



*Committed to
Life Long Learning*

Orange County Literacy Council Annual Report FY 2000/01

OUR VISION

Achieving 100% adult literacy in Orange County
in order to help adults achieve
their employment, community, family and life goals

“As we enter the new Millennium, strong literacy skills are more important than ever before. The Orange County Literacy Council’s Board, volunteers, and staff are committed to supporting adult learners as they work to develop the skills needed to become competitive in the workforce, active in the community, and to support their children as learners.” – Lucy Lewis, Executive Director

HIGHLIGHTS

Most of us recognize the critical importance of having strong literacy skills in the 21st Century. At the beginning of the 20th Century, you were considered “literate” if you could read and write your own name. Even if you could not read or write at all, there were often good paying employment opportunities.

In today’s Information Age, literacy means having the reading, writing, math, and computer skills to compete for jobs that pay a living wage, to help your children succeed in school, and to be able to accomplish daily living activities – reading a rental agreement, reading a map and road signs, writing checks and balancing a checkbook. 43% of adults with the lowest literacy skills nationally live in poverty.

Many of us also know that adult literacy is a major problem in our nation. In the US, 40 million adults read at or below the fifth-grade level – far below the level needed to earn a living wage. Another 48 million have significant literacy needs.

What many do not know is that adult illiteracy is a critical problem in Orange County, too. In a county that is home to our nation’s first public state university, 1 out of 3 adult residents in Orange County have significant literacy needs.

The Orange County Literacy Council was founded in 1984 because we were committed to addressing this need. From our beginnings - with two newly trained volunteers and a shoebox – we have grown to offices in Chapel Hill and Hillsborough, 4 part-time staff, and over 120 volunteers serving more than 300 adult learners every year.

The following pages describe our key programs and activities in the last year. You will also read the words of

literacy tutors, students, and supporters. Additional highlights from FY 2000-01 include:

- We began administering a standardized test to all new adult learners. This testing, initiated due to funding requirements, has allowed us to more precisely assess a student’s strengths and areas for improvement. In FY 2001-2002, we will begin administering annual post-tests to help assess student progress.
- We continued to develop the work we began two years ago as a national pilot literacy site for learners with characteristics of learning disabilities. We offered three tutor workshops using the Phono-Graphix method.
- We continued and expanded our work with computer literacy, adding a computer-based GED class at Hargraves Community Center and purchasing new adult literacy software.
- We worked with our community and school partners through Orange County READS to offer the first Northern Orange Parent University.
- We increased the number of bilingual and Spanish Family Reading Reading Workshops.

Working together, we can make a difference. In these times, it is more important than ever that we take responsibility so that everyone in our community can reach their full potential – so that no one falls through the cracks or gets left behind. Everybody has to count. Those of us who are involved with literacy efforts have seen lives changed and hope rekindled. But we know that there is so much more

PROGRAMS FY 2000-01

INDIVIDUAL TUTORING

OCLC tutors provided literacy instruction to 103 adult learners

The Individual Tutoring Program is the primary focus of the Literacy Council's work. Adult learners strengthen their reading, writing, basic math, or GED preparation skills through free, confidential weekly instruction with a trained volunteer tutor. Tutors use a learner-centered approach to help students define and work towards their short-term and long-term goals. Typical goals include filling out a job application, getting a drivers' license, getting a GED, or helping children with homework.

"I really like my student, and I admire her determination. She works so hard at everything she does...I used to worry about whether I would have the time to be a literacy tutor. Now I value the hours I spend with my student. I look forward to seeing her, catching up, and working on the lessons. I love that I can help her reach her goals." – tutor, Phyllis Farlow

Individual Tutoring is provided at numerous additional sites throughout Orange County. This year, tutoring was provided at sites including:

- Chapel Hill Public Library
- Freedom House
- Northern Orange Literacy Council office
- Orange County Correctional Center
- Orange County Department on Aging
- Orange County Public Library
- Orange County Skills Development Center
- Project Homestart
- South Estes Community Center
- St. Benedict's Anglican Church
- Northern Orange Family Resource Center

Five Orange County employers participate in the **Workplace Literacy Program**. These employers provide paid time during the work week for employees to receive on-site tutoring. We hope that all Orange County employers will become participants.

