

**WHERE I WAS**

**WHERE I'M GOING**



A collection of inspirational stories from current students as  
Literacy Network celebrates its 50th year.



## OUR MISSION

Literacy Network helps adults in  
Dane County build skills, reach goals,  
and connect communities.





Since 1974, adults at Literacy Network have built their skills for improved opportunities.

Adult literacy education leads to long-term impacts in the lives of students and their families. **Benefits of improved literacy include:**

- greater self-esteem and quality of life
- better health
- greater adaptability to a changing world
- improved economic opportunities
- greater gender equity

**Adults at Literacy Network:**

- find meaningful, family-sustaining jobs
- communicate better with their children's schools
- gain their U.S. citizenship
- obtain their high school equivalency diplomas
- take the next step to college and other certifications
- learn the basic reading, writing, and English language skills that support them in all areas of life

We are proud to support more than 1,000 adults annually (a record-breaking 1,445 in 2023!) with the collaboration of more than 30 employees, hundreds of volunteers, and numerous community partners.

# Celebrating 50 Years of Literacy Education – Historical Highlights

**Humble Beginnings – Launching a legacy of literacy education started with one couple’s vision.**

In 1970, Raphael “Ray” Wagner, a UW-Extension professor, and his wife, Ernestine, attended a presentation by Dr. Frank Laubach, a renowned literacy advocate. This inspired them to create an adult literacy program in Madison. After years of work, the Wagners and a team of dedicated volunteers established Madison Literacy Council in 1974. Lessons for adults began with one-on-one tutoring and 70 people were served in the first year. To bring on more volunteers, intensive workshops were conducted to train tutors in the Laubach method of teaching reading.

The newly incorporated nonprofit was staffed entirely by volunteers until 1980, when the first part-time staff person, Pam Gates, was hired. Pam becomes the first paid Executive Director in 1982. Throughout the early '80s, additional staff were hired, including the first volunteer coordinator.



EAST WILSON STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT  
Madison, Wisconsin  
406 E. Wilson Street, contributing building  
Photo by K. H. Rankin, March, 1985  
Neg. in possession of City of Madison

**On the Move – Over the years, the organization’s journey has included various buildings and name changes.**

- ▶ 1974 Madison Literacy Council opens at 8 S. Carroll
- ▶ 1979 Relocation to 406 E. Wilson
- ▶ 1985 Relocation to 823 E. Johnson
- ▶ 1992 Relocation to 2007 Atwood
- ▶ 1996 Name change to Madison Area Literacy Council
- ▶ 2002 Relocation to 1118 S. Park
- ▶ 2006 Name change to Literacy Network
- ▶ 2014 Purchase of 701 Dane Street building
- ▶ 2016 Move into 701 Dane after renovation and creation of dedicated learning space
- ▶ 2024 Expansion of classroom space and offices into entire building

**Evolution of Programming – As student needs and best practices changed, the programs, classes, volunteers, and instructors progressed too.**



Photo credit: *The Cap Times*



For many years, trained and supported volunteer tutors worked individually with adult students, both native English speakers and English language learners, to provide literacy education. The way of teaching grew from one-on-one tutoring by volunteers to include paid staff who taught and supervised volunteers. The combination of volunteer tutors and paid staff became a more efficient and effective way of instruction. The use of tutoring pairs has remained an important and impactful way of instruction to this day.

With the increase in student needs and numbers, group classes were offered in Literacy Network classrooms, at community sites, and at workplaces. Throughout the expansion of services over the years, programming retained its flexibility to best meet the needs of students. This has provided students a way to learn while maintaining as balanced a work, study, and family life as possible.

**Highlighting the Student Population – Responsive programming helps diverse students form connections, build skills, and reach goals.**

The Wagners founded Madison Literacy Council to provide free basic literacy education to adults. They adopted Laubach’s step-by-step approach, which was developed specifically for adult learners who have little or no reading skills. In the early years, the numbers of native English language speakers and English as a Second Language (ESL) students were roughly equal.

Soon, the number of ESL students far outpaced native English speakers, as refugees and other immigrants came to Madison Literacy Council for help with English skills like reading and writing. Early groups of ESL students included Hmong and other refugees from Southeast Asia, and Cuban refugees resettling in Dane County. Over the years, students have included Bhutanese, Syrian, Congolese, Venezuelan, Colombian, Nicaraguan, Haitian, Central African, and, most recently, Afghan and Ukrainian refugees, among others. Literacy Network now regularly serves students

from close to 90 different countries each year who speak more than 60 different languages.

**Building Community Partnerships – Working collaboratively with others accomplishes shared missions.**

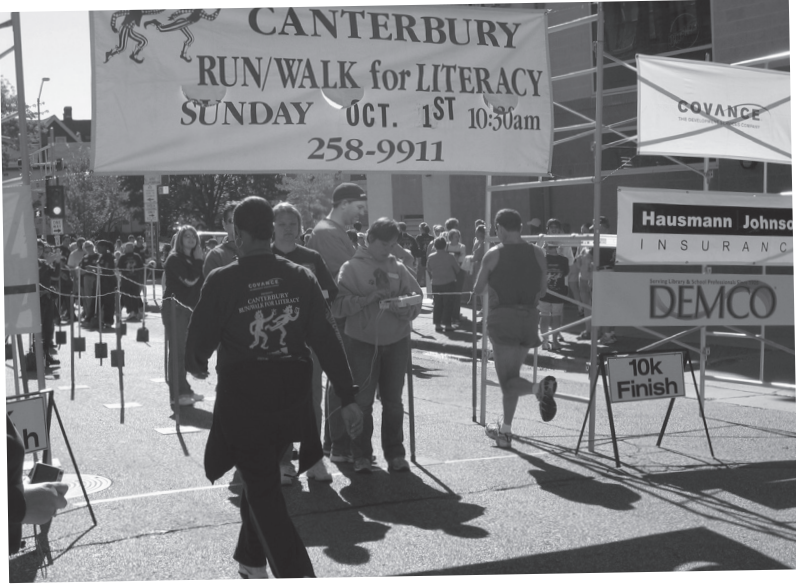
Over the years, Literacy Network has partnered with many community organizations and businesses throughout Dane County to offer English classes where students and their families live and work, including\*:

- ▶ Madison Public Library branches and South Central Library System public libraries in Fitchburg, Middleton, Verona, and Waunakee.
- ▶ Over 11 Madison public schools (MMSD elementary, middle, and high schools, and Nuestro Mundo Community School) and school districts in Marshall, Middleton-Cross Plains, Monona Grove, Sun Prairie, and Verona.
- ▶ Workplace partners from more than 20 area business since the 1980s including Oscar Mayer, Wisconsin Cheeseman, University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics, King Pharmaceuticals, Springs Window Fashions, DoubleTree Hotel, NCG Hospitality, Future Foam, Dane Manufacturing, ETC, and the Edgewater Hotel
- ▶ Community centers: Allied Family Center Boys & Girls Club, Bayview Community Center, East Madison Community Center, Goodman Community Center, Kennedy Heights Community Center, Lussier Community Education Center, Madison Senior Center, NewBridge Madison, The Neighborhood House, Open Doors for Refugees, Vera Court Neighborhood Center

In addition, Literacy Network has worked, and continues to partner, with many nonprofit organizations\* including Wisconsin Literacy, Centro Hispano, Madison College, the Catholic Multicultural Center, Jewish Social Services, and Urban League, and has been a proud partner of United Way of Dane County since 1979.

(\*Note: not a full list)

**Sustaining the Mission through Fundraising – Putting the “fun” in fundraisers from the mid-1970s days of bake sales and garage sales to current events focused on the students and their stories of accomplishments.**



**1984 - 1997:** Margo Ahrens runs an annual nut sale

**1992 - 2012:** Annual Canterbury Run/Walk for Literacy, initiated by Harvey and Trudy Barash of Canterbury Booksellers

**1997 - 1999:** Series of benefit concerts included The Nylons and the New Orleans Preservation Hall Jazz Band, sponsored by TDS Telecom

**1999 – 2001:** Criterium on the Square bike race, sponsored by TDS Telecom

**2002-2005:** Adult Spelling Bee for Literacy

**2006 – 2012:** Literacy 24/7, a “read-a-thon,” hosted by Borders Books West



**2011-2023:** Reading Between the Wines evening party, including student writings and auction

**2014 – 2023:** Literacy: A Sustainable Future, later renamed Growing Through Literacy, a daytime gathering to raise awareness and funds

**2014 – 2018:** Annual used book sale

**2014 -2017:** Central Park Sessions, Literacy Network designated as one of the beneficiaries

**2015 – 2016:** Busking for Books, featured local musicians doing benefit concerts throughout the city





## WHERE I WAS, WHERE I'M GOING

As Literacy Network celebrates its 50th year, we both think about our past, as well as look forward to our future. For this year's book of student writings, we asked students to do the same by reflecting on the theme, "Where I Was, Where I'm Going."

The following writings from adult students in Literacy Network programs offer reflections about students' earlier lives, as well as their hopes for the future. These stories are unedited and reflect the abilities of dozens of students, all at different places on their journey of literacy education.

My name is Paulina. I was born in Puebla, Mexico. I had a happy childhood. I grew up playing in the mountains in a small town next to the wilderness. I have a brother who has always been with me. I also have a very loving family. I moved to the city to study through middle school and high school. My dream was always to



go to university. I studied hard to get a scholarship to study at the university of my dreams. In college I studied nutrition for a year. It was a year of a lot of learning. But since I was little I was always interested in chemistry and biology. Due to family issues I had to make the decision to move to Madison with my brother. I left the University, my pet and my family. It was a very difficult decision because I really liked studying.

But I believe that when we make decisions for ourselves things get better. I felt very sad and alone at the beginning of moving to a place I didn't know and with a totally different language. But things are getting better and I feel more confident in myself. I met incredible people who illuminate my life. The most important thing is not to stop believing and always follow your heart. Here I hope to follow my dreams and continue studying. I want to be able to learn everything about laboratories and science. I will continue studying English and working hard to achieve all my goals. "I'm not telling you it will be easy, but it will be worth it, never give up."

