

## ***Tutor Orientation Info***

**Literacy Council of Washington County Inc**  
**15 Randolph Ave, Hagerstown MD 21740**  
***literacyofwcmd.org***

Office Administrator: Brenda (Tues/Thurs 11am-2pm)  
301-739-4208  
*office@literacycouncilofwashingtoncounty.com*

Tutor Trainer: Becky  
301-988-8003 C, 301-432-5780 H  
*becky4lit@msn.com*



### **WHAT DOES BEING “LITERATE” MEAN IN TODAY’S WORLD?**

It means being able to:

- ✓ Read and write
- ✓ Do math
- ✓ Use technology
- ✓ Apply this knowledge to real-life situations in order to function as a parent, employee and community member.

It’s hard to believe, but approximately one in five adults (20%) can’t read or write English at a functional level. They are our **Basic Literacy** students. They can’t fill out employment forms, use the phonebook, understand prescription labels, help wanted ads and road signs, or do simple tasks taken for granted by most of us.

There are also people moving into our country who don’t speak English; they are our **ESL** (English as a Second Language) students. They begin by learning to speak conversational English, then learning to read and write English.

Tutors are the backbone of the Literacy Council. They provide direct service to our clients through individualized lessons. In the U.S., nearly 20% of adults are functionally illiterate, 10% do not have a high school education and 34% of the foreign-born has trouble speaking English. Without literacy or English skills, they face higher rates of joblessness, poverty, abuse, exploitation, medical problems and mortality. Through their efforts, our Tutors in Washington County are helping to change these distressing statistics.

### **The LITERACY COUNCIL of WASHINGTON COUNTY**

- Our office is located in Trinity Lutheran Church, 15 Randolph Avenue, Hagerstown MD 21740.
- Visiting our office:
  - ✓ You can only access our office when the church is staffed -- usually Mon-Fri 9am to 3pm and Sunday mornings.
  - ✓ We make every effort to cover our office on Tues and Thurs from 11am-2pm but you may want to call before coming in.

✓ Drive down North Potomac Street and turn left on Randolph Avenue. You can park on Randolph or in the TLC parking lot behind the church. Come to the **RED door** on Randolph Avenue. *If the door is locked*, press the buzzer and wait for an answer, then announce you're going to the Literacy Council office and you'll be buzzed in. Come in the church, turn left down the long hallway to Room 106 (last office on your left.)

- We were founded by a small group of people in November 1986 and were known as the Northwest Central Literacy Council. Our program focus was to “*Respond to the community’s mandate to upgrade adult basic skills with particular emphasis on offering conversational English skills to the foreign born.*” The office closed in the mid-90s and our funds and materials were held in trust by the Frederick Literacy Council. In 1996, a Hagerstown resident attended a Tutor Training Workshop in Frederick. While talking to the Frederick tutor trainers, she was persuaded to reopen the Hagerstown office. In January 1998, she and 9 other interested people met at the Hagerstown library for their first meeting to form the Washington County Literacy Council.



- We are an active member of ProLiteracy Worldwide and are a non-profit educational organization of volunteers (**Tutors**). We're dedicated to helping fellow adults (**Students**) learn basic life function skills including reading and writing English by providing free, confidential, one-to-one tutoring. This individual instruction is what sets us apart from other agencies where people can go for similar help.

- We invite you to read our Purpose and Goals on our website ([literacyofwcmd.org](http://literacyofwcmd.org)).

## **BECOMING A TUTOR**

### ***What are the requirements to become a Certified Tutor?***

- Be fluent in English,
- be at least 18 years old,
- possess patience, enthusiasm, dedication, flexibility, cultural sensitivity and a desire to help someone you've never met,
- attend our 2-Day (14 hr) Tutor Training Workshop.
- commit to meeting with your student on a regular basis, prepare adequately for each lesson, and report your volunteer hours and your student's progress to our Office Administrator each month.

In return, you'll receive the following rewards: an increased knowledge of the English language, more understanding about other cultures and people, and a sense of accomplishment from helping someone enrich their life and achieve their goals.

### ***Do I need to know a foreign language to teach **ESL**?***

- No, because all lessons are conducted in English.

### ***How do I become a Tutor?***

- Attend our 2-Day Tutor Training Workshop (held every Spring and Fall for two consecutive Saturdays from 8:45am-3:45pm at Benevola United Methodist, 19925 Benevola Church Rd, Boonsboro MD). Both days are required to receive your Tutoring Certificate.



- ✓ The Literacy Council of Frederick County holds their Workshop four times a year; you're welcome to train in Frederick (if their dates work better for you) and tutor through the Hagerstown office.
- Read this entire document before coming to the Workshop.
- So we have enough training materials for everyone, register to attend the Workshop via email ([office@literacycouncilofwashingtoncounty.com](mailto:office@literacycouncilofwashingtoncounty.com)) website ([literacyofwcmd.org](http://literacyofwcmd.org) / *Becoming A Tutor / Online Registration*) or phone (301-739-4208).

