



5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

ENVISIONING OUR GROWTH & IMPACT FROM 2016 TO 2021



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Dear Friends of Literacy DuPage,

We are pleased to provide this summary of our five-year strategic plan, prepared by the Literacy DuPage Board of Directors. On these pages, you will learn about the goals and objectives we aim to accomplish for the benefit of the learners we serve every day.

Meeting our communities' language learning needs is no small task. Approximately 100,000 DuPage County residents need language instruction. Within that population, we serve a unique group: adults who cannot get to or cannot succeed in classroom instruction. We serve 500 of these learners each year, and still our waiting list hovers at 300 people who have requested and are waiting for help. We are dedicated to matching these learners with tutors, and ensuring that every learner meets his or her literacy goals.

This mission requires effort and commitment from our donors, tutors, staff, board members, and other volunteers. To motivate and guide all our actions from 2016 to 2021, the Literacy DuPage Board of Directors has defined three strategic initiatives:

1. **Double the number of active adult learners we serve.** This means growing our reach from 500 to 1,000 learners.
2. **Increase giving from individual donors.** This will bring balance and diversity to our funding, and strengthen us to serve learners even in the midst of challenges such as the Illinois budget impasse.
3. **Make Literacy DuPage a great place to work and volunteer,** for those who selflessly give their time and energy to support our mission.

The following pages offer more detail about how we intend to implement our long-range plans. As you review this summary, we hope you will catch our excitement and optimism—and that you will be moved to take part in our ambitious plans. Whether you have supported our cause for a day or a decade, or you are discovering us for the first time, we invite you to be involved. Together, there is so much we can accomplish.

Thank you for all that you do to support and encourage the Literacy DuPage Board. We remain dedicated to this cause and grateful for your help.

Jean Demas

*President, Board of Directors
Literacy DuPage*

Bob Talbot

*Board Member, Chair of Strategic Planning
Literacy DuPage*

WE CHANGE LIVES
WITH LITERACY

Literacy DuPage trains volunteer tutors to provide customized, one-on-one instruction for adults who do not know the English language. Our tutors meet learners when and where it's convenient, one-on-one. They set practical goals—communicate with a grocery store checker, apply for a job, read to a child—and discover life-changing results by achieving them. We are a nonprofit, community-based organization in DuPage County, Illinois.

THE NEED FOR LITERACY EDUCATION IS ENORMOUS.

44,000,000

U.S. adults cannot read beyond a fifth-grade level (that's 14% of the population)

3,000,000

low-literate adults are all our nation can afford to help, based on combined funding of all government and philanthropic agencies

50

percent of chronically unemployed U.S. citizen are not functionally literate

43

percent of people with low literacy live in poverty and struggle to find work, remain healthy, and support their families

30

minutes is what it takes a parent to read to a child each day, to provide the "literacy nutrition" a child needs as foundation for learning

100,000

DuPage County residents need to improve their English skills

SO WHAT DO WE DO?

Literacy DuPage provides free, customized, one-on-one English language tutoring to adults with low-level skills who have difficulty accessing classroom instruction due to transportation obstacles, work schedules, or lack of childcare. We train volunteer tutors to help their neighbors increase their English skills so they can achieve practical goals like finding a better job, navigating the healthcare system, advocating for their families, or helping their children in school. In fact, children are an important part of what we do. Our tutor volunteers **teach a parent and, in turn, reach a child**, helping them to succeed in school and life.

As a result, we're empowering adults, families and communities through literacy.

30,000

hours our 400 volunteers devoted to Literacy DuPage in 2015

500

adult learners achieved their goals in 2015 as family members, workers, and community residents

75

percent of our learners are parents with school-age children

88

percent of our learners come from low-income households

89

percent of our learners are learning English as a second language

100

percent of Literacy DuPage donations go to services that directly benefit our learners



VISION

Empowering adults, families, and communities through literacy

MISSION

Helping adults achieve their goals through accessible, customized tutoring in English

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES FOR 2016 - 2021

1

IMPACT

Increase our impact in DuPage County by doubling the number of active learners by the end of the plan period

2

FUNDING

Grow and diversify our funding sources. Reduce our dependence on grants. Increase individual donor and events giving.

3

CULTURE

Create an exceptional place to volunteer and work. Improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and accessibility of our programs and organization, with particular focus on tutor effectiveness.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #1: IMPACT

INCREASE OUR IMPACT IN DUPAGE COUNTY BY DOUBLING THE NUMBER OF ACTIVE ADULT LEARNERS BY THE END OF THE PLAN PERIOD.

