



December 2017

Dear friends:

Literacy. It is something that we too often take for granted. What does it mean when a community, a family, or an individual lacks basic literacy skills? It means:

- An inability to successfully seek employment, fill out job applications, create a resume, and perform well on written employment tests: **lack of economic self-sufficiency**
- Difficulty communicating with healthcare professionals: **jeopardized health and long-term increase in healthcare costs**
- Reluctance to get involved and ask for help when children are having difficulty at school as well as lack of reading materials in the home and inability to provide assistance with homework: **poor literacy skills are transferred from generation to generation**
- Confusion about how to successfully navigate the process of becoming a citizen: **our community is deprived of the contributions of hard-working immigrants**

In Lehigh County, more than 900 people turn to The Literacy Center each year to develop their literacy skills so that they can create a better life for themselves and their families. Because of our community's generous support, we are able to enroll **more than 500 of these students** in our English as a Second Language (ESL) and GED high school completion courses. Each student has the

Education for Work, Family and Life

www.theliteracycenter-lv.org

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opportunity to develop literacy and employment skills in a structured, supportive environment that addresses their unique needs and interests while removing barriers to their success.

Meet **Ravens**, **Mina**, and **Gerson**, three of our students who are setting an example for other through their accomplishments and our 2017 Faces of Literacy honorees:



Ravens came to the United States after a devastating earthquake ravaged his homeland of Haiti. With support from The Literacy Center, Ravens earned his GED and enrolled in an Associate's Degree Program at Lehigh Carbon Community College. He has **completed half of the required credits for his degree** while maintaining a 3.7 GPA *and* working full time at Home Depot.

Mina, a native of Morocco, came to the United States four years ago on her own to seek opportunities in higher education. While a student at The Literacy Center, Mina also enrolled at Northampton Community College and obtained a full-time job at Amazon where she is the only woman who works in the IT department. Mina is the recent recipient of a **National Science Foundation Scholarship** and will continue her studies at Bloomsburg University in 2018, where she will study applied science and technical leadership.



Gerson worked for an operations manager at Citibank in Chile. Soon after relocating to the United States, he worked in construction building trusses. He enrolled in ESL classes at The Literacy Center and started to pursue his passion by teaching karate at the YMCA. He has been the **recipient of state and national awards for innovating programming using karate** at Access Services, Inc., where he has worked for the last several years.

Ravens, Mina, and Gerson are **just three examples of the nearly 30,000 students** who have benefitted from The Literacy Center's GED and ESL classes since our inception 40 years ago. Our classes have a profound impact on our students' ability to pursue educational and professional opportunities so that they can become more self-sufficient and enjoy a better quality of life.

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The holiday season is a time for gratitude. **We are grateful to you** for your past support and generosity, which has made these success stories possible. With your continued support, we can meet the growing demand for ESL and GED classes in Lehigh County.

There are many ways that you can offer your support to The Literacy Center and our hundreds of hard-working students this holiday season. Whatever your ability to give, your tax-deductible donation helps The Literacy Center continue to provide services and obtain materials that support our high-quality, innovative learning environment. For example:



\$30 purchases **five GED practice tests** for one student



\$45 purchases **three GED instruction books** for those who are unable to afford one



\$75 purchases **five Texas Instruments calculators** exclusively used for GED testing



\$100 supports activities that **help students develop workplace skills** in the computer lab



\$250 provides one English as a Second Language classroom with **instructional materials**



\$500 makes it possible for one student to receive **180 hours of instruction** – that's a full year of instruction!

Donations can be made at www.TheLiteracyCenter-LV.org or by check in the enclosed envelope.

We sincerely thank you for your continued support of our organization.

Wishing you a Happy Holiday and New Year,

Avery E. Smith, Esq.
President, Board of Directors

The official registration and financial information of The Literacy Center may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free within Pennsylvania, 1.800.732.0999. Registration does not imply endorsement. The Literacy Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization – donations to which are tax deductible to the fullest extent permitted by law.

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