



August 2020
Issue 8

Literacy Chicago News

Chicago's Oldest Literacy Organization Stays Young

Literacy Chicago • 641 W. Lake St. Suite 200 • Chicago, IL 60661 • 312-870-1100 • literacychicago.org

Message from Our Executive Director



Richard Dominguez

We are now wrapping up our 5th month of online operations. Classes, tutoring, and all meetings have been virtual, yet nothing about our mission to serve the community has changed. We will continue to support our students on the other side of computer and phone screens as needed.

We appreciate the continued support of our volunteers and their hard work in teaching and tutoring students at a distance. I would like to extend congratulations to volunteers that have completed their training and began working with students during the pandemic, this has allowed us to reach more students and create a sense of progress in our efforts.

We have no immediate plans for reopening in person operations. For continuous updates please follow us on social media and our website where we will keep you up to date on when we will resume in person operations.

Please take care of yourselves and stay healthy.

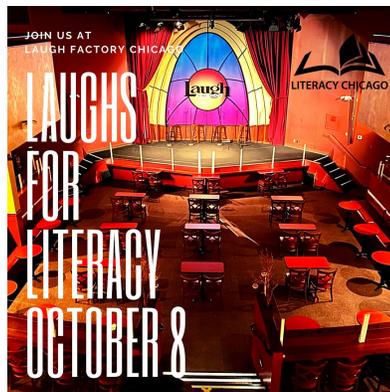
Richard Dominguez
Executive Director



Literacy Chicago All A-Board!

Upcoming Events

[Laughs for Literacy](#)



Laugh your mask off at Laughs for Literacy. All ticket sales support Literacy Chicago's efforts towards Adult Literacy in Chicago! This will be a fun-filled night of laughter with some of Chicago's best comedians. We are happy to have rescheduled our event so we can share this night with you! VIP ticket holders will receive an exclusive Literacy Chicago merch bag with exclusive items inside!!

Online Volunteer Tutor Training

Training from 6:30PM to 8:30PM

Thursday September 17, 2020

Friday September 18, 2020

Thursday September 24, 2020

Friday September 25, 2020

And 4 hours training to do offline

Join us for our online training! This fun-filled training course takes place the last two weeks of September. Four 2-hour sessions and about 4 hours of work offline are required to complete Volunteer Tutor Training. [Find out more about volunteering here.](#)

Continuing Events

Registration open for Fall quarter for GED and ESL classes.

Registration ongoing for online Citizenship, ESL Conversation, and Adult Literacy classes.

<https://www.literacychicago.org/register-for-classes.html>

CONNECT



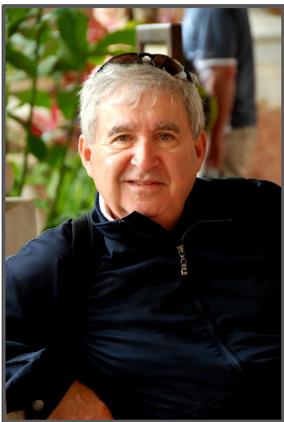
@literacychicago

Literacy Chicago's Executive Board

Marilyn Peterson: Board President

Some years ago when I attended Literacy Chicago's tutor training course, I learned that the students at that time ranged from the early 20's to well into the 70's. One of the older students was a grandparent who just wanted to be able to read stories to his grandchildren. I learned that when adults in the family have higher literacy skills, the children in that family are more likely to stay in school which increases their chance to succeed in life.

I cannot know the challenges our students face daily. Not being able to understand a job application, or medical information, or an election ballot is foreign to me. But I do know that higher literacy skills can break the cycle of poverty. It can lower healthcare costs. And an informed electorate benefits everyone.



Steve Ginsburgh: Vice President

Having been a Board leader for an adult literacy non profit in Houston, I looked for a similar organization in Chicago. Once I found Literacy Chicago I immediately volunteered to be a Board member. I became so committed to the organization that I became a tutor as well. I have had the same student for over three years now.

I gladly give my support to the Board and my student because I can see change happening for every student that commits to their own development with us. Too often one does not see change from their involvement with non profits.

Additionally, it is a kick to work with our energized staff and Richard's change minded leadership. Literacy Chicago is a great example where personal investment produces growing success.

Diane Coker: Treasurer

As a former educator, nothing is more fulfilling and enjoyable than to witness a student's spark!! This is what Literacy Chicago does as it acts as a conduit to lighting that fire and creating the spark for its students' success.



David Applegate:

I owe it all to comic books, which I began collecting at the age of ten. The Executive Director of our predecessor, Literacy Volunteers of Chicago, ran a benefit cartoon art auction at the Chicago Comic Convention, and as a winning bidder I wound up on the mailing list and soon joined the the Board. More than thirty years after my first involvement I'm glad to be back, because Literacy Chicago is like a second family to me and because reading is not only FUN but FUNDamental to success!



Bill Fehrman:

Literacy is foundational to success, citizenship and ultimately democracy. The work Literacy Chicago does empowers individuals and those individuals go on to be more engaged members of society and help to build healthier communities in our city and state. I am inspired by the work of Literacy Chicago, but more so by the work of those we serve.



Literacy Chicago's Executive Board Members also Include:



Shirley Evans Wofford: Director



Bridget Ross: Director

KEEPING UP WITH THE TIMES

Literacy Chicago, Chicago's oldest literacy organization has always been able to adapt to the times. The organization started out simply teaching adults to read over 50 years ago and has kept up with demand by offering new programs. Today, in addition to Adult Literacy, we teach ESL, Citizenship, Digital Literacy, Workforce Skills and preparation for the GED. As part of our Outreach program we have been working in churches, temples, Chicago public schools, and partnering with organizations who need math and reading instruction. Our volunteer tutor program allows each and every student to request a tutor for personal tutoring.

Until March 2020 nearly all of our programs took place in person. Then came Covid-19 and restrictions about gathering in groups. Within only two weeks we were able to transform all of our ESL, Citizenship and GED programs to online classes. All of our instructors and most of our volunteers were up for this challenge and they learned to adapt.

However the digital divide became very apparent as we worked to set up classes for our Adult Literacy students. These are the students who came everyday to classes at our center. They know each other well and we have always felt they are part of the Literacy Chicago family. Although some of them had taken our digital literacy instruction, it was difficult to teach them how to connect to an online platform.

Digital inclusion is important to Literacy Chicago. This is the idea that everyone, no matter how disadvantaged they may be, should have access to, and knowledge of how to information and communication technologies. There are three elements needed to make this happen, often referred to as the "Three Legged Stool". First a device that can connect to the internet, second a broadband and third the knowledge of how to utilize the services that can be found on the World Wide Web.

For the last three years we have been offering digital literacy classes to all of our students. However when they found themselves at home they didn't all have this "Three Legged Stool". Some had knowledge but no connection or device, others had devices but no knowledge and still others had knowledge and connections but no device. Literacy Chicago has been able to help this third group of students by lending them Chromebooks. However we are still in need of hot spots for others. In spite of these issues we have been able to help many of our students connect and they are currently enjoying their online classes and seeing each other every day.

As for our volunteers, we are very proud of the time and efforts they have put into learning to teach online! We now have six adult literacy and digital literacy programs up and running online.

We are expanding in spite of this pandemic. We are continuing to develop new partnerships, such as [Orland Park Library](#) where we are offering ESL conversation and Citizenship classes. We have also partnered with [C.H.I.C.A.G.O. Outreach Initiative](#) to offer an adult literacy program to people living on the South and Southwest side of the city.

Please reach out to us if we can be of service to you!

Literacy Chicago's Associate Board



I became involved at Literacy Chicago because I am passionate about reading. I feel strongly about helping others develop their reading and writing skills. After completing the Literacy Chicago tutor training, I was assigned an ESL student. We worked on vocabulary, comprehension and conversational skills so that she could interview more confidently for jobs.

Shortly after starting work with my ESL student, I started co-teaching a class on How to Write Your Memoir. The class has been a remarkable experience. Many of the students had never reflected on their life stories. No one had ever asked them questions about their family, aspirations or important life events. We talked and wrote about the possible components of a memoir. It takes courage and determination to be an adult learner.

In April 2019, I joined the Associate Board which has also been an excellent experience. Our board is committed to developing new and creative ways to raise money for the amazing array of classes and resources provided by Literacy Chicago and to share the great accomplishments of our students, staff and volunteers.

External Communications Chair - Laura Frankel



I'm in my first year with the Associate Board and learned about the organization through meeting Joanne, the Program Development Manager, at a storytelling event. I've enjoyed working with the organization to continue to think of ways to further the mission and continue to be an agent of change within the city of Chicago. Literacy is one of the great equalizers and it is such an honor to work with an organization that is providing opportunities for individuals throughout our city.

-Onyi Okoroafor

I got involved with Literacy Chicago because I am really interested in the importance of literacy for adults when it comes to reading and writing. I have a degree in creative writing and I've always loved to read since I was a little kid. I believe that's integral to the development of children and the growth of adults. I love the different workshops and classes that literacy Chicago has available for its students. I also really like the different types of events literacy Chicago has for example with the laugh factory and their annual gala. I'm excited to work on creative strategies when it comes to social media and marketing. I always like to be creative with anything I work on so I'm excited to see what Literacy Chicago has to offer in terms of expressing my creative skill set.

My professional background is Communications with a small nonprofit. So I understand a lot of the behind the scenes process with small organizations and implementing strategies to engage with your audience whether it be online platforms or in person. I mainly read a lot of fiction And some of my favorites or inspirational books have been because of Winn-Dixie by Katie DiCamillo , Langston Hughes poetry, or *Drinking Coffee Elsewhere* by ZZ Packer. But As for nonfiction books that have influenced me over the years would be *The Hillbilly* By JD Vance , *Evicted* by Matthew Desmond, and the *New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander. Those books really shaped my perspective on poverty, social mobility, discrimination, and economic opportunities. My favorite Chicago author would be Sandra Cisneros. *The House on Mango Street* is a classic.

Social Media Chair - Sarah Luyengi



Literacy Chicago's Associate Board

I work within client services at a market research firm. I really get to flex my marketing and project management skills in this position, and these are critical skills for planning events and engaging with the community. I joined the Associate Board because I was looking for a way to give back to the community, and realized that literacy and education related issues were something that I felt passionate about. It's always inspiring to work with people who are really interested in improving their lives, and I knew that by joining the board and supporting this organization I could help them achieve their goals. One of the first things I immediately noticed about LC that I loved was the openness and flexibility of the group. No idea is too out there, and everyone is very supportive.

A recent book I've read that has influenced me is called *Pachinko*. It's a historical fiction story about a Korean family that moved to Japan in the late 1800s/early 1900s. I personally really enjoy immigration stories, and this one in particular looks at the journey from a different lens than most Americans are used to reading or hearing about, with significant struggles and tribulations, and especially prejudice. I really admire people who are brave enough to leave everything they know to seek a life elsewhere, and I think every story is always so different. My parents themselves immigrated to the US from Poland.

-Patrick Jurczyk



Hi, my name is Marisol and I have been part of the Associate Board for two months now. What I love about Literacy Chicago, is its mission to equip people with skills that will boost their confidence, and hopefully their standard of living. Currently, the Associate Board is planning the upcoming online series "Voices of Literacy", and I'm really excited because it's my first event as a Board member!

I have a background in Advertising and communications and have volunteered in nonprofit organizations, such as the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) and St. Jude Research Hospital, which prompted me to join Literacy Chicago.

One of my favorite books is William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* because it uses allegories to depict how twisted civilization can become without rules. (Allegories take common ideas and objects to depict a more abstract idea). Really nerdy, I know, but we all have one of those novels. Happy Reading!

-Marisol Guzman



My background is in public relations and marketing, specifically in the healthcare field. This allows me to use my writing skills for various promotional materials (op-eds, marketing materials, etc.). On a personal level, I also have skills in videography, allowing me to capture our special events like the galas and share with our community of followers on social media.

I became involved with the Associate Board because my father is a reading specialist and so I grew up knowing the immense value of being literate, and I wanted to be able to help bring those who never had the opportunity the ability to read. I love that we offer FREE classes for adults. Literacy Chicago truly represents that kind of organization that is all about giving. If people can read, the whole city thrives.

One of my favorite memories of being on the board is seeing how well the 2019 gala came together, the space was beautiful and the attendees were so supportive. Our annual gala is a great way to spread the word to friends, family and colleagues about the importance of literacy, a topic that most don't think about on a daily basis because of their own literacy level. Many people simply don't realize how many people are illiterate, especially in Chicago. I'm also excited for the Laugh Factory event! I like the idea of building out virtual events, specifically finding authors to host sessions on diversity and inclusion.

- Jacob Voss



Literacy Chicago's Associate Board



Hello! My name is Abby McQuiston, and I am one of the current Co-Chairs of Literacy Chicago's Associate Board. I joined the Associate Board in April 2019 after attending a volunteer happy hour where I won the Raffle Prize of a bag of Trader Joe's goodies and a bottle of bourbon! Literacy Chicago obviously won my heart and I've been involved with the board ever since.

My professional background is in consulting and data analytics. While I help my clients achieve their data goals during the day, I was excited to have an opportunity to help individuals achieve theirs in my free time. Being a consultant means I am always putting my best foot forward, and I try to do the same for Literacy Chicago.

