

Brunner Literacy Center
Annual Report

2015



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The Brunner Literacy Center opened its doors in July 2011 —

Built on the foundation that literacy is a basic human right, we were committed to accepting all who came for assistance. Soon we were welcoming many adults, each with personal literacy goals.

From that tenuous but trust-filled beginning, the Center has responded to the needs of more than 700 persons who have come seeking help. Many were fearful, timid and really scared, but determined to get their lives on the right educational track. The stated mission of the Brunner Literacy Center is that it is a welcoming place for adults to reach educational goals. Our task was evident. When clients come to learn to read, to help a child with homework, to learn English, to get a GED, to take the next step in getting a job or to further their education, they are not turned away. It is no exaggeration to say that the Center is driven by client needs.

Personnel at the Brunner Literacy Center are its strength. From the Executive Director through the line of committed directors, assistants and more than 130 volunteer tutors, the Center thrives. The signature instructional format of one-on-one tutoring ensures positive educational results. It is a giant hinge for the personal success of many.



adults have come to BLC

This report is interactive —
click or touch on the table
of contents or the page
number arrows
to navigate.



Sustainability is enhanced through the governing Board of Directors. Members who serve are prominent leaders in their various spheres of influence. They represent many organizations and businesses from all corners of Montgomery County. They give valuable service while lending their support to the continuing effort to make the Center a welcoming place for adults to reach their educational goals.

Sr. Helen Weber, CPPS
President of the Board of Directors

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Friends,

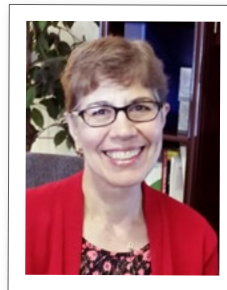
Last July, after a career that included working at a university and in for-profit and non-profit organizations, I made the decision to join the Brunner Literacy Center. I had some familiarity with adult illiteracy, but didn't have experience with the issue firsthand.

In the intervening months, I have observed the joys of those who made the first tentative steps toward reading, spelling, and math. I have met people who found employment because of our help in preparing them for license classes or testing, and GED preparation participants who somehow summoned the energy to attend classes after a long day at work or taking care of children. I have been edified by ESOL clients who work tirelessly to grasp the intricacies of our language, and have admired the patience and endurance of our "special" folks who come to our Center to learn and to experience community.

The Brunner Literacy Center is an exceptional place that attracts exceptional people. You will meet some of them – clients and tutors – in the pages of this report. I hope that you are as charmed by them as I am. They represent only five of the stories of the almost 800 clients who have graced our doors, each of them asking for our help in achieving his or her unique goal.

We invite you to join us in realizing our mission and sharing our successes as we and our clients continue to grow and change together. With your help, we can continue to meet their needs, and the needs of those who will present themselves at our doors in the months ahead.

Celine M. O'Neill
Executive Director



more than **130** volunteer
tutors

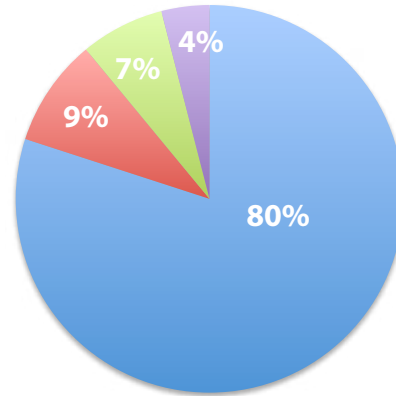


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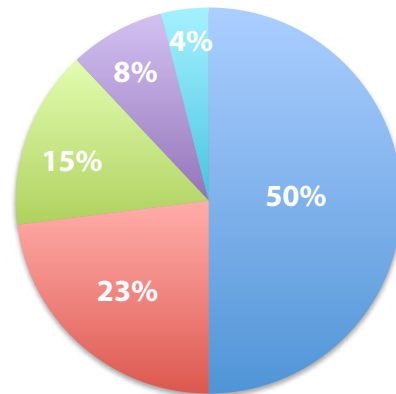
Revenue Sources 2015

● Grants ● Donations ● Fundraising ● In Kind



Expense Distribution 2015

● Educational Programming ● Administrative Personnel
● Facilities & Equipment ● Other ● Office Expenses



total clients served **123** in 2015

47 New Active Clients 120 Intake Interviews

- 32** Adult Basic Education Clients – **ABE**
- 29** General Education Diploma Clients – **GED**
- 28** English for Speakers of Other Languages Clients – **ESOL**
- 11** License Preparation Clients – **LP**
- 23** Adults with Other Needs Clients – **AON**

29 clients
met their goals in 2015

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 2 GED | 2 Computer Skills |
| 1 GED Preparations | 10 Improving Reading & Math Skills |
| 1 Citizenship | 1 College Readiness |
| 6 Improving English | 3 Class Readiness |
| 3 Job Search | |



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In Real Words: Ro Ro's Story

In 1953 twin brothers Gerard and James were born, and though they came into the world together, their lives took very different paths. James struggled to pronounce his brother's name, calling him "Ro Ro" instead, which has stuck with Gerard to this day. Though James graduated from Jefferson High School, Ro Ro had a harder time. Ro Ro dropped out of high school after the ninth grade, but his educational journey was far from over.

