

The Learning Connection

YOUR IMPACT REPORT | FALL 2022

"My first class ever in America was here."

Hussein, originally from Iraq, came to the U.S. as a refugee in the summer of 2020. In the two years since, he has studied with Literacy Network each semester and has made monumental progress toward his goals. He advanced from Level 2 through Level 4 English classes and earned his HSED.

"When I arrived here in Madison, I didn't know what I should do. Where should I go?" says Hussein. "Jewish Social Services told us about Literacy Network. My first class ever in America was here. I took my ESL class starting here with Level 2."

Hussein made rapid progress through diligent studying and with the help of teachers and tutors. He describes classes as "a mix between enjoyment and hard work," and appreciates that the instructors are "taking questions seriously and trying to make things understandable."

In addition to ESL classes, Hussein worked with three personal tutors, whom he credits with helping improve his reading, pronunciation, and, especially, his writing. "Sometimes we put the idea, but we change the sentence to make it more easier to read, which has helped me a lot with compliments from my instructor at Madison College," Hussein shares. "She told me 'you've really improved your writing.' I really felt comfortable and encouraged when I saw my writing."

With all his hard work, Hussein says, **"Now I feel comfortable talking to people and reading and writing."** I really improve my English skills through these classes and through tutoring classes."

Hussein reached an important milestone this May when he earned his HSED and participated in the graduation ceremony at Madison College. Now, he is enrolled in Literacy Network's Transitions class and is working on future goals.

"Last week we talked about SMART goals in class," says Hussein. "We have to put some specific things for short and long term. So for short term, I need to improve my writing through this class. I'm trying to improve my reading as well. After that to complete my education and college, take some classes. The classes at college are the long term." Hussein is pursuing a career in IT. He looks forward to settling in Madison and achieving personal goals including joining a gym and learning to swim.

"After a journey of being a refugee for about five years, now I'm living here" says Hussein. **"I'm part of this community and part of Madison."** ■



"Education is the passport to the future."
— Hussein

ASSISTING REFUGEES NOW

82 refugees have enrolled in our programs so far in 2022

44 Afghan refugees served, with 25 currently enrolled

7 Ukrainian refugees currently enrolled, with more enrolling in fall semester

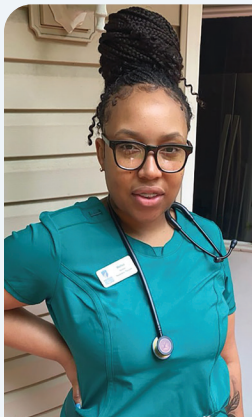
Other home countries include:

Syria, Iraq, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Bhutan, Gambia

20 refugee students obtained their citizenship since 2018

Former Literacy Network learner on her way to becoming respiratory therapist

MELISA EARNED HER GED WHILE STUDYING WITH LITERACY NETWORK



"Literacy Network has helped me to get a GED, something I didn't think I could get," says Melisa in a video interview. Melisa, a single mother of three, initially dropped out of high school to care for her son and had attempted to earn her GED nearly a dozen times before finding success working regularly with a tutor at Literacy Network.

Melisa applied for college immediately after finishing classes at Literacy Network and is excited about her future as a respiratory therapist. "Respiratory therapists are amazing people that's added to the health care field," says Melisa. "I can see myself in this career." Melisa also identifies the important role respiratory therapists have played during the COVID-19 pandemic. "**Respiratory therapists are front and center with COVID,**" she explains.

"Advancing their career is one of our learners' top goals in taking classes at Literacy Network," says Executive Director Jeff Burkhardt. "Research shows adult learners who complete at least 100 hours of adult education earn on average nearly \$10,000 more per year. Our programs provide long-term poverty reduction—adults in our programs gain skills vital to increases in earnings, increases in hours, more responsibility, promotions and better jobs."

Melisa is on track to graduate in May of 2023. "**Go follow your dreams,**" says Melisa, "**...don't let not having a GED stop you.**"

A video of Melisa sharing her experience is available here: bit.ly/MelisaJune22 ■

2022 Annual student survey results

▶ **185** students participated during the summer semester

▶ **100%** of students are happy with their teacher or tutor

▶ **97%** of students would recommend Literacy Network to a friend

We asked learners: What do you like about Literacy Network?

"I like that you really help me to learn English."

"It gives me confidence by learning."

"I like the class, I like the way our teacher gives the class, I like that is free, I like all the information they share."

"Is a big opportunity for the Latino community about read, write and speak. Also is so important to meet new people when you come to Wisconsin."

"I like because it was easy and fast to get a tutor to me. My tutors have been very respectful and friendly."

WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT STUDENTS

- **VOLUNTEER to be a tutor.**
- **DONATE** Become a sustainer with monthly or planned giving.
- **FOLLOW US** on social media: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, or Twitter.

Rosa and Ann share their learner–tutor journey



Rosa, where are you originally from? I'm from Mexico, I was born in Jalisco.

Why did you decide to take classes? When I decided to live here in Madison WI I to take English class because I like to communicate with other people and speaking the same language.

When did you start taking classes at Literacy Network?

I decide to take classes it was nine months after moving in 2017.

What classes are you taking? I'm taking to tutor classes now.

What do you like about your class, teacher, and/or tutor? I like a lot because I can speak from person to person, it is also a way to practice English and have corrections when I make mistakes.

Describe your experience as a Literacy Network student.

My experience is very comfortable. I have learned a lot since I started taking classes. I like the way I have learned. I fell very well learning on Literacy Network.