*"I'm not telling you it will be easy, but it will be worth it, never give up."*



My name is Sandra Peña. I am from Colombia. I lived there for many years with my family, my children and my husband. In Colombia I had a job that I loved, it was to help migrants from the country of Venezuela and be of help to provide health, food, housing, and study for their children. We helped them psychologically and spiritually, I miss that job very much.

It was a wonderful time in my country, because my children were born and grew up there, however we have always wanted to give them an opportunity to fulfill their dreams, learn about other cultures and other languages and for this reason we decided as a family to start a process to migrate to the United States legally, through a great company and the EB3 visa, we managed after four years of waiting in my country Colombia, to obtain permanent residency or green card in this beautiful country.

We decided to live in Wisconsin, because the company that hired me. We are happy to live here, we love the place, the landscapes, the tranquility in which we live, the food is very good, because we find variety especially in fruits and vegetables.

I am currently working as a Spanish teacher in the fourth grade DLI program at Chavez Elementary School.

My name is Alvaro, I am a boy from Uruguay, I have lived in Wisconsin for 11 years, I have been working and I am married, we have a child, a great dog, and as an immigrant, I am always interested in improving myself in whatever is within my reach.

In 2017 I was in Brazil, I had worked for 14 years at the company Unimed federação, but unfortunately that same year I was fired, for reasons that were not very well explained. So I went looking for a new job, but unfortunately I couldn't find a job with the same salary I was earning at the company I had just been fired from.



I felt very discouraged, because Brazil was going through many political problems. and salaries were getting lower and lower.

as it was difficult to find a good job in Brazil, my daughter Suellen, who married an American, invited me to live in the United States, she said that there was a lot of work here, so I agreed to come and live in America, I have a job, I have free English course, I live with my family and my American grandchildren.

Learn to speak English, and be able to get a better paid job, to be able to help some people in the family who are in Brazil.

**MOMODOU**

In the past I was struggling to understand some of words during my annual training at work.

But now I am conformable doing my training and I also improved my computer skills because the help I got from literacy network.

When come to my family now I can help my kids with some of their homework and I also can read their chart from their doctors appointments. In future I want to get help to prepare to go to collage.



In 2022 arrived in the state of Wisconsin, with many goals to achieve, but at that time the first problem was not speaking English. My first job was in a housekeeping hotel, I felt terribly afraid of not being able to ask or know what they were telling me. At that time there was not enough information or help in English classes. I started reading books, listening to audios that they lent me in the library, but it was not the same the day to day work was not the same because I could not learn and practice it as I needed.

In 2020 I went to Literacy Network and took my first class. I felt great, the teacher was pretty good helping me and that's how I started learning more English. After my first semester I started taking classes with a tutor via zoom and that helped me a lot with my learning, and I have had the opportunity for many jobs. I am grateful to the literacy network and each of the tutors who have helped me to make my English productive in my daily life. In the future I see myself working in an organization and helping the Latino Community as I have been helped by the Literacy Network for all your support.

**SINAN***Level 2 English Class*

I was working with the US army when they entered Iraq 2003. I was working and I was very happy until 2007 when I left the American embassy. Embassy if cars followed me they started shooting at me they were terrorists while I was between life and death in the street I was taken to the hospital some bullets came out of me. I did not go out because of fear and I sent email to American Embassy any citizen who works with the American army goes to America because of the threat from terrorist gangs.

I was born in a small village in Haiti (Saltadeire). I am the 6th child in my family. My mother was a business woman, she has her small business where she sold meat and my father was an elementary school teacher. Unfortunately they are no longer exist.



After my elementary school, my parents sent me to the city to go to school because my village did not have middle school. I did well in school and later I became a volunteer middle school teacher in my village. I helped students who could not go elsewhere to continue their study.

In my country Haiti, I studied accounting in law. I have my diploma for both.

I am a father of three children including two sons and one daughter.

I was working as a commercial executive for a cellphone company.

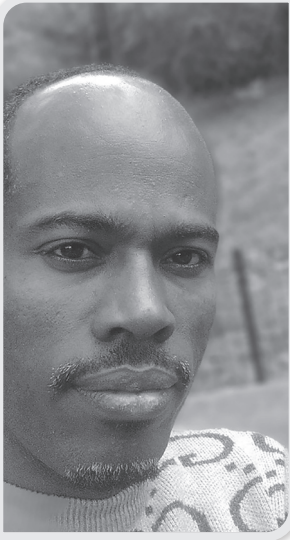
I moved to the United States from Haiti on May 8, 2023. When I arrived in Madison, the first place I visited was Door Creek Church. I live in Madison, it is a beautiful city with kind people and many beautiful places.

I have been paying school fees for other students in my village and I hope to continue supporting them.

In the future, I would like to bring my family to the United States.

I am very thankful for what I had and what I have and thing to enjoy a family day in Madison.

I also learn English at Literacy Network because my goal is to read and write this language 90%.



If I think my past history it was very difficult. The time I was 20 years old I was suffering to leave my home country because of political crisis in Ethiopia. So I was leave my country to protect my life. I was lived in three countries Eriteria, Sudan and Egypt the life was very hard. SO I know theyr cultur and even ther languages and I learned how to live with nighber. For fifteen years I was lived between three countries. in 2023 I arrived in USA know my life is very good. for the future hope to get nobel prise.

**ANONYMOUS***ESL Tutoring*

I moved to the United States in 2002. I lived in California first and I worked in construction. this was hard becose I was learning a new skill and I knew very little English. I stayed almost a year in california and then I moved to Madison Because I had friends here. When I arrived in Madison I was happy to see my friends and I felt more confortable living here. I have had many opportunities and I love living in Madison. I continue to work on my English one day I hope to help others with there English Because I have Receivet so much help my self.



## **“ M Y T R A N S I T I O N ”**

20 years ago, I came to the United States it was a radical change in my life, for a long time I thought that I could only work very hard to get ahead. I didn't know about the opportunities and support that exist for foreigners like me in this country.

I felt grateful to be here but, at the same time, I felt hopeless and somewhat frustrated for not speaking the English language and not being able to grow professionally. Today, I can say that I am still grateful for being here, with the difference from yesterday, I feel with great hope of fulfilling my dream, since now, I know that there is a lot of help and support for people like me.

I have informed myself and I am studying and I just want to continue studying until I can complete my dream and grow professionally, it is difficult since I am a mother, a wife and I work to help at home, but I will not stop trying as hard as necessary, I will not give up because now, I can see my future completely different went I improve my English. This is my goal.

## **ANONYMOUS**

*Level 2 English Class*

I am from Guinea. I am 27 years old. I live in McFarland. I am married I live with my husband I am so happy to be here I learning English I want to studie English I want to do something I want to work at the different service hospital or home care I want to help my family in Guinea realize something in my country.



## GRISELDA

*Level 2 English Class and ESL Tutoring*



I lived in Argentina I worked in store coffee shop for 3 years and cleaned houses. I have three children. My life was not easy. I was married for 30 years. I come to visit my family in the city and I liked it. I decided to get divorced and life here. My

life here is good the people is nice and I am learning English at Literacy Network school because it is necessary to communicate in my work and family and help my children when they come to visit me.

I lived in Santa fe Argentina for 46 years. I have three children. My daughter Yanina is 36 years old. My sons, walter and Alexis, are 33 and 28 years old. In Argentina, I ran a business that sold office supplies. I got divorced in 2017 and moved to Madison in 2018. In 2020 , I met my husband Stephen. He is 51 years old and speaks English with me. I like this country because the people are very friendly and helpful :)

## SHEILA TORRES

*ESL Tutoring*

My name is Sheila, my first name is Ludmila and my last name is Torres. I am 23 years old, I am an English student. I am from Argentina. I studied in a high school in Communication. I worked in a restaurant and babysitter. I am feel not very happy, now I feel better because have the opportunity of to came to the United States, I now can help my family in economic. I am learning English, the difference is that it is more stable.

## **Don't Give Up**

When I came to the US my life changed. In those moments, I felt alone, I couldn't speak English. It was difficult to communicate with most people. The jobs asked me if I spoke English. I needed to have a change. Arriving in a country with a language different from mine made me understand that I should make a change in my life and start learning English.

After a while I couldn't continue learning English because my expenses increased and I worked less hours, so I worked a full-time job and a part-time job. It was a time when I had to work harder to survive in this country.

When I had the opportunity I returned to school, my children had grown up, so I could dedicate time to school. I finished the GED and obtained a Cosmetology license. Going back to school changed my life and my family's. It has taken me a while to learn and pursue my dreams.

The support of my tutors and teachers is very important to me. It doesn't matter how much time passes, but the results are the best part.

Now my children have graduated and I continue to learn English. I try day by day to build my future.

*"It doesn't matter how much time passes,  
but the results are the best part."*



I grew up in a big family and I am the youngest. As I was growing up in Lebanon, problems started occurring because of the various sects and officials, which led to the closing of schools and cutting of electricity. As a result, life became harsh and learning became almost impossible. My older brother that lived in the UAE at the

time sent me a sum of money to hire a private teacher so that I can continue my education. I thanked my brother a lot and thanked God for giving me a brother like him. He changed my life to the better and encouraged me to continue learning because he always told me that education is the door to progress and civilization. He advised me to do the same thing to someone else in need by helping support them via education. When I came to the United States, I decided to learn and improve my English language. I asked my daughter-in-law if she knew of any schools or centers that taught English. She eventually came across Literacy Network. My husband and I went to the Literacy Network facility and did the evaluation exam. When I started with Literacy Network, I felt that it was that it was not just a place for teaching the English language, but also a place to bring together different nationalities and help anyone advance in their life. I took many courses at Literacy Network and benefited the most from the citizenship exam class. As a result of taking this class, I was able to pass the citizenship exam. In the future I hope to someone who helps students start a new life full of hope and love.

