

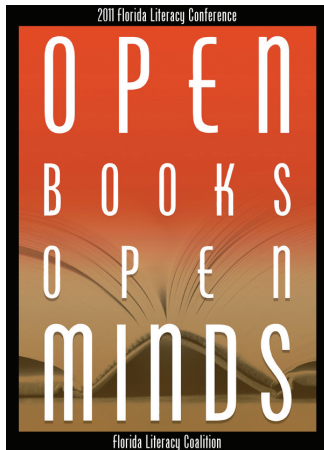
# LITERACY NEWS



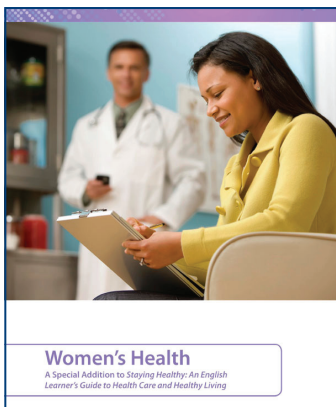
FLORIDA'S NEWSLETTER FOR LITERACY TUTORS,  
TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS AND SUPPORTERS

Number 127

Fall 2010



2011 Florida Literacy Conference  
(see page 5)



**Women's Health**  
A Special Addition to Staying Healthy: An English  
Learner's Guide to Health Care and Healthy Living

Health Literacy Curriculum  
Wins National Award  
(see page 8)

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## Post Secondary Transitions; Help Students Choose Between For-Profit and Public Educational Institutions

There is an increased recognition in the field of adult education regarding the importance of preparing students to successfully transition into post secondary education. Many options exist for students to pursue degrees, industry certifications and apprenticeships, which can provide a gateway to good paying careers. As teachers and tutors help students explore their options, it's important to remember that all institutions of higher education are not created equal. Many for-profit schools have recently come under scrutiny by the U.S. Department of Education. These institutions, which largely target older students, have significantly expanded student enrollments in recent years.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a study in August 2010 detailing unsavory business practices at 15 of the most popular for-profit institutions. This report found that all 15 were involved in some form of deceptive marketing. These practices included:

- Misrepresenting the value of the program
- Advising prospective students to commit financial aid fraud
- Providing prospective students with incorrect graduate statistics and incorrect accreditation information
- Overcharging individuals for GED programs

*Continued on page 11*

## Programs Report Student Gains in Health Literacy

The results from year one of the Florida Health Literacy Initiative provide an encouraging first look at how this unique program has impacted family literacy and ESOL students throughout the state.

A partnership between Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida and the Florida Literacy Coalition, this initiative provides instructional resources, teacher training and grants to promote and support the successful integration of health education into adult ESOL and family literacy instruction. In the FY 2009-10 grant year, 10 local adult and family literacy programs received \$5,000 mini-grants for this purpose.

### Summary of Program Results:

- Number of Students Served: 2,680
- Number of (pre and post tested) students who improved their health literacy: 85%
- Average increase in testing score: 42%

*Continued on page 8*

## Congratulations Literacy Ambassadors

Congratulations to the 2010 class of Literacy Ambassadors. Nine individuals completed FLC's Literacy Ambassador Training, Oct. 15-16. The Literacy Ambassador Program helps adult learners build skills and confidence to be successful public speakers. Students are teamed with program representatives who, in turn, learn about marketing strategies and how to identify opportunities for their students to speak.

A special thanks for the Florida Department of Education, Division of Career and Adult Education, for its support.



(From left to right) Tyrone Booze, Sonja Johnson, Shijie Cheng, Treatha Feaster, Provi Gonzalez, Rachel Williams, Adriana Campo, Andrew Bess and Raydel Triana all completed the Literacy Ambassador Program.

## Adult Literacy Programs Can Play Important Role in Ex-Prisoners' Transition

Over nine million people pass through America's jails each year and these individuals often receive little in the way of services, support or supervision as they leave incarceration and reenter the community. Nearly all offenders in Florida's jails and prisons will return to their communities. This means that every county in Florida will be affected by prisoners returning to hometown neighborhoods.