How has it helped you to improve your life? It has helped me a lot because sometimes I no longer need to interpret when I go to the doctor, dentist or when I need to talk to someone at work.

What plans do you have for the future? My goal is to continue studying and later to be able to take a university degree in the future.

Is there anything else you'd like to share? I'm happy to have found Literacy Network it is supporting me in my learning of English. I am very grateful.



Ann, how long have you been a tutor with Literacy Network? I've been a tutor with Literacy Network since January 2020.

What program are you a tutor for? ESL

Why did you decide to become a tutor with

Literacy Network? I enjoy people, I enjoy language, and I enjoy teaching. I wanted to volunteer for something that supported the empowerment of others and held meaning for myself.

What do you like about tutoring with Literacy Network and the students with whom you work?

I appreciate the Literacy Network's vision, its values and priorities, its track record, and its strong, reliable, and consistent support of students, of tutors, and of the learning process.

How has tutoring with Literacy Network impacted your life?

I have enjoyed the process itself, the chance to increase my own skills, and the experience of working directly with students on goals that they themselves determine.

Why is adult literacy important for our community?

Strong language skills are necessary to succeed in any community, and this is certainly true in Madison. The ability to understand and communicate with others is essential in establishing one's place in a new culture, in accessing and engaging in the educational system for oneself and for one's family, in the work world, and in all aspects of daily life.

What are you most proud of from your work with Literacy Network?

I'm pleased to be doing this work, and through it, to be useful to others and to this community.

Is there anything else you'd like to add about working with students, tutoring, or Literacy Network?

It's been a pleasure and thank you for this opportunity. ■

Join our volunteer community and make a difference in the life of an adult learner:
www.litnetwork.org/volunteer

GROWING THROUGH *Literacy* — LUNCH

Tuesday, September 27, 2022
12:00 – 1:00 PM

Sheraton Madison Hotel
706 John Nolen Dr • Madison, WI 53713

Join Literacy Network's adult learners, volunteer tutors, supporters, and staff in a celebration of student success.

Attendance for this fundraising event is free of charge and includes lunch. REGISTER AT www.litnetwork.org/events.



All are welcome! Whether you're a longtime Literacy Network supporter or an interested community member looking to learn more about how to support adult literacy education, Growing Through Literacy provides an inspiring look at Literacy Network's programs. Learn about our mission and hear directly from the adults impacted by community support.

Event proceeds will support adult learners in our English group classes, citizenship program, GED tutoring, and more.



**Please note: Literacy Network will monitor local health guidelines and recommendations.*

Questions? Interested in being an event sponsor? Contact margaret@litnetwork.org or call 608-268-6578. **Registration closes September 22 at 5:00 pm. Capacity limited.**

THANK YOU TO OUR EVENT SPONSORS!



Learn more about Literacy Network! See our 2021 Annual Report bit.ly/LitNetAR21

Jeff Burkhart shares his decision to resign in December



Dear Literacy Network family,

Because you have been so important to our work together and my development as a leader, I want to share this news with you directly. I have decided that the time to open the door for others to lead Literacy Network has come. **I am resigning my position, and my last day as executive director will be December 16, 2022.**

It has been an incredible honor to see the many accomplishments our students have achieved in the last 14 years. I am confident that Literacy Network is ready for its next period of growth because our success has come by a persistent focus on the goals of our students. The level of passion, talent, and commitment at Literacy Network is astounding – our staff and volunteers show a daily dedication to helping students reach their goals.

Our board and staff have worked together to develop a transition plan. I am ready to help the organization with whatever it needs to make this transition as smooth as possible. I will continue to increase our connection to students, and to support the next generation of leaders at Literacy Network. I will still be available to answer any questions that arise even after my departure. My hope is that this might provide sufficient time to recruit and hire a new executive director and for me to support their training as needed.

Together, we've deepened our support of students. Our team regularly asks students what they want to accomplish and uses their feedback to direct our work. Taking their lead, we expanded our student services, citizenship programs, support for transitions to higher education, high school completion programs, refugee English classes, and many other program areas. We've deepened partnerships with other social service agencies, educational institutions, libraries, community centers, and workplaces.

I am ever grateful to the thousands of people who have supported us as volunteers and donors over the years – some for more years than I've been here! You make this work possible in a very tangible way. I hope to connect with you soon and thank you personally for your support of adults working toward their goals and making our community stronger.

In the next few months, I'll continue to build support for our programs and put plans in place for Literacy Network's future. There is a lot of exciting work ahead, and I am eager to see it come to fruition as Literacy Network evolves in this ever-changing world.

As always, please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or comments. Thank you so much for your loyal support of our students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Burkhart'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jeff Burkhart

Executive Director

Jeff shared this letter with our supporters via email on July 19, 2022.



MISSION:

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

Supporters answer the question: “Why Literacy Network?”



“Investing in Literacy Network is investing in humanity and our future.”

Glaucia Lima Pilarski, monthly donor



“Literacy Network has the power to change lives. With literacy comes self-reliance; with literacy and self-reliance come freedom, choices, options and opportunity.”

Jane Nemke, donor and former board member

THANKS TO THESE RECENT FUNDERS FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT!

2nd Market Capital Economic Opportunity Foundation

American Family Insurance Dreams Foundation

Ascendium Education Group

Herb Kohl Philanthropies

ProLiteracy

Technology Education Foundation

The Nora Roberts Foundation

(June 1 - September 1)