Throughout his adult life, Ro Ro struggled with literacy until he found the Brunner Literacy Center. He was almost sixty years old when he began working with his first tutor, Sister Carlotta, and with Sister's help, he committed himself to his goal of learning to read. After some time, Ro Ro found it hard to maintain his tutoring schedule and stopped attending his sessions. Sadly, Sister Carlotta passed away during their time apart. Two years later, Ro Ro resolved again to meet his literacy goal, and he returned to the Brunner Literacy Center, working this time with Becki, a dedicated teacher who had previously done Christian missionary work in Europe, Africa, and Central America.

Becki's strong commitment to serve the underserved, and her caring, vivacious personality were exactly what Ro Ro needed. Becki's encouragement compelled Ro Ro to work harder than ever. After a lifetime of illiteracy and years of hard work, Ro Ro can read.

Ro Ro has made a new goal for himself; he now wants to be a better reader than his twin brother, James. James and Ro Ro also have a sister who recently visited the BLC. When she heard Ro Ro reading aloud, tears sprang to her eyes. When asked why she was crying, she replied, "Ro Ro can read. Now I can text him in real words!"

Ro Ro is proud of himself too. Literacy has changed his adult life. He can finally read. He can send and receive text messages to his friends and family, and he can use "real words." Ro Ro's story is a wonderful testament to the fact that literacy really does change everything.

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Adult Basic Education (ABE)

The goal of this program is to bring an adult's reading and math competency levels to a 6th grade proficiency in order to meet the client's individual goals.



Becki and Ro Ro





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Dedication to the Diploma: Monique's Story

Monique first came to the Brunner Literacy Center in November of 2013, and she soon became one of the Center's most dedicated students.

Monique began her studies in the Adult Basic Education program, but has gradually worked her way up to pursuing her GED. Monique currently works one-on-one with three tutors to improve her math, writing, and reading skills, and on top of that, she attends five full-group GED classes every single week. She is achieving amazing successes all the time at the BLC, including earning perfect scores on her English tests.

Monique has worked with lots of different tutors throughout her time at the BLC, and that variety has directly contributed to her success, in part because all of her academic skills have built on top of her previous experiences with BLC tutors. Advancement in math lessons in particular have brought Monique a steady stream of qualified tutors to help her get to the next level. She currently works with Amy on algebra, geometry, and ratios in pursuit of her GED. Says Program Manager Barb Maloney, "Monique has the best grasp of the basic skills of anyone in the GED classes."

Monique has not undertaken her education alone. Her husband, Ronnie, is very supportive of Monique's studies and has helped ensure her the opportunities she needs to get ahead. Monique is an extremely persistent learner who never gives up, and family and tutor support makes all the difference for her. Coming to the BLC is like her job now, and she has no plans to discontinue her education.

"When you look at her binder [of completed work] and see all the things people have put there, you see how hard Monique has worked," says Barb Maloney.

General Equivalency Diploma (GED)

The goal of this program is to take an adult successfully through a typical high school curriculum including practice testing. GED classes are offered along with one-on-one GED tutors. Clients may need additional tutoring to bring them to 6th grade proficiency in some subject areas.



Monique (center) surrounded by some of her tutors and the staff of the BLC



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A Love of Language: Assane's Story

Assane came to the United States from Senegal to seek a better life for himself and his family. Since 2014 he has been working with his tutor Terri in the ESOL program at the BLC. A speaker of Arabic, French, and some Spanish, Assane is no stranger to foreign language learning. When he came to the United States, he wasted no time in beginning his English studies. The first time he took the bus in Dayton, he didn't understand the conversations around him except the word "Africa," the two women behind him were talking about the man from Africa – him. "Assane is one of the bravest people I know," says Terri. He has overcome many challenges during his time studying at the BLC, and he is not afraid to take on more.

At the BLC, ESOL students work one-on-one with their tutors to make sure their lessons progress at an appropriate and stimulating pace. The individualized nature of the program allows clients to feel comfortable and supported in their work. "It's wonderful. I am very happy when I come here," Assane says. "I like every time I learn something new in my life."

Assane's passion and curiosity for English idioms and expressions led to the Center procuring study materials on the subject that are now used by multiple tutors and clients to improve conversational English abilities. He says, "My dream is to talk well and write well in English." Assane makes progress every day, turning his dream into reality.

Recently Assane earned the Brunner Literacy Center's Attendance Award. Ironically, Assane was unable to attend the Awards Ceremony, so the BLC later held a special ceremony while his wife and daughter were in the United States on a travel visa.