Many offenders are in need of housing, jobs, substance abuse treatment, educational services and mental health counseling. Since these resources are often hard to come by, counties must coordinate with partners at the local, state and national levels to ensure that communities are well prepared to deal with offender reentry.

In 2010, the Florida Legislature unanimously passed a bill authorizing the state's Public Safety Coordinating Councils to develop 5-year plans to assist inmates to successfully reenter the community.

The plans are to focus on education, employment, health care, housing and substance abuse. "These reforms will

promote the Governor's highest priority of protecting the safety and security of Florida's citizens and reducing victimization," stated Department of Corrections Secretary Walter McNeil.

### Inmate Reentry Resources

#### Transition from Jail to Community (TJC) Initiative:

In response to the need for jurisdictions to address jail/community transition, the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) partnered with the Urban Institute (UI) to launch this initiative, which includes a comprehensive implementation toolkit. For more information go to [www.jailtransition.com/Toolkit](http://www.jailtransition.com/Toolkit).

#### Back to School: A Planning Guide to Continuing Your Education After Prison:

This guide reflects the most recent information on federal student financial aid for inmates headed for release. To view the guide and other prisoner re-entry resources go to [www.jjay.cuny.edu/centers/prisoner\\_reentry\\_institute/2704.htm](http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/centers/prisoner_reentry_institute/2704.htm) and click on "Publications/Resources."

This expanded attention on inmate reentry provides a good opportunity for adult education and literacy programs to work in partnership with corrections and other community programs. The need is clear. Approximately 70 percent of Florida's inmates are believed to have less than 9th grade reading skills. Ninety four percent of adult male inmates approaching release who were identified education as a personal re-entry need, according to a recent national evaluation. Adult education and literacy instruction can be an important part of the continuum of services that enable ex-offenders to successfully transition back into society.

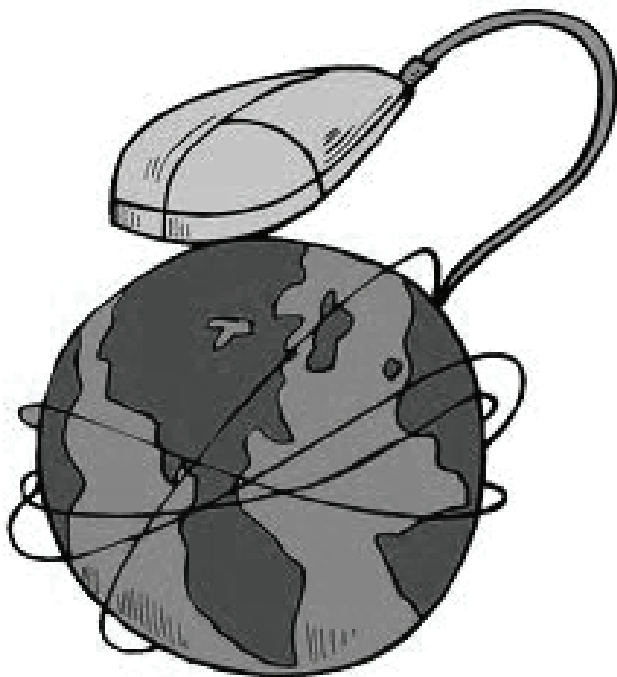
The Literacy Coalition of Palm Beach County is currently a member of the Palm Beach County Criminal Justice Commission Reentry Task Force and sponsors two AmeriCorps members who work with The Lord's Place, a center for the homeless that provides a variety of services, including assisting ex-inmates to develop literacy skills.

For more information about inmate transition initiatives in your community contact your county sheriff's office.

## Submit Your News!

Has your organization received funding or planned a major public event? Do you know something that would benefit other adult and family literacy practitioners?

