

LITERACY NEWS



FLORIDA'S NEWSLETTER FOR LITERACY TUTORS,
TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS AND SUPPORTERS

Number 121

DECEMBER 2008

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MINDS

2009

Florida Literacy Conference,
May 6-8, 2009
Clearwater

See page 5 for more information.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Partners with FLC to Establish Florida Health Literacy Grants Program

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida (BCBSF) has awarded the Florida Literacy Coalition (FLC) a three-year grant totaling \$360,000 for the establishment of a statewide health literacy initiative. This grant will provide a new statewide emphasis on health literacy and provide resources for local adult ESOL and family literacy programs to incorporate health literacy into their instruction.

The cornerstone of the statewide initiative is a mini-grants program that will award up to 46 renewable, one-year \$5,000 grants over three years. These projects will serve to increase health literacy awareness among ESOL students and families and provide information and resources to help them better understand the medical system and make wiser health decisions.

"Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida seeks to find real and meaningful solutions to some of the most critical social issues facing Florida's communities," said Susan Towler, vice president for community affairs for BCBSF. "Those who are more literate are more likely to have health screenings, follow medical regimens and seek help in the course of a disease. We are committed to improving literacy skills by focusing our community investments on family and health literacy programs."

In addition to mini-grants, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida will support regular training opportunities for teachers, tutors and administrators on how to effectively

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President Elect Obama's Position on Adult Education and Literacy

While adult education and literacy were not among the more prominent issues in this year's presidential campaign, Senator Barack Obama was one of two candidates who responded to a questionnaire from the advocacy group Literacy President, regarding his position on adult literacy. The following are excerpts from his response:

On Making Adult Education an Education Priority

Throughout America's history, education has been the vehicle for social and economic mobility, giving hope and opportunity to millions of people of all ages. Even for those well-past their twenties, people recognize that an education is the ticket to a better life. Today, more than ever, we must prepare our students, young and old, not only to meet the demands of the global economy, but also to take their place as committed and engaged citizens.

We have to provide struggling adults the opportunity to succeed, and adult education is a crucial part of this. **I will make adult education a priority.**

On Increasing Educational Access to those in Need

As a nation, we have an obligation to make an education available to anyone who wants one, regardless of station in life. As president, I will make long-term investments in education, language training, and workforce development so that Americans can leverage our strengths—our ingenuity and entrepreneurialism—to create new high-wage jobs and

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Florida's Adult and Family Literacy Resource Center

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Partners with FLC to Establish Florida Health Literacy Grants Program (Continued from Cover)

incorporate health information and topics into their instruction. BCBSF will also sponsor a first-ever health literacy track at the annual Florida Literacy Conference focusing on promising practices and new resources in the field of health literacy.

This statewide program will utilize and build upon the recently released Staying Healthy ESOL curriculum, a free resource developed by FLC through a grant from the Florida Department of Education, Division of Workforce Education. "This initiative reflects Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida's commitment to helping adult learners, many of whom are new to this country, become informed health advocates for themselves and their families," said FLC Executive Director Greg Smith, "We look forward to working together on this program and truly appreciate their generous support."



BlueCross BlueShield of Florida

An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

According to the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy's (NAAL) report on the health literacy of America's adults, 14% of adults have below basic health literacy skills. Low health literacy is especially prevalent among adults who did not complete high school and Hispanic adults, who have lower health literacy than any other ethnic/racial group.

Low health literacy costs an estimated \$73 billion a year in the form of longer hospital stays, emergency room visits, increased doctor visits, and increased medication (National Academy on an Aging Society). Moreover, adults with low health literacy often fail to engage in early detection and preventive health care and have difficulty understanding the medical system and complying with instructions from their doctors.

Florida's adult education, literacy and family literacy programs are uniquely positioned to help adult learners acquire important health information while developing their English language and literacy skills. Drawing on local health care providers and other community partners, this initiative promises to break new ground in engaging adult literacy in a grass roots approach to health education.

Look for the health literacy guidelines and grant application mid January 2009, available at www.floridaliteracy.org.

FLC Staff Update

FLC is pleased to welcome the following additions to our staff.



