

LITERACY TOGETHER

IMPROVES COMMUNITY, ECONOMY AND INDIVIDUAL LIVES.

BY SANDRA BILBRAY



Literacy Together is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with a mission to transform lives and community through the power of literacy. Now in its 39th year, Literacy Together has three distinct programs: English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Adult Literacy and Youth Literacy. Funded by individuals and various foundations and grants, Literacy Together provides free tutoring to youth and adults in Buncombe County.

Executive Director Amanda Wrublewski says, “Our vision is for a just and equitable community in which literacy is accessible and achievable by all,” she says.

Literacy Together depends on volunteers to be able to serve the community. Last year Literacy Together provided 34, 938 hours of instruction to students and intensive tutoring to 549 students. Still, their waitlist of students currently totals 80. “We are able to have this impact because of

the generosity of others who give their time, but we always need more tutors,” Amanda says.

ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL)

The ESOL program provides free English language instruction to students who wish to remove barriers to employment, improve the economic mobility of their families, help their children in school, become U.S. citizens and learn to navigate the healthcare system.

ADULT LITERACY

The Adult Literacy program provides free one-on-one instruction to English speakers whose reading, writing, spelling or math skills are below a basic level. Students enroll because they want to improve job prospects, help their children in school, enroll in a high school equivalency program and better navigate the world around them.

YOUTH LITERACY

The Youth Literacy Program improves the academic achievement of youth (K-12) who read below grade level by utilizing volunteer tutors and paid young interns to provide free one-on-one instruction in reading, writing, spelling and math. Youth participating in the internship are also provided with professional development workshops throughout the year.

DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library mails a free, high-quality book every month to children under the age of 5 to build a home library and ignite a love of reading.

Amanda says it's easy to take literacy for granted, and there's a misconception that literacy is just about reading. “Without literacy, you can't order at a restaurant, pay taxes, go to a bank, go to a doctor or fill a prescription,” she says. Helping with literacy results in better health and economic outcomes.

People with undiagnosed ADHD and dyslexia often fall through the cracks, Amanda says. Students with a history of trauma or those who are pushed through the system without getting extra support benefit tremendously from Literacy Together. Tutors customize a plan for each individual and create learning environments where the dignity, worth and complexity of each person is honored.

Tutors often report that they get far more out of the experience than they feel they give.

Monthly orientations are held for tutors to be fully empowered before being matched with a student. Literacy Together also offers workshops to help tutors hone their skills.

“We are able to do this because of the generosity of others who give of their time or resources,” Amanda says. Go to lit-together.org to make a financial donation toward literacy services.



Stephanie Corcoran, owner of The Little Gym in Gerber Village, sponsors Making a Difference.



SAVE THE DATE!

Authors for Literacy
Fundraiser May 29

Literacy Together is
honored to welcome

New York Times
bestselling author of
Strangers in Time,
David Baldacci, to
Asheville, May 29
at the Crowne Plaza
Asheville, Expo Center
at 1 Resort Drive,
Asheville. Doors open
at 5 p.m. Scan the QR
code to buy tickets and
to learn more.



Tickets & Info.
Scan me!