*"As a result of taking this class, I was able to pass the citizenship exam."*

I was born on August 21 of 1994, in Sabana De la Mar, Dominican Republic. When I was young, about six years old, while my parents were together, life for my brothers and I was kind it perfect. At that time, I had two brothers and a sister. We didn't have a lot of money, but we at least get to eat a meal a day. My brothers and I play together, we went to church every Saturday with our mom and dad, but everything changed when my parents separated.

My mom moved to my grandma's house, which was in another state. In the other hand, my bothers and I stay with my dad. That was a big change, my father was working at night, and we have to stay by our own while he works. A few years later, my brothers and I got separated, two of them moved to my grandma's house, my sister moved with my mom, who was no longer living with her mom; I was the one who have to stay with my dad, but six years later, I moved with my mom and sister. While I was living with my mom, I was about 13 years old. I was studying. I decided to get a job close to the school, that way I could help my mom and my self. Furthermore, I have always tried to do my best in everything I decide to do, I work really hard at school; every time I got a bad grades, a got frustrated, I cried because I did not know what else to do. Studying for me have always being really important, that's the way I think I can get better opportunities, better chances to help my family.

When I was 15 years old, I moved with my mom and my younger brother to Puerto Rico. A few months later, I started looking for a University because I did not want to stop studying and thank God, I found a good University and applied for scholarship. This was a really hard time for me, I was working night shift but I also have a lot of responsibilities at home. Once I finish my shift, I go home; I have to make food and study before I go to the University, I did not have the chance to rest, I usually slept after class. . I didn't make

much money at that job, but I used part of it to help my father and the older brother I have in Dominican Republic.

Four years later, my mom decided to move to Madison Wisconsin, my sister was getting married and asked my mom to move there. When my mom moved to Madison, my brother decided to go with her, once more life is getting hard for me. I didn't want to go because I did not want to stop studying, but I also didn't want to be alone. This wasn't an easy choice, know I was living on my own; I have to pay rent and I also want to keep helping my father, but for that, I have to make more money, I have to work extra hours. During the time of Covid-19, I got sick; this was really hard, I have no one to take care of me, that's when I decided to follow my mom's steps, I didn't want to be alone anymore, I used to spend Christmas alone, but now I have decided that was going to stop, and today I'm here.

Moving to Madison was a big change to my life, one more step that I have to do so I can get where I want to be tomorrow. Here I have the chance of learning new things, chance to learn English. Getting a job at the beginning was really hard because of my English communications skills, but that did not stop me, after a few months I finally got a good job, now I have the chance to improve my English.

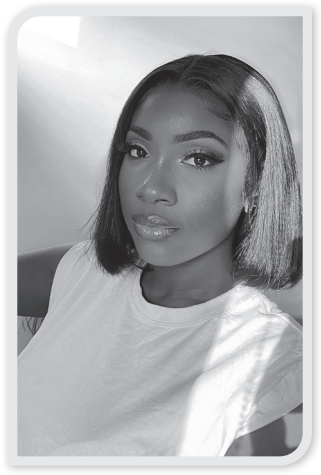
Everything in our lives happened for one reason, even if we don't believe it; we just need to be focused in that thing that we want to get. In my future, I see myself doing what I like to do, helping others; I see myself working as a Clinical Psychologist, then I will finally get the chance to help my family, specially the ones that need me the most, the ones that still live in Dominican Republic, that house I started working on while I was living in Puerto Rico, will be finally done.

*"We just need to be focus in that thing that we want to get."*

## CHERIF

*Level 2 English Class*

I'm from Belgium. I have done my studies in Brussels. In 2018 I started the nurse course but I got pregnant and gave birth to a girl in 2020. With a baby it was easy to continue my nursing courses. However I changed my course and in 2023 I graduated in pharmacy technical. I worked a few months. In December 2023, I moved to Madison, WI. Today, I study english classes because for the future, I would like to work here as a pharmacy assistant.



## PABLO

*Level 2 English Class*

My name is Pablo. I am 18 years old. I am from Guatemala. I was a Firefighter in my country for 8 years. I was listed as one of the best Firefighters at my station. My parents have given me a great opportunity to come to the United States. My parents knew that I wanted to be a hero in the United States. This is a very difficult process. I am learning English in the literacy Network so I can reach an advanced level and start fulfilling my dream.





These writing events are really important for me. They force me to think and improve my English writing skills. I thought hard about writing this article. I wrote, deleted, and changed my words many times. But finally, I decided what to write.

It is difficult to remember childhood memories. When you are growing up you can just remember a few moments. I wish I remembered my childhood time, especially most of the good things. I am closing my eyes, taking a deep breath and...

The bridge connecting Asia and Europe from north to south and east to west. It is the center of the world. Istanbul is in Turkey like a pearl in all continents. There is so much history that has roots in Istanbul. My family moved to Istanbul when I was almost 4 years old from Ankara. Ankara is the capital city in Türkiye. It is smaller than Istanbul. Istanbul is a very crowded city. So many different people live there. We are a small family. I have one brother who is younger than me by one year. We played together. We supported each other all the time. Of course, we love each other a lot. Sometimes we fought like any siblings. We were like twins when we were kids. One day, while we were playing together in our apartment building's back yard there was a neighbor's child who came to us with a snake in his hand. The boy was maybe 10. We didn't know each other. Suddenly he threw a fake snake at us. It was actually plastic, not real, but we were 3-4 years old. We were too young to understand that it wasn't real. When he squeezed its tail, it was moving and curling, like a real snake. We were very scared, and I remember we started to cry. My mother heard our voices and came to us in a hurry. When she saw the plastic snake, she understood everything. She warned our neighbor and her child.



At that time, we were kids. We were scared and cried, but today I can understand why I don't like snakes. We never experienced a similar situation again, but this story still stays with me as a bad memory from my childhood. Time went by. As a teenager I became interested in learning English. I had pen friends from Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan and Finland. We wrote to each other for two or three years. My Japanese friend even sent me a walkman. I sent him books about Türkiye. I had no friends from the USA. A Turkish doctor who studied in America told me about the US. I worked with American Nursing directors for three years. Then I decided to apply for the Diversity Visa.

Many people have different dreams about America. When I came here, I had three dreams. The first of these is to learn English, so I met with Literacy Network. I'm still with the Literacy Network to this day. To be honest, I have completed all English classes, but I am continuing with Level 4. The topics I repeat increase the retention of the language. I remembered my first months when I came here, I wasn't speaking English, and I could not understand much. Today this situation is different. Also, if you want to learn about me, "Why I am here, how I came to the US?" please read the "I am ready 2023" story. You can find that book on the Literacy Network web page.

The second of my dreams is to be able to practice nursing in America. This seemed very challenging. Because I finished university many years ago. I worked 25 years as a nurse, and then here I'm studying at Madison College in the Practical Nursing program. Maybe it was difficult for me when I first started, but as I learned and understood English, everything became easier. I can't do my dream job yet working as an ICU neonatal nurse. I am getting closer to my goal every day. Studying nursing again in a foreign country in a foreign language makes me feel strong. I think it is not too far to achieve this goal. The Literacy Network helped me again with a scholarship. I got the Altrusa scholarship from Literacy Network for my nursing program.

Now. I would like to share my 3rd dream. This is a bigger dream than my second one. It is waiting for its time. This is very exciting. I believe at this point the Literacy Network citizenship class will help me. I want to be an American Citizen. I will learn US history, prepare for the citizenship test, and start and complete the application process. This will be an unforgettable moment. After becoming a citizen, I will vote. This one is really important to me because I really want to feel a part of this country.

I can't thank the Literacy Network teachers, administrators, and staff enough for everything. It became like my family. I feel comfortable at the Literacy Network. There is a huge, lovely, warm and reliable family here.

## **BONI**

*ESL Tutoring*

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Hi my name is bonifacio ok in the past when i came here was totaly different new culture diferent language different food different people but i had a goal my mind was only work every day and i did for 18 years but not everything happen what you want like we can have accident sicknes or loose your job i was concerned find another one for the language and oder reason so this bring you go we people who speak your same language but is not good because they take the advantage some time they dont pay you or pay lest i was feel bad or frustrated you need pay your bills food rent and everything you need to do in my case help my family in my country and here and the other thing i was feel bad was when i went to grocery store mechanic clinic hospital or any place ok my life now is litte different because i can understand not 100% but is more easy i can talk we people like in my job or evry where but my life is not easy after my accident my quality is not the same evry day whent i wake up i give thanks god hope feel good during the day in my job because sometime i had headache or dizziness but whent i thought my kids they gave me the power to continue

forwar because they need me and my other family in my country  
ok in the future i wanna do many things help my kids finished  
ther college and my familly who dont live with me but the way  
to do tha is i need to continue learn the language for get  
another job or posicion and other thing very important i think is  
to keep me healthy.

## MARIA

*ESL Tutoring*

I arrived in this country with the challenge of knowing the English language only what I learned in my training as a student, both in my high school and university, and technical English in my master's studies. In my country it is not relevant for a professional to have the knowledge of speaking two languages and in my work when I had meetings with foreign business partners an interpreter was requested.



Living here was when I felt the need to learn the language to be able to communicate with other people, it seemed like I was in an abyss, I lived with great uncertainty, and I hardly left my apartment. By chance, an acquaintance gave us the support of getting the covid 19 vaccine, that's how I discovered the facilities of Literacy Network since this activity was in their facilities, I began to request information and become interested in the services and opportunities they gave to immigrants to study and learn the universal language such as English, from that moment it gave me personal satisfaction to feel that my life would change.

As soon as I was able to, I enrolled and started in a regular group at level one with Professor Gregg, I was enchanted, amazed by his pedagogy, his way of imparting his knowledge in the classroom through his dynamic graphics, to make us understand in a simple

and easy way what perhaps was something complex for some.

Upon finishing that level I became part of the adult program, where I have attended until now and in which the classes are more personalized, these are with the collaboration of a tutor who, with his patience and dedication, my level of learning has advanced, I feel with more and more confidence when going to work, when going shopping, at a medical appointment or simply going to have a coffee or any other activity in my daily life. I am pleased to go to my class every Tuesday morning since among other assignments we talk about our experiences and anecdotes, it is a moment of pleasant company as you learn.