In order to support this higher number of learners, we must also expand our entire infrastructure. The following key initiatives will allow Literacy DuPage to smoothly add new learners and tutors without affecting the quality of our engagements:

Increase number of tutor training sessions, eventually reaching 30 per year

Increase program staff and intake and support specialists to facilitate growth

Increase focus on health literacy and job readiness

Triple online and social media channels from 5 to 15

Research, identify, and select key demographic segments to target for tutor recruitment

Research, identify, and implement strategic partnerships to help expand tutor base

Increase overall funding to support higher numbers of learners and tutors

Increase board membership from 10 to 15 members

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #2: FUNDING

GROW AND DIVERSIFY OUR FUNDING SOURCES. REDUCE OUR DEPENDENCE ON GRANTS. INCREASE INDIVIDUAL DONOR AND EVENTS GIVING.

Achieving our goals requires an increase in financial support. We plan to better balance our sources of funds by increasing individual giving and fundraising events, while reducing our dependence on grants. To those ends, we will pursue the following key initiatives:

Establish a charitable gift annuity program

Identify projects that can benefit from "Go Fund Me" approach

Identify 3 major donors per year and align with board contacts

Implement rebranding and revamped website

Develop and execute a focused public relations plan

Identify and assemble a network of ambassadors to share messaging on our behalf

Focus board recruitment and education on individual fundraising

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #3: CULTURE

CREATE AN EXCEPTIONAL PLACE TO VOLUNTEER AND TO WORK. IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY, EFFECTIVENESS, AND ACCESSIBILITY OF OUR PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATION, WITH PARTICULAR FOCUS ON TUTOR EFFECTIVENESS.

Our volunteers—who give so much of their time and resources to support our mission—deserve a motivating and efficient environment so they can focus on our primary goal: improving literacy for every learner. To make strides in this area, we will:

Create tutor support programs such as an online forum, peer mentors, and surveys to identify areas for improvement

Create an IT forum to identify and implement infrastructure improvements

Review alternative work sites that may help improve our service, as our lease comes up for renewal

Look to our extensive volunteer network for future board members

Create flexibility in our budget to ensure continued operation during challenging economic periods

CHANGING LIVES THROUGH LITERACY



PABLO CAME TO THE U.S. LOOKING FOR WORK AND SPEAKING NO ENGLISH. GOALS: IMPROVE ABILITY TO TALK WITH PEOPLE OUTSIDE RESTAURANTS WHERE HE WORKS; IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION.

COLEMAN IS A BUSINESSMAN WITH AN MBA. HE WANTED TO BE AN ACTIVE VOLUNTEER.

Pablo came to the U.S. alone. His wife Linda joined him seven years later, when he had achieved enough stability for the two to be together and start a family.

Although neither spoke English when they arrived, Linda had completed high school in Mexico. Pablo studied only until seventh grade. Because he worked in restaurants, alongside other Spanish speakers, this didn't keep him from supporting his family.

But Linda wanted to communicate with neighbors, store clerks, doctors, and others. When she found help and quick improvements through Literacy DuPage, she urged Pablo to find a tutor, too.

Literacy DuPage connected Pablo with Coleman.

"I've got time in my life now," said Coleman. "And working with Pablo and Linda has opened me up to a life I would never have imagined. Sometimes I think it's easy to live in a bubble in this country."

Coleman is inspired by the couple's drive to learn.

"At one point Pablo had three jobs going," said Coleman. "But he always carved out time for me to give him lessons."

That commitment is paying off. The couple purchased a home last year, and "I have more opportunity with my job now," said Pablo.

"They are driven to succeed in this country," said Coleman. "Particularly for their children."



JANIE MOVED TO CHICAGOLAND FROM RURAL MISSISSIPPI WITHOUT A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA. GOALS: BE A STRONGER READER AND MORE CONFIDENT COMMUNICATOR IN RETIREMENT.

LAURIE TAUGHT SPECIAL ED BEFORE RAISING CHILDREN. SHE ENJOYS TUTORING ONE-ON-ONE.

Janie and her husband brought their three young children to Chicago in the early 1970s, seeking a better life. Janie focused on childrearing, working temporary jobs when time and opportunity allowed.

Once the kids were in school, a friend recommended Janie for a data entry job at the Chicago Board of Trade. Even without a high school diploma, she got the job and worked there 26 years.

Once she retired, she started thinking about improving her literacy skills.

"The biggest room in the world is the room for improvement," said Janie. "I wanted to do constructive things with my time."

Literacy DuPage paired Janie with Laurie.

"I missed teaching," said Laurie. "I realized this would be something I could be interested in."

In the two years Janie and Laurie have worked together, Janie has progressed to reading *To Kill a Mockingbird*. She also enjoys reading the Bible.

Improved literacy skills help her in other ways, too.

"I teach Sunday school, and I feel more secure about talking in front of a roomful of people now," Janie said. "I also feel more confident communicating as a mother and grandmother. I feel better about myself overall and better about sharing the wisdom I have about life."

Literacy DuPage Leadership

Executive Director: Therese McMahan; *Program Director:* Carol Garcia; *Board of Directors:* Janice Anderson; Troy Brethauer; Jean Demas; Lisa Greenfield; Grant McKay; Beth Nyland; Joe Ponsetto; Joe Sarnicki; Bob Talbot