

Lifting Lives with **LITERACY**

CHANGING LIVES IN **BRUNSWICK COUNTY** THROUGH ADULT LITERACY

The ability to read and write is an open door for life-transforming opportunities.



**BRUNSWICK COUNTY
LITERACY COUNCIL**

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OUR STAFF

Melissa Warren
Executive Director

Susan Railing
Program Coordinator

Patrice Agner
Admin Assistant

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

It is a privilege to reflect on my first year as executive director with Brunswick County Literacy Council, and it has been inspiring to see long-standing donors, and new supporters, seasoned tutors and volunteers, and those just starting their journey with BCLC, to come together and make 2021 an impactful year for the families of Brunswick County we serve.

As I've learned, literacy is much more complicated than not being able to read or write.

Students often come to the Council to learn basic literacy skills or to improve proficiency; others want help understanding math, preparing to take a high school equivalency test, or learning English as a second language. Some need to focus on computer skills or business literacy to be more successful in the job market. Many lack the financial or health literacy abilities to manage all they need to do for themselves, their families, their jobs, or the community. The Literacy Council can address all of those needs, and that help is available at no charge.

We don't take the challenge of empowering adults to read and prosper lightly. In Brunswick County, 17% of adults lack basic literacy skills. 14% of families in Brunswick County live below the poverty line. 26% of NC adults over 25 did not graduate from high school. 28% of adults living below the poverty line in NC have less than a high school education.

We work everyday to change those statistics because we believe that literacy is attainable for EVERYONE.

With sincere gratitude for your support of our mission,



Melissa Warren

BCLC MARKS A MILESTONE 40 YEARS



May 2021 marked 40 years of service improving the lives of more than 2,500 adult learners in Brunswick County by providing them with the literacy and work/life skills they need to succeed.

Brunswick County Literacy Council was established in 1981 based on the principle that literacy is critical to the growth and self-sufficiency of individuals and their families. That mission continues today. We work to improve the lives of Brunswick County families through seven specific program areas:

- GED Preparation
- Adult Basic Education
- Work/Life Skills Development
- Financial Literacy
- Computer Literacy
- English as a Second Language
- Citizenship

COVID-19

2020-2021 brought several challenges to the council with COVID-19. Though it initially impacted our ability to provide in-person instruction, we were able to operate successfully by revamping procedures amid the restrictions. Always looking for the silver lining, the pandemic introduced new opportunities as well. Adult students who were struggling with job and income loss, homeschooling, and food and housing uncertainties--issues made worse with limited literacy skills--came to us for assistance.

The End of an Era

2021 continued to bring other changes to BCLC, including the retirement of Dorothy "Dot" Hoerr, the Council's executive director for the last 10 years. Dot has transitioned to the Board of Directors, where her guidance and expertise are much valued. In her tenure, she increased the number of students who received their GEDs, became citizens, initiated a workforce program, expanded the public face of the organization, and was instrumental in recruiting new volunteers, tutors, donors, board members, and community partners.

Dot officially passed the BCLC torch to Melissa Warren in January of 2021. She admittedly has "big shoes to fill" but is so thankful for the opportunity to get to continue to work with Dot.

*Thank You
DOT!*



FINDING HER "WHY"

Empowering Adults. Improving Communities.

SANDRA MCNEIL'S INSPIRATION TO READ COMES FROM A PLACE OF PURE LOVE: HER GRANDCHILDREN

Sandra McNeil is a typical BCLC student. She is dedicated, attentive, humble, and thoughtful. She has been a student at BCLC since September 2020. Her literacy journey started because she wanted to improve her own reading and writing so she could help her grandchildren with homework and read to them. And, read for her own enjoyment.

Before coming to Brunswick County Literacy Council, Sandra was reading at a 3rd or 4th grade level. Like most BCLC clients, she was shy and lacked confidence in her ability to learn how to read. But we've got some special tutors who know how to turn that confidence around.

Helping Sandra build her vocabulary and comprehension is Sue Railing, BCLC's program coordinator. While Sue's day-to-day responsibilities coordinating tutor-student matches and other programs continue to grow, she makes the time to personally tutor several students, including Sandra.