FLC invites you to submit short articles and other news items including funding opportunities, upcoming events, hot topics, research and more. Contact Yari Payne at [payney@floridaliteracy.org](mailto:payney@floridaliteracy.org)



## Web-Based Courses for ABE Teachers and Administrators

Through the support of the Florida Department of Education, Indian River State College's Institute for the Professional Development of Adult Educators and Florida TechNet recently developed the following self-paced Internet courses:

- New Administrator Training
- New ESOL Teacher's Training
- Experienced ESOL Teacher's Training
- New ABE/GED Teacher's Training
- Experienced ABE/GED Teacher's Training

To access these free resources go to <http://new.floridatechnet.org/moodle/course/category.php?id=16>

## FL DOE Releases Technical Assistance Papers for Program Guidance

This summer the Florida Department of Education, Division of Career and Adult Education released the following technical assistance papers to provide information and guidance to Florida's adult education and literacy providers.

### Adult English for Speakers of Other Languages Program

This paper provides guidance to local educational agencies and community-based organizations in the implementation of the Florida Department of Education Adult ESOL program.

### Adult Education Assessments

This paper provides guidance to local educational agencies and community-based organizations in the implementation of adult education assessments approved by the United States Department of Education and the Florida Department of Education. These assessments align with the educational functioning levels of the National Reporting System.

### The Rights and Responsibilities of Adults with Disabilities and the Responsibilities of Adult Education Service Providers

It is increasingly important for adult students with disabilities to understand their rights and responsibilities in order to actively participate in and benefit from adult education and literacy programs.

This paper provides both historical and current information that: (1) spotlights federal and state legislation designed to protect the rights of adult students with disabilities, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; (2) describes the rights and responsibilities of adults with disabilities; and (3) explains the responsibilities of adult education service providers with regard to students with disabilities.

These publications are free and available at [www.fldoe.org/Workforce/AdultEd/taps.asp](http://www.fldoe.org/Workforce/AdultEd/taps.asp)

## Volunteer Stories Needed!

Know an inspiring volunteer? Have a volunteer with a unique story? We are looking for stories of literacy volunteers who have gone above and beyond to include on Florida's Adult and Family Literacy Resource Center website. If you feel you have or know such a volunteer, please contact Raychel George at [georger@floridaliteracy.org](mailto:georger@floridaliteracy.org) or 407-246-7110.

## Second Portraits of Literacy Photo Contest Accepting Submissions in the U.S.



Last year's winner, "Education Together" by Chetan Soni. Over 150 photographs were submitted in the inaugural year.

Participate in FLC's second annual photo contest! Submit your photos capturing how words and literacy are experienced in your everyday lives through photography.

The photos entered into the contest will be used to promote literacy throughout Florida. Submissions will be posted online and everyone will be encouraged to vote for their favorites.

Select photos will also be featured at the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Florida Literacy Conference.

The contest will accept submissions from Dec. 15 to Feb. 13.

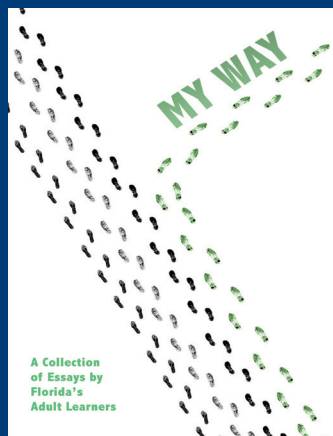
For submission guidelines please visit our website at [www.floridaliteracy.org](http://www.floridaliteracy.org)

## Essays Wanted!

### Florida Literacy Coalition 7th Annual Adult Learner Essay Book

The Florida Adult and Family Literacy Resource Center is proud to announce the launch of the Annual Adult Learner Writing Campaign. Students 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 2011 Florida Literacy Conference.

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.



(2010 Essay Book)

Submissions should be no longer than two pages (500 words). Space in the book is limited and entries will be edited for readability. Authors can choose to remain anonymous or have a short biographical paragraph included with their submission. Only one submission per adult learner is allowed. Each author who is included will be invited to the Florida Literacy Conference and will also receive a free copy of the book. Free copies of the book will also be made available to all literacy organizations. Please feel free to distribute this announcement widely throughout your program.

