

# Literacy News

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## Winnebago County Literacy Council

*We teach ...so others may reach!*

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### Director's Corner

There are many staggering statistics about the scope of illiteracy issues in our community and how illiteracy affects our local economy. Behind those numbers are the faces of parents and children, wives and husbands, the employed and unemployed, voting citizens and non-citizens, the young and old, and everyone in between.

Have you ever imagined not having the basic literacy skills to take the bus the across town, understand a medical prescription, read a note sent home by your child's teacher, fill out a job application, or to simply read the newspaper? Most of us do not know what this seclusion feels like, but in Winnebago County there are over 12,000 adults who do.

One in six adults in the United States cannot perform tasks requiring the most simple literacy skills, according to the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) Report released by the National Center of Educational Statistics (NCES) last December. In 2003, NAAL assessed a nationally representative sample of more than 19,000 Americans aged 16 and older. NCES, which is part of the U.S. Department of Educational Sciences, conducted the assessment in both 1992 and 2003.

How does this national estimate then compare to what is going on in Wisconsin? According to 2000 Census data, about 1 million Wisconsin adults qualify for literacy and English language services. Nearly 800,000 residents (19%) age 16 or older are not enrolled in school and do not have a high school diploma.

One in six Americans not being able to read and understand basic written information should be alarming news and raise serious concern to public officials and business leaders. America's ability to compete globally and to maintain its economic self-sufficiency depends on a literate adult population.

The results of this report demand that we take a closer look at the root effects of poverty and how adult education programming, if funded sufficiently, can be a major solution to this issue. Adult literacy is the single greatest factor affecting our economy. The price of an illiterate community is expensive, not only for the illiterate person, but for their family, and our society.

Illiteracy in adults directly affects social issues in our community such as, workplace literacy, health literacy, citizenship, financial literacy and family literacy which supports efforts to help stop intergenerational illiteracy. Those who cannot read and write are severely impeded from participation in a complex society, without access to the information necessary to make an intelligent decision.

For more information about our literacy programs, or how you can help change someone's life by becoming a volunteer literacy tutor call 236-5185, or visit us on the web at [www.winlit.org](http://www.winlit.org).

***Our Mission: To increase literacy skills of adults and families so they can make informed decisions in order to function effectively in society.***

***Vision Statement: To increase the number of individuals served annually by 500% to 500 individuals throughout Winnebago County within 5 years.***

## Upcoming Info Sessions & Trainings

### Info Sessions (held at 11am and 5:30pm)

April 3rd  
April 20th  
May 1st  
May 8th  
June 5th

### Adult Tutor Trainings

April 19th, 20th, 26th, 27th  
5:30-8:30pm in Oshkosh  
April 22nd (9-5) & April 23rd (1-5)  
Oshkosh  
May 9th, 11th, 16th, 18th  
9:30-12:30 in Menasha

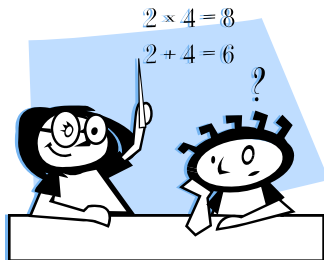
### Child Tutor Trainings

April 5th and 6th  
6-8pm in Oshkosh

## Teaching....teaching....taught!!

Please welcome our newest tutors:

LuAnn Butkiewicz  
Sandra Gade  
Michael Greene  
Sherri Haskins  
Sid Hirschberg  
James Kossel  
Carol Kossel  
Nancy Roebke



## Literacy Council Receives Diversity Award

The Literacy Council was awarded the Diversity Award at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh's Annual Martin Luther King Awards Banquet on January 16th. The Literacy Council was nominated by the Oshkosh Northwestern staff for the services it provides to students with diverse backgrounds. In 2005, the Literacy Council served 18 different ethnic backgrounds.

Thank you to all our tutors for helping us to serve such a diverse group of people who all have the same goal: improving their literacy skills!

## "How Do You Spell Chocolate?" Spelling Bee & Silent Auction a S-U-C-C-E-S-S!!

The Literacy Council held its' 5th Annual "How Do You Spell Chocolate?" Spelling Bee & Silent Auction on Saturday, February 18th at the Oshkosh Public Library. It was chilly outside but warm and cozy inside as people feasted on free chocolate from The Oshkosh Shoppe, Fox River Valley Cheesecake, The Hilton Garden Inn & Starbucks, and enjoyed Mexican hot chocolate and cinnamon crispas from Lara's Tortilla Flats.

We had a record number of supporters arrive to cheer on the spellers, and all applauded as Merrill Middle School took the Middle School Bee, while the Appleton Post-Crescent team walked away with their 4th win in as many years. The silent auction also provided a wide array of items to bid on., and Miss Oshkosh was present to sign autographs.

Thanks to everyone who helped to make the Bee a success!!

