

WOMEN NURTURING CHANGE

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***THIS ISSUE:***  
**Women Minding  
Their Own Business**

*The Literacy Council of Buncombe County teaches adults and children basic reading, writing, math, and English language skills through individual and small group instruction by trained volunteers. Students gain self-confidence and develop self-sufficiency to transform their lives as individuals, parents, workers, and citizens. The Literacy Council, a non-profit organization accredited by ProLiteracy America and serving the community since 1987, provides highly individualized tutoring to fit the needs of over 300 students in three core programs – Adult Education, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and the Augustine Project. This profile of ANNE DACHOWSKI, is another in a series of inspiring stories about those whose lives The Literacy Council has improved (and in this case one who has helped improve the lives of others as a tutor).*

From the time she was an infant, Anne Dachowski was raised by a Nicaraguan housekeeper. Although Anne spoke only English, she learned how to communicate with a Spanish-speaking caretaker and came to appreciate cultures other than her own. Years later, when Anne enrolled in college, her ambition was to graduate with a degree to teach students who were not native English speakers. As an enthusiastic college student, she did teach this population. However, three years later, when she dropped out of college, Anne focused on making a living working in the food service business. Still, in the back of her mind, Anne knew that she would love to work with people from other cultures. It was an untapped passion.

One fateful day in the mid 1990s, Anne drove by the Literacy Council of Buncombe County and thought, "I'd love to volunteer there but I don't have time to do that right now." Luckily for us, she remembered LCBC in 2005 when her schedule became free. At that time in her life, Anne went on disability and she felt directionless. She was struggling to form a self-identity as she found herself unable to work. Anne knew that she could still make a difference in the world and in the lives of those around her. She signed up for our new-tutor orientation and then attended the 15-hour training course to become a tutor in our English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program. Her passion for other cultures was reignited.



The Literacy Council of Buncombe County has many resources to assist tutors and students. These are some books in the resource library.

Anne has been one of our most dedicated tutors—a nine-year veteran—and she is a gift to her many students! She says, "Half of my family are teachers. Maybe it's in my blood. Teaching brings me great joy. It's a fulfilling feeling to share with someone who is achieving their goals." Over her years of service, Anne has watched her students grow in independence. She recalls the joy of one student who reported that she had gone to the bank and completed all of her transactions without a Russian-speaking interpreter. Another student went on to obtain American citizenship. All successes, large and small, are moments of celebration. Anne works with all of her students one-on-one and gives focused attention to their specific areas of need.

Wendy Mejias has been Anne's student since 2011. Wendy had recently arrived in this country from Venezuela and spoke no English. Wendy says, "At first it was hard to speak. I could not talk to Americans. I could not buy items in the store. But Anne is very patient. She loves to teach. I think she would die if she couldn't teach. Because of Anne, I know how to speak English well now. I have a good job at a bank and I feel like I can fly so far."

Anne says, "My overall experience with the Literacy Council of Buncombe County has been wonderful. Everyone who works there seems to love their work and they are interested in helping tutors. Erin (the ESOL program director) rocks! She is

accessible, helpful, and she answers hard grammar questions."

Erin thinks that Anne rocks, too, saying, "During Anne's tenure with us she has taught twenty students. She usually has a caseload of four students, each of whom she meets individually on a different weekday. When a student achieves his or her goals and moves on, or has to 'stop out' of tutoring for reasons having to do with work or family life, Anne is immediately ready to take on a new one. She consistently strives to give her students meaningful lessons, using a variety of methods and materials and consulting with me any time she has questions about how best to explain something or how best to serve a given student. I only hope she keeps working with us for at least another nine years!"

Anne has made it full circle. She says, "I actually have achieved my college goal of teaching ESOL. That's pretty amazing, as so few people are lucky enough to achieve their college dreams."

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**Would you like to become a tutor at the Literacy Council of Buncombe County? Please contact us for more information. At 828-254-3442. Orientation meetings are held every other month offering an opportunity to explore our three programs- ESOL, Adult Education and the Augustine Project. We would love to hear from you. Also, check us out on our website [Litcouncil.com](http://Litcouncil.com), Facebook and Twitter.**