



# The Power of Blended Learning



**Center for Literacy**  
Learning for Life

2015-2016 | ANNUAL REPORT



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# Dear Friends,

When life gave us lemons, we made lemonade. We turned the state budget crisis — which forced us to shut down our classes for two months — into an opportunity to take a deep breath and plan a new way of serving our students. We introduced “blended learning,” in-class instruction combined with online learning, to help address students’ need for individualized instruction, flexible options and more time to increase their computer skills.

We also became a *myPLACE*<sup>SM</sup> campus: a single point of entry for adults seeking basic academic skills remediation, English Language Acquisition training, secondary school credential preparation, workforce and college preparation. *myPLACE* campuses are sponsored by the Office of Adult Education, City of Philadelphia.



**Blended learning is using both online and in-person learning experiences when teaching students.**

While digital literacy is important, we also believe in the power of in-person meetings. Our three learning coaches provided case management to 331 students this past year, helping our students to improve their academic, social and professional outcomes.

We are grateful for our board of trustees, donors, partners and staff for their support during this difficult time. The good news is that we were able to continue our tutoring services during the budget impasse, with limited staff and volunteer tutors. CFL began as a volunteer tutoring program in 1968 and we are honored to still be able to serve the community in this way.

With much appreciation,



*Peggy*

Peggy Leimkuhler  
Chair, Board of Trustees



*Michael*

Michael Westover  
President and CEO

# Center for Literacy *Serves* Those in Need...



**37% of adults**  
in Philadelphia are considered  
**low literate**



**81% of CFL students**  
read at **6th grade level**  
**or below**

In 2020, **65% of jobs**  
will require education  
**beyond high school**



**69% of CFL students**  
are unemployed and  
**available for work**

... and *supports* them on their journey  
to a higher education and a career.

**80 volunteer  
tutors**

spent 3,859 service  
hours



**44 hours**

of instruction per  
enrolled student,  
on average

**47 community  
classes**

in Adult Basic Education (ABE),  
GED test preparation, English as  
a Second Language (ESL),  
Family Literacy and  
Out-of-School Youth

**600 students** were  
forced to leave their classes  
because of the state budget  
impasse



**1,083  
students**

**283 students**  
achieved U.S. citizenship skills



**331 students** were  
counseled by a learning coach

**334 students** raised their literacy  
skills by at least one educational level

Above figures are from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016.

Approximately **90 cents for every dollar** that you donate to  
Center for Literacy goes to support our students.

# Successful Student: Eric Jackson

Eric Jackson, at age 47, found the courage to learn how to use a computer.

When Eric Jackson came to Center for Literacy (CFL) about a year ago, he did not have much experience with computers. At age 47, he found the courage to learn how to use a computer, and then became determined to buy one for himself.

Growing up in North Philadelphia with his mom, stepdad and five siblings, Eric dropped out of school when he was in 11th grade. "I was hanging out with the wrong people, I thought cutting school was cool. I started smoking cigarettes, then drugs came into play. I made some bad choices and paid for them," he said. "I'm not going to cry at my failure. I'm not going to give up my educational hope. It's never too late to get a high school diploma. I'm in it for the long haul."



Eric has worked as a dishwasher, a security guard and a housekeeper. When you name a fast food restaurant in Philadelphia, he most likely worked there. His goal is to get his GED and go to culinary school to become a professional cook.

Eric followed the standard enrollment process at CFL, which includes the online course, *Introduction to Adult Learning and Careers*. He went to the Comcast Computer Lab at CFL to get extra help to finish the online course. "Chandra [Chandra Waters, instructional technology specialist, CFL] took the time to help me learn, was patient and recognized the growth in my computer skills. She encouraged me."

After he completed the online course and orientation, he began in a low Adult Basic Education class, taught by Michelle Jensen. Like all others in his class, he logged-in to Plato Courseware, which allows him to work at his own pace on assignments tailored to him, on a classroom-supplied Chromebook, or on a desk-top computer in the computer lab.

Eric had Michelle as his teacher for almost one year. "Michelle brought my spirit up, made me think more, pushed me to work harder. She was a leader and saw a leader in me," recalled Eric. When Michelle moved to California, Eric moved on to an equally gifted teacher, Steven Hawkins.

With more encouragement from Steven, Eric moved up to an intermediate Adult Basic Education class, also taught by Steven. And he kept coming to the computer lab to work on his Plato assignments.

"Eric is dedicated to learning," said Steven. "He took to the computer right away."