## Family English Language Classes offered at St. John's Church!

We are now offering classes to any non-native English speaker with children. Adults receive classroom instruction while their children work with a child tutor. Children must be younger than age 6 and not enrolled in Head Start or pre-school. Classes are held every Tuesday and Thursday from 1-3 at St. John's Church (808 North Main Street).

Please call Lisa at 236-5185 to sign-up or for more information.

## **\$\$\$ Every Little Bit Counts! \$\$\$**

Thanks to the following people & businesses for making a donation:

### Individuals

Ryan Hilbert  
James Flood  
Michael & Sandra Stratz  
Nathalie Moore  
Lurton & Carolyn Blassingame  
Nancy Samida  
Bernie Olejniczak  
Thomas King  
Douglas & Sharon Pearson  
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Dr. Jean Caudle  
Peter & Suzanne Wallace  
Thomas & Marcia Galica  
Stephen & Anne Hintz  
Marlo & Kenneth Osmond  
Kevin McGee  
Dale Fischer

### Businesses

Chamco, Inc.

## Tutor Resource Page

### Key Tips for Teaching Adult Literacy

1. Build and focus on your client's strengths. What are his/her interests? What are his/her gifts? What does he/she want to learn about? Tie Language Experience Activity stories to your clients' strengths.

2. Take time to organize your sessions before you met with your client. Review the objectives in your core curriculum text, think about supplementary materials that will support learning (flash cards, pictures, jigsaw tasks, webs/graphic organizers, real objects, role plays, the Oxford Picture Dictionary, Azar Grammar, Speaking Up at Work, filling out form activities, What Every Student Should Know (10 WESSK items), Speaking and Social Interaction book, children's books, video and cassette tapes and CDs, Rosetta Stone, educational websites, etc.), decide how you will approach teaching your client's personal education plan goal(s) for part of your session time together. Call Kari Uselman, Program Educator, at 236-5219, ext. 4830, if you need ideas, support materials, and/or tutoring support. She is there to help you and your client achieve and succeed!

3. Vary the ways you teach. Try something new. If you have not explored Language Experience Activities, the use of flash cards, support readers/books, support materials from your client's workplace, jigsaw tasks, graphic organizers, pictures, real items, going on a field trip, or reading together, challenge yourself to try something new! Ask your client what he/she liked or found challenging about an activity to learn more about his/her learning style. Ask questions!!! "What were you thinking when...., how did you remember ....., What helped you remember....., What was easy/difficult?" Ask your client what he/she was thinking inside his/her head.

4. Review your client's Personal Education goals on a regular basis. Ask him/her if what you are working on is still his/her number one priority. If your clients says "yes," continue, If your client says "no" then adjust the content of your tutoring sessions until you get additional feedback. Remember, ASK QUESTIONS!!!

5. Record all client-achieved goals on the Literacy Council's monthly calendar, due the 10<sup>th</sup> of every month, which are now accessible on-line at [www.winlit.org](http://www.winlit.org). Monthly goals can be stated in a variety of ways: "My client learned the first six consonants of the alphabet." "My client successfully responded to a question with correct grammar (or pronunciation) (or with comprehension)." "My client got his/her Oshkosh Public Library Card, or a driver's license, or something else." "My client read a story to his/her child or grandchild." "My client read a book." "My client wrote a note (or a list)." ...and so many more!

6. Keep records of your client's achievements. Reminder: When your client finishes a core textbook, there are end of book evaluations and certificates. You can request these from Raissa or Kari.

### Tutor Help Lines

Looking for a new creative idea to use with your student? Are you running into a dead end in trying to teach your student a new skill?

One of our goals for 2006 is to create a Tutor Discussion Board on our website so that tutors will have a place to share their ideas and suggestions, as well as pose questions and difficult situations to other tutors. You are each other's best resource and the Literacy Council wants to promote tutor-to-tutor communication.

Until we can achieve this on the website, we have two other ways to go about it. If you have a great suggestion or a question you'd like to hear other tutors' perspectives on:

1. If you are email-savvy, you can contact Raissa at 236-5219 ext. 4802 or [phelps@winlit.org](mailto:phelps@winlit.org). She will then email it out to all tutors and keep you updated on their responses.
2. If you prefer the old-fashioned form of communication, we will have a "Challenges & Solutions Center" on the bulletin board in the lobby area. You can post your question up on the board (keeping it anonymous if you prefer), and other tutors can then post their responses.

We hope that this will be beneficial to you in helping your student achieve their goals!

### Possible Tutoring Opportunity

We are working on having a small group conversation class at the Oshkosh Workforce Development Center on Fridays, and need a tutor (or tutors) to facilitate the group. Students would be of all English levels and the primary focus would be improving speaking and comprehension skills.

If you are interested, please contact Lisa at 236-5185.

### Useful Website

Here is a website that has some interesting activities for English as a Second Language students. It covers multiple languages.

<http://a4esl.org/>

**WINNEBAGO COUNTY  
LITERACY COUNCIL**

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