"The Workplace Literacy Program has my full support. It provides a win-win opportunity for the employees and the organization." – John Link, Orange County Manager

The following employers offer Workplace Literacy:

- ★ Carol Woods
- ★ Orange County government
- ★ Orange Water and Sewer Authority
- ★ Town of Chapel Hill
- ★ University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill



John Taylor, student speaker, at Annual Appreciation Banquet

SMALL GROUP INSTRUCTION

129 adult learners participated in small groups

Small Group Instruction provides an opportunity for peer interaction and support. For some adult learners, it reinforces individual tutoring; for others, it is the main form of tutoring. Weekly small groups have been offered on a variety of topics, based on students' needs and volunteers' interests. This year, several small groups continued to be offered, and new ones were developed:

- Creative Writing class at IFC Community House
- Learning Games class at OC Public Library
- Writing class at OC Correctional Center
- Diabetes Reading & Discussion Group at OC Skills Development Center

"I have only one complaint about this class. It doesn't last long enough!" – student at the Puzzles and Games class

LITERACY CLASSES

*85 adult learners attended
computer-based literacy classes*

OCLC continued to explore the use of computers to enhance and supplement traditional tutoring approaches. This year, we were fortunate to be selected to participate in the Chapel of the Cross' Johnson Intern Program. An intern continued and expanded the Literacy Council's Computer-based Literacy Classes in Chapel Hill public housing neighborhoods. Weekly computer-based GED classes were offered at:

- South Estes Community Center
- Trinity Court
- Hargraves Community Center.

For the second year, tutors provided a Computer Lab at the Orange County Correctional Center.

We encouraged individual tutors to check out laptop computers and use adult literacy software, including New Readers Bookstore, Lexia, Pre-GED and GED programs.



Photo by Jon Gardiner/The Chapel Hill News

Will Hardman and Chris Toenes at UNC computer lab

FAMILY READING WORKSHOPS

84 parents attended Family Reading Workshops

Family Reading Workshops encourage and support parents in reading to their young children. This Smart Start funded program provides highly interactive workshops which help parents understand the critical importance of reading to children, integrate reading into everyday living activities, become comfortable with reading to their children, incorporate new ideas into their reading,

and learn about reading for enjoyment.

To better meet the needs of our diverse community, 3 bilingual workshops and 2 workshops in Spanish were offered. This year, 16 workshops were offered at 9 different sites and programs:

- Adolescent Parenting Program
- Chapel Hill Headstart/PreK
- Headstart/Pre K
- IFC Family Connections Program
- Northern Orange Family Resource Center
- Orange County Correctional Center
- Project Homestart
- South Estes Family Resource Center
- Trinity Court/Pritchard Park Family Resource Center

“One of my favorite parts of doing Family Literacy workshops is the amount of useful information we facilitators learn from participants. It adds to our knowledge base, and makes us continually better at what we are able to offer.” – Family Reading volunteer, Roxanne Gwyn

TUTOR TRAINING

*58 new tutors were trained this year
98 tutors provided literacy instruction*

OCLC programs are provided by a large group of dedicated, hardworking literacy volunteers. Most tutors who provide individual tutoring and small group instruction receive training in a 12-hour workshop; volunteers may apprentice in the Family Reading Workshop program or the Writing Class at the IFC Community House. Training workshops provide information about working with an adult learner, help tutors acquire a “toolbox” of approaches and resources, and offer small group opportunities to develop and role-play a tutoring lesson.

Regular inservice opportunities are offered so that tutors can further develop their skills, share their successes and address common challenges. “Integrating Technology with Literacy” was offered, as well as several workshops on using the Phonographix method for working with adults with characteristics of learning disabilities.

Board

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FINANCES

Income..... 159,323
Expenses..... 154,712

Sources of Income

Government..... 41%
Triangle United Way..... 36%
Contributions and Grants..... 12%
Fundraising..... 6%
Other..... 4%
Program Fees..... 1%

Expenses

Program..... 77%
General & Administrative..... 22%
Fundraising..... 1%

Become a Friend of Literacy

Your tax-deductible contribution will help ensure that Orange County adults obtain the skills they need to be competitive in the workforce, active in the community, and to support their children as learners. Our Friends help provide critical operating support for the work of the Literacy Council. Become a new Friend or renew your Friendship this year.

"Hi, my name is Deborah. I've been with Orange County Literacy for around two years now. It has really been very helpful to me. Here is some ways it has helped me...One of the main questions they asked was, 'What are your goals?' Here's my number one goals to share with you and others. They were to go back to school to work on getting my GED, driving, and working on a part-time job. I'm doing all three. . .

...I know I can do it, so can you. Please, don't never say you can't, because I know who ever you are, you can do it too. Have determination!"