Literacy is a bridge to hope. It is a tool for daily life in modern society. It is a bulwark against poverty, and a building block of development. Literacy is a platform for democratization, and a vehicle for the promotion of cultural and national identity. It is an agent of family health and nutrition.

— FORMER UN SECRETARY-GENERAL KOFI ANNAN
What does it mean to be an illiterate adult?

Of course it means the obvious, you cannot read traffic signs, fill out an employment application, or calculate the cost of a purchase. But it also means developing some pretty sharp skills, strategies to hide their illiteracy from everyone, sometimes even loved ones … memories sharpen because one cannot create lists … clever questions conceal the deficit … “I forgot my reading glasses,” “I’ll read through this when I get home.” By virtue of the strategies that guard them from humiliation, illiterate adults have also managed to remain unseen. And for that reason the statistics are shocking, especially in our educated community.

• One out of three working-age Michigan adults — 1.7 million people — lacks the basic skills or credentials to attain a family-sustaining job and contribute to the state’s economy. Of these adults, 692,000 do not have a GED or high-school diploma. If those working-age adults were to earn a diploma or GED, their annual net fiscal contribution to the State of Michigan would increase by $4.97 billion.

• According to community colleges around the state, at least 60 percent of students entering these institutions require basic skills remediation prior to engaging in post-secondary education.

• 1 in 6 adults in Washtenaw County lack the basic skills to read, write or communicate in English, they are at the lowest level of literacy.

• Parental literacy and parental attitudes toward education are strongly related to reading achievement in children. 50% of children with illiterate parents will become illiterate adults.

• 86% of Washtenaw Literacy learners live below the poverty line.
At Washtenaw Literacy we focus on our learners’ individual life goals. Our learners show such strength and courage when they ask for our help and such extraordinary determination as they work to improve their basic skills in order to have success in their lives. Our training, mentor program, tutor support, and ongoing professional development encourage independent, confident learners who then become advocates for literacy.
Patricia Mills, Women’s Literacy Achievement Award

Patricia Mills had been working with her tutor for just six months when her reading and writing vastly improved! She has been able to reach her goal to enroll at Washtenaw Community College.

Washtenaw Literacy focuses on educational attainment through intensive programming with the goal to acquire a high school credential or gain admittance to training or community college programs.

The PATHWAYS program serves young adults 16 - 24, providing high impact, interventional tutoring in reading, writing, and basic math. Pathways is not homework help, it is short-term concentrated basic skills improvement through intensive, customized tutoring for individuals who are:

- at-risk for dropping out of high school,
- need to complete high school, or
- need to earn a GED, and/or
- gain entrance to post-secondary training (i.e.; Compass test).

COLLEGE NOW is a pre-GED skill building program offered in partnership with Washtenaw Community College. Participants’ skills are assessed at the outset, and again after every 20 hours of instruction. In one College Now session during winter 2011 with a group of 11 participants, the average reading level was 4th grade at the outset. 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.
Soukeyna Samba arrived from Senegal in 2009 speaking very little English. 18 months later, she is reading very well and is enrolled at Washtenaw Community College. She also works part time and takes care of her two little brothers. Tutor Michelle Anderson says that working with Soukeyna makes her life better too. She says, “Soukeyna has taught me so much more than I could ever teach her, and I am proud to be able to say that I am her tutor and her friend.”

Washtenaw Literacy can help businesses operate more effectively by improving workers’ basic skills. Our award-winning customized workforce programs are tailored to meet employers’ needs. Onsite tutoring to improve competency with the English language or ability with reading, writing and numeracy is developed for specific employment needs. Trained tutors meet with learners weekly for 1-2 hours. The tutoring sessions are designed with each employee’s strengths and work goals in mind.
SUPPORTERS

Corporate Literacy Teams
Corporations and businesses understand the value of improving literacy in Washtenaw County while building teamwork internally through community service. Corporate Literacy teams are based within local companies, and engage and support Washtenaw Literacy in multiple ways.

ProQuest has supported the agency for several years by offering a variety of marketing services to the agency. “ProQuest offers employees a formal volunteer program, and working with the Washtenaw Literacy team is a fulfilling way for the marketing team to leverage their talents to help the community,” says ProQuest Senior Vice President of Enterprise Marketing and Customer Care, Lynda James-Gilboe.

DTE Energy Resources has created a program to encourage employees to become tutors, helping the agency fulfill its tremendous need for tutors. “Our staff has been able to help with several of Washtenaw Literacy’s programs and have found the experience personally and professionally rewarding,” says DTE Energy Resources Vice President, Mark Rigby.

Marty Friedburg
ESL Tutor and World in a Basket Volunteer
Beth and I donate to Washtenaw Literacy because we believe in its mission. The ability to read and write is so critical to one’s life in today’s world! 50% of kids who have illiterate parents will themselves be illiterate as adults. Breaking that terrible cycle benefits those who learn to read and write as well as the community as a whole. We want to do our part to help!
In the 2011-2012 program year, Washtenaw Literacy served 1806 adult learners.

In 2011-2012 Washtenaw Literacy delivered services through 891 volunteers.

CASH FINANCIAL STATEMENT

INCOME
Grants ................................................................. $93,591
Donations.......................................................... $177,509
Events ................................................................. $39,602
Fees ................................................................. $3,937
Service Contracts ............................................... $89,158
Literacy Coalition Pass Through ............................ $75,078
Interest & Dividend ............................................... $1,109
Gain or Loss on Investment ................................. $954
$480,938

EXPENSES
Program Services ................................................. $311,192
Management ...................................................... $67,269
Fundraising ......................................................... $116,789
$495,250

Audited financial statement, Titus & Urbanski, Inc., Certified Public Accountants for the year ending May 31, 2011

Major In-Kind Donors include Ypsilanti District Library, Washtenaw Community College, ProQuest, Edwards Brothers, Comcast, Google and over 732 literacy tutors.

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