Although Sandra was unsure of her abilities in the beginning, Sue's patience and tenacity for "getting it right" helped Sandra become more confident and comfortable.

"She used to say I can't read. We no longer use the word *can't* in anything we are doing," Sue says.

The most significant improvement--besides her confidence level (she can do this!)--is that she will read out loud now and read full paragraphs without missing a word. And most importantly, she understands what she is reading. In the short time Sandra has been working with Sue, she's gained a reading level!

Sandra is just one of the Council's heart-warming success stories over the last 40 years. Our tutors provide much more than instruction. They help learners transform their lives, sustain their families, and strengthen their communities.

WHAT'S YOUR
Why?



What Success Looks Like

“Working with each of these students and the hundreds of others is more rewarding than you can imagine. When a student “gets” a math problem, or reads a sentence, or can understand a science or social study question, it is amazing. Not everyone who comes into our office has the same goal. Each individual is unique and has a specific need. We provide and tailor our programs to meet those specific needs. That is what makes the Literacy Council stand out. All of our tutors are special individuals who willingly give their time every week in detention centers, recovery centers, ESL classes, PC classes, at the Literacy Council, and in libraries across the county. --Sue Railing, BCLC Program Coordinator”

Brenden

When Brenden dropped out of school in the ninth grade, he could never have imagined where his life would take him. After years of bouncing from one job to the next, and battling drug addiction, he was ready to turn his life around. In August 2019, at the age of 35, and after five months of tutoring with BCLC volunteers, Brenden passed all four of his GED tests—English, math, social studies, and science. Today, he is working at a job he really enjoys, and has the support of his family and his sobriety.

Irina

Irina, a native of Russia, accomplished something that’s even difficult for many US-born professionals—she passed the North Carolina Real Estate exam and earned her license. But she wanted to improve her English reading, writing, and comprehension skills so she could better serve her clients. She came to BCLC in May 2021 for help. It was important for her to meet one-on-one with a tutor. They continue to meet twice a week, and her comprehension of the English language has improved, as has her speech. And we’re happy to say, she recently sold her first house as a Real Estate agent!

Justin

Since 2015, BCLC has been providing GED tutoring assistance to inmates at the Brunswick County Detention Center. To date, 34 of those students have completed their GEDs. Justin is one of them. He left high school after the 11th grade and found himself on the wrong side of the law. In June 2017, he wanted to take full advantage of the GED program offered at the detention center. He worked with absolute determination and quickly passed all four tests in August 2017. In August of 2021, Justin reached out to BCLC for copies of his test scores—he needed them because he was headed for college!

Ashley

When Ashley came to us in July 2019, she so much wanted to get her GED, but wasn’t sure she would be successful. She originally started her journey in a group instruction setting but didn’t receive the one-on-one attention she deserved. While juggling motherhood and other challenges, Ashley made time for her tutoring sessions. In 2019, she first passed her science exam. Then came math—her most difficult subject. She continued her tutoring sessions, and in January 2021, Ashley passed the math test and completed her GED!

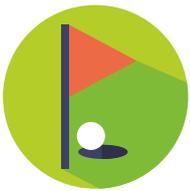
2021 Highlights

Despite the obstacles and uncertainties that lingered in 2021, we did have the opportunity to resume some in-person events this year, including our 31st annual golf tournament and 31st annual Spelling Bee and Silent Auction.



\$40 for 40

To commemorate four decades of assisting adults 16 and above with reading and writing skills so essential to daily life, the Council launched a "\$40 for 40 Years" campaign during the month of May. Thank you to all who contributed. Your donations not only have an immediate impact, you make a difference in the community for many years to come.



Golf Tournament

Can you believe it? We held our 31st annual fundraising golf tournament on September 18, 2021. 107 players enjoyed a great day of golf at the beautiful Carolina National Golf Club in Bolivia, NC. Thanks to all of our sponsors, players, and supporters for coming out to make a difference in the lives of Brunswick County families. No one won the \$1,000 hole in one contest, but there is always next year! Save the date: September 17, 2022!



Readers Are Leaders

We held our first ever ever "Readers Are Leaders" campaign this past September during National Literacy Month to help encourage everyone --young and old--to challenge themselves to become literate. We had 30 different books read--that's one for each day--during the month of September. Community members from all backgrounds participated. You can still enjoy all the videos on our website at: www.bcliteracy.org/readers-are-leaders.



Spelling Bee & Silent Auction

31 years ago, BCLC hosted its first Adult Spelling Bee and silent auction. On October 19, 2021, the tradition continued! Eleven teams competed for the coveted title of BCLC Spelling Bee champ! Congratulations to Brunswick Community College for taking home the trophy. And a big round of applause to Seaside United Methodist Church in Sunset Beach for being runner up! Save the date: Next year's Spelling Bee will take place at Odell Williamson Auditorium on Tuesday, May 24, 2022!

THE GIFT OF LITERACY

HOW YOUR GIFT MATTERS

BCLC is fortunate to receive a portion of our funding from community and corporate grants. The majority of that funding cannot be used for operational expenses, so every dollar from individual donors helps us keep our doors open. Here are a few ways how your donation makes an impact:



\$1,500

Supports the development of a workplace, financial, health, or computer literacy program.



\$550

Keeps our office open for one week.



\$500

Helps train 20 tutors and volunteers.



\$250

Pays for an online subscription to practice GED tests.



\$110

Keeps our office open and accessible to students and tutors for one day.



\$50

Provides the first level of books for one student and tutor.



\$30

Covers the cost of workbooks for one student for one curriculum level.

3 easy ways...

TO HELP BCLC CONTINUE ITS MISSION.

Go to

www.bcliteracy.org.

Click

the donate button in the lower right-hand corner.

Choose

how you want to give:

1

ONE TIME

Donate a single amount for a one-time contribution.

2

MONTHLY

Choose a recurring contribution each month. Any amount is OK! From \$3 to \$300, we appreciate whatever you can give.

3

ROUND UP

Automatically round your credit or debit card transactions up to the nearest dollar and donate the "change" to us! You can do this as a separate donation or as an "add on" to a one-time or monthly contribution.



OUR DONORS

Thank you to all the individuals, businesses, foundations and organizations whose ongoing generosity has enabled our organization to inspire so many Brunswick County residents to improve their quality of life and their economic opportunities through literacy, but also contribute to the overall economic well-being of our communities.

Individuals

Andrea L Rogers
Angela Ruel
Ann Gutleber
Ann Samsell
Ann Warren
Ashley Newton-Lazarrino
Carol Whitham
Carolyn Henretta
Cathy McGill
Cecil Ann Simmons
Christopher & Kathryn Egger
Christopher Niewold
Col. Willie Gore
Dan Levine
David & Janet Foster
David Young
Deanne Neuman
Denise Donnelly
Dennis & Marianne Iavarone
Donald Melvin
Donna Giles
Dot Hoerr
Dr. & Mrs. Christopher Isenhour
E Faye Coggins
E Kay Brannon
Edwin & Suzanne Gurski
Eileen Farrell
Elizabeth Gradel
Elizabeth Johnston
Eric Tryggeseth
Eugene & Rebecca Steadman
Gary Baughman
George & Margaret Yu
George & Mari-Lou Wong-Chong
Gregory and Darlene DeCrane
Gregory C Miller
Jane Evans
Jeff Mount
Jerry & Patsy Thrift
Jim & Peggy Antunes
Jo Ann & Steve Mathews
Joanie Hoffman
Joanne Astin
Joe & Christine Volpe Jr.
John Cunningham
John Vernon
John Walz
Judith Vasile
Judy Cunningham
Julia Saccente-Levine
Kandace Williams
Karen Williams
Kathy McElroy
Kim & Carolyn Loucks
Kimmery Martin
Kristi Thorne
Larry & Patricia Carlisle
Len Trizinsky
Lia Zygmunt
Linda Rudick
Linda Sinclair
Lisa & Bob Von Sprecken
Louis & Lavora Washington
Lynn Hollett
Mabel Sudderth
Margaret Gresham
Margaret White
Mari VanSchaften
Mary Pat Lynch
Maryann Redington
Matt & Karen Ernst
Melissa Warren
Nancy McLaughlin
Nancy Toler
Patrice Agner
Patricia Green
Paul White
Paula Woods
Peggie York
Richard & Helen Skorny
Robert & Marilyn Priddy
Ron Melvin
Ron Veronese
Rosemarie Hawkins
Ruthann Trange
Sharron Rutzel
Stacy Benton
Stephen Burns

Steve Corbett
Sue & Richard Railing
Susan Shook
Tammy Kesky
Thomas Burke
Thomas Kelso
Tom & Elizabeth Burke
Tom & Jane Propst
Virginia Brown
William & Carol Fredericks
William & Kay Hogue
William E Fredericks
William White
Yvonne Moody

Businesses

A+Pro Services, Inc.
Ace Hardware Calabash
Ace Hardware Leland
Ace Hardware Southport
All in Bloom Landscapes
Amelia's Grille
Angelo's Restaurant
Arlie Gardens
Armour Associates
Art Catering & Events
Atlantic Auto & Marine Inc
Atlantic Elite Crete & Landscapes
Back Porch Ice Cream Shop
Bagel Dock Café
Bald Head Island Club Golf Course
Bald Head Island Conservancy
Barn and Beach Design
Battleship North Carolina
Baxley Smithwick PLLC
BB&T Shallotte
Beach House Harley-Davidson
Beaches-n-Cream
Beachin' Day Spa
Beachwood Golf Club
Bell & Bell Buick GMC Trucks
Bella Cucina
Bellamy Mansion Museum
Bella's Pizza
BEMC
Berry, Padgett & Chandler, PLLC
Better Beach Rentals, Inc.
Blue Crab Blue
Boardwalk Billy's
Bob's Stained Glass
Boundary House
Brentwood Restaurant & Wine Bistro
Briar Patch Floral & Gift
Bridgewater Wines, Leland
Brunswick Air, Inc
Brunswick Community College
Brunswick County Pest Control
Brunswick Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery
Brunswick Plantation Resort & Golf
Brynn Elizabeth Jewelers
Bull Frog Corner
Burg Dog Grill
Butcher of Brunswick
Café KOA
Calabash Fishing Fleet
Calabash Garden Tea Room
Calabash Napa Autocare
Calabash Photography Art and Curios
Calabash Seafood Hut
Callahan's of Calabash
Cape Fear Custom Jewelers
Cape Fear National
Cape Fear Seafood Company
Capt. John's Seafood House
Carolina Creations Landscaping Inc.
Cat on a Whisk
Cattail Cottage
Champion Resort Maintenance
Cheers-Sizemore Insurance
Chianti South
Chili's
Christmas House
Christopher's Pizza
Clark's
Classic Colors Paint & Body Shop
Clubs at St. James
Coastal Craft Beverage Company
Coastal Insurance & Realty, Inc.

Businesses Cont'd.

Coastal Pediatric Dentistry
Coastal Wine Room
Crow Creek Golf Club
Crown Park Golf Club
Dockside Seafood House
Dry Street Pub & Pizza/Blue Cow Grille
Edwin L. Styers, DDS, PA
Elph's Accounting
Ella's of Calabash
Elrod, Jones & Lawrence Financial
Farmstead Golf Links
FEAST OIB
Fishy Fishy Café
Food Lion #1607
Golf Chic Bags
Grape & Ale
Grapevine Restaurant & Lounge
Health Markets Insurance Agency
Heritage Fresh Market
High Tide Aviation
Holden Beach Massage
Holly Clark
Home Depot #3648
Hwy 55
Ingram Planetarium
Island Bicycles LLC
Island Seafood Co.
J.P. Russ & Son
Jerome's Steak & Seafood
Jilla's Gourmet Kitchen
Joseph's Italian Bistro, Inc.
Kimball's Furniture & Design
La Cucina Italiano, LLC
Lantana's Gallery & Fine Gifts
Legends Golf Resort
Links at Brick Landing
Lockwood Folly Country Club
Lori's Golf Shoppe
Mansfield Brothers LP Gas
Maria's Pizzeria
McDonald's
Meadowlands Golf Club
Mmm Que Rico
Mr. P's Bistro
Museum of Coastal Carolina
Nana's Main Ingredient
North Carolina Symphony
Novant Health, Inc.
Oasis Bar & Grill
Ocean City Chevrolet
Ocean Isle Inn

Ocean Ridge Plantation Golf, Inc.
Oliver's on the Cape Fear
Oyster Rock
Parson's Table
Party Time #1 and #2
Petals & Presents
Photo Phactory Selfie Studio
Planet Fun
Ports of Call
ProTee Practice Range
Publix North Carolina
Purvis Tax Services, Inc.
RD White & Sons, Inc.
Ricky Evans Gallery
Riegelwood Federal Credit Union
Rivers Edge Golf Club
Robinson's Hardware / Gray Gull Motel
Sandpiper Bay Golf & Country Club
Sea Island Trading Co.
Seascape Designs
Shallotte Nails
Sharky's
Shoe Center, Leland
Shores Express Car Wash, Leland
Shuckin' Shack Oyster Bar
Side Street Bakery
Silver Coast Winery
Smithfield's Chicken 'N Bar-B-Q
Southport Cheese Shoppe
Sunset Dental
Sunset Properties
Sunset Slush
Tee-time Café
Thomas B Gutierrez CPA PA
Tidewater Golf Club
Tranquil Harbor Restaurant
VCA Doggone Healthy
Wild Bird & Garden
Wilmington Water Tours, LLC
Wine Rack

Municipalities

Town of Calabash
Town of Holden Beach
Town of Oak Island
Town of Ocean Isle Beach
Town of Sunset Beach

Religious Affiliations

Knights of Columbus Our Lady of the Rosary
Our Lady of the Rosary Columbiettes
Saint Peter Lutheran Church

Seaside United Methodist Church
Seaside United Methodist Men
Shallotte Presbyterian Church
St. Brendan Columbiette's
St. Luke Lutheran Church
Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Organizations

Brick Landing Book Club
Brick Landing Women's Club
Brunswick County Democratic Party
Brunswick County Republican Party
Brunswick County Sheriff's Office
Brunswick Plantation Neighbors in Service
Brunswick Town Chapter of DAR
Friends of the Library of Brunswick County
GFWC Of South Brunswick Islands, Inc.
NC Society Colonial Dames XVII Century
Ocean Ridge Charities Association
PEO Women's Club
Rivers Edge Book Club
Shallotte Lions Club
Shallotte Rotary Club, Inc.
NARFE Chapter 1894 Bruns. County

Foundations

Bob Jones Charitable Foundation
Brunswick Community College Foundation
Dollar General Literacy Foundation
Duke Energy Foundation
Louisiana-Pacific Foundation
McKesson Foundation
Specialized Energy Consultants
The Dan and Linda Lynes Gift Trust
The Lori Martin Fund
The New Horizons Foundation
United Way of the Cape Fear

Memorials

Bernadette V Dupont (Harry Stanhope)
Cathy McGill & Tina Kugler (Voncile McGill)
Debra Key Newhouse (Voncile McGill)
Elsie S Haight (Harry Stanhope)
Everett & Barbara Landen (Harry Stanhope)
Frederick Carano (Harry Stanhope)
John & Kim Curry (Voncile McGill & Anna Jo Belcher)
John & Juanita Harry (Voncile McGill)
Larry & Patricia Carlisle (Voncile McGill)
Linda Kurta (Harry Stanhope)
Magnolia Greens Cornerstone Book Club (Harry Stanhope)
Mark & Doris Hampton (Harry Stanhope)
Phylis Boykin (Harry Stanhope)
Robert and Regina McCullough (Harry Stanhope)
Sally Proctor (Harry Stanhope)



BRUNSWICK COUNTY
LITERACY COUNCIL

Thank You

TO OUR MAJOR 2021 SUPPORTERS



DOLLAR GENERAL
LITERACY
FOUNDATION



ProLiteracy®



INTERNATIONAL  PAPER



Interested in making a difference in someone's life through adult literacy? Become a tutor, board member, or volunteer with BCLC.

Call us at 910.754.7232 or go online and fill out an application.