Please visit our webpage for more information on how to submit essays:  
<http://www.floridaliteracy.org/essaybookhome.htm>

**Deadline for Submissions: Feb. 25, 2011.**

If you have any questions please contact Quizaira Recio at [recioq@floridaliteracy.org](mailto:recioq@floridaliteracy.org) or (407)-246-7110 x 201.

## Don't Forget About FLC's Clearinghouse

Florida's Adult and Family Literacy Resource Center provides a wide range of free reference and outreach materials, serving as a clearinghouse for the distribution of quality resource materials for literacy instructors and administrators. If you need posters, bookmarks or reference materials, feel free to look through our selection of over 100 materials. Check out our materials online catalog at the Florida Literacy Coalition's website, [www.floridaliteracy.org](http://www.floridaliteracy.org), and click on "Order Materials".



## 2011 Florida Literacy Conference

May 4–6, 2011

Pre-conference day: May 3, 2011

Orlando Marriott Lake Mary in Lake Mary, FL

OPEN  
BOOKS  
OPEN  
MINDS

### Registration Rates:

Full Conference Early Bird: postmarked by March 11:  
Member \$185 Non-Member \$210

Full Conference:

Member \$210 Non-Members \$235

On-Site Registration \$250

Adult Learner: \$90 (no fee for adult learners attending only  
Adult Learner Day)

### Reservations:

Hotel reservations must be made by April 15 to qualify for the \$105 group rate. Mention the 2011 Florida Literacy Conference when making your room reservation. State and local taxes apply (subject to change). Call the Orlando Marriott Lake Mary at 1-800-380-7724.

### 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 Dec. 16 with our easy-to-complete online form at [www.floridaliteracy.org](http://www.floridaliteracy.org). For more questions or details, please contact Yari Payne at [conference@floridaliteracy.org](mailto:conference@floridaliteracy.org) or call (407) 246-7110 ext. 203.

## Make Your Nominations for the 2011 Florida Literacy Awards

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2011 State Literacy Awards, which recognize outstanding accomplishments and achievements of individuals and organizations supporting adult and family literacy throughout Florida. The awards will be presented on May 5 at the awards banquet and ceremony during the 2011 Florida Literacy Conference. Visit [www.floridaliteracy.org](http://www.floridaliteracy.org) for the 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)
- Outstanding Literacy Volunteer Award
- Excellence in Education Award (honors an outstanding literacy program/organization)
- Outstanding Business Partner Award

## ESL Tutor Training

**When:** Saturday, Nov. 20  
9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Learn to tutor an adult for whom English is a Second Language. There is a \$30.00 charge to cover the cost of the books.

**Where:** Literacy Volunteers  
of Lee County  
7275 Concourse Dr, #300  
Ft Myers, FL 33908

**To Register:** Pre-register by calling  
LVLC office at (239) 415-3621.

## Florida CHOICES for Adult Education

**When:** Wednesday, Dec. 1  
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Florida CHOICES includes a variety of useful tools such as, a Resume Builder, a Cover Letter Creator, and Job Interview Practice.

**Where:** 1st Coast Tech College  
Bldg A Room 101  
2980 Collins Ave.  
St. Augustine, FL 32084

**To Register:** [www.surveymonkey.com/s/CHOICES\\_StAugustine\\_Dec10](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CHOICES_StAugustine_Dec10)

## GED Math Most Missed Questions Series Update

**When:** Wednesday, Dec. 1  
9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

This four hour workshop is a sequel to the four part GED Math Series offered in Region II over the past two years.