After his first lessons on a CFL computer, Eric decided that he wanted his own computer. He put a jar in his closet and put whatever money he could spare in the jar every week. A year later, in November 2016, Eric had enough money, \$500, to buy his own laptop. "It was a Christmas gift to myself," he said. "I shopped around and went to Best Buy and purchased a computer, preloaded with Windows 10. I paid \$436 for it, with virus protection. I brought myself dinner and lunch with the change."

"I called Comcast and they walked me through the process of installing a wireless router. I created my own e-mail account and an account with Skype, and installed apps. I practice on the computer at least 30 minutes a day, plus using Plato at home to get closer to my GED. I also use the internet to play games and to watch movies. My favorite homepage is Bing," Eric said with a smile.

# More Successful Students



## Luis Colon

After a rough start in life, Luis rediscovered what an education could do for him. After he received his GED® from CFL in 2008, he immediately enrolled in Community College of Philadelphia and obtained an associate degree in behavioral health and human services, transferred to Chestnut Hill College, and obtained a bachelor's degree in human services. Making his mom even prouder, in May 2016 he procured his **master's degree in social work** from the College of Public Health at Temple University, and later his license in social work. Now he has a job as a recovery guide with NHS, working with individuals with mental and intellectual disabilities.



Kathryn's loss of hearing did not prevent her from being on the dean's list and obtaining her associate degree in human services in July 2016, and becoming a peer instructor. "Kathryn always had a goal. She never gave up," said Vann Delaine, her CFL instructor. "I'm so proud of her. It was a big deal for her to enroll in Kaplan University, taking online college courses, and a bigger deal for her to graduate with her **associate degree**." She is now a volunteer peer instructor, with a certificate from the City of Philadelphia's Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services, to conduct group sessions with adults recovering from drugs and alcohol.

## Kathryn Kenny



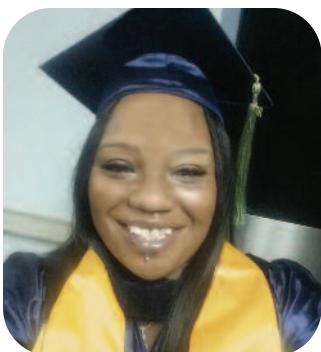
## Adam Stewart

Adam was on the front page of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (11/9/15) representing the 600 students who were unable to attend CFL classes during the state budget impasse in 2015. "I'm almost 30, and I can't read," he said to the *Inquirer*. "By not passing a budget, they are pushing people who want to make a change back into the streets." At age 12, he started selling drugs and was in jail four times. Now education is a big part of his life. Adam comes to class regularly, with instructor Larry Hastings. Over the past year, he has **moved up one grade reading level**. He helps other students that do not have much experience using computers.



Speaking almost no English, before coming to the U.S. in 2014 from China with her husband, Jing Jing had a bachelor degree in interior design and seven years of working experience. She immediately found CFL, started with CFL tutor Donna Lambert and worked hard to improve her English skills. Jing Jing is now in CFL's **highest level English class**, taught by Hanna Schlosser, and is studying for the TOEFL exam in order to enter a master's program in the U.S. She also volunteers in a local ESL class where she helps to teach low-level ESL students from China. She recently gave her first public speech in English to a group of foreign Fulbright scholars who were visiting CFL.

## Jing Jing Sun



## Latasha Williamson

Latasha dropped out of school at an early age and had her first child when she was 17. Now with four children, she said, "I wanted an education for myself and for my kids." She enrolled at CFL in 2011, while working the night shift as a cashier at gas stations. It was difficult for her to get up in the morning and go to classes. "I was going to quit many times, but Mr. Mark [instructor Mark Edmonds] never gave up on me," Latasha said. With confidence, she applied for admission to Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) two days before she passed her last GED® test. She received her **associate degree** in criminal justice from CCP, **with honors** in May 2016, and is now working on her bachelor's degree at Alvernia University-Philadelphia Center, in Elkins Park. She also works as a direct support staff in a group home in Willow Grove.

# Center for Literacy Staff



**STANDING, L TO R:** Shaquanda Clemons, Larry Hastings, La'Kisha Wilford-White, Jacqueline Monts, Lynette David, Roberta Hodges, Hanna Schlosser, Michael Antosch, Shaina Kapeluck, Mary Wilson, Victoria Lynam, Carolanne Mitchell, Bess Davis, Jemal Davis, Steven Hawkins, Debbie Pope-Williams, Scott Bostwick, Cynthia Allen, Tina Baker-Gee, Ashley Garnett, Danielle Fredane.

**SITTING, L TO R:** Sr. Janice Owen, Mitchell Berger, Robin Robinowitz, Meghan Agnew, Vann Delaine, Michael Westover, Mark Edmonds, Si "Tracy" Li, Maribel Ojeda.

**MISSING:** Akilah Evans-Carter, Brian Jones, Veronis Lawyer, Leo McNeil, Melanie Menkevich, Shawanda Spivey, Duane Waters, E. Samira Woods.

We thank our staff for their steadfast commitment to helping our students

*Achieve Their Goals.*



Working on their math skills in their Adult Secondary Education class are (l to r) Tara Brown, Jacqueline Turner and Kyle Slaughter. Mark Edmonds is their instructor.



L TO R: Olena Konochuck, Chun (June) Liu and Lorenzo Martinez are practicing their job interview skills during their high intermediate/advanced EL Civics class at the Independence Library. Their teachers are Hanna Schlosser and Si "Tracy" Li.

# Tutors 2015-2016

We thank our tutors for their dedication to our learners and for their compassion.

Marybeth Acac  
Rhonda Alsbrook  
Niraj Amin  
Lakshmi Balaji  
Gina Bennett  
Mia Bonds  
John Bradwell  
Lori Brannigan  
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Ronald Cahan  
Nicole Campbell  
Shuwen Cao  
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Digvijay Singh  
Mark Swirsky  
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Carroll Toney  
Victoria Turlik  
A.C. Usher  
Marge Vance  
Carole Weathers  
Ellen Wehle  
Deborah Williams  
Joseph Williams  
Danielle Gardner Wright  
YuXing Xia  
Sara Zimmerman  
Rachel Zolf

## Pat and Theresa

A health educator, Pat McGovern Gorchov's love of reading led her to the Center for Literacy (CFL). "I don't think that I could live without reading. The printed word is very important to me. I wanted to share that love with other people," said Pat, who then decided that the CFL was the place to volunteer.

In April 2014 she was matched with Theresa Cade, who had a fear of reading. Theresa's worry soon vanished after she met Pat and they became friends. They meet twice a week after Theresa gets off her work as a housekeeper. Pat has showed her how to write a check and balance a checkbook, and how to use a computer, including e-mailing. One of the ways that they practice writing is for Theresa and Pat to compose essays about an event each has been to, and then edit it.

In September 2016, Theresa began attending Adult Basic Education classes at CFL with instructors Samira Woods and Shawanda Spivey. She is still actively meeting with tutor Pat as well.

"I admire Theresa's persistence. She takes three modes of transportation to get to the tutoring sessions. I like that Theresa shares her experiences with her family – that family support is so important," said Pat.

Theresa truly values Pat and the CFL. "Pat is great and caring. I thought I would never get to this point. I wouldn't stop coming to CFL as long as Pat is here."



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We thank our board for their passion and leadership.

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Cat in the Hat, and his friend, join board members Ashley Del Bianco (on the left) and Peggy Leimkuhler (on the right) at CFL's Speed Read Challenge.

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Center for Literacy is deeply grateful for each and every gift.

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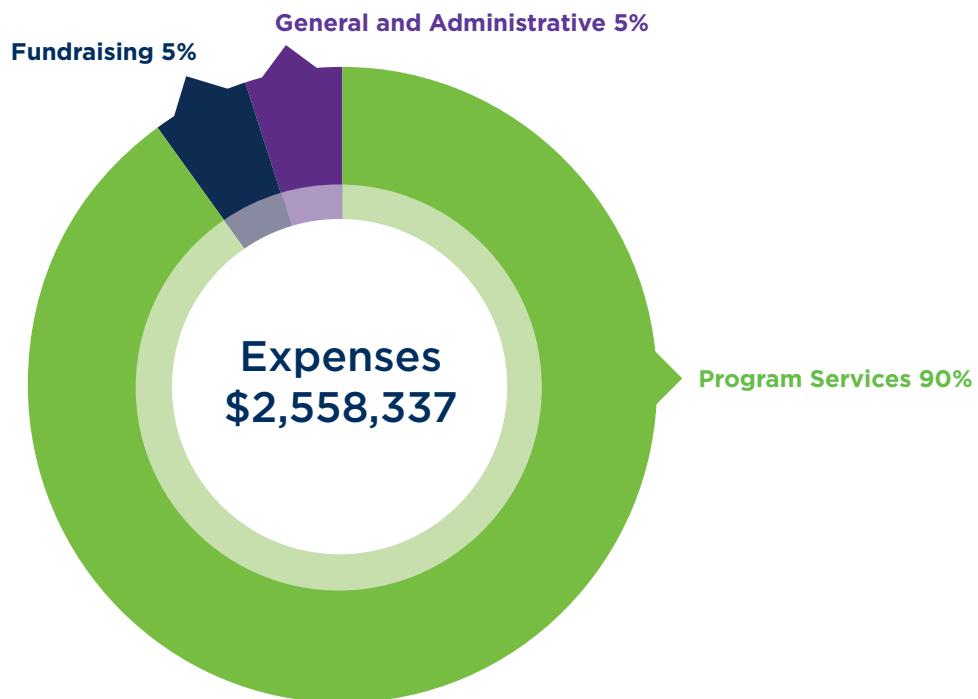
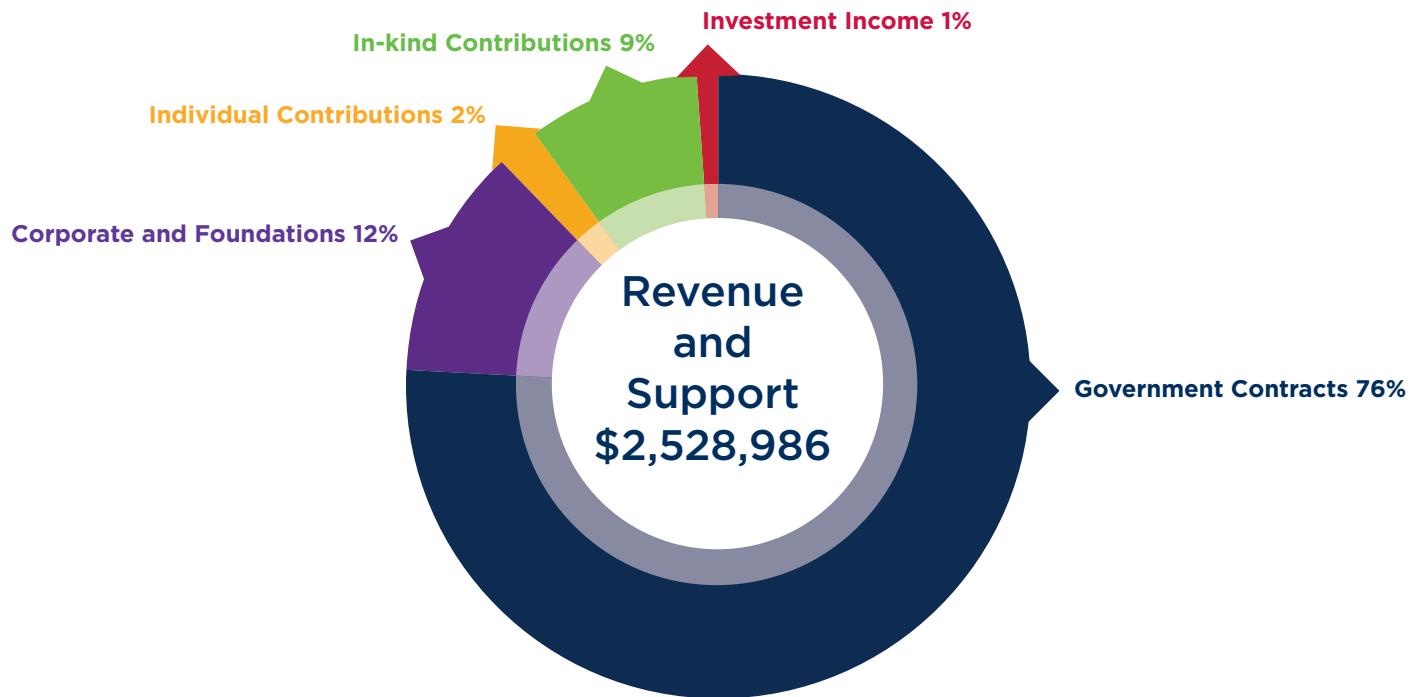
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## In memory of Ronnie Colcher:

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Pamela McKeon  
Anita Slocum  
Bernard Sobel  
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(FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2015 TO JUNE 30, 2016)



Special thanks to the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Philadelphia Youth Network for their support.

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