From the moment you enter the Literacy Network facilities you feel as if you had not left your home, the people who work there receive you with kindness, they are very pleasant, they treat you as if you were their family, the tutor staff and their coordinator , each one with a super special charisma and attention, for me it is a privilege to be in the adult program.

I feel grateful for your kindness, dedication, and patience, for making me feel like a useful person in a country with a culture, climate, and language different from mine. I am sure that in the not-too-distant future I may be sitting on the left side of the table as part of the tutor volunteering, letting other people know that they feel the same concerns and questions when arriving in this country of not knowing how to communicate with people.

Thank you, my respects and recognition to you, you are my anonymous heroes.

“In uncertainty we find the freedom to create anything we desire and find that place in ourselves where nothing is impossible”  
Deepak Chopra

I am María

I am from Venezuela

This is part of my story.

## How I Learned English

When I moved to Wisconsin, I didn't know English. I needed a lot of help with appointments, job applications, meeting with teachers, and at the doctor. I felt frustrated because of these situations. I felt everything change when I started to take English classes. The words I learned in class I was hearing everywhere.

In the past, I was working in a factory and sometimes I forgot my punchcard, and I told my manager "I lost my card," because I didn't know the specific word "forget." My coworkers tried to talk to me and say hi at the store and I felt too shy to have a conversation.

After I started to learn more English, life was easier. Now, I understand conversations, I have good communication, I can make appointments, I can read stories, watch movies at the movie theater, and when my son was in kindergarten, I could help him with his homework. Sometimes, the teacher sends instructions telling the parents to bring snacks or instructions for the next day. Now, I can read and understand what is going on in my kids' school.

In the future, I will keep taking English classes. I will show my kids that no matter your age, you can always learn something to help you and have a better life.



*After I started to learn more English,  
life was easier.*

**How did you feel?**

When I came in United States 5 years ago I feel scared because it's a new country, new people, and new language.

I started studying in a literacy network 4 years ago. My first goal was learning English to speak with other people, at a grocery store, medical, school, teacher, and neighbors.

**How is your life now?**

Now my life is different because now I can speak more English, I can understand more words, I can help a friend with applying for a new job.

**What do you want to do in the future?**

I will learn English well because I can help my family with appointments at the doctor, translate for friends when they apply for work, and I can have a better job or more opportunity for myself.

**VERONICA**

Part of my life of 24 years in the United States

Hello, my name is Veronica. I am from Mexico, from a small town in the state of Mexico. I am 44 years old. I came from a large family. There are 8 of us. I have 6 brothers and only one sister. I had a problem with my nose. I needed surgery but my parents didn't have enough money to pay for that surgery. I was born with a tumor in my nose. I was a victim of bullying by my classmates at school because I had a very large bump on my septum at the age

of 12. My parents decided to take me to the city. To treat me in a hospital everything was going well but the day of surgery was approaching and my parents did not have the money to pay for that surgery because what happened was that we missed the surgery appointment due to lack of money. Years passed and at age 20, I decided to emigrate to the United States in 2000 to work hard and be able to have the money to have the surgery when I was gone. I started with two jobs in a hotel and a McDonald's. I came to make money by promising my parents that I would return in a couple of years and what was the surprise that in 2002 I decided to get together with my boyfriend. We have 5 children, 4 of them are boys and only one girl. I am fulfilled as a mother with my partner, we live with ups and downs as in all marriages, but we live happily with our children. My nose surgery was finally performed here in the United States. In 2004 I had two surgeries. The other I had in 2011 and after working for a year at the hotel I decided to resign, I only stayed with my job at McDonald's. After working for 17 years in 2017 I decided to resign. That same year I was hired at another restaurant and until now I am working. I have a shift leader position and I like my job and since 2000 I have not returned to my town where I was born and the truth is I just feel frustrated to think that if someone One day I will return to my country although sad because in 2016 I lost my mother. My father is still alive and my greatest wish is to hug him again and tell him to forgive me for not keeping the promise. I had meant to return in a couple of years and I can also hug my brothers and sister, but that requires a lot of paperwork to fix an immigration status. That would be my greatest wish to be able to see my family again and one of my goals has been to have my own little house here in the United States. My future is to live in the United States legally and be able to go visit my family in my country.



my name is johane, I come from Haiti, I am 28 years old, I have lived in Madison for 7 months with my husband, I left my country 4 years ago to go to Brazil, left my father, my mother and my grandmother sister, it was really painful to live far from my family, I passed many countries to arrive in the United States, when I arrived here my life changed, I was lucky to have a better life, because that when I was in

Haiti I didn't have this opportunity, in Brazil also I couldn't help my family, but now I can help my mother and my father, unfortunately I lost my big sister it's a really painful story in my life, but God gave me the chance to be in the United States because in Haiti it is really dangerous there is a lot of insecurity, and I think one day I will have the chance to see my mother and my father near me again , and also to go to university to realize my dream.

**YAILINA MANRIQUE**

I arrived to USA from Colombia in 2019, five years ago I did not understand when the people talked to me. It was so hard for me, I never thought I would live in this country.

The English language wasn't easy for me, but I decided to take English classes, my English skills are better, but I feel that I need more dedication if I want to speak, read, and write fluently.

At this moment I can read, I understand more when the people talk to me, I continue taking English classes, I feel that my English skills are improving and I am better than five years ago.



I fell me happy when I can understand to my teacher, the radio, and movies, I think that it's a process and I have the interest for improve.

I would like to obtain a degree in marketing and obtain a job in my profession. I want to have a good communication.

**ANONYMOUS**

*Community English Class*

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## **Life lessons of a business woman that now is a missionary**

Hi, my name is Maria. I am married with João and we have two children.

After they married, we gained two more children, as we now consider their spouses our own.

I love my family and I love to spend time together..

About some years ago, I was in Brazil and I worked in a known company.

I graduated in accounting and my last job was credit analysis. This job was good, but it required a lot of concentration from me and I was very tired. It was overloading me too much.

I worked a lot and I didn't feel willing to go out or to have fun.. On weekends I wanted to stay at home and I was sad..

I worked there for 24 years

I thought of some way to get out of this job, but I didn't want to resign so as not to lose my worker's rights

While this I and my husband were planning to do volunteer work as soon as I retired

In December 2019, I retired, but I continue working in the same company..

In January 2021, the company fired me and 299 more workers. The company pass our job for other company

For me it was very good, because I didn't lost my worker's right and I could spend my time in volunteer job

My husband worked too and after I fired he asked his resignation too

In march 2021 we started to do a mission course in my city..

I didn't have a vocation before this mission course and I continue to be tired..but the big difference is this new job makes me happy..

We worked with children, we helped in our church and we have time to have fun

We did some volunteer jobs until the end of 2022 and this year we did our application to missionary organization in Madison, WI.

Since 2023 we started a volunteer job in missionary organization until today..

In the past I was a person very worried about having a career, having money to help my husband give a better life for our children and to have money to travel...I think all of this is important, but all of this can't make you unhappy, or make you lost your willing to live.

I learned that all of us need to have a job, but the job can't take away all your energy and your happiness.

We need time to take care our body, we need some time to have fun...

Currently I don't make much money, but I love to help people, especially babies.

I feel very good about this.

Every day I go to the mission in the morning. Some days of the week I help my friend to take care of her baby. On Sundays we help our church.

I miss my family, but this year our 4 children came to visit us and we spent some time together....God is good for us.

About my future? I want continue to do volunteer work and my goal is speak english well and don't need translator to speak with the doctor and don't need translator to participate meeting in my job.

This is a little of my story

## **MARTIN GUEVARA**

*Level 2 English Class*

I remember be a poor and bullin problems. My parents worked all life and the last year they passed away for cancer. I have two brothers and two sisters. I married with mi wife Rebeca in 2007 never had children but I helping to take care she owned now we have 8 grandchildren and I happy.

Last year I haves hearth attract and I was in the hospital for seven months I have a new hearth and kidney I take more the 20 different pills a day so I want to learn more English and live each minute of mi life



*"I want to learn more English and live each minute of mi life"*



The early memory that I always cherish is the moments spent with my grandmother. My parents divorced when I was young, leaving my grandmother to care for my brother and me while my mother worked. She took on the role as both caregiver and provider, preparing special meals that we still cannot replicate today.

As a merchant, my grandmother often traveled to collect money and inspect goods, and we needed to accompany her. During these trips, she would buy new foods and items, making journeys an adventure for us.

One of her passions was landscaping, and she created a small natural pond in our backyard. During rainy days, we delighted in making paper boats and playing in the pond. Our land was abundant with coconut trees, tamarind trees, and various vegetables, all tended to by my grandmother. She taught us the value of hard work and money by involving us in selling the produce at the market.

Despite her busy life, my grandmother was incredibly generous, regularly donating to charitable causes as part of her Buddhist belief. My brother and I often accompanied her to these events, learning the importance of compassion and giving.

Though she possessed a strong voice and a sense of vanity, her heart overflowed with kindness. These memories of my grandmother are etched in my mind, and sometimes I dream of her, longing for her presence. If I could make one wish come true, it would be to have her by my side for a lifetime. However, I came to the US with my son last year to accompany my husband, who is pursuing his studies here. In my initial days in the US, I encountered

numerous challenges, particularly with understanding American accents, despite having worked in Singapore for 12 years and being proficient in English.

As a result, I sought out English language classes to enhance my language skills and came across the Literacy Network, which offers a systematic approach to teaching English. Improving my English proficiency in accordance with American usage holds the promise of opening doors to higher-paying job opportunities, enabling greater involvement in social activities, and providing proper guidance to my son. Moreover, it empowers me to share my English knowledge with fellow countrymen who require support.

I am currently enjoying my classes and working towards realizing my aspirations with the guidance of the talented teacher, Catalina, at the Literacy Network.

At my current age, I have accumulated experiences of failure and success, as well as relationships have shaped me. Through these experiences, I have gained insight into both my strengths and weaknesses.