Judy Bodnar (Americorps VISTA Member). Judy has an extensive business background and has served as a financial and management consultant in Latvia for the American Bar Association's Central Eastern European Law Initiative. While there, she collaborated with the United Nations Development Program and the Soros Foundation in the establishment of an educational center for judges and lawyers. She will be assisting the FLC with program administration and is deeply committed to literacy causes. She is currently studying for a master's degree in Public Administration Nonprofit Management at Troy University.



Amanda Aucoin (Intern). Amanda is currently attending the University of Central Florida, majoring in Hospitality Event Management. She will be graduating in the spring with a bachelor's degree, and hopes to pursue a career in special event/wedding coordination. Amanda will be providing us with assistance for the 2009 Florida Literacy Conference in fundraising and coordination, as well as some of the other services offered by the Florida Literacy Coalition.



Quizaira Recio (Referral Specialist). Quizaira graduated from the University of Central Florida last year with a bachelor's degree in Multi-Cultural Humanities and hopes to further her education with the goal of pursuing a fulfilling career in the non-profit sector. As a first generation high school and college graduate, she is dedicated to literacy issues. As a first generation American, she is especially committed to native language literacy. Quizaira will be providing referral and resource services to new students and also assisting staff members with administrative support.

6th Annual Literacy Leadership Institute

The Florida Literacy Coalition will host its 6th Annual Literacy Leadership Institute January 22-23, 2009 at the Lake Mary Marriott.

This free professional development opportunity, designed for directors, program managers and board members of non-profit adult and family literacy organizations, will cover topics such as:

- Board Recruitment and Development
- Fund Development
- Program Capacity Building
- Volunteer and Student Recruitment and Retention

This is a good opportunity for individuals interested in growing their organizations while maintaining and enhancing program quality.

Pre-registration is required by January 15. To participate, contact Yari Payne, Education & Training Coordinator, at (407) 246-7110 x 203 or via e-mail at payney@floridaliteracy.org. Space is limited, so call today.

Travel assistance (up to \$350.00 per person with a limit of two reimbursements per organization) is available in accordance with state guidelines.

This session is sponsored by Florida's Adult and Family Literacy Resource Center and funded through a grant from the Florida Department of Education, Division of Workforce Education.

Essays Wanted for the Florida Literacy Coalition's 5th Annual Adult Learner Essay Book

The Florida Adult and Family Literacy Resource Center is proud to announce the launch of its Fifth Annual Adult Learner Writing Campaign. Adult learners throughout Florida are invited to submit original short stories, poems, or autobiographical narratives to be included in a published book that will debut at the 2009 Florida Literacy Conference this May in Clearwater.

The goal of this book is to allow adult learners the opportunity to build confidence while also improving their reading, writing, and critical thinking skills. Organizational representatives can use this book as a way to promote how their programs are having a positive influence within their communities.

Adult learners and their tutors/teachers are encouraged to work together in writing, typing, editing and submitting a written piece. Teaching tips/exercises to help start the writing process can be found at www.floridaliteracy.org.

We recommend that adult learners select from one of the following topics to write about:

- My experience in adult education and literacy
- A turning point in my life
- My goals and ambitions
- My favorite place
- What learning to read (or learning English) has meant to me
- Why I vote

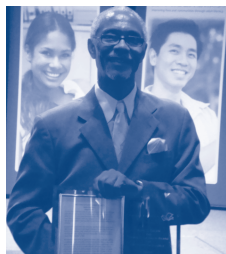
- How life in my home country differs from life in the U.S.
- Why I came to the United States
- What education means to me
- Let me tell you about someone I admire
- Original poetry

We ask that completed pieces be submitted **by e-mail** to bodnarj@floridaliteracy.org by **February 14, 2009**. Submissions should be no longer than 650 words. Only one submission per adult learner is allowed. Entries will be edited for readability.

Authors are also asked to complete the "Essay Book Submission" form, which can be found at www.floridaliteracy.org. Authors can choose to remain anonymous or have a short biographical paragraph included with their submission. Each author will receive a free copy of the book, and will be invited to the Florida Literacy Conference Annual Meeting May 7, at which time the publication will be unveiled. Free copies of the book will be made available to all participating literacy organizations. Please distribute this announcement widely throughout your program.