**Where:** 1st Coast Tech College  
Bldg A Room 101  
2980 Collins Ave.  
St. Augustine, FL 32084

**To Register:** [www.surveymonkey.com/s/GED\\_MathUpdate\\_StAugustine\\_Dec3](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GED_MathUpdate_StAugustine_Dec3)

## Kiss the Horse for Literacy

**When:** Friday, Dec. 3  
Second annual fundraiser raises funds for Marion County Literacy Council.

**Where:** Ocala Equestrian Complex  
1601 SW 60th Ave  
Ocala, FL 34474

**To Register:** [www.marionliteracy.org/kth.html](http://www.marionliteracy.org/kth.html)

## The Non-Traditional Learner: Session II Left Brain vs Right Brain - Ocala

**When:** Friday, Dec 3  
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

This three hour workshop will take a closer look at the left-brain vs. right brain tendencies introduced in Session I. Practical strategies and techniques for tutors and instructors will be presented and practiced in this workshop.

**Where:** Marion County Community,  
Tech, and Adult Ed,  
Brewster Hall,  
1014 SW 7th Rd,  
Ocala, FL 34471

**To Register:** [www.surveymonkey.com/s/NonTradLearner\\_Sessions2and3\\_Ocala\\_Dec3](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NonTradLearner_Sessions2and3_Ocala_Dec3)

## The Non-traditional Learner - Session III Learning Styles and Modalities

**When:** Friday, Dec. 3  
1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

This three hour workshop will take a closer look at the learning styles and modalities introduced in Session II. Practical strategies and techniques for tutors and instructors will be presented and practiced in this workshop.

**Where:** Marion County Community,  
Tech, and Adult Ed,  
Brewster Hall  
1014 SW 7th Rd  
Ocala, FL 34471

**To Register:** [www.surveymonkey.com/s/NonTradLearner\\_Sessions2and3\\_Ocala\\_Dec3](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NonTradLearner_Sessions2and3_Ocala_Dec3)



## ESL Tutor Training

**When:** Saturday, Dec. 11  
9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Learn to tutor an adult for whom English is a Second Language. There is a \$30.00 charge to cover the cost of the books.

**Where:** Literacy Volunteers, Lee Cty  
7275 Concourse Dr, #300  
Ft Myers, FL 33908

**To Register:** Call: (239) 415-3621.

## Staying Healthy: A Health Literacy Curriculum and Resource for ESOL

**When:** Thursday, Dec. 16  
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Virtual training covers comprehensive health literacy curricula.

**Where:** Your Computer

**To Register:** [www.surveymonkey.com/healthliteracyworkshops](http://www.surveymonkey.com/healthliteracyworkshops)

## Online Presentations

**When:** Thursday, Dec. 16  
3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

Online presentations can range from the incredibly boring and dull all the way to fantastically fun and interactive. How do you make sure that your sessions meet participants' needs and effectively communicate your ideas? Come learn more about best practices so you can ensure that all of your webinars are successful no matter who your audience is. Experienced web conference moderators will share not-to-be-missed strategies and will model them throughout the session.

**Where:** Your Computer

**To Register:** [www.surveymonkey.com/s/BestPracOnlinePresentations\\_Virtual\\_Dec16](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/BestPracOnlinePresentations_Virtual_Dec16)

To submit events for the upcoming issues of the *Literacy News* and/or the FLC online calendar, please forward event information to Erin Balleine at [balleine@floridaliteracy.org](mailto:balleine@floridaliteracy.org). For a more comprehensive calendar listing, please go to [www.floridaliteracy.org](http://www.floridaliteracy.org).

## 8th Annual Literacy Leadership Institute to be in Gainesville in February



The Florida Literacy Coalition will host its 8th Annual Literacy Leadership Institute Feb. 10–11 at the Cabot Lodge in Gainesville, Fla.

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 & Development
- Fund Development
- Motivating and Retaining Adult Learners
- Career Pathways/Transitions
- Public Relations & Marketing

This is a great opportunity for individuals interested in growing their organizations while maintaining and enhancing program quality. To register, go to [www.floridaliteracy.org](http://www.floridaliteracy.org), and select 2011

Leadership Institute under Literacy News. Pre-registration is required by Jan. 15.