Since a young age, I have harbored a desire to support those affected by illness, poverty, and old age in my country. To achieve this, I dedicated myself to maintaining good health, advancing in my career, and saving money with the goal of eventually starting my own business.

If my aspirations come true, I envision myself as a grateful and benevolent individual. And then, I will travel the world to share my experiences and contribute to meaningful causes.

*"Moreover, it empowers me to share my English knowledge with fellow countrymen who require support."*



**1\_ Where were you? What did you do?  
How did you feel?**

I was in Mexico in 2020. I was working in a pharmacy. I felt kind of sad because I miss the Mexican food that I love.

**2. What changed? What did you learn?**

My life completely changed when I move to this country where I have big opportunities. I've been learning English for the past six months, and I'm still doing it at the literacy network.

**3. How is your life different now ?**

My life is now more comfortable, and I feel happy with these changes and learning.

**4. What do you want to do in the future?**

I want to master the English language to have better opportunities and to be able to help and encourage other people.

**LACOSSIERE  
CARL-RICHARDSON**

I from Haiti a cantry located in the Caraibbean,I from directly in Hinche, a city of Haiti. It's a beautiful little place with the kind people. I did my school over there, lived with my family, friends, did some works and enjoyed the city.

in the city, I felt me very happy, above all when I ate the good local food, visited some places with my friends, it was a nice moment in my life.

Many things changed now, left my country with every things I did, learned to come here, a nother country with a different system and culture. But I thanks to help of literacy Network through my teacher and tutor I'm making progress and feel me better integrate the country.

Literacy makes my live change too, because it helps me with my English to cummumilate and improve my language ability.

In the future, I wish to learn more, go to school. I see me a succesful person, better place, where I can to participe in the dazzling of this organization in Literacy network to share my experience, knowledge to teach the other immigrants.

## **JARVIN**

*Level 2 English Class*

I was in Nicaragua in 2021. I immigrated to the United States in 2022. I worked as a truck driver. I feel happy because now I can work every day, but I miss my parents and the food in my country. I had to get used to the time change in summer and the food here. Since I started studying ESL at level 2, I have improved the way I communicate at work, make appointments, request some services, and I feel different since my English has improved. I hope to be able to express myself better by writing and speaking.



In the future I hope to study to obtain a GED and become a professional at using computers; although, I would also like to become certified as an excavator operator to obtain better jobs.

In 2019 I lived in Uruguay. I was studying in high school and liked it. I moved countries with my husband, and many things changed. In the future I would like to study something. Many things changed when I moved to the United States, for example the language, I was able to learn to drive, and I am learning English. My life is very different now. I am very far from my family and surrounded by many new things for me, and in a different country than mine. I like being here. I don't know what I want for my future, but after a few years, I would like to return to my country.

**ALEJANDRA MUÑOZ***ESL Tutoring*

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When I arrived in Madison, Wisconsin, I didn't know what I was going to do. I was a little lost in my goals, but one of the things that my husband helped me was that he pushed me to become a citizen since I had already been a resident for 10 years and it was scary to become a citizen because of the language. It was when he told me to prepare myself and to look for a class that would help me with the preparation for citizenship and that

was how I started searching, first with Centro Hispano and then they referred me to the Literacy Network and it was the beginning of my path with them.

It was a great change in my life since Literacy Network helped me to connect with other organizations and the community and find people from many places with the same goal as me -- to become



citizens and continuing to learn English.

My life took a 180 degree turn since I began studying with Literacy Network to obtain my citizenship and continue learning English. Now I continue studying the ESL tutor program and now I have the opportunity to give something back here in this place. I have also had the opportunity to help many people reach their goals and I feel very happy to be able to do so. Literacy Network has given me the opportunity to continue moving forward and continue building my dreams. Together with the help of my husband and my children who support me, I feel I have made a lot of progress on this path by completing goals and continuing to study.

Thinking about the future, I would like to be able to continue with my goals, such as continuing to study for my Microsoft Word certificate and maybe in the future being able to buy my house or move with my family to Denver. It is difficult to determine what I want to do because there are many things that I need to do. I want to achieve my dreams, and I know that little by little I will achieve them. I also know that I want my family to feel proud of me in any goal that I have.

I would also like to be an inspiration so that people see that if I can do it, they can also achieve their dreams, because the only barrier to our dreams is us and if we want to accomplish something, it is up to us.

*"Literacy Network has given me the opportunity to continue moving forward and continue building my dreams."*



When I think about my past life, it feels bittersweet. I was married with children and lived a happy life. One day that all changed. My world came crumbling down as my relationship with my wife was deteriorating. I didn't know how to feel, because this

little family I had made was gone, but the truth is I still had my boys, Cameron and Malik. I felt helpless, and by myself. I was so dependent on my Ex-wife. I soon became depressed trying to find a way out of my thoughts, and the fear of being alone without a companion.

After my divorce, I had to learn Independence because I no longer had a life partner. I was alone, just me and the kids. I had to get used to being a weekend dad.

I realized that my future is brighter than my past. My life goal has always been to buy a house so me and my family can have generational wealth and ownership. I am content with being happy these days and being alone. I would just like to have nice things in life.

My plan is to volunteer and start a non-profit, or maybe even go back to school. I'm currently in a different space in life. I'm a retired bachelor with time on his hands. Still learning and teaching my kids, I just want to be a vessel for my boys. My future contains mainly selfcare, that was the biggest lesson of all! How can you take care of family, kids, and community if you can't take care of yourself? I just want to leave my imprint for my boys.

*"I realized that my future is brighter than my past."*

My journey with Literacy Network started with enrolling in the basic-level class more than three years ago. At that time, I wasn't even able to say a complete sentence without making a lot of mistakes. I have finished the basic level and kept moving up from one level to another. I'm now in level 3, and I'm also in the Citizenship classes. I feel a huge improvement in my life. Now, I can talk with neighbors, my son's teacher, and my doctor's office. I can understand mostly everything they say. I'm proud of myself, and I have enough confidence when I'm surrounded by native speakers. Also, I feel grateful for Literacy Network staff, teachers, and tutors. I'll continue learning with them until I reach a level that qualifies me to continue my education and find a good job.

**AURELIA***ESL Tutoring*

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I am learning English as a third language for me. As a child I speak Zapoteco with my parents and friends. When I started kindergarden, I learned to speak Spanish. In 1999 I came to Madison. It was another challenge for me because I needed to learn another language. It was very difficult because I needed to work and understand my boss and co-workers, nurses, doctors and my son's teachers. Speaking English helps me to improve my income and get more opportunity to grow at my current job. I would like to keep learning English and improve my accent, writing and reading; read a whole book and understand. I encourage you to learn English! You can help your kids read books, watch movies and have a great time and good memories with them.

*Speaking English helps me to improve my income and get more opportunity to grow at my current job.*



At first, I didn't feel very happy when I moved to the State. But after I feel very happy and I made the best decision. It wasn't easy because I left all my family and friends in New Jersey. When I know about Literacy Network, I decided to start with English class. When I started, I think I can't learn but in a couple months it was so easy to understand when I read books. The most important is when I have an appointment with the doctor. I don't need an interpreter. For example, my daughter always said she didn't like having more people in the room. I feel more comfortable if it's just me and the doctor, not more people. For example, in my job, my manager doesn't speak Spanish, and my coworkers don't speak English. I don't speak a lot, but I can understand, so I can help them when they need something. I hope in the future, not too long, I can find a new job and maybe I want to speak just English.

*"When I started, I think I can't learn but in a couple months it was so easy to understand when I read books."*

Last year everything was hard for me in my reading and writing. I felt sad because I think I was not going to make it. But this year it's good. My reading and writing have improved and in the future I hope to become a writer who tells stories about people and their lives. My story will be about myself Rochelle.

It was 2019 when I came to this country. I came to Chicago and then a friend helped me take the bus to Madison. I started a new life here, with a big dream in my mind. With more opportunities I'm working to support my family and I'm making a better future for myself.

My friend helped me to find a job and I started to work in restaurants. At the beginning I felt scared, because I didn't speak English and everything was new for me: other languages and culture. I had to ask for help when I wanted to talk with my managers.

All my life changed and it was a challenge to me, but I felt motivated to do my best and people always helped me.

First of all, I learned that the people here are very nice. Although I couldn't communicate with them, they were always patient with me and they tried to help me. Then a friend told me about some English classes at Literacy Network and I started to study English. At the beginning it was difficult, but they motivated me to do my best to learn. Literacy Network always helped me when I needed to learn any specific topic to talk in my job.

My life is so different now, because I can communicate by myself and also I can help other people to communicate. I wanna continue learning English to have a better social life, expressing my ideas and I wanna still motivate people to learn English.

*"Literacy Network always helped me when I needed to learn any specific topic to talk in my job."*



**Think about a time in the past. Where were you? What did you do? How did you feel?**

My name is Kelly. When I was a little girl, I wanted to be a superhero figure or a drama actress.

I really admired Wonder Woman (Linda Carter 80's Wonder Woman - this year i will be 54 years old). My mother always told me: "Kelly! Are you crazy? You don't have any superpower and we don't have any money like Bruce Wayne".

I grew up thinking that we don't need super power to do awesome things. I decided to develop communications skills in my job as a medical sales representative and felt so good because I taught the doctors how to use new pharmaceutical alternatives to help people to get better. In this way, I was like an actress doing the performance when I talked with the doctors about the mechanics of the drugs in the human body, at the same time applying my knowledge about sales techniques.

Also, I felt like a superhero figure because the drugs can change the lives of sick people who suffer from Alzheimer, depression, psoriasis, etc.

I came from Venezuela in 2016, the situation in my country changed by the communist government. Venezuelans used to live a very good life but everything turned into a nightmare. Little by little we lost food, medicines, jobs, safety and freedom.

Anyways, leaving your home country is very sad. There are a lot of feelings of loss and nostalgia. I felt like I lost my superpowers.

How can you feel like this? When I lived in my country I became a manager in Pfizer, one of the most important pharmaceutical laboratories in the world. Also, I got two university degrees, but when I came to the USA I had a lot of vocabulary in my mind that I had learned when I studied at school, but I couldn't put them together, I couldn't get them out of my mouth; my tongue was stuck.

