



READ

503 West Franklin Street
Chapel Hill, NC 27516
www.orangeliteracy.org

SUMMER 2005

A few words from our students ...

The Orange County Literacy Council honors its students, tutors and volunteers at an Annual Awards Banquet. This year, in addition to the presentation of certificates, awards and others acknowledgements of achievement, a number of our students read from original pieces they had written about literacy and why it is important to them. Below—and continued on page three—is a sampling of their writings.

What Education Means to Me

Joel E. Keel

First, education is important to me because it will help me to be a better person. In fact, I will be able to make better decisions. When I buy groceries at the grocery store, I will be able to know the difference between a gram, one pound, and six ounces.

Second, it will help me understand the banking system, how to fill out a deposit, savings or debit card. It will also help me to use the teller machine and to work out the percentage on a loan.

Third, education will help me to build my vocabulary. Also, it will improve my communication with other people. I will learn about words and meaning, spelling, and writing, which allow me to have better self esteem.

In conclusion, I will be able to open a business of any kind. This will allow me to buy, sell, and trade. And with the help of my tutor, Mary, and my wanting to be educated, I will work hard to make it possible.

Reading

Vance Jacobs

I read because it makes me independent. And I like doing my own work. And I like doing my own business. There was a time that I could not do my own business after going to school. I had learned a lot since going back school. Most thing I learned was to read my Bible in Bible School. I am doing math and division. I learned it all since working at UNC. And I thank God for Blessing me to go back to school again.

This is My Story

Anthony Brooks

Growing up in a small town called Caldwell, on a farm, in a family of six, we raised pigs, and we grew our vegetables. It was very hard because we didn't have time to play like other children played. We had to work on the farm before and after school.

I would watch the other kids ride their bicycles or go-cart and just have fun, but we didn't have any of those things because our family was poor. My Mother then died when I was fifteen and a half, I quit school and got a job and an apartment. My Dad died when I was eighteen. Now that I am an adult and can look back on my childhood with a different perspective I realize that we were not poor. We had food to eat, clothes on our backs and a roof over our heads.



Fourteen Orange County Literacy Council students received achievement awards this year.

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Addiction

Shannon Ravenel

I spend a couple of hours a month in a writing group at the Interfaith Council's shelter for homeless men at the corner of Columbia and Rosemary in Chapel Hill. Sponsored by the Orange County Literacy Council, and coordinated by OCLC Board member, Willis Brooks, the group meets from 8 to 9PM in the shelter's dining room every Tuesday night.

There are always two volunteer leaders, but no telling how many residents will join us. Now and then, there are as many as ten. Sometimes there are only two or three. Once, there was just one. Never mind. We have come with our writing topics to offer and we are ready ourselves to write.

Advised to stay away from "sensitive" topics—politics, religion, sex—we suggest first memories, important people in our lives, pets we have loved most, favorite dishes (with descriptions if not recipes), best school memories. The point is just to get us thinking and then writing and, finally, sharing what we've thought and written.

There's one man—I'll call him Eddie—who shows up regularly and who writes well. A natural comic, he knows how to get his humor down on paper—a rare talent. One night, after I'd put forth my pale little topic—maybe it was something like if you could choose a new name for yourself, what would it be and why?—Eddie shook his head and said, Oh come on. Let's write about something that really matters. Like what, I asked, hoping he hadn't thought of anything.

But he had. He answered, Like addiction.

Well, it wasn't politics, or religion, or sex. And the rest of the group yelled Yeah! So we wrote about addiction. There are, I realized as I twirled my pen, all kinds of addiction. And indeed, we shared our written thoughts on many kinds. Scary as it is, addiction turned out to be a great topic.

These days, Eddie attends ever more regularly, always with a scary topic at the ready. Last time it was *Michael Jackson—guilty or innocent?* Another one was *Should the Senate vote to end the filibuster?* Then there was *Is the gap between rich and poor widening in America?*

For me, the shelter writing program is itself something of an addiction. The opportunity to confront issues, confront your own responses and find the right words to express them is habit forming. And giving up people like Eddie is impossible. They remind me—us—what matters.