Travel assistance (up to \$350 per person with a limit of two reimbursements per organization) is available in accordance with state guidelines.

Contact Yari Payne, Education & Training Coordinator, at (407) 246-7110 x 203 or via e-mail at [payney@floridaliteracy.org](mailto:payney@floridaliteracy.org).

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 Career and Adult Education.

## Tutor Tips

### SCRAMBLE RELAY

**Purpose:** This is a warm-up activity that can be adapted for all levels and used to review any situational dialogue or grammar point previously covered in class.

**Preparation Time:** 10 minutes

**Materials:** Paper or index cards, pen or marker

**Preparation:** Make two complete sets of sentences. Limit the number of sentences, based on the level of the group and what can be accomplished in 15 minutes. For higher level students, a whole dialogue, poem or story could be put onto cards. Write the words for each sentence on separate cards. Scramble the words in each sentence and clip them together with a paper clip.

**Procedure:**

1. Divide the group into two teams, each team standing around a table.
2. Place each team's pile of scrambled sentences in front of the room.
3. A runner from each team takes one scrambled sentence back to its team.
4. The team works together to unscramble the sentence. When they think the sentence is in correct order, they send a different runner back to the teacher to whisper the solution.
5. If the sentence is correct, the runner takes another sentence for his or her team to unscramble.
6. If the sentence is not correct, the runner returns to the team to try again.
7. When one team has unscrambled all the sentences, the game is over.

**Source:** Minnesota Literacy Council: [http://www.themlc.org/Scramble\\_Relay.html](http://www.themlc.org/Scramble_Relay.html)

## New Health Literacy Curriculum Honored with National Award

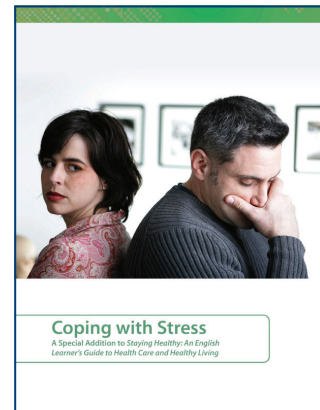
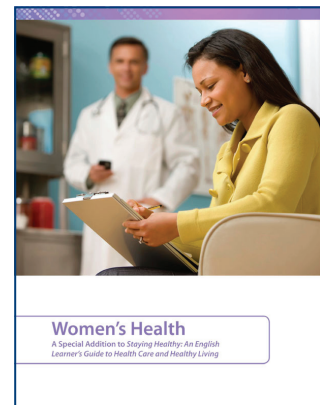
The Florida Literacy Coalition (FLC) health literacy curriculum, *Women's Health: A Special Addition to Staying Healthy*, was recently recognized by Health Literacy Innovations™, an industry leader in the development of tools and resources to enhance health literacy.

The Health Literacy Innovators Awards is a national contest rewarding excellence in plain language and health literacy principles. *Women's Health* won the the ReadsEasy™ Publication Award, which emphasizes the use of plain English, proper graphics and a proven reading level of 6<sup>th</sup> grade or lower determined by industry assessments.

"We salute FLC's commitment to health literacy and to its community, and we applaud its innovation and creativity to develop this outstanding curricula for hard-to-reach women, many with language barriers who now for the first time may be able to understand their health information," said Aracely Rosales, Health Literacy Innovations Chief Content Expert and Multilingual Director.

*Women's Health*, and its sister publication, *Coping With Stress*, are special additions to FLC's *Staying Healthy* curriculum. To order these free publications, contact Naomi Soto at [soton@floridaliteracy.org](mailto:soton@floridaliteracy.org) or (407)246-7110 ext. 209.

These publications were made possible through the support of the Florida Department of Education, Division of Career and Adult Education.