This publication is made possible through the generous support of the Florida Department of Education, Division of Workforce Education and the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Florida Adult Learner Douglas Smith Receives National Literacy Award



Douglas Smith was recently awarded the Ruth J. Colvin and Frank C. Laubach Award for Student Excellence at this year's ProLiteracy Annual Conference in Little Rock, Arkansas. This annual award recognizes a student who has distinguished his or herself in achieving literacy skills, reaching goals and providing student support and leadership.

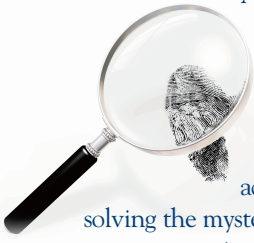
As a child, Smith did not have the opportunity to attend school. His obligations to his family and the farm were a major priority. Instead of attending school, he helped his 11 brothers and 7 sisters pick cotton. Even if he had the time, the distance was an issue. The school designated for black children, in what was then a segregated South Carolina, was just too far. As an adult, Smith put his family and his business before himself. He was the owner of a highly

successful New York bakery before he retired to Florida after experiencing a back injury. This gave Douglas the opportunity to focus on his education by enrolling in Learn to Read Jacksonville in September 2006.

Smith has accomplished many goals, such as checking books out of the library, using e-mail, surfing the web, conducting business meetings online, and even publishing a story, "From Rags to Riches." He has demonstrated leadership skills by completing the Literacy Ambassador Training through the Florida Literacy Coalition and serves on the Learn to Read Board of Directors. Smith frequently speaks publicly about his experience. Within the past year alone, he has addressed audiences at more than 30 events and has reached hundreds of people, including adult learners, volunteers, donors, corporate representatives and the general public.

Douglas Smith has touched many people with his words of inspiration and his dedication to lifelong learning.

Mystery Dinners: A Fun Way to Raise Funds



A murder mystery dinner theater fundraiser is a fun way to raise funds. Mystery dinner theater is the perfect audience participation party environment for large groups. It is an interactive experience where guests observe a live action adventure, analyze evidence, and work toward solving the mystery. Combining this fun entertainment with a great menu is a real crowd pleaser. Here are some suggestions on how to host a murder mystery as a fundraising event. First, you need a location.

- Your location should combine good food and exclusive use of the facility because your theater performance takes place in acts divided by dinner courses. You don't want other restaurant patrons coming and going during the critical scenes, so it is best to book a reserved dining room at an inn or a large restaurant.
- Make sure the room seats a large enough crowd to actually produce a good profit. Negotiate a flat group rate that includes dinner and dessert. Check and see if there are deals that include wine with dinner or if there's a corkage fee if they bring their own bottle.
- A basic rule of thumb is to set the ticket prices at double the cost. For example, if the group dining rate including meal is \$25, then price your tickets at \$50. Don't forget to include other costs such as script or performance charges.
- If you include other fundraising activities, then you can reduce your ticket markup and keep prices lower. That, in turn, may be what helps you sell out your event, so keep supply and demand in mind when setting your prices.

Some groups will have their own members perform the mystery script. Others prefer to work with a local theater group so that the performances are more professional and attendees are less likely to know the performers.

You can find mystery dinner theater scripts online for a reasonable price. It is also possible that a local theater group may already have a working script in-house that they have already performed.

Here are some ways to generate extra revenue. Get items and services donated by local businesses and place them on tables for silent auction bids. Include a wine tasting with your event. Sponsorships are another way to raise funds. Sell sponsor ad spaces on your event menu or look for corporate contributions to help offset costs. Some groups raise in excess of \$25,000 with their mystery dinner theater performances.

This fun fundraising event offers a great night out on the town complete with dinner and entertainment. Plan ahead and make your mystery dinner theater a truly enjoyable fundraising event.

Funding Opportunities

Bank of America Offers Community Builders Grants

Bank of America will begin accepting applications for Community Builders Grants beginning January 2009. Recipients will receive \$200,000 (\$100,000 for 2 years). Nonprofits must have a tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service and not classified as a private foundation. Organizations must be based and serve communities in a Neighborhood Excellence Initiative market. Previous recipients of the award include the Adult Literacy League in Orlando and The Palm Beach County Literacy Coalition.