### ***What will I learn at the Workshop?***

- Using the Laubach method of teaching -- a phonics-based multi-sensory approach -- our objective is to prepare you to teach reading, writing and spelling to native-born non-readers and low-level readers in our **Basic Literacy** program.
- You'll also learn to teach conversational English, reading, writing and spelling to the foreign-born in our **ESL** program.
- We'll also introduce you to many other tools and resources that are available for your use.

### ***What is the Laubach Method of Teaching?***



- Dr. Frank Laubach was a missionary and linguist working in the Philippines in the 1930s. He found that the Moro tribesmen had no written language. He isolated 16 sounds in their spoken language, assigned English letters to the sounds, wrote a language and began a literacy program. When the Depression came, there were no longer funds for his literacy program. Dr. Laubach told the chief of the Moro tribe that the reading program would end. The Chief said no, each person who had learned to read would teach someone else or he would kill them. The Moro were headhunters, so this was no idle threat. No one died and the literacy program continued. That's how we got our motto – “Each One Teach One.”
- The Laubach materials are designed to be used by people with no teaching experience and include very detailed, scripted Teacher's Manuals. It's been used in over 100 countries and 312 languages with over 100 million people being taught to read.

### ***What is the time commitment in being a Tutor?***

- Training:
  - ✓ You'll have invested **13 hours** of classroom instruction at our Tutor Training Workshop and **2 hours** for homework.
- Tutoring:
  - ✓ We've found that Students make the most progress if they're tutored **1 to 1.5 hours twice a week**. (Based on our most recent Annual Report, Hagerstown tutors and students meet anywhere from 1 to 18 hours a month.)
  - ✓ You may spend **1 to 4 hours a week** preparing your weekly Lesson Plans and traveling to/from tutoring sessions. (Hagerstown Tutors are logging in 1 to 12 hours of prep and travel time each month.)
  - ✓ We ask you to commit to tutoring for at least **one year** (especially with a **Basic Literacy** student, because if you stop they'll think it's their fault and they've failed again). If you know from the beginning that you can't tutor for that long, tell us, so we can tell the student from the start that it will be temporary. If you have to stop before your student is finished, we'll assign him/her a new tutor when one is available.
- Reporting:

- ✓ At the end of each month, you're required to email our Office Administrator with the above-mentioned tutoring hours and prep/travel time. We need this information for our ProLiteracy Annual Report that documents what the Literacy Council accomplishes to fight illiteracy in Washington County.

## **OUR STUDENTS**

### ***How do you find students?***

- They find us. Our students come from diverse educational and economic backgrounds and are often referred by county agencies, churches, family members, friends or other students.
- Most **Basic Literacy** students have low self-esteem and a fear of failure. Some know they can't read, and we must protect their secret. Many have learning disabilities; this means they're unable to perform up to the level of their intelligence and must be taught differently than they were in school. We'll teach you how to do this.
- Some **ESL** students are illiterate in their own language as well as in English, while others are college graduates and professionals but lack spoken English. Secrecy is not usually necessary with **ESL** students, because there is no stigma attached to their inability to speak or read English. We do not ask for documentation of immigration status. If it's important to you, then tell us you want a student that is documented.
- Many students are "multi-level," having different levels for different skills. We succeed with a wide variety of students because of the individuality of our one-on-one tutoring program and our multi-sensory methods. Students' skills vary greatly and we will have evaluated him/her before they're matched with you.

### ***What determines a student's eligibility for the program?***

- Being over 18 years old with a desire to learn and a commitment to make time for lessons is all that's required to become a student.

### ***How long does it take for a student to learn?***

- It varies depending on their background, goals, and frequency of lessons.
  - ✓ The average **Basic Literacy** student can take three years to complete the program.
  - ✓ The typical beginning **ESL** student stays about two years, while those with more education stay about a year.
- If the student has the ability and willingness to continue, our materials can bring him/her to a level that makes them eligible to enroll in the Hagerstown Community College (HCC) Adult Basic Education (ABE) program.



## **TUTORING**

### ***How do I get a student?***

- After completing the Tutor Training Workshop, you can choose either a **Basic Literacy** or **ESL** student. If you have no preference, we'll match you with a student from either program. Tutors and students are paired according to availability, location and tutoring interests.

### ***Where do I begin?***

- Once you're paired and given your student's contact info, it's your responsibility to call him/her and schedule the first meeting. Call within 2 weeks. Many students are nomadic; they tend to

move away and/or change their cell phone numbers a lot. If your student speaks little to no English, you'll be given an English Speaking Contact (ESC).