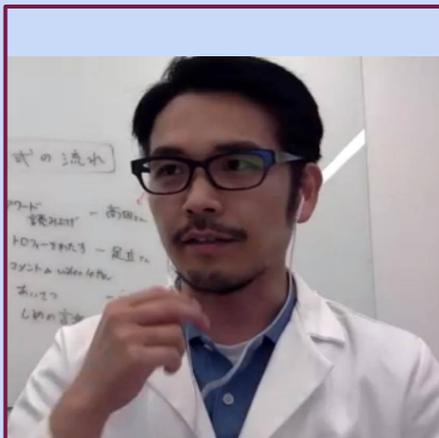
I love Literacy Chicago's dedication to helping its students achieve higher levels of literacy whether or not English is their first language. In the future I would also love to see Literacy Chicago partner with other organizations around the city that work to keep children in schools so that over time the number of adults with low literacy skills decreases. So far, I've had a blast working with the Associate Board, planning and executing events, and look forward to more in the future.

Co-Chair - Abby McQuiston



John Hennessy has been involved in adult education since he was nineteen years old and it has led him to meet some incredible people and to have some phenomenal travel experiences. John has taught ESL at private schools, public universities, community colleges, and for amazing non-profit organizations like Literacy Chicago. John believes strongly in the mission of Literacy Chicago and is proud to serve on its Associate Board. In his free time, John likes riding his bike, playing sports, and reading about, listening to, and watching the Chicago White Sox.

-John Hennessy



My primary job at Northwestern University involves fundamental research to discover something new and relevant to future medicine. Bioengineering techniques allow me to reproduce brain activity and seek essential mechanisms behind normal and pathogenesis settings.

Outside the lab, my roles are to jointly run two research communities in Illinois to facilitate scientific activities through exciting events around Midwestern United States as well as on virtual platforms these days. As a president, I have recently co-organized Japan XR Science Forum, a new style forum in a virtual world that uses virtual reality technologies to enable presentations, exhibitions, and many more for researchers, students, and their families.

I have been living in Chicago for more than four years. My favorite things are mainly domestic and international trips, as well as conversations in casual fashions. Literacy Chicago has brought me a tremendous gift of training skills, particularly useful in formal and informal conversations. I want to circle back to help any way I can with my current skills. I hope my experience will be helpful, and that I play a unique role in this community.

-Nozomu Takata

Literacy Chicago's Associate Board

Hi my name is Keay Crandall. I have been working with the Associate Board since February 2019. When I first started volunteering with Literacy Chicago I was finishing my bachelors degree in Anthropology at Loyola University of Chicago. I helped teach our citizenship class for a few months and then I began working with two students one on one. As I became more involved on the board and began teaching more, I decided to become an AmeriCorps Service member with Literacy Volunteers of Illinois so I could serve in a fuller capacity while earning a living stipend. My service year is just coming to an end August 2020, however I will still be staying involved with the Associate Board.

I love working on the board because were able to plan events and fundraisers that directly support our students and our volunteers efforts to support our students. I've always enjoyed reading and learning. At Literacy Chicago I am able to share those passions with everyone around me. I'm looking forward to the events that we have planned for the end of 2020. I think it's going to be a great mix of in person and online fun. Don't forget to get your tickets for our Laughs for Literacy comedy fundraiser hosted by the Laugh Factory Chicago!

Secretary of Internal Affairs - Keay Crandall



I consider myself a life-long learner — constantly seeking knowledge and gaining skills has been a passion of mine since I was very young. I also consider life-long learning a necessity, which is why I joined Literacy Chicago. Being able to help others discover the benefits of constantly learning is something that I feel is sorely needed in our society. Unfortunately, not all communities in our society have equal access to knowledge and skills, and I hope to change that. I look forward to making that change, by continuing as a tutor, being a member of the Associate Board.

-Julian Wiley



Other Board Members Include:

Membership Chair - Taylor Booth

Treasurer - Hinda Razzouq

Brandon Locke

Karen Kring

Akshat Patel

Tracy Schroeder

Liaison Literacy Chicago/Co-Chair - Joanne Telser-Frere

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

HELP MAKE LITERACY A REALITY



VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME

Become part of a team of like-minded individuals dedicated to reaching and advocating for Chicago adults who struggle with basic education

<https://www.literacychicago.org/volunteer.html>



BECOME A TUTOR

Give a couple of hours a week to help someone with their reading, learn English, or master essential skills to join the workforce

<https://www.literacychicago.org/become-a-tutor.html>



DONATE TO LITERACY

Your generous monetary gift will provide educational programs for Chicago communities in need and help adults to find gainful employment

<https://www.literacychicago.org/donate.html>



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