

# James Hassell:

“When I wrote my first letter, it felt good. My sister said, ‘You’re gonna be able to write to me now.’”



“Before I came to Literacy Network, I wasn’t able to read books very well at all,” said James. “Now I’m able to read a lot better.”

James came from Arkansas to Madison in 1973. He had a ninth grade education and had worked as a farm laborer in Arkansas. When he got to Madison, he soon landed a job at Madison Kipp, a foundry on Madison’s east side. He worked there for 26 years until he was injured on the job.

James started working more than three years ago at Literacy Network on his reading and writing skills with a personal tutor. “Its been a good option because I’m learning a lot more than I already knew,” said James. “Marilyn is very good and we get along very well. She finds a lot of interesting things for me to read. She lets me do what I want to do,” said James.

Marilyn and James meet twice a week at Literacy Network. They work well together because they are both dedicated to learning. “He just really wants to learn -- he shows up every time,” said Marilyn. “He’s is very good about following through on homework.”

To help James work on his reading, writing and

spelling, Literacy Network installed Lexia learning software on his computer. “It’s hooked up right into my computer and I can use it at home also.”

James wanted to be able to read and write so that he could use the Internet. “James had never used a computer before,” said Marilyn. “Now he’s pretty comfortable with it, and he even bought his own laptop.”

“Literacy Network helped me learn to use the computer a lot better and helped me to read better too,” said James.

With a proud smile, James said, “I wanted to be able to write letters and notes. Now, I also like to read books. I go to the library and get books to read.”

“James is a good learner and seeks out information for himself. He’s really good about taking a subject and will often follow up at the library,” said Marilyn.

James and Marilyn also started working on writing and spelling. “When I wrote my first letter, it felt good,” said James. “I learned to be able to really write and to spell the words. And my sister commented on it – she said, ‘You’re gonna be able to write to me now.’”



**Literacy Network**  
Improving Lives Through Literacy

James tells his story in video at [www.litnetwork.org](http://www.litnetwork.org)

Literacy Network teaches reading, writing and speaking skills to adults and families so they can achieve financial independence, good health and greater involvement in community life. All programs are free of charge.

*Photo and Video: Narayan Mahon*