One of Assane's goals is to work hard enough to be able to bring his wife and daughter to the United States permanently so they can continue building their lives together. Everyone who knows Assane believes in him and is confident in his ability to reunite with his family and accomplish any other goals he sets for himself in his life.

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Terri, Assane and his wife and daughter

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

The goal of this program is to provide an adult not native to the United States with conversational English. The program is tailored to individual needs which may or may not include preparation for United States citizenship.



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On the Road to Success: Abder's Story

Moving his entire family across the Atlantic Ocean was only the first step on Abder's journey to create a new and better life for them. Originally from the central African country of Chad, Abder moved to Dayton, Ohio in the late 1990s and immediately began working hard to make his dreams a reality.

Abder came to the United States to build a better life for his family, and he needed a better job to make that happen. Before he could get a better job, he needed to earn his Commercial Driver's License (CDL), which meant passing a timed, 6th-grade-level math competency test.

In 2014 Abder found the Brunner Literacy Center. He met with several people to develop a plan to reach his goals. Barb Maloney, the BLC's Program Manager, paired him with a couple different tutors to work on these areas. Rita helped him with his math skills, while Nancy helped him with his job search.

Abder stopped coming to the Center for some time. Sometimes clients need to spend more time at work or with family, and they are always encouraged to come back when they are able. After a few months, one day in true, dramatic, celebratory fashion, Abder walked into the BLC with some news. Not only did he finish his timed math test, but he passed with flying colors and went on to earn his CDL. Abder continued to show his dedication to his education by returning to the BLC for reading lessons and professional guidance.

Abder made a great impression on the volunteers and staff of the Brunner Literacy Center, and he is remembered fondly and would be welcomed back again at any time. "I wouldn't be surprised if he walked in here today," says Barb Maloney. "I always tell them, once you come in, you're always a member."

License Preparation (LP)

The goal of this program is to help an adult secure the appropriate proficiency (oral or written) to earn a license or to be eligible for a license class.



Barb and Abder



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Meals and Mail: Martha's Story

In June of 2012, sisters Mary and Martha came to the Brunner Literacy Center with a shared goal: to be able to read their mail. The sisters had grown up in a share-cropping family in Metter, Georgia, and as children they only attended school on rainy days because only then were they excused from working on the land. As a result, their education had never been a priority, and their reading skills were lacking.

The women were in their early 70s when they came to the BLC, and they were frustrated with not being able to understand their mail. Typically clients at the BLC work one-on-one with their tutors, but we made an exception for these sisters; they were matched with Nan, a retired primary school teacher who worked with Mary and Martha together. Martha remembers her mother's advice: "She said, 'Y'all stay together and make each other happy.' And that's what we did." The sisters' bond took them far.

With Nan's help, Mary and Martha met their goal in August 2012. The sisters had been receiving assistance through Meals on Wheels, and Meals on Wheels had sent notices to let their clients know that their service would not be available on Labor Day. Mary and Martha were thrilled to bring their notice into the BLC, triumphantly announcing to the staff that they knew they would not receive their meal that day. They didn't care about the food. They cared that they had met their goal.

The sisters continued to attend classes at the BLC, diligently taking the bus to Salem Plaza to continue working on their reading and writing skills. When Mary was diagnosed with cancer, she told her doctors that she would not go to any appointments that interfered with her tutoring sessions, and Mary upheld that promise. She attended the BLC until she moved to Hospice. In early 2015, Mary passed away.

Now Martha gets a ride to the Center from her brother Roosevelt. She still attends tutoring sessions with Nan, and she has found a deep love of writing about her life. Martha writes stories about her childhood in Georgia, her life in Ohio, and her time at the Brunner Literacy Center. Says Nan, "I have learned a little bit of everything about harvesting Georgia crops!" Martha's joy and passion for learning are an inspiration to all who know her.



Nan and Martha

Adults with Other Needs (AON)

The goal of this program is to help an adult achieve his or her goals for other literacy needs.



Tutors and Volunteers

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Catherine Aubrey	Gregory Gondek	Pat Maloney	Anna Maria Schaefer
Alison Austin	Gerri Gordley	Joan Marquis	Mary Ann Schiller, CPPS
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Maryann Barter	Diane Grant	Kent McClelland	Ruth Schmaltz
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Steve Bellitt	Peg Haley	Chris McGuinness	Ronald Shearer
Sandy Bench	Nan Halton	Stephanie McGuinness	Jean Sichman
Thomas Bench	Sandy Hartman	Sandy Mefford	Bob Snyder
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Literacy Center**
Literacy changes everything

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Staff Members

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Maryann Bremke, CPPS — Vice President of Mission

Barbara Maloney — Program Manager

Ruth Ann Meyer, CPPS — Grant Writer

Pat Gill — Center Receptionist

2015