OCLC Staff Changes

Linda Browner, Program Coordinator for Southern Orange County, is retiring from the OCLC on June 15th. Linda joined the OCLC in 1998, and over the past seven years, she has been a cheerleader, instructor, sounding board and supporter for literally hundreds of tutors and students.

Christine Hodder, the Council's Office Manager left in mid-May. Christine had been with the organization for eleven years, and for many of our volunteers, she was their first point of contact.

We thank them both for their service and dedication to literacy.

My Mother Is My Hero

Anonymous

First of all, she is my mother. She married at a young age to a great man. She gave birth to eleven children. One was still-born and the other ten are healthy and doing fine. She has 37 grands, 44 great grands, and two great great grands. She babysat for every child they had and never complained. Everyone who meets her calls her Mother.

We grew up on a farm. At that time, she was having severe migraine headaches. They were so severe you could not touch her. She set up in a chair all night long with tears running down her cheeks. The next morning you could tell the pain was still there. She would get up, make a fire, and cook breakfast. We had ham, eggs, gravy, rice and homemade biscuits. She would wrap her head up and come to the tobacco barn. You could still tell the pain was there. We would hand her the tobacco. She would tie it on the tobacco stick. When she was not at the barn, she was in the garden. We raised our own food. You name it and we had it, even down to popcorn. The only income she had coming in on Saturday. I would go with her to look for star grass. It looks like a flower with long roots. She would clean it and take it to the market. They made medicine out of it.

In 1989 she started focusing on her own life and went to school and got her degree and started working at Home Health. In 1991 she has a massive heart attack. The doctor called the family in. She was in a coma. Then she started coming back strong.

She is 80 now. I asked her what keeps her going and where does she get her energy. She said, "You always put God first and always remember tomorrow is not promised to anyone. So what you want in life, go for it and never worry about something you can't do anything about." This was very encouraging and helped me to make up my mind.

My mother is my hero.



*In our
own words ...*

Me and the Literacy Council

Deborah Harris

Hi, my name is Deborah Harris, and I've been with the Literacy Council once before. I would like to share some ideas of how it has helped me in many, many ways. It helped me with my reading problems. Such as with words, remembering what the story was all about and answering questions afterwards. It was hard at first, but the more I tried the better I would get, and the more interest I had gotten into reading, the more I wanted to read. So I know if I can do it you can too. I had even gotten better with spelling and with writing also.

I want to share that I had to quit because of health problems. But I hope that by going back this year, I hope and pray through God, I can make it. If I can I know you can too. It takes determination.

Thank you.



Over 125 Students, Tutors, Volunteers and Family Members celebrated at the OCLC's Annual Banquet.

What Reading Means to Me

John Taylor

Since I have been learning to read, I have read several books that have been exciting. The book by George Dawson, 'Life is so Good', a book about Harriet Tubman and the underground railroad, 'Having Our Say', by the Delaney Sisters, and the latest one, 'Holes'. Each of them books put a different feeling on you and made you look at life different. Each one put a meaning on you, and it's up to you, as an individual, to find that meaning.

Welcome New Tutors

The OCLC is pleased to announce that the following volunteers have successfully completed Tutor Training. Welcome to our new community of learners!

Kim Batcheller
Elizabeth Borene
Willis Brooks
Katherine Buse
Diane Calleson
Annette Council
Jeanine Driscoll
Elizabeth Jones
Kristen Kane
Martha Keating
Matthew Lewis
Rebecca Miller
Shanthy Nainar
Tasha Pate
Kelly Sharpe
John Solan
Ashley Tittlemore
Prathyusha Vadlamudi
John P. Vernon
Katharine Walton
Ludie White

We would also like to thank trainers Wanda Weaver, Jill Hallenback, Deb Gerhardt, Pat Brooks and Susan Attermeier for their continued dedication to training OCLC tutors.

Next Training

Our next Tutor Training Workshop will be held in the fall. Check our website for updates.

Tutor Tips

In April, Karen Marsh-Lovvorn, a course designer at Elon College and longtime OCLC tutor, led a tutor in-service discussion on Dealing with Expectations and Frustrations in Ongoing Partnerships. She offers the following tips.