## Students Benefit from Health Literacy Programs

(Continued from Cover)

Percentage of students who:

- Changed their eating habits: 40%
- Enrolled in one or more insurance plans (private health insurance, Medicare, Medicaid and Florida Kid Care): 50%
- Started exercising regularly: 45%
- Visited one or more health-related websites: 36%
- Indicated that the health information they learned in class helped them in their everyday life: 93%

"Our goal for this initiative is to help students acquire skills and information that they can use to make good choices regarding their health and nutrition," said Greg Smith, FLC Executive Director. "We are very pleased with the data. It clearly shows that students and their families are benefiting in very real ways. Congratulations to the grant recipients and students on their success, and special thanks to Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida for their generous support."

Programs interested in beginning or expanding a health literacy program are encouraged to visit [www.floridaliteracy.org](http://www.floridaliteracy.org) for health literacy information, training opportunities and free instructional resources. Proposal requirements for the next grant year will be on the FLC web site in mid-January 2011.

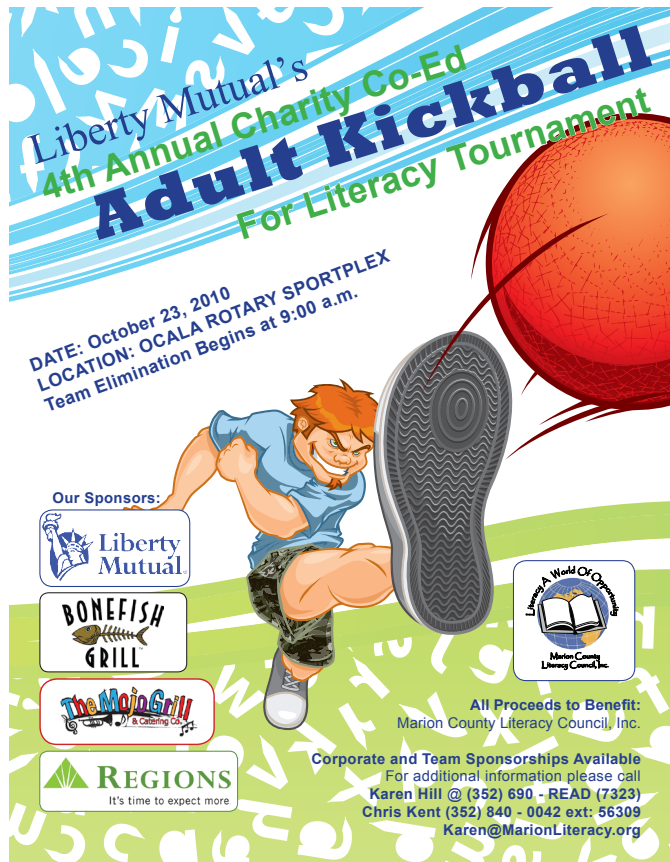
### 2009-2010 BCBSF Health Literacy Grant Recipients

Adult Literacy League  
Volunteers of America (Monroe County)  
Literacy Volunteers of Lee County  
United Methodist Cooperative Ministries  
Haitian-American Organization for Women

Manatee Technical Institute  
Palm Beach County Literacy Coalition  
Florida Community College in Jacksonville  
South Florida Community College  
Adult Learning Center of Osceola



## An Easy Game of Kickball May Also be a Way to Raise Funds and Awareness



The Marion County Literacy Council recently completed their 4<sup>th</sup> annual Adult Kickball for Literacy Tournament on Oct. 23. The event increases in attendance each year and has captured the attention of local business leaders. As literacy organizations are not always the most popular charitable donation recipients, offering an exciting experience like kickball may increase charitable contributions and participation.

The kickball event partnered with local businesses and families to create teams of 15 individuals and asked for a donation of \$150 per team. Karen Hill, Executive Director of the Marion County Literacy Council, shared that this event is inexpensive to mount as the only costs are trophies, a banner and t-shirts. While the t-shirts are optional additions to the event, Hill believes they are great ways to advertise a literacy organization.