Also now, I can not explain why my mind and my tongue were not connected in any way. On the other hand, being around people speaking a unknown language and not understanding anything they say it feels like suffering from some kind of deafness. You don't understand and it's very frustrating. In the past, some days I wanted to cry because I felt like I was missing out on everything. I felt awful in many ways because I was like an eagle without wings: powerful and strong but useless.

I thought for a long time that my situation had no solution. When you work without a legal document, your salary is low and you can barely afford food and bills. I did not have money to pay for English classes.

One day, a friend of the church was talking about Literacy Network and invited me to register in 2017.

### **What changed? What did you learn?**

Coming to Literacy Network goes beyond just learning to speak English. Here I found a family that is willing to give me advice and information according to my needs. This is a very good place, the staff is very friendly, they always treat me well and they are always smiling . Here, I learned how to ask and give directions, and how to ask in the stores when I go shopping. I also learned to order food in restaurants.

When I worked in a factory they prepared my classes to teach me vocabulary related to machines, equipment, packaging, tools. When I worked in restaurants here I learned vocabulary related to utensils, cookware and kitchen's equipments .

I feel very proud to belong to this Literacy Network community. This place has impacted my life in a positive way. Here, we are equal, no matter your age, race, gender, religion, and we can feel that we matter. My teachers and tutors have treated me with respect and affection. I have received a lot from them and I haven't had to pay anything, I just had to pay for my books. I have no way to measure my gratitude. I'm so happy to be here being part of the 50th anniversary Literacy Network celebration

**How is your life different now?**

I still don't feel like a superhero figure but I'm much more confident and stronger than I was before coming here. I am no longer afraid of people making fun of my pronunciation. I don't think much about my tongue getting stuck, and my ears are attentive to the people who are talking around me and I can feel connected to them.

I'm getting closer and closer to being able to open my wings and fly above the storms just like the eagles do!

**What do you want to do in the future?**

I want to be able to apply for a position where I can train people. Being able to teach people is something that really catches my attention. I also dream that one day I will be able to make a business presentation at the company where I currently work .

*"My teachers and tutors have treated me with respect and affection."*



I came to the U.S. three years ago with no intention to stay, just to visit my fiancée at that time. Everything was awesome and I felt excited but I was concerned because I did not know the language.



I had a feeling that I could work wherever because I grew up putting in hard work that made me handy, but I decided to focus on my career as a music teacher.

I got different jobs for two reasons:

- the requirement to speak English even if I didn't know the language
- to help me to learn how school works, while I was getting adapted to the culture of this country.

At the same time, after work, I took English classes, which helped me to apply at my current job as a Paraeducator. Now I am getting experience working in the schools and because I have my foot in the door I am looking forward to applying for a music teacher job.

*"At the same time, after work, I took English classes, which helped me to apply at my current job as a Paraeducator."*



Hi I'm Reyna. I went to the literacy Network for 4 or 5 years. Literacy Network has helped me a lot. I have learned English. I understand and speaking little more. I learned more words about my job. I feel more confident in speaking and talking with my supervisor and co-workers. I feel more confident how to make on appointment. I understand that the

doctor says and the question the nurse ask me. They also helped me with the citizenship class. I passed the test and became a citizen. I also bought the house. I'm very grateful for all the help I have received. My tutor Bethany has helped me a lot. I want to continue learning and speaking English. I also learn more skills for my job. I will get my GED. Thank you for everything.

**ANONYMOUS***Transitions ESL Class*

In June 2023, my family and I made a big move to the United States, fulfilling my husband's dream. I had as I thought good level of English and some experience working with a US company last year, so I was pretty sure I could handle the changes without any worries. Who could ever talk how mistaken I was? :D

When we arrived, everything felt brand new – the stores, banks, post offices, rent of apartments and schools. But what surprised me the most was how challenging the language appeared to me. People spoke so quickly that I could barely catch a few familiar words. Phrasal verbs, those tricky two-part verbs, were everywhere, and different accents from people all over the world

added to the confusion. Passing my driving test on the first try felt like a big piece of luck, given how hard it was to understand my instructor. Communicating with locals left me feeling exhausted every day.

Then came the Literacy Network month ago, and I realized it was the place to solve all my issues. The group was really diverse, with people from different countries, but during the first weeks of classes, I struggled to understand everyone because of their varied accents. Now it's looking more optimistic.

What made a significant difference was the information I received about career and educational opportunities. I discovered options that I couldn't have found on my own. With this newfound knowledge, I decided to focus on improving my pronunciation, writing, and understanding skills. I aim to be well-prepared for professional interviews, working towards obtaining a certificate that approves my Project Manager skills. Additionally, I plan to have my diploma evaluated and pursue the completion of my Master's degree at the University of Wisconsin.

So, as I go to classes at the Literacy Network, not only am I figuring out American English, but I'm also getting ready for a better job and more education. The hard parts from the first few months are becoming steps that bring me to a future where I know the language well and can do more in American society.



## **LIFE CHANGING**

By starting this story let me tell you that I'm in the best stage of my life. I've been married for 4 years now and I'm expecting my first baby with the love of my life, my dear husband.

Although many things have changed and life is full of new challenges and adventures to overcome. I can not feel more blessed for the amazing changes that are coming for me and my family.

I grew up in Mexico city which is one of the most exciting places to grow up, full of cultural richness, a great variety of delicious gastronomy and great music. It is a very vibrant city full of color and artistic activities. I come from a very festive family we love a good laugh and gather together for a potluck, dance and song.

Mexico offers one of the best locations, amazing landscapes, beautiful woods, paradisiac beaches, little villages full of magic and archaeological sites. I feel lucky to have had the opportunity to visit some of them and God, how I miss all that!! However my new life in the U. S. is also full of new adventures, incredible landscapes and more opportunities to reach our goals and dreams. I can not be more grateful with their people and the acceptance and respect that they have for different cultures and diversity. I have learnt a lot and I'm making new friends.

The future for me brings new responsibilities, starting a new path as an Interior designer, acquiring more abilities, keep studying and preparing myself each day so I can conquer my biggest dreams.

It has been a life changing situation but I'm facing every stage with faith in God, the love of my husband and family and enjoying every step of the way that brought me here.

I started in the Literacy network in the spring of 2023; I was so happy to get my spot for the English for College & Career course. I remember my first class. I did not understand too much, but my introductory test said this course would be best for my English level. Time passed, and I understood a little more each day. The feeling was so good when I went to the supermarket, and the cashier asked me what kind of bag I would like, plastic or paper. I understood the first time he asked me; I will never forget that moment. Simple things can be challenging when deciding to start a new life in a new country with a different language. Literacy Network has been my second home because, in this place, I met incredible people who helped me understand a new language and introduced me to a new culture. Everyone has a different history and experiences, but everyone here looks forward to moving up, recovering their confidence, and being the same person, we are in our native language when we use English.

After one year here, I started thinking in English. This is not easy; sometimes, I have a natural expression that makes me happy and confident. I feel so glad to have this opportunity. Also, I got a spot last year with a personal Tutor. My class is very specific because I want to learn academic English with scientific vocabulary. I love my Wednesday class; it is two hours long, and I always learn new words. I am now training for the interview process. In every class, my tutor has different words and American business expressions that I need to learn to be confident in interviews. This process is stressful, but having this support makes it easier. I thank my tutor, my professor, and everyone in the Literacy network. My communication skills are improving, my confidence started back, and I am so excited about the process of being fluent in English one day.

In a few months, I hope to get my new position as a Research

Project Manager in this country; I will continue to improve my English skills, feel confident, and return to being the person I have always been.

*"My communication skills are improving, my confidence started back, and I am so excited about the process of being fluent in English one day."*

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**YAZMIN MARTINEZ**

*Level 4 English Class*

When I was 10 years old I wanted to be a Dentist and my mom she wanted me to be a nurse. Because one day my sister had a blister on her toe and I remember my grandma had a red liquid and she used it. And I had the idea put the red liquid on my sister's toe. But the liquid wasn't for blisters it was for calluses and her toe was left without skin and she couldn't walk for a month.

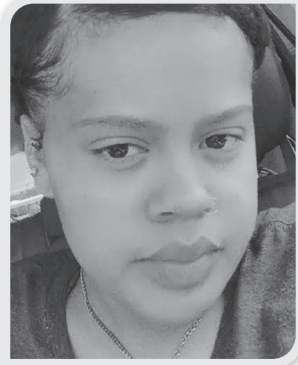
I felt bad because of my sister couldn't walk and I needed help for everything and that's when I liked helping others and that's why I decided to study nursing.

I finished studying in my country and managed to have the job of my dreams, for a few months I worked at the children's hospital. Now I have to learn English and find a way to continue studying.

I would love to be able to return and work in a hospital so I can continue doing what I like most, which is helping people and making a difference.

In the future I see myself happy with my family, enjoying the fruits of my effort, working in a children's hospital with a specialty in anesthesiology and opening a free clinic where migrants and people in less favorable situations can find medical care.

I think I deserve this scholarship. because once I got older and had kids I opened my mind more and started to love learning about a little bit of everything. I want to motivate my kids when they are older and teach them more. and eventually go to school for childcare and be there for kids. Especially kids who have rough home lives. I want to speak life into them and show them love. and put more into the kids because as a kid I struggled a lot with math. and other subjects. and stuff I dealt with as a kid. and having ADHD .And push them and show them they can do it.

**TAPIA***Level 2 English Class*

My name is Tapia, I come from Cameroon in Central Africa. I immigrated by road through several countries, namely Benin, Niger, Algeria, and Morocco.

I was greatly marked by my crossing of the Sahara desert, where I experienced many obstacles and all kinds of fear, violence, robbing, aggression, and even loss of human life. I arrived in Morocco in 2017, and it was very difficult to live there as an LGBT male person in a Muslim country without a job. I found myself in a survival situation and almost every day I was suffering from discrimination and homophobia.