1. Our role as tutors is to be coach, cheerleader, listener, feedback-giver, creative problem-solver and teacher. We *facilitate* learning, rather than *teach* something. Motivated adult learners will learn something, regardless of what we do. What they learn may not be what we want or expect and it may not happen the way we want, but they will learn something. Our job is to help these adult learners figure out the best way for them to understand, retain and use the material.
2. The goals that we are working toward are the *learners'* goals, not ours. It is the learners' responsibility to learn. Our responsibility is to set up and manage the circumstances so that learning can occur. If students decide to change goals mid-stream, that's all right.
3. Our students' definition of success may be very different than our own. Both tutors and learners want to be successful, but sometimes we have different definitions of "successful". Focus on the learners—it's all about what they need, not what we need. This may be difficult, particularly if a tutor is a high achiever accustomed to being successful. The learners may have completely different ideas of what "learning to read and write" means.
4. Don't take an "all or nothing" attitude. Celebrate small victories. Focus on the positive and let the larger victories come naturally. If your students don't learn the material in the way or at the time you hoped for, or if they don't meet goals you originally agreed upon, it doesn't mean you're a bad tutor or that they're bad students. If you start to think that way, you will probably communicate your frustration and disappointment to the learners. And this could damage your relationships as well as the students' ability to learn.
5. Your students are adults. They have been managing their lives without knowing how to read or write. That is a tremendous challenge, but they have made the decision to make a change. This isn't something they *have* to do; it's something they *want* to do. Be supportive and help them do it! They may want your approval—but they want their own approval even more!
6. Keep in mind that learning to read takes time. You can't compare the adult learning process with that of a child. Adults process information differently. Reading, writing or math may be completely new skills for them, even though it's second nature to you. Give them time. Help them celebrate successes. And work at their level, with their interests, not yours.

Upcoming Events

Celebrate Literacy: Clyde Edgerton
Sunday, Oct. 18th, 4:00-6:30pm
 ArtsCenter, Carrboro

OCLC Gift Wrapping—Borders, Chapel Hill
Saturday, Dec. 17th, 9am – 9pm
Saturday, Dec. 24th, 9am until 7pm

Thank you to Mark and Chris Gordon of Mark Gordon Signs for installing the signs outside our Hillsborough Office.

Thank You to the following vision care providers. Their generosity makes it possible for adult learners to receive much needed assistance.

- Mark Tenney of Tenney Opticians for a pair of glasses.
- Dr. Jan Kylstra of Eye Associates of Chapel Hill for an eye exam.
- Dr. Barbara Wujciak of Carrboro Family Vision for an eye exam and glasses.
- Dr. Laurel Gropper of Chapel Hill Eye Care for an eye exam and glasses.
- Dr. David Kroninger for an eye exam.
- Dr. Thomas Costabile and Fred Connor of Optical Reflections for an eye exam and glasses.

Friends of Literacy

The Orange County Literacy Council would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their very generous support.

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Thank you for supporting adult literacy!

Celebrate Literacy!

September 18, 2005

I dreamed of coming home from a lone solo flight soon after I was old enough to look into the sky and see an airplane.

(from SOLO: My Adventures in the Air)

When Clyde Edgerton was four years old his mother took him to a local airport to see the airplanes. Eighteen years later, she would take him to the same airport to catch a plane to Texas for Air Force pilot training. She'd been his first passenger when he got his pilot's license. She'd supported his decision to join the Air Force. All the same, she wished he'd kept up his piano lessons instead.

Join us **September 18, 2005** as we buckle ourselves in for Edgerton's reflections on his youthful passion for flying, at the joy he took in mastering it, at the exhilaration—and lingering anguish—of combat flying. Edgerton—author, professor, musician and pilot—will be our featured guest at **Celebrate Literacy!** the Council's annual fall fundraiser. He'll read from his soon-to-be-published book SOLO: My Adventures in the Air, and entertain us with his music, including two new songs written especially for the book.

Celebrate Literacy! will be held from 4:00 pm until 6:30 pm at The ArtsCenter in Carrboro. Tickets are \$20 per person (\$18 for ArtsCenter members) and available from The ArtsCenter box office at (919) 929-2787 ext. 201 or online at www.artscenterlive.org.

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Mark your calendar

Celebrate Literacy!

Sunday, October 18, 2005
4:00– 6:30pm



A Triangle United Way Member Agency