For more information, visit

<http://www.bankofamerica.com/foundation>.

Big Read Offers Support for Community Reading Projects

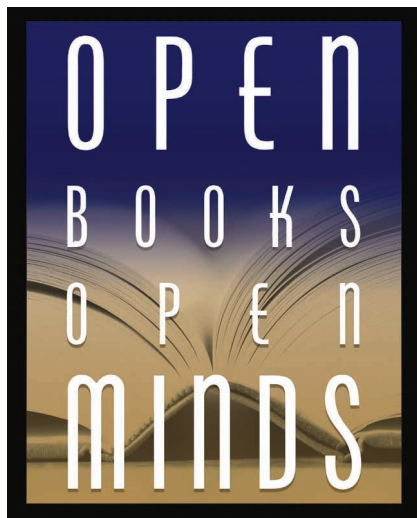
Deadline: February 3, 2009

The Big Read (www.neabigread.org) is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts designed to restore reading to the center of American culture. Presented in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and in cooperation with Arts Midwest, the initiative brings together partners across the United States to encourage reading for pleasure and enlightenment.

The Big Read is accepting applications from nonprofit organizations to conduct month-long, community-wide reads between September 2009 and June 2010. Organizations selected to participate in the Big Read will each receive a grant ranging from \$2,500 to \$20,000, financial support to attend an orientation meeting, educational and promotional materials, an Organizer's Guide for developing and managing Big Read activities, inclusion of the organization and activities on the Big Read Web site, and the prestige of participating in a highly visible national initiative. Approximately four hundred organizations of varying sizes across the country will be selected for this cycle.

Applicant organizations must partner with a library (if the applicant organization itself is not a library), and must select one of the twenty-seven available book titles or one of the three available poetry books.

Complete program information is available at the Big Read Web site at <http://www.neabigread.org/guidelines.php>.



Last Call for Presenters!

Do you have something to share with Florida's adult education, literacy and family literacy practitioners? If so, we invite you to submit a session proposal by the extended deadline of January 16, 2009. We welcome your participation and encourage you to propose a session using our easy-to-complete online form at www.floridaliteracy.org. To request a session proposal form via mail or FAX, contact Yari Payne, Education and Training Coordinator at conference@floridaliteracy.org or call (407) 246-7110 ext. 203

2009 Florida Literacy Conference

May 6-8 • Pre-conference Day—May 5

The Belleview Biltmore Resort in Clearwater, FL

Registration Prices:

Full Conference Early Bird: postmarked by March 6:
Member \$180 Non-Member \$205
Full Conference: Adult Learner: \$90
(no fee for adult learners attending only on May 5th for
Adult Learner Day)

Reservations:

Hotel reservations must be made by April 15 to qualify for the \$109 group rate. Mention the Florida Literacy Coalition 2009 Conference when making your room reservation. State and local taxes of 12.5% apply (subject to change). Call the Belleview Biltmore Resort Reservations at (727) 373-3000.

Make Your Nominations for the 2009 Florida Literacy Awards

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2009 State Literacy Awards, which recognize outstanding accomplishment and achievement of individuals and organizations supporting adult and family literacy throughout Florida. The awards will be presented on May 7 at the Awards Dinner and Ceremony during the 2009 Florida Literacy Conference. Visit www.floridaliteracy.org for nomination form and procedure.

Award Categories

- The Mary J. Brogan Leadership Award (honors a literacy leader in Florida)
 - Flight for Freedom Award (honors an outstanding adult learner)
Winner's program will receive a \$150 New Readers Press gift certificate.
 - Outstanding Literacy Volunteer Award
Winner's program will receive a \$150 New Readers Press gift certificate.
- Excellence in Education Award (honors an outstanding literacy program/organization)
Winner will receive a \$200 New Readers Press gift certificate.
 - Outstanding Business Partner Award
 - Outstanding Media Partner Award

TABE PC

When: December 9, 2008
8:30 am - 1 pm

Where: Northwest Florida State College
Chautauqua Center 908 West
Hwy. 90
Defuniak Springs, FL 32433

For more information, contact Lisa Jones
at 850-922-5343 or via email at
Jonesl@ACE-Leon.org.