"This is the event we all look forward to because it is so much fun," Hill said. Hill also recommends running a concession stand at the event to raise extra funds. The kickball fundraiser has raised approximately \$4,000 each year and is one of the most anticipated fundraisers for the organization.

For more information about kickball games as an alternative fundraiser, contact the Marion County Literacy Council at (352) 690-7323.

## Upcoming Grant Opportunities

### Bank of America

**Area of Interest:** Part of Bank of America's signature philanthropic program, Neighborhood Builders focus on local neighborhood priorities.

Past recipients include the Adult Literacy League and the Literacy Coalition of Palm Beach County. Benefits include:

- \$200,000 (or local market currency equivalent) for operating support to 2 nonprofit/charitable organizations in each of 45 markets.
- One senior executive attends two 4-day workshops on strategic thinking, business planning during tough economic times, leadership development, and other topics.
- One emerging leader attends three 4-day workshops on developing organizational management skills, managing strategic opportunities, forging alliances, and building communities.

**Url:** [www.bankofamerica.com/foundation/index.cfm?template=fd\\_grantapp](http://www.bankofamerica.com/foundation/index.cfm?template=fd_grantapp)

**Deadline:** Applications accepted from Jan. 1 - June 1

### Gulf Power Building Strong Communities

**Area of Interest:** To further deserving causes in education, Gulf Power offers educational grant programs to teachers, students and researchers. Each offers a number

of benefits aimed at building knowledge and enhancing the quality of life and the economic well-being of our local communities.

**Url:** [www.gulfpower.com/community/charity.asp](http://www.gulfpower.com/community/charity.asp)

**Deadline:** February 15

### Bob Evans

**Areas of Interest:** Bob Evans focuses on families and children by assisting hundreds of organizations each year working to improve the quality of life in Bob Evans communities.

**Url:** [www.bobevans.com/ourcompany/philanthropy.aspx](http://www.bobevans.com/ourcompany/philanthropy.aspx)

**Deadline:** March 1

### Civic Reflection Grant

**Areas of Interest:** A Series of Community Conversations:

A special initiative of the Florida Humanities Council requires only a letter of intent from a qualified non-profit organization. The Florida Humanities Council seeks to partner with community organizations interested in convening meaningful conversations among citizens about the challenges faced in trying to improve public life through community service.

**Url:** <http://www.flahum.org/index.cfm/do/Grants.civicreflection/civicreflection.htm>

**Deadline:** Ongoing

## New Research Shows that Improving Mothers' Literacy May Be Best Way to Help Children Succeed

Recent research funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) concludes that programs seeking to boost the academic achievement of children from low income neighborhoods may be more successful if they also provide adult literacy instruction to parents.

The study, which examined data on more than 3,000 families, concluded that a mother's reading ability is the greatest determinant of her children's future academic success, even more so than other factors, such as neighborhood and family income.

The researchers undertook the study to identify and isolate factors contributing to the disparity in academic achievement between children in low income and more affluent neighborhoods. The findings indicate that programs that improve maternal literacy skills may provide an effective means to address and overcome the disparity in school achievement.

The study also states children ages 8 to 17 are most affected by neighborhood income. This data supports the claim



A study released by a NIH stated that a mother's reading ability is a crucial component to children's success.

that a child's home environment is crucial as a child gets older.

The study appeared in *Demography* and was supported by NIH's Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

For more information and data on this study, go to [www.nih.gov/news/health/oct2010/nichd-25.htm](http://www.nih.gov/news/health/oct2010/nichd-25.htm).

## Half of Americans Believe Home is a Leading Cause of Learning Disabilities

A new survey released by the Emily Hall Tremain Foundation indicates that many Americans have a poor and/or incorrect understanding of the causes of learning disabilities.

Fifty-five percent of parents and the general public surveyed agreed that learning disabilities are often a product of the home environment. About 51 percent of those surveyed also thought that learning disabilities are the result of laziness.

Telephone interviews were conducted with adults throughout the United States, including sub-samples of parents, teachers and school administrators. The results show that the definