



December 2019
Issue 5

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

Winter is almost here and we are preparing for a new quarter of classes to begin. The Literacy Chicago family thanks you for your support throughout the years. Thanks to your contributions we have been able to provide educational and workforce skills to thousands of Chicagoans.

2019 has been a year of growth and expansion to meet the needs in adult education. In addition to the ongoing 10 courses that Literacy Chicago offers in GED, ESL, Citizenship and Adult Literacy, we have added 14 offsite classes in neighborhoods where we make the greatest impact. Student development and workforce skills have been on the forefront of our expansion.

As we welcome 2020 we are developing other relationships and partnerships throughout Chicago. We need your support to enhance and sustain this work. Your contribution will allow us to expand our outreach programs, continue developing innovative and creative classroom environments by bringing in the latest technology.

If you see opportunities in or around your neighborhood where adult education services are needed, please contact us today.

Richard Dominguez
Executive Director



Literacy Chicago News Highlights

November 9th

Literacy Chicago, hosted in partnership with Literacy Volunteers of Illinois, its second annual Casino Night fundraiser. The night was filled with Blackjack, Poker, Roulette and Craps. Everyone gambled for a great cause and many went home with fun prizes too! Check out the photo gallery for pictures.

Reflecting on 2019

For the second year Literacy Chicago has been developing career pathways within the carpentry construction field where we are partnering with an organization that provides hands-on training. Students earn two stackable credentials and their Department of Labor card. As students transition through this program Literacy Chicago works closely with them to reach their career and educational objectives. Our role is to increase their reading and comprehension levels and to teach contextualized mathematics specific to this field. Those needing assistance in obtaining their GED enroll in our evening classes while continuing the carpentry skills training during the day. In 2019, 89% of the adult students who participated in this program have found employment with our job placement assistance. This targeted student population is from the West Side and South Side of Chicago were many of them faced unemployment or were underemployed.

This year we have served over 500 students by helping them improve their education and their lives. We have had many success stories in 2019 but there are just as many stories of adults who need our assistance but can't attend our classes due to financial setbacks. Just recently, Jordan B., one of our students, told us that although he is benefitting from his reading classes, he can't afford to come to our offices in the West Loop more than once a week. He is faced with the conundrum of trying to find a job without having the education he needs. In order to serve students like Jordan, this past year our main focus has been on developing our neighborhood outreach programs.

Even though 14 additional classes have been established in 2019, many more are desperately needed. We have been able to establish our presence in these neighborhoods that are often overlooked by developing local partnerships and creating non-traditional classroom environments in schools, libraries, churches and community agencies. Thinking outside the box on how to deliver these programs have enabled us to target specific areas and increase opportunities for people to attend our classes. It's easier for Literacy Chicago to send teachers to these neighborhoods than it is for adult students busy looking for work and trying to support their families to attend our classes in the West Loop. Our programs are tailored to address the needs of each individual neighborhood. For example, we have several classes located within Chicago's Elementary Schools where parents drop their children off at school and then stay to attend one of our classes such as an ESL, GED or a Computer Literacy course.



CONNECT





HEADS UP!

Keep Up to Date on LC Events

Winter Classes Begin
January 6th

Registration for Winter Classes
January 6th, 7th & 8th

www.literacychicago.org/register-for-classes

Save the Date
June 17th

The 2020 edition of **Words on the Page – Top of My Bucket List** will be presented. Family, friends, volunteers, and community supporters are invited to save the date for this fun event! Come celebrate and hear our students read their own essays from the book. Purchase copies of previous editions of the book at our office or order here on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com).

www.literacychicago.org/words-on-the-page

September 17th 2020

LC will be celebrating its 52nd anniversary, so be sure to mark your calendar. This year's gala will be held at the [American Writers Museum](https://www.americanwritersmuseum.org), in the heart of Downtown Chicago. Stay tuned for additional details!

www.literacychicago.org/gala-2019-information

Volunteer Tutor Training

January 11th & 18th
February 8th & 15th

This fun-filled training course takes place on two consecutive Saturdays from 9 to 3. Two days of training are required.

[Find out more about volunteering here.](#)

QUOTE OF THE MOMENT

"The beautiful thing about learning is that nobody can take it away from you."

-B.B. King



John Coats

Vibrant Volunteer of the Month

John has been volunteering with Literacy Chicago for nine years. He started out tutoring students one on one, however for the last seven and a half years he has been teaching an Adult Literacy class as well. Our students love John. He recognizes that our students come from different backgrounds, yet they all have one thing in common. They all want to improve their reading skills.

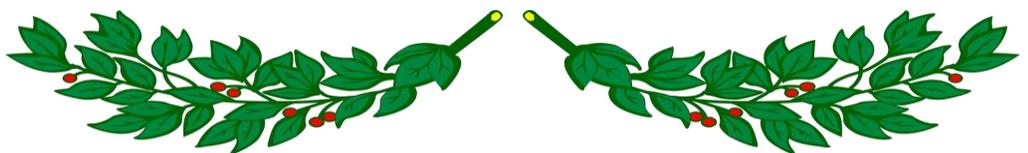
Some of John's favorite memories of working in the classroom are when students supported each other's learning and achievements. For example, one day students broke out in spontaneous applause when one of their classmates did an exceptional job of reading out loud. Other notable moments for John include when students progressed from his class to a higher level. He is always happy to see students making progress in their reading, writing, and comprehension.

