

# A New Chapter: Learning and Growing

Literacy Nassau's Annual Report

July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2010





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**Our Mission:** Through personalized instruction, Literacy Nassau opens doors to opportunity and success for adults in our communities who seek help improving their reading, writing, and English speaking skills.

**Our Vision:** One day, every Nassau County resident will be literate.

## Literacy Nassau Overview

According to the National Assessment of Adult Literacy, 10% of Nassau County adults lack the basic skills required to perform simple daily information processing tasks.

Since 1968, Literacy Nassau has provided over 30,000 adults in Nassau County with free one-to-one or small group literacy instruction. The organization serves adults who struggle at the lowest levels of literacy, the 6th grade equivalent or below, for whom there are limited programs available. Students are both native and non-native English speakers. Volunteer tutors meet with their students weekly in libraries throughout the county.

Literacy Nassau is accredited by ProLiteracy America, the largest non-governmental agency of adult basic education and literacy programs in the world. Literacy Nassau is one of 36 local affiliates of Literacy New York, whose goal of "Building Literate Communities" is mobilized by their statewide efforts in advocacy, marketing, and resource/program development.

Literacy Nassau recruits and trains volunteer tutors, provides intake, assessment, and support for adult literacy students, matches tutors and students, and builds community relationships to raise awareness about the issue. Literacy is the most basic building block of education; communities that lack education traditionally experience high levels of poverty and crime. Literacy Nassau attacks this problem - one student, one family, *one word at a time*.

## The Year in Review

2009-2010 was a year of change for Literacy Nassau. The start of a new fiscal year brought with it the appointment of Arthur Feldman to the role of Board President. By October, we were cutting the ribbon to mark the official opening of our new administrative office in Freeport. Perhaps the most notable change came in April, when the agency was introduced to Karen Micciche, the new Executive Director. In response to the economic climate, unprecedented cuts to the Adult Literacy Education line of the New York State budget, and increased demand for accountability on the part of the New York State Education Department, by year end the staff at LN was reorganized, charting a new course as they set sail into the next decade.

Though change can be uncomfortable, the decisions that were made over the past year have set the stage for 2010-2011, which will clearly be a rebuilding year for LN. In a new location, new partnerships will forge. New leadership will bring new ideas and new vision. New staff will bring a fresh perspective and a willingness to learn about (and comply with) new State mandates. The beauty of change lies in the hidden gift of its endless possibilities.

## Student Demographics

Though Literacy Nassau touched the lives of over 800 adult learners in 2009-2010, State mandates indicate that in order for a student to count as being “served” by the agency, he/she must complete a minimum of 12 hours of instructional study. In 2009-2010, Literacy Nassau served **272** students.

<u>Gender</u>	<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>Age</u>
<b>74</b> males	<b>78</b> Asians	<b>10</b> ages 16-18
<b>198</b> females	<b>44</b> African Americans	<b>13</b> ages 19-24
	<b>106</b> Hispanic/Latino	<b>106</b> ages 25-44
	<b>44</b> Caucasian	<b>106</b> ages 45-59
		<b>37</b> ages 60+

Literacy Nassau provides services to two types of learners: BL (Basic Literacy) and ELL (English Language Learners). BL students are native born, while ELL students are foreign born. Instructing ELL students poses the additional challenge of teaching speaking and listening skills, as well as tackling reading and writing. In 2009-2010, Literacy Nassau served **83** BL students and **189** ELL students.

## Volunteer Tutors: Worth Their Weight in Gold

In 2009-2010, Literacy Nassau offered 6 Tutor Training Workshops (TTWs) all over Nassau County, through which 113 volunteer tutors were trained. Additionally, Literacy Nassau hosted 9 In-Service Trainings, 7 supplemental trainings, and 7 New Student Orientations.

We are always searching for ways to improve our training experience for volunteers; as such, 4 staff attended Literacy New York's White Eagle Conference in June 2010. This series of workshops trained staff in the New Program Initiative: an updated, module-based version of the classic TTW. In the past, Literacy Volunteer organizations such as ours have "front-loaded" their training, placing most of the emphasis on the TTW and failing to adequately follow up with tutors later on in their tutoring experience. This has led to a problem with tutor retention, because tutors feel disconnected from the agency in the long run. Literacy Nassau subscribed to the optional New Program Initiative because we saw this issue among our own tutors. Without tutors who understand what to do, how to do it, what to report back to us, and who to call for help with issues, we will not be able to satisfy the requirements of the State, but worse than that, we will not be able to teach our students as effectively.

The new module-based training allows tutors to be trained in either ELL or BL strategies, reducing training time from 18 to 15 hours. The last module (Successful Tutoring) introduces tutors to their Literacy Specialists, who are the "go-to" staff people whose job it is to ensure that each tutor-student match is supported by the agency. This model of case management is likely to help retain tutors for longer periods of time, by establishing a deeper connection between the tutor and the organization, instead of just the tutor and the student. Tutors are less likely to "fall through the cracks" with this new model.

Literacy Nassau looks forward to the implementation of the New Program Initiative because it is based on Literacy New York's extensive research. The economic downturn has led to many small agencies being obliterated; this streamlined, statewide method of training sets the stage for the possibility of future changes, such as Literacy New York becoming the "parent company" of Literacy Nassau. If/when that happens, Literacy Nassau, and all other Literacy Volunteer agencies in New York State, would become more sustainable.

## Celebrating Success: Recognition Night 2010

Literacy Nassau celebrated its' 29th annual Recognition Night on May 27, 2010. Hundreds gathered for the event, held to applaud successes in overcoming literacy challenges. This celebration of the efforts and accomplishments of Literacy Nassau's students, tutors, volunteers, and community partners is marked by Open Door, an anthology of student writing. In their own words:

"My goal is to complete my studies for a college degree in the USA. I want to be the first person in my family to graduate from college and get a better job. I want to help my child get every possible education."  
~ *Student Delmy Q.*

"Literacy Nassau has a group of people that volunteer. Thank you to all of you for your dedication to us. Literacy Nassau has opened the door for all the immigrants who need help." ~ *Student Mary C.*

"My name is Oznur. I came to the United States six years ago. I couldn't speak English. Now I am learning to write, read and speak English, because my tutor helps me. I am very happy now." ~ *Student Oznur C.*

The following people were presented with awards to celebrate their exceptional achievements:

**Anne DuPrey Student of the Year Award (Basic Learner):** Osner Solon

**Anne DuPrey Student of the Year Award (English Language Learner):**  
Norbert Lis

**Kathryn Seaman Tutor of the Year Award:** Eileen Goldman

**Volunteer of the Year Award:** Herb Aldrich

**Conversation Group Tutors of the Year:** Eric Bonge and Marie Marsac

**Outstanding Community Partners:** Freeport Memorial Library, Hillside Library, and Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock

**Anniversary awardees:**

**20 years:** Ellen Widlitz

**15 years:** Ruth Gelb

**10 years:** Patricia Cohen, Carol Donaldson, and Helen Asarch

**5 years:** Mary Eisenstein, Lawrence Kaplan, Marilyn Leibowitz, Kaye Negri, Nancy Quinn, Judy Ronayne, Leonard Shaw, and Peedee Shaw

## 2009-2010 Financial Results

<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$345,098</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Salaries, benefits, independent contractors	\$229,604
Rent, utilities, and related	\$50,245
Printing, publications, postage, and shipping	\$12,622
Technology, website, etc.	\$41,456
Conferences, trainings, and recognition	\$12,463
All other	\$8,428
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$354,818</b>
<b>Excess of expenditures over receipts</b>	<b>\$ (9,720)</b>
<b>Cash available June 30, 2010</b>	<b>\$92,188</b>

### Corporate and Private Foundation Donors

Literacy Nassau's work in 2009-2010 would not have been possible without the support of the following corporate and private foundations:

Bank of America Charitable Foundation  
BJ's Charitable Foundation  
Farrell Fritz, P.C.  
King Kullen  
John & Janet Kornreich Charitable Foundation  
Lockwood Family Foundation  
MSC Industrial  
Nassau County Bar Association  
National Grid Foundation  
New York Community Bank Foundation  
William & Maude Pritchard Foundation  
Resource Plus, Inc.  
RTS Family Foundation  
United Way of Long Island  
Verizon Foundation  
Walmart - We Care Fund  
Winthrop University Hospital

## The Year in Photos



July 2009 - Arthur Feldman becomes President of Literacy Nassau's Board of Directors.

October 2009 - Literacy Nassau moves to its new home on Smith Street in Freeport.



February 2010 - Karen Micciche, Literacy Nassau's new Executive Director, is hired (scheduled to begin in April).

March/April 2010 - With news of 38% total cuts to the Adult Literacy Education (ALE) line in the NYS budget, Literacy Nassau and Literacy Suffolk joined forces with the entire Literacy New York network to advocate and educate government officials.



March 2010 - Sharon Grosser, Director of External Affairs at Madison National Bank, is honored at Literacy Nassau's annual (un)Scrabble fundraiser.

May 2010 - Recognition Night celebrates the accomplishments of students, tutors, volunteers, and community partners.



The year ends on a hopeful note, with the appointment of 5 new board members, including Sean Grady (pictured).

## Current Board Members

Arthur Feldman, President  
Farrell Fritz, P.C.

Barbara Behrens, Vice President  
The Learning Net

Lori Alexy, Secretary  
HJMT Communications

Elizabeth McCarthy, Treasurer  
New York Power Authority

Johnny Gilchrist  
Literacy Nassau Adult Learner

Sean Grady  
C&B Consulting

Iris Grover  
Retired Teacher

Angelica Huynh  
Queens Library

Craig Jennings  
Business Coach

Sharrel Kamath

W. Scott Kershaw

Mark Leff  
Cisco Systems

Mary Stephens  
Nassau BOCES

## Current Staff Members

Karen Micciche, Executive Director

Brenda Alui, Director of Tutor &  
Student Services

Maria Reed, Bookkeeper

Barbara Fody, Literacy Specialist

Ocaria Silva, Literacy Specialist

Emma Shinn, Literacy Specialist

Steven Gouzos, Office Assistant

Theresa Parker, Program Assistant

## Retired Board Members

Marian Conway  
New York Community Bank Foundation

Adrienne Cooper  
Law Offices of Michael A. Haskel

Tina Sanacore  
Former Executive Director  
Literacy Nassau

Gary Schulz  
Nixon Peabody, LLC

