to kids ....................................................................... 37%

Life Goals
- Learn to use the bank .............................................................. 57%
- Learn to use the library ............................................................ 63%
- Learn to use the post office ...................................................... 53%
- Learn to use the grocery store .................................................. 59%
- Improve life skills .................................................................. 57%

Employment Goals
- Get a job ........................................................................... 20%
- Perform current job better ......................................................... 29%
- Enter job training .................................................................. 29%

Job seekers at MichiganWorks! Service center receive literacy assessments, computer-based instruction, and one-on-one tutoring to help them build skills needed for employment. (Sponsor: Washtenaw County)

Forty-eight low-income Ann Arbor residents increase family economic stability through our one-on-one tutoring program. (Sponsor: City of Ann Arbor)

Employees at Edwards Brothers, Inc. receive on-site ESL tutoring. (Sponsor: Edwards Brothers, Inc.)
I am improving my literacy or English skills. ......................................... 97%
I am making progress toward my goals. ........................................... 100%
I am more involved with my community. ....................................... 63%
I am more successful at work. .................................................... 64%
I feel more confident. ............................................................. 93%
I feel better about my family life. .................................................. 79%

Educational Goals
Enter Adult Education .............................................................. 20%
Work on computer skills ........................................................... 30%
Know more about American culture ............................................. 47%
Understand information from the doctor .................................... 46%
Improve self-esteem/confidence .................................................. 64%

Writing Goals
Improve spelling ................................................................... 70%
Take phone messages .............................................................. 53%
Write stories or essays ............................................................. 41%
Fill out forms or applications ................................................... 74%

TUTOR RESULTS
Are you happy with your current volunteer assignment? Yes ................ 98%

Other comments
• “The training was excellent.”
• “Watching my learner make progress is the best reward.”
• “The best experience has been meeting great people.”
• “I’ve enjoyed the gratification of working with learners who are eager to improve their skills and appreciate my help.”
• “Every meeting is a wonderful experience.”

Healthcare professionals learn to identify literacy problems and improve communication through the Michigan Health Literacy Awareness Training Program, developed in collaboration with University of Michigan Health Sciences Libraries. (sponsor: National Network of Libraries of Medicine, Greater Midwest Region)

University of Michigan medical students learn literacy sensitivity, how to refer low-literate patients to tutoring programs, and how to locate literacy services nationwide in a 90-minute training provided by Washtenaw Literacy staff.
In Review / June 2007–May 2008

Learner accomplishments:
- I am improving my literacy or English skills. 97%
- I am making progress toward my goals. 100%
- I am more involved with my community. 65%
- I am more successful at work. 64%
- I feel more confident. 93%
- I feel better about my family life. 79%

Volunteers: 741
- 1:1 Tutors
- Group Tutors
- Mentors

Cash Revenue: $335,352
- Businesses & Organizations
- Event Revenue
- Grants
- Individual Gifts
- Subcontracts
- Other

Major in-kind donors:
- Ypsilanti District Library, Washtenaw Community College, Comcast (office and training space), Edwards Brothers (printing), The Ann Arbor News (advertising) and over 550 volunteer tutors.
Young parents at Catholic Social Services learn how to effectively read to their children and take home new books in a four-session workshop series. Teen parents in need of reading help complete literacy assessments and enroll in one-on-one tutoring. (sponsor: Target)

Mothers and grandmothers are the focus of an ESL pilot program at POWER, Inc. (sponsors: James A. & Faith Knight Foundation, Junior League of Ann Arbor)

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**June 2007–May 2008**

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Washtenaw Literacy

is a volunteer-based organization providing

free literacy instruction customized to the

needs of adults throughout Washtenaw

County. Volunteers provide individual and

group tutoring in reading and writing skills

and in English as a second language so

adults can improve their personal, family

and community lives.