John isn't shy about telling everyone he knows about Literacy Chicago. If it comes up in conversation, he tells them about the work he does to serve our students. He has even recommended that others volunteer to work with Literacy Chicago. John has been truly invested in the mission of Literacy Chicago and advocated for the success of all his students.

In November 2019 John stepped down from teaching classes. He will once again focus his efforts on tutoring individuals. We are happy to have John making an impact as one of our Vibrant Volunteers!

CITIZENSHIP CORNER

Congratulations to Susan Emami for successfully completing her naturalization process and becoming a United States Citizen on October 28th 2019!



Janie Moore

Star Student Spotlight



A Woman with a Mission

Janie Moore didn't learn to read in school, where she grew up in Jackson, Mississippi, or later on in Detroit, Michigan where she moved with her family. Janie was always in Special Education classes, however she just couldn't get the swing of reading - to her dismay.

At 16 years old she relocated to Chicago and moved in with her sister-in-law. She had to get a job doing something so she started babysitting. One evening the father of the children she was taking care of came home and asked, "Janie, do you enjoy babysitting?" Being an honest young woman she admitted that it wasn't her favorite activity but she needed to work. This man told her about a Job Corps program where she could get workforce skills training.

Janie has always been extremely talented with her hands. Thanks to her enrollment at Job Corps she quickly found a job making handmade men's suits at the renowned Hart, Schaffner & Marx company. Janie did very highly skilled work sewing suits from top to bottom and was very excellent at reading patterns. She worked there for 44 years, while raising two boys, until retiring just a few years ago. Today she sews quilts with her church group.

One of Janie's goals in life was to get her driver's license. Being a strong and determined person, it took her a year to learn the sight words needed for driving, and she worked hard to accomplish her objective. She passed her test with flying colors.

After retiring Janie decided that now was the moment to learn to read. She came to Literacy Chicago and joined the adult reading classes. Janie thinks it's important to read and says her life would have been different if she had learned sooner. "For example," she said, "If I had been able to read better I would have eaten in a healthier manner and probably wouldn't have developed diabetes." Now she can read labels to identify quantities of fat, sugar and sodium - ingredients that she has to watch.

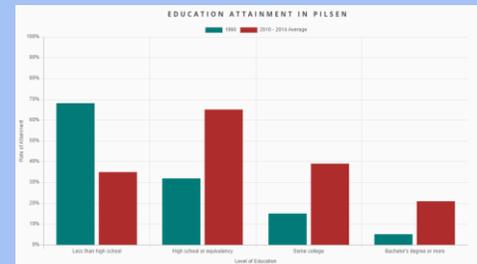
Since Janie has been coming to classes and working with her tutor, her life has changed. She's suddenly aware of all the words around her: in the street, in the bus, in stores. Whereas before she didn't even notice these words, today Janie tries to read everything and she is developing the skills to do so. In addition is learning to use a computer, can write her own checks and feels much more independent!



DID YOU KNOW?

Education Attainment in Pilsen

In 1970, Pilsen had one of the city's lowest median levels of school completion: only 8.5 years for adults over age 25. Only approximately 40 percent of adults in the neighborhood had completed high school.



Today, nearly 65 percent of adults in Pilsen have high school diplomas, and at the local high school, [Benito Juarez Community Academy](#), the graduation rate for the 2015-2016 school year was 80.9% – more than seven points higher than the average for Chicago Public Schools.

The gains are due to the myriad programs, services, and creative outlets fought for and hard won by local educators and activists.

In 1977, when Benito Juarez Community Academy finally opened its doors, CPS Superintendent Joseph Hannon stated that the school was "the direct result of a community that refused to take 'no' for an answer."

It began in the late 1960s and early '70s, when students at Harrison High School organized boycotts and walkouts. Frustrated that they were being put into special education classes if they weren't proficient in English, and discouraged from attending college, they demanded the school hire Latino teachers and counselors and provide bilingual education, among other things. It was the beginning of a movement.

Today they struggle to keep neighborhood schools funded as the community demographics shift. The number of families living in Pilsen has decreased in recent years and the local schools have lost students and much-needed resources as a result.

Administrators at Juarez are working to attract new students by drawing upon the cultural resources in the community and re-establishing their connection with local parents.

Sources:
<https://interactive.wttw.com/my-neighborhood/pilsen/education>

Photo Gallery

Casino Night November 9th 2019



Joanne Telser-Frere and Dorthy Miaso



Playing chips were exchanged for raffle tickets to be entered to win amazing prizes!



Place Your Bets!



[DONATE](#)

Help Support Literacy Chicago's Efforts!



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Photo Gallery

Casino Night November 9th 2019



Beautiful Bartender



Mystery Wine Bottle Grab



A big thank you to everyone who came out to the 2nd Annual Casino Night!

[DONATE](#)

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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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