



Report to the Community July 2012 – June 2013

HIGHLIGHTS

- Purchased our first online educational software, Lexia, used by current and waiting list students to help with phonological awareness, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension
- Two successful fundraising/branding events – Fall: “The Marvelous Wonderettes” at Flat Rock Playhouse. Spring: “Three Things That Will Change Everything” presentation with former FORTUNE magazine editor, Rik Kirkland
- Sponsored our first ever Hendersonville Main Street bear – Joy Bear
- Complete redesign of our website – www.litcouncil.org (please visit us)
- Refined and expanded monthly in-service training sessions for tutors and students
- Board of Directors increased from 6 to 12 members
- Use of social media grew significantly. Please join/like us on Facebook
- Prepared students for the significant changes in GED testing coming in 2014
- 100% of our students completing all 13 sections (weeks) of our Citizenship program went on to get their US Citizenship

STATISTICS

- 157 English as a Second Language and 63 Adult Basic Education students served
- 143 volunteers donated 15,479 hours which is worth \$342,708 as determined by the Independent Sector

FINANCIALS

Revenue – \$196,840; Expense – \$206,152
Net Assets – \$120,109
Change in Net Assets – (\$4,665)
Overhead rate – 16%

WHAT'S AHEAD?

- Comprehensive strategic and fund development plan is in works with completion targeted by June 30, 2014; Board member development and training
- Renewed focus on current and potential partnerships to enhance overall services
- Continued focus on reading, writing and English language skills with a new concentration on GED readiness and efforts to get a job, retain a job and advance in employment; enhanced marketing to increase the number of tutors
- Additional hardware/software for online learning and technology/keyboarding experiences to supplement our traditional one-to-to instruction
- Implementation of our work plan following our grant from the prestigious Melvin R. Lane Fund with the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina

Thanks for Your Support!

Michelle Blackwell

Adult Basic Education Student

Michelle has struggled with dyslexia all of her life. She shares her story:

My name is Michelle Blackwell, and I am currently finishing my GED. I have dyslexia and for those that don't know what that is, you see things backwards...like letters, numbers, some words. It was very frustrating as a child. There were not very many teachers that could teach children with dyslexia. I am proud to say that I have worked very hard to get my GED without having

to be retested. I am also enrolled in Blue Ridge Community College's Office Administration Program. Let me just tell you a little bit about how I came to know about the Literacy Council. I attempted to get my GED several times in the past few years & it was not meant to be at that time for me to achieve this goal. A little over a year & a half ago, I was talking to my neighbor about

getting my GED. She said that I needed to go to the Goodwill Center. She told me where it was at, so I went & they told me they met twice a week four hours a day. The lady that I talked with told me about BRLC & how they could get me a tutor to help me with my GED. I went & meet with Kathy. She made the experience wonderful for me. They provided me with a math tutor Jack Fitzgerald. I don't know how, but he has put up with me & my frustrations & helped me to achieve this goal. My mom would say, "How did you get her to understand math?" My mom stayed up with me through the night trying to help me with my math. Thank you, Jack! I am getting ready to complete this journey that has been 24 years in the making. On October 9, I will be taking my last GED test - the Math Test. There are no words that can express my gratitude for all that the Literacy Council has done for me. On behalf of all the students, thank you for all that has or ever will be done to help people continue to get a better education & positively changing their lives. I know that it has changed my life. I look forward to going on to college & receiving my certificate & graduating from Blue Ridge Community College. Then on to bigger & better things that life has to offer.

Post-script: Michelle recently paid us a visit bursting in the door with "I got my GED!" Congrats and well deserved!



Idaly Arredondo

ESL Student of the Year

Idaly's story is one of overcoming fear and finding the courage to build a new life. Here, in her own words, is her story:

My first mistake was quitting school in Mexico. I was pregnant and embarrassed to stay in school. I thought it was a good decision, but I made my mom feel so bad. My second mistake was leaving home and living with the father of my kids. He was violent in many ways. I could not make my own decisions. My mom wanted to give me support, but he would not allow it, which I permitted. After I had the opportunity to come to the United States, I decided to change my life. I started to work in a restaurant even though I didn't speak English. This was the first job in my life. I

was very happy. I started making biscuits, meeting new people, learning new positions and learning a little more English. I felt important, useful and independent. I progressed from crew, making biscuits, to shift leader, to helping the manager, to co-manager, and finally assistant unit director. I still did not speak much English, but I learned my job by watching, taking

notes and working hard. The restaurant wanted to promote me again to unit manager – if I could speak more English. Everything was going well at work, but I was still in that abusive relationship until I became tired and finally opened my eyes. I realized it was not good for me or my kids. I decided to separate. I went to Mainstay where I learned about the Literacy Council. I came to BRLC to learn English and got the courage to end that relationship. With the help of my BRLC tutors my English improved and, even though I was scared, I was finally able to accept the new promotion. I am also studying for the GED. When my English is very good, I want to become a tutor myself. I want to improve myself, make up for past mistakes and to make my mom happy. People can make their dreams their reality. Mistakes in the past cannot stop your dreams. It's never too late.

Post-script: Idaly decided to send her Student-of-the-Year Award to her mom in Mexico. We're sure she is very proud!

