

Brunner Literacy Center presentation to Trotwood City Council

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The Brunner Literacy Center is a Trotwood-based non-profit that helps adults improve their reading, writing, math and conversational English skills. Founded in 2011, the BLC has since served more than 1,000 adults and helped them to pursue personal goals such as to improve their literacy levels, earn GED credentials, and become U.S. citizens.

Student Stories

Martha and Mary came to the Brunner Literacy Center several years ago, hand in hand. The twin sisters had a straightforward goal; they wanted to learn to read their mail. Martha and Mary were in their early 70s when they began attending tutoring sessions at the BLC, and they needed to work from the ground up, beginning with letter recognition. The sisters had grown up in a sharecropping family in Georgia, and as little girls they were only allowed to attend school on days that it rained. After two months of studying with Nan, their tutor, Martha and Mary triumphantly came into the Center waving a flyer from Meals on Wheels. Due to the Labor Day holiday schedule, Martha and Mary would not receive their normal meals that weekend. They didn't care about the food. All they cared about was that they could read their mail. Mary passed away about a year later, but Martha still comes for tutoring, and she writes her life story a little at a time.

Monroe was a star athlete in high school. An impressive basketball player, Monroe's presence on the team was critical enough for the school that his teachers constantly advanced him to the next grade level despite his academic struggles. As a result, Monroe's reading and writing skills were very low for most of his life. After school and after basketball, Monroe found stable employment in electronics. He could read and understand blueprints and technical schematics, and he was able to support himself until he lost his job and could not read or write well enough to fill out a job application to drive a truck at the Dayton airport. He came to the BLC for help, began tutoring, improved his skills, got a job, and decided to "come out" to his church as being illiterate so other people would have the courage to change their lives like he did.

Big Problem - Local Problem

Thirty-six million adults in the United States are low-literate, meaning that they read below a third-grade level. (PIACC Adult Skills Survey, 2013). Forty-three percent of adults living in poverty and 70% of welfare recipients are low-literate (National Institute for Literacy, 2005).

In Montgomery County Ohio, this equates to nearly 60,000 adults that read below a third-grade level, which prevents them from obtaining a living-wage job, adequately supporting a family, navigating healthcare, tax and other complex systems and leading a productive, successful life. Of these low-literate adults in our area, 46,000 are living in poverty. Illiteracy is linked to

unemployment, crime, and poor health. It is a primary cause of generational poverty (National Institute of Adult Literacy and ProLiteracy, 2017).

History and Mission

The Brunner Literacy Center was founded in 2011 by two Sisters of the Precious Blood, who discovered from the 2010 census that 30% of their Trotwood neighbors did not have high school diplomas. Being life-long educators, they decided to do something about it and created the Brunner Literacy Center. Six years later, the Brunner Literacy Center has served over 1,000 low-literate adults.

Students work towards goals such as earning the GED, getting a job or better job, learning the English language or becoming a U.S. citizen. As students increase their skills, they also gain confidence, sense of self-worth and hope for the future. The Brunner Literacy Center is a welcoming place for adults to achieve their educational dreams.

How to Get Involved

Be a Tutor. Next training session is in August. Learn more at www.brunnerliteracy.org/volunteer.

Refer Students / Spread the Word - If you hear concern from employers, business owners, schools, etc. that they are encountering adults without the expected basic skills in reading, writing and math, tell them that the Brunner Literacy Center is available to help.

Financial Support - The BLC is primarily funded by grants but is actively working to increase the number of individual donors and recruit high-net donors who have a personal connection to literacy. Donate online at www.brunnerliteracy.org

Every dollar invested in adult literacy yields \$60 in community benefits.
-National Commission on Adult Education, 2016

“I tell students, because you can’t read doesn’t mean you are dumb. In fact, you’re really very smart, because you’re able to cope without the skills that we take for granted. Once you can tap that and give them the self-confidence, and give them the basic skills, they can do anything.”

- Ruth Colvin, founder of modern Adult Literacy movement. 100 years old.