I had to make three attempts to cross the Mediterranean to reach Spain. But at the last attempt I got lost for almost two days in the Mediterranean, manhandled by big waves, and i was between

death and life. God has saved me and I promised myself never to return to the Mediterranean.

In 2019, I heard of the UNHCR and I applied for the refugee status, which I got in 2020. It was a new chance of life for me. Several doors started opening to me and I integrated various associations. My new objective was now focused on my personal development despite the situation of survival, without any job. But I was able to survive based on the divine grace.

I successfully participated for six months in informatics and computer basics courses. I then did English courses and got the intermediate level before doing a 1 year training in cooking and hospitality. At last, I participated in an artistic residency at the Fondation Orient Occident (FOO) in Morocco, and got involved actively as a volunteer peer educator in the activities of ALCS association (fighting AIDS) from 2021 until my arrival in the United States.

what has changed in my life after all these difficulties is that now, I am full of experience, I have matured, I have been able to strengthen my state of mind, my personal development, my faith has strengthened. Through this situation I have understood that as long as we live, we must always keep hope, never be discouraged, never give up. perseverance, determination and patience are the key to success... the proof today is that I am taking refuge in the United States, legal with all the documents: a new opportunity, a chance of life., an opportunity to realize my dreams: to become a great gospel pianist, to work hard to save money, to be an entrepreneur, to have a music production studio, in short to be a recognized businessman. what has changed in my life after all these difficulties is that now, I am full of experience, I have matured, I have been able to strengthen my state of mind, my personal development, my faith has strengthened. Through this situation I have understood that as long as we live, we must always keep hope, never be discouraged, never give up. perseverance, determination



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*Through this situation I have understood that as long as we live, we must always keep hope, never be discouraged, never give up.*

## **LUZ ANTELO**

*ESL Tutoring*

In 2004 I arrived in Janesville WI, with great desire and enthusiasm, to have a better future for my children and with the desire to learn English, I tried to go to a school with free classes, but I did not feel good with the other classmates, because they made fun of me, of me because of my pronunciation and I never tried it again until many years later and I am still here believing that I can learn although now it is more difficult for me to memorize, the words I have a more positive mentality and I



I think, I am improving, although, I don't have much time because my Job is exhausting and I work more than 8 hours, my life is more peaceful and less stressed than in previous years and I want to change Jobs, but I need to speak English to earn a little more money and have better benefits.

I am from Ukraine. I was born in a town Novgorod-Siverskyi in 1941 year. 2 years lived under German occupation. After lived in a town Storozhynets (west of country) 7 years, next the city Chernigov (north of country). In 1957 completed the school and entered the railway institute (now Academy) of railway transport and completed it in 1962, then moved to Lviv, where worked on railway before 1969. In USSR everybody after high education obliged 3 years minimum work in obliged place. In 1969 I moved to Kyiv (Ukraine Capital) and worked in headquarters of southwest railway before 1975, then changed work for project company Kyivgiprotrans which developed a projects of reconstruction and development of railways. I worked here twenty one year for 1996.

My duty was analyse of existing situation, forecasting volume and structure traffic, justification for the need building or reconstruction objects. At the some time I cooperated with other project companies in develop of master development plans of main cities (Kyiv, Lviv, Kharkiv, Dnipro, Zaporizhzhia, Simferopol, and other). In 1996 I moved to Ukraine railway administration (Ukrzaliznytsia) where worked a head of strategy railway development. At the some time I was an expert of organization of cooperation railway (Headquarters in Warsaw, Poland).

I retired in 2012 year, after heart attack. I am lucky, all life I had an interesting job. The only exception: in project company I was two years a head of department with 100 persons. It's no my work, it's administrative work, not creative.

Now I am a pensioner. How I am feel? In Ukraine a pensioners said: worse than before but better than it will be. The old man is as the old car – starts to crumble. What changed? A war in Ukraine. I with my wife live at the fifteenth floor. If a rocket hits a house or power supply networks, are absent light, water, sewerage, elevators stopped. We have a problem with legs.

What did you learn. I'm learned English. I don't have a big problems with reading and writing, but I have a hardhearing, and bad different oral speech. It's my main problem. English is interesting for me. I learn it in school and institute, but serious studies had not serious meaning – we lived behind the iron curtain. Now I live in U.S.A.

What I like? The unknown persons a smile each other, ready to help. In buses drivers helps passengers with disabled carriage. Passengers thanks driver for the trip, drivers answers a good wishes. In shops salespersons and customers are polite, friendly. People respect a work, own and other.

What I don't like. I don't like hamburgers and habit a bus drivers drive through bus stop 5-7 minutes earlier schedule.

What do you want to do in the future. I don't have a special wishes I'll live how much will be.

## **OLGA**

*Level 2 English Class*

When the war started in Ukraine, my husband and I decided that we needed to leave Russia. It was very difficult to leave home and family. But we decided that our children should have a future. And we ended up in the USA. It is difficult, difficult, you need to learn a lot again. There is hope, thanks to the Literacy Network school for helping with this. We dream of a future full of opportunities for our family.



*"We dream of a future full of opportunities for our family."*

## EDWARD

*Level 2 English Class*



My life has been a constant change since I was 15 years old, but thanks to a strict and dedicated father I was able to make good decisions and overcome several setbacks.

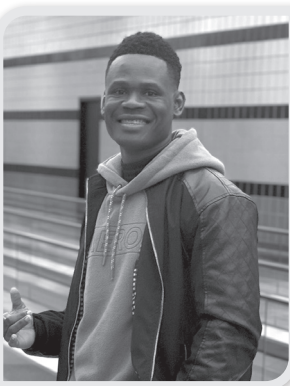
Studying a degree in physical education and sports was a great choice which allowed me to grow a lot as a human being and as a good citizen with the need to transmit information and social values to the young people of a

new generation and be part of their growth in society.

In 2017 my life changed drastically again when I had to choose to migrate from my country for political reasons and the most difficult thing for me at that time was to move away from my daughter, but I was able to use that experience to show my capabilities in a new country full of the unknown but also opportunities...

## LELVA ROMULUS

*Transitions ESL Class*



I am 35 from haiti ,one country with many problems., politic, social, security and financy, So I leave my country seven years ago looking for a better life, not just for me but for all my family and my wife too so not was easy to decided to leave all this people. My parents have 9 kids so they haven't no money to take care all people for food,school etc.. So to leave

my country first i applied for a visa to brazil because I have my cousin living in brazil ,he always told me how can be a better to live there and can be helpfull for my family so i did the application and by the grace of God the approved my visa request.

God put someone to buy the ticket for me to go in brazil because the ticket was expensive \$1250 haiti to brazil without someone else without jesus I couldn't go to brazil financy speaking no haven't money to leave my country,in september 13/2017 I leaved and I remember I cried, and I still cried for the first.

month and the most difficult after the life without my wife my family was the language because was a new language never heard before , when I heard people talking I asked jesus to help me. undestand because I didn't undestand nothing and after like 3 month was easier because I founded. a job practices every day and then I speak portuguese fluently every month I sent money for my wife and family. The big thing I realised was to sponsorise my wife to came in brazil after 15 months living. without her and when she came, she helped all her family too and after a c 1 year she speak portuguese fluently we restarted the college because when we were in our country we were in university after a couple months we realised not enough money to do what we want after help family pay those bills and college and no saving money so resolve to leave brazil to come in USA.

The hardest in all our life, we passed 10 countries crossed some florest, dangerous animal eating. people, no food to eat ,drinking water in the river was really scare but God did it for us we are here now,me my wife and my cousin too now my life change i can help all my family and literacy network help with a lot opportunities and i am really confident and focus on my dream literacy network can help me to realise my goals.

## **ROSALINDA ZAVALA**

*Level 2 English Class*

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When I was younger I always thought about studying bussiness. But in 1998 my plan changed, a hurricane affected us nation and decided to come to the USA for a better life. But now my plan is help my son because I want the best for them.

## **MELISA**

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My name is Melisa, current RT student. Right now I'm in my second semester at Madison College. It took me a long time to get here, this is my second attempt to this degree, I made it to third semester and only had one left to graduate. I have been through so much over these last last years. Domestic abuse relationship, new baby and being kicked out my house. I good friend of mines helped out that dark place I was in and now I'm back at school living with family and taking care of my four children. I'm very blessed, I remember thinking I was not going to be anybody my life was over but look at me now. I want to graduate and buy my family a house with having the financial stability. I've learned in this process no matter how you feel now or what you lost keep trying, reach out for support and never give up on your goals. I'm hopeful this time around I will graduate I'm not letting nothing hold me back, staying focused on my end goal for my education and that's to graduate. Show my kids an example of what dedication does, the reward you get from never giving up on yourself.

*"Show my kids an example of what dedication does, the reward you get from never giving up on yourself."*

My name is Anna and I came from Ukraine, where I received an excellent education, graduated from the medical school and became a cardiologist. I was lucky enough to work in the largest and most modern hospital in Ukraine, where I provided care to patients with severe cardiac pathology, preparing them for the surgeries and heart transplants. I've always been useful in my position. Yes, all this happened in another life. Before the war. But now, just as then, I want to be useful in this country and be useful to the people living next to me. For now, today I started this hard journey again as a phlebotomist, and I appreciate this work. But I don't want to stop there and now I'm ready to pass the exams to obtain a Doctor of Medical Sciences diploma and then return to my profession. This is very difficult, but I am glad that I can do this and use all the knowledge and experience I have gained in Ukraine.

There is an expression: "If it's hard for you, it means that you're going in the right direction". Today I don't regret anything, I have no doubt, I believe in luck and hard work.

I am having a hard life right now but I'm very grateful to all the people I have met and the Literacy Network, which is more than English for me.

## **BUILDING MY STORY**

Where I was where I am and where I am going

My name is Christopher Bisimwa, married legally to Jeannette Mwakalonge with whom God has blessed us with 4 children (2 boys and 2 girls)

I came to Madison with my entire small family as a Congolese refugee through via Uganda. It was like a party when I was told I got resettled to USA in a state of Wisconsin, Madison, it was my 1st time to hear about those names.