CASAS CERTIFICATION TRAINING

When: December 12, 2008
8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Where: Gulf Coast Community College
3rd Floor, Student Union
Building West
5230 West U.S. Highway 98
Panama City, Florida 32401

For more information, contact Lisa Jones
at 850-922-5343 or via email at
Jonesl@ACE-Leon.org.

PROLITERACY AMERICA TUTOR TRAINING WORKSHOP

When: January 13-15, 2009
5 pm - 8:30 pm

Where: Library Annex
4639 Lake Worth Road
Lake Worth, FL 33463

For more information, call
1-888-780-5151.



6TH ANNUAL LITERACY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

When: January 22-23, 2009

Where: Lake Mary Marriott
Lake Mary, FL 32746

For more information, contact Yari Payne
at 407-246-7110 X 203 or via email at
payney@floridaliteracy.org.

ENERGIZING AND ENHANCING INSTRUCTION WITH BRAIN RESEARCH

When: February 3, 2009
8 am - 4 pm

Where: NW Florida State College
College Blvd.
Niceville, FL 32578

For more information, contact Lisa Jones
at 850-922-5343 or via email at
Jonesl@ACE-Leon.org.

FREE ESOL TUTOR TRAINING

When: February 6 & 7, 2008
9:30 am - 4:30 pm

Where: Bartow Public Library
2150 S. Broadway Avenue
Bartow, FL 33830

Are you interested in teaching English to
speakers of other languages (ESOL)?

Increase your ESOL tutoring skills by
attending this free, dynamic training that
is open to new or experienced tutors.
Topics covered include:

- Second language acquisition
- Cultural awareness
- How adults learn
- Assessment
- Lesson planning
- Teaching techniques

No foreign language skill or teaching
experience is required. Roberta Reiss,
ProLiteracy America Supervising Trainer,
will lead the workshop.

For more information, contact Yari Payne
at 407-246-7110 X 203 or via email at
payney@floridaliteracy.org.

Tutor Tips

TEACHING WITH CARTOONS

Purpose: At the most basic level, cartoons
can be the basis for creating basic dialogues.
They can also be used for practicing
grammatical structures, vocabulary and for
reading and writing practice.

Preparation Time: 10-15 minutes

Materials: Cut a cartoon strip out of a local
paper. Next, take some white-out or a
corrector pen and remove the dialogue in the
frames. Photocopy enough strips for the entire
class.

Preparation: If your learners aren't familiar
with cartoons, you might want to show them
the newspaper, where the comics are located,
and how the story moves from one frame to
the next, left to right or top to bottom.

Procedure:

1. Model a dialogue, so learners understand
what you are asking them to do.

2. Then pass out the photocopied cartoons
and ask students to write their own dialogue
in the open spaces.
3. If time permits, ask students to read their
dialogues to the other students.

Variations:

- Cut out a cartoon strip and remove key
vocabulary items or grammatical structures
with white-out or a corrector pen. Ask
students to make educated guesses about the
missing vocabulary words or structures. Let
the students compare their answers with
each other.
- Ask students to cut out a cartoon strip from
the paper every day for a two-week period.
Ask the students to paste each cartoon on a
separate piece of paper. Next, ask the
students to rewrite the dialogue in the past
tense or in the future.

Source: Minnesota Literacy Council



President Elect Obama's Position on Adult Education and Literacy

(Continued from Cover)

prosper in a global economy.

As president, I will support funding for apprenticeship programs and investments in community college programs that target adults looking to gain new skills. I will also increase federal investments into transitional jobs, which are a promising way to help chronically unemployed people break into the workplace, and support bridge programs that partner the federal government with employers and community-based organizations to identify job opportunities, develop customized training programs, and place low income employees in better jobs.

I also believe that we have an obligation to new immigrants who we welcome into our community. We need to place

greater importance on an adult education regime for immigrants which includes learning English so that they can succeed in the global economy.

On Supporting Intergenerational Literacy Programs

Children's literacy levels are strongly linked to the educational level of their parents, particularly their mother. We must break the cycle of children for whom poverty is their inheritance and illiteracy their destiny. If this means intergenerational literacy programs where possible, I'm in favor of exploring those options.