- ✓ Before you call, have an idea where and when the two of you can meet. Lessons are held any time and place mutually convenient for the tutor and student. We encourage well lit, quiet, neutral locations and public places. We've had people meet at the local library branches, their church, our office, any Sunday School room at Trinity Lutheran Church, the atrium at Robinwood Medical, a corner booth at a restaurant, a picnic table at the park, etc. Sometimes, particularly with **ESL** students, tutoring is done at the student's home or place of employment if the student lacks transportation. It's your decision whether to go to a student's home – we will not ask you to.
- ✓ Once you've made contact, agree on a meeting time and place, and exchange phone numbers. Plan to meet outside, trade physical descriptions or what you'll be wearing, and say you'll be carrying a red folder (something to identify you). You'll have to approach the student first, they won't approach you.
- You'll need to come in our office and pick up the student workbooks and teacher manuals that you'll need before your first meeting. Our Office Administrator will usually have them pulled and labeled for you.
  - ✓ You can pick up books/supplies whenever the church is open (Mon-Fri 9am-3:30pm and Sunday mornings.) However, sometimes the church is not staffed and no one will answer the buzzer. A good time to stop by is Tues/Wed/Thurs from 11am-1:45pm when the Food Bank is open. If our Office Administrator is in, she's happy to go over more details about your student and help you in any way.
  - ✓ You may always borrow your Teacher's Manuals and other materials. If you want to write in your books, we ask that you donate their cost to our book fund if you are able. Most books costs about \$15-\$20.
  - ✓ Students should have their own Skill Book (learn from) and Workbook (write in). Your student is allowed to borrow these books and return them when finished. If only a portion of the book will be used, you can copy pages from it or use a plastic sheet protector and dry erase marker. If he/she wants to write in the book, we ask that they pay \$10 for it.
  - ✓ If/when tutoring stops for any reason, the tutor is responsible for the return of all materials to the LCWC office in a timely fashion and telling our Office Administrator so she can update the student's file.
- At your first meeting, try to get there early to make sure the location is suitable and then you can take the student directly to the meeting room.
  - ✓ Bring paper/pens for your student because they're usually anxious and forget them.
  - ✓ If both parties are a little nervous it's okay to just sit and chat and get to know each other.



Talk about your backgrounds, hobbies, tutoring goals, learning strengths and weaknesses. Try to make your student comfortable with you before you even open the workbook. On the other hand, we also have students who have been waiting for help for a long time and are motivated to get started; they can't wait to open that book. The two of you can figure out what works best for you.



### **A LITTLE MORE INFO**

- If your assigned student doesn't work out or you can't make contact, there are always others on the Student Waiting List. Please don't just give up and go away. Don't be discouraged by no-show students or those you are unable to make contact with. This happens for various reasons (cold feet, lack of commitment, lack of time, moved, etc). Please let us know and please don't just go away. You are needed. We always have more students.
- Tutoring, by nature, is a rather solitary activity, but we want to keep in contact with you. Please keep your Office Administrator informed of your tutoring hours. **This is very important!** We need this information for our ProLiteracy Annual Report and to document what the Literacy Council accomplishes for Washington County. Also, keep your Office Administrator informed when tutoring starts, your student's progress, if/when tutoring stops temporarily or permanently, any name/address/contact info updates for both you and your student and any problems or questions you may have.
- You are never "on your own" after the Workshop is over. Call or stop by our office. We have plenty of resources and materials for your use. Our Office Administrator and Tutor Trainer are happy to help and answer any questions you may have.
- We promise confidentiality. Remember, especially with **Basic Literacy** students, you must protect their privacy. They could not only be very embarrassed but could lose their job if someone finds out they can't read. Keep your student's name private. There is no need to tell. We want you to talk and share about your tutoring experience, but there is never a need to disclose the identity of your student.
- Even though tutoring is free, we gladly accept donations from tutors, students, friends, patrons, churches, businesses and community organizations. We receive no funding from the state or county. We exist solely on donations.
- The Literacy Council wants and needs your help. But if tutoring isn't for you, there are other ways you can support us. We always need staffers for our office, fundraisers, artists, newsletter writers, publicity and marketing help, public speaking, people to make refreshments for our Workshops, officers/Board members, computer/website maintenance, and tutor trainers. Donations of office supplies are always needed. Financial support is greatly appreciated. One way to help us is to use *smile.amazon.com* each time you shop online. Just input The Literacy Council of Washington County and we receive a donation from your purchase. Thank You!



For quick literacy statistics, go to <https://www.proliteracy.org/Resources/Adult-Literacy-Facts>.

For more information or to register for a Workshop, contact us via phone (301-739-4209), email ([office@literacycouncilofwashingtoncounty.com](mailto:office@literacycouncilofwashingtoncounty.com)) or website ([www.literacyofwcmd.org](http://www.literacyofwcmd.org)).

We look forward to hearing from you!