

BRIDGE TO LITERACY

Spring 2011

Literacy Source | 720 N. 35th St. Seattle, WA 98103 | www.literacysource.org | 206-782-2050

A note from our Executive Director...



Literacy Source has changed remarkably in the 25 years since it began – but the organization's mission and the need for its services are unaltered. Pictured here in the early days are longtime Literacy Source Board member Peter Cole, stalwart bookkeeping volunteer Margaret Toeniskoetter and then-and-now Executive Director Anne Helmholz.

25 years...and just beginning!

It has been a quarter century since Literacy Source was founded in a basement at St. John's Lutheran Church on Phinney Ridge. Starting with one electric typewriter, child-sized chairs, one staff person and a handful of dedicated volunteers, the organization has grown into an independent non-profit with a staff of more than twenty, two hundred plus volunteers, hundreds of learners and its own learning center across from the Fremont Library. With a



Basic skills student Johnny Bronson works with tutor Mary DeJarnatt. "She's tough. She makes sure you understand what you need to understand... She's got patience. A caring heart, that's what she has, too."

\$500,000 annual budget, Literacy Source provides learner-centered instruction to both non-native English speakers and native speakers who have not been able to access or succeed in traditional schooling for a variety of reasons.

Over the years, Literacy Source learner demographics have changed and so has the world of work. To help clients earn a living wage, provide for their families and contribute to their community today, Literacy Source integrates computer and workplace skills training and offers speaking and reading fluency classes, as well as citizenship assistance and a high school diploma program. Adult basic education and English as a Second Language classes and tutoring remain among the organization's most popular offerings.

A changing landscape

Computer literacy has become crucial to educational and workplace success since 1986, so technology instruction is increasingly important to Literacy Source learners. Alece Kaplan, former Literacy*AmeriCorps member says, "During my time at Literacy Source I saw a noticeable growth in the use of computers and the internet to further

When I look back over the 25 years since Literacy Source began, I am amazed at how much has changed – and how much remains the same. In 1986, our first learners were English-speaking students who needed basic skills training. Literacy meant learning to read and to write your name. As we've transitioned from one IBM Selectric to a roomful of computers, from one room on Phinney Ridge to our much larger space in Fremont, we've also expanded our offerings to meet the changing needs of our learners. We serve many ESL students now as well as native speakers. Today literacy encompasses not only reading, but computer and math literacy, citizenship assistance, high school diplomas, workplace learning and more. What hasn't changed is the continuing need for these skills, the passionate commitment of our staff and volunteers to lifelong learning and empowerment and the powerful motivation and success of our many and diverse learners. Please join us for the next 25 years!

Anne Helmholz
Executive Director

student learning and opportunities."

The more than 200 dedicated people who volunteer their time at Literacy Source are a primary component of the organization's success. And volunteering is its own reward, says former volunteer Christine Canty. "While I knew volunteering would be a worthwhile activity, I was unprepared for how much I would be blessed by my students."

Literacy Source volunteers tailor their instruction to enhance the skills students need in their jobs or lives right at that moment, "just-in-time" learning. Marcos Santos, citizenship student, is one of

(Continued on reverse side)

Get involved at Literacy Source!

Volunteer

Volunteers make it possible for Literacy Source to serve 600+ students each year. We invite you to come to one of our **Volunteer Orientations**, which are held the first Thursday of every month at 1:00pm and 7:00pm.

Become a student

We offer free classes, workshops, tutoring, and learning resources for adults who want to improve their basic reading, writing, math and computer skills; learn English; study for a high school diploma or GED; or prepare to become citizens. Call 206-782-2050 to register for the next **New Student Orientation**.

Donate

Generous contributions from corporations, government agencies, private foundations, small businesses and individuals make Literacy Source's successes a reality. We are grateful for all our donors and invite you to join them in supporting Literacy Source in whatever way you can. **Visit www.literacysource.org to find out how.**



For more information,
visit our website!

www.literacysource.org

(Continued from reverse side)

those who found Literacy Source right when he needed it. "I saw the announcement of resources and it caught my attention that it's close to my neighborhood also is free and open to the public. My first impression was amazement. I sent an email to the staff and they sent me back information next day."

Many literacy programs focus on children, but the adult-focused instruction at Literacy Source has broad benefits. The knowledge and skills imparted to an adult also directly benefit the adult's family and community—increasing home ownership, parent involvement in kids' education, civic action and more. Central to the Literacy Source mission is the notion of instilling a lifelong love of learning. "I'm never going to stop studying; I just know that," says Anthony Murphy, a 2010 graduate of the External Diploma Program.

Into the future

Despite the changing demographics of Literacy Source learners and the expanded list of classes offered, the organization's purpose hasn't changed. Staff member Kit Hanski adds, "Our mission may have been reworded a time or two, but it's always been that same focus – accessibility and affordability for those people that can't find services elsewhere."

What will the future hold for Literacy Source? No doubt, we will continue to celebrate the successes that learners achieve in the workplace, in family life and as involved community members. Former and current friends of Literacy Source share their visions for the future...

I was a student, and now I apply to volunteer. **Shizuka Sugimoto**

I still look back on my time as a rich and wonderful experience...My hope is that over the next couple decades, most Seattle residents will know about Literacy Source and the excellent work they do. **Christine Canty**

I look forward to seeing Literacy Source continue their mindful expansion into the community, providing much needed services to vulnerable populations- the elderly, the isolated, the economically disadvantaged. **Alece Kaplan**

My experience in this community center has been very nice and I hope that the economic situation facing the government does not affect sites like this that are designed to educate people like me who have the desire to improve our situation as well as improving the community where live. Someday...I would like to take part of this great team. **Marcos Santos**

Literacy Source's mission is even more important now than it was 25 years ago. Whatever the next quarter century holds for our world and our learners, Literacy

Source will work to meet the demand – and we'll continue to need your help.

Today, we thank all of the students, volunteers, donors and staff that make Literacy Source the dynamic and ever-engaging place that it is.

—The Literacy Source Team



Literacy Source remains a place where learners at all levels can expand and improve upon their skills. Above, Volunteer instructor Lourdes Roque Weda works with (from left) Sinknesh Tucho, Radiya Abdel Kader and Mohammed Alfera in a Beginning ESL class.



Basic reading and writing skills are still crucial and still taught at Literacy Source – as are a host of other skills. In 2011, Suad Abdella (in yellow) and Fardosa Mohamed work diligently in their computer-based class for job-seekers.