To read the questionnaire and Senator Obama's complete response, go to www.litpresident.org

Book Review

Bridge to Literacy: No Child or Adult Left Behind

AUTHOR: JOHN CORCORAN • PUBLISHER: KAPLAN PUBLISHING

"At the grassroots level, community awareness is the first little spark that ignites a fire."

John Corcoran's first book, *Teacher Who Couldn't Read*, based on his own life as an adult who did not learn to read until age 48, catapulted him into the national spotlight as a literacy advocate and champion for those who live in the subculture of illiteracy.

John's personal experience and perspective as an adult learner make him unique among literacy advocates and provide insight into failures of education systems from childhood through the college level.

He has written his second book to inspire and encourage literacy advocates and policymakers to take action in closing the literacy gap in society. John offers a blueprint for communities and

schools to collaborate at the local level, while also making policy recommendations for systematic change.

His advice for greater involvement of volunteers at the community level is a direct result of his own experience with successful local literacy programs. In his opinion, "when the grassroots gets big enough, change on a large scale is possible—one person joining with others can turn the tide of any problem—and at the local level, just one person can make a tremendous difference."

This book is a great inspirational tool for anyone thinking about tutoring adult learners. And may serve as a bridge to volunteerism.

Resources



Dynamic New Website Offers Free Online ESOL Instruction

A free website was recently launched to support immigrants who want to improve their English skills as they become part of American society. Funded through the U.S. Department of Education, USALearns.org has been designed to be user friendly and highly interactive. All instructional materials are online; there are no videos or workbooks to purchase. The portal may complement the services that are provided through existing, classroom-based programs. Tutors and teachers can use the website's learning management system to set up classes and invite their students to learn English via the *U.S.A. Learns* website.

The videos, graphics, and exercises are built around settings and situations that should be familiar to immigrant populations. A simple interface runs throughout all the materials, making it accessible to populations with limited technological schooling in their native country. Online help is available including an on-screen character that talks to users to help them get started. The user can choose to have the character speak in either English or Spanish.

To access *USALearns.org*, users will need a computer with a broadband Internet connection and an up-to-date web browser.

Florida Choices Career Planner Now Online

The Florida Choices Planner offers Florida citizens a free online portal to the state's career information system offered by the Florida Department of Education, Division of Workplace Education. The service includes a skills/interest inventory that matches users with possible career paths and salary data, along with a directory of schools that offer related degree/credential programs. Highlights of the Florida Choices Planner include: a step-by-step tutorial, up-to-date career content, and secure portfolios.

For adult and postsecondary users:

1. Log on to www.flchoices.org.
2. Click on Adult and Postsecondary and select Sign In.
3. Click on Create a New Profile.
4. Choose your county.
5. Choose your school or agency. (If your school or agency is not listed, email choices@fldoe.org for help.)
6. Fill in remaining information as requested. Name and password are both case sensitive.



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The Literacy News is a publication of Florida's Adult and Family Literacy Resource Center, a program of the Florida Literacy Coalition. It is made possible through a grant from the Florida Department of Education, Division of Workforce Education.

LITERACY NEWS, #121 CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

Amanda Aucoin, Judy Bodnar, Sarah Feuer, Pam Logsdon, Yari Payne, Quizaira Recio, Greg Smith, Samantha Sparks, Florida Literacy Coalition, Inc.

Become a Member of the Florida Literacy Coalition and Make a Difference for Literacy in Florida!

BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- Literacy Resource Packet
- Discount for Florida Literacy Conference Registration (\$25 value)
- Membership reception at the Florida Literacy Conference
- Professional development opportunities
- FLC's *Literacy News* print and e-newsletters
- Eligibility to submit nomination for the Florida Literacy Awards
- Membership Certificate (Organizational Members)

And much more.....

Membership rates:

\$25 Individual

\$50 Organizational (with budgets under \$200,000)

\$75 Organizational (with budgets over \$200,000)

For more information, contact Samantha Sparks, Resource Specialist at sparkss@floridaliteracy.org
or visit www.floridaliteracy.org and click on Become a Member.