Honestly speaking I was discouraged by the case manager's resignation who was the reason of our papers' disappearance: our family passport, I-94...but thank God we later on got them! On top of that it was during Covid-19 in 2021 offices were not really very active, even the pocket money all refugees use to call "welcome envelop", we expected to be given as soon as we reach was not the case! We never enjoyed what other people used to call Covid-19 cash assistance!

We really got disappointed us and we like started to lose hope. So, I started losing hope having better life in Madison.

I was like confused, lost and stranded facing what was not according to my expectations.

Nevertheless, I never want to think about all the bad experiences I had from Uganda (East Africa) where we were from as refugees with all bad experiences after running because of the war in our country of origin; DR Congo, it seems as if this is another moral war we are facing.

Good enough I was excited knowing that at least the agency that organized our travel and our resettlement in the USA have signed a 3 months lease for our rent but the 4th month we should start living on our own, I was ready and happy to work but I took time before I got my first job. When I was employed I could organize myself how to pay my bills but not at all because it was a part-time job!

Something that amazed me was the gift of a car I was given that could assist me to organize my transportation because in the USA there's nothing you can achieve to if your transportation is not organized.



When I got my 4th job at Exact Sciences I unfortunately lost it but with my organized transportation I just learnt how make Madison my hometown since though lack of all my papers as expected, because even my daughter's Social Security Card took very long to come out and our Green card but I have decided to make this state mine with all my joy!

No matter what may come away from all the challenges I'm facing; nothing can shake me in life, I know God will carry me through by His grace! I know soon I'm moving to a different location, something I hate but I was told by my landlord to move for the reason of his apartment's renovation.

I'm wondering with my status of being jobless, with the low income of my wife, it won't be easy but possible to find another apartment on our own.

What I have learned in life: "the greater God is taking you the higher challenges are but in all those things we are more than conquerors through God who loved us.(Roman 8:37)

Though challenges are now many, on Saturday I was told my brother passed away, I've not yet got my Green card, a new apartment, I'm concerned about my credit score, like in the USA they say: "your credit score is your father and your mother!" but I know God will carry me by His grace through and nothing can shake me and weakening my faith in God who brought me to the USA, I know I will make it.

I'm pursuing my dreaming of having a scholarship in the USA, being a great man of God here, being a good translator, interpreter with the 4 languages God has allowed me to know(French,Swahili,Lingala and English as my second language)with all that I will be able to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ all over the world! I appreciate being at Madison college where I am seeing all my dreams come true, I appreciate all my teachers (Cassie,Mona,Mr Creg and the entire team from Network literacy!) with her great team),

May God bless you for such a big heart and sacrifice taking us to 100miles to our destiny!

What I know all these challenges are like stepping stones taking me to 1000s mileage of destiny,there'no testimony without test,I know I will experience God's miracle.

## **ANDREI**

*Level 2 English Class*



When we lived in Russia, we were doing well, but after the beginning of the war of Russia against Ukraine, we had to leave our home and our country and leave, because we are

ethnic Ukrainians, and the attitude towards Ukrainians in Russia became very bad. We moved to the United States with the whole family. Of course, it was difficult in the new place. But thanks to learning English in the Literacy Network, new horizons and new opportunities have opened up. I hope to build my business. My children got a chance to become educated people and make themselves and others happy

## **AMELIA**

*Essential Literacy Tutoring*

I came to this country twenty years ago without speaking any English. It was hard to understand people when they talked to me. It was very frustrating when I wanted to go to the stores because very few people spoke Spanish. When I came to the United States (North Dakota), I never thought that I'd have to learn another language until I got here. I was not sure how to start but needed to start somehow because I wanted to speak and understand the language.

One day I was at the clinic and I saw a bulletin board that said free English classes and I went to ask for more information. That is how I got to Literacy Network. That is where I took my first English classes.

Thinking back twenty years ago I would not have believed that I would learn English. I still have much to learn but now have the confidence to go different places or have a conversation even making doctor's appointments.

My vision in the future is to be fluent in the language in this country.

## **ANDERSON**

*Level 2 English*

I went to the university and studied business administration, I also studied a specialization.

I lived in my country for 30 years and I worked in different companies, theaters,taxes, supermarket's and migration . This was my last job.

I miss my country, my family, the food but I know then I am on the right way for better future.

I had to learn news cultures, traditions, form to drive.

I learned live in united states and had other style live and learned some English, I learned cooked.

My life is very different here because learned new things for me and I traying to find job about my studies.

I hope learn more English and work in the business company.



# LITERACY NETWORK PROGRAMS

## CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship offers English classes for lawful permanent residents pursuing their goal of becoming a naturalized U.S. citizen. Classes cover the U.S. civics and language skills necessary to pass the U.S. Customs and Immigration Services naturalization interview and test. Students seek citizenship for many reasons, including to enhance their work opportunities, become more involved in civic life, and provide a more secure future for their family.

## COMMUNITY ENGLISH

Community English classes teach English as a second language (ESL) to adults so that they can engage in their family's education, advocate for their family's needs, and participate in their local communities. Currently, 11 multi-level classes are supported in partnership with school, library, and community center partners throughout Dane County. Curriculum topics are based on students' goals and often include conversation, calling a child in sick, and scheduling appointments.

## COMMUNITY LITERACY (ESL TUTORING)

ESL students work one-on-one with volunteer tutors in a group ESL tutoring class every week. Students set their own goals every semester, and tutors use lessons tailored to each student's goals. Personalized lessons allow students to work with their tutor on skills like creating a resume, learning English to have a parent-teacher conference, or understanding directions at work. Students learn at their own pace and practice skills they can use right away in the community and at work.

## ESSENTIAL LITERACY TUTORING

Program focus is on building essential skills in reading, writing, computers, or math. Students are native English speakers or advanced English Language Learners who work with a tutor one-on-one for help strengthening essential skills. Students want to build

their skills for a variety of goals, such as increasing employment opportunities, preparing for further education, helping their children, or personal growth.

## **GED/HSED TUTORING**

This is a one-on-one approach where tutors meet each student's specific needs for earning their GED or HSED (high school equivalency diploma). Tutors are also trained and placed in Madison College's GED/HSED Program. Students seek their high school credential for many reasons, including preparing for higher education, improving their career outlook, and proving to themselves and others that they can achieve this.

## **GROUP ESL**

Group English as a second language (ESL) classes serve adults with a wide range of English skills, from those with no familiarity at all to those whose command of English can be applied to everyday situations. Taught in a group setting to reach students of all language backgrounds, classes are meant for real-world application. They center on language and skills needed for involvement in the community and at work. (Group ESL classes are also offered for newly arrived and resettled refugees.)

## **TRANSITIONS ESL CLASS**

Transitions provides personalized support, education, and career advising to help adults succeed at Madison College. The program supports higher-level English Language Learners by providing rigorous English language, literacy, critical thinking, and academic skill development. Participants receive personalized advising services to create a plan and identify resources to reach their educational and career goals.

## **WORKPLACE ENGLISH**

Workplace English classes offer customized on-site English language instruction to support employees' communication on the job. The curriculum is tailored to meet an employer's specific goals.

# GET INVOLVED

## VOLUNTEER

**Help students** reach their goals and achieve their dreams by becoming a volunteer tutor.



*Tutor Kathy and student Ernesto work together in our personal tutoring program.*

*"I like it because we're like friends, and I feel comfortable. I like how she tries to find a way that I understand better. Literacy Network is a great group, a great resource."* - Ernesto

*"It enriches my life in ways I wouldn't have if I didn't interact with people from other cultures. I learn more from my students than I teach them."* - Kathy

## DONATE

**Your support** helps adult students obtain new jobs and promotions, better communicate with their children's schools, and gain U.S. citizenship. They earn high school equivalency diplomas and take the next steps toward college and other certifications. Because of you, adults improve their skills with free literacy education and have greater adaptability to a changing world.



*"It's really the intrinsic benefits that speak to me. That really is about self-esteem, confidence, and agency... You can't put a value on that."*

- Rodrigo, monthly donor



*"The amount of change that literacy brings to an adult's life is profound. It is a joy to watch a student's life, and their own self confidence, improve."*

- Anne, donor and volunteer tutor

## WAYS TO GIVE:

*Monthly recurring donations*

*Planned giving*

*Donation of stock*

*IRA contribution*

*Employer match*

*Tribute gift  
(in honor or memory)*

# SUPPORT THE STUDENTS



Learn more about volunteering:  
[www.litnetwork.org/volunteer](http://www.litnetwork.org/volunteer)

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Donate online: [www.litnetwork.org/donate](http://www.litnetwork.org/donate) or  
Send check to: **Literacy Network**  
**701 Dane Street, Madison, WI 53713**

*Thank you!*



# WHAT SETS LITERACY NETWORK APART



**Individual support.** Adults improving their basic skills need individualized support and individual lessons delivered one-on-one by volunteer tutors.

**Personal education plans.** Each student has an individual plan that follows them throughout their time at Literacy Network.

**Flexible curriculum.** Individual support means that our team meets each participant where they are.

**High-level support for success.** Every student starts their educational journey with a one-on-one interview to identify their goals and skill level and make a plan for success.

**Regular follow-up.** Staff follow up regularly with students to ensure they have the support they need to persist with programs.

**Commitment to strong partnerships.** Program locations are around Dane County in schools, libraries, community centers, and workplaces.

**Building relationships.** Our students, tutors, interns, and staff form strong bonds, creating cross-cultural connections, a sense of community, and better understanding of diverse life situations.

**Efficiency.** We efficiently use resources and leverage approximately 10,000 hours of volunteer time annually at a value of more than \$300,000.



**Literacy Network™**  
**LEARNING FOR LIFE**

**Help people change  
their lives through  
literacy education!**

## **CONTACT US**

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608-244-3911 • [info@litnetwork.org](mailto:info@litnetwork.org)

***VOLUNTEER. DONATE.***

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**[www.litnetwork.org](http://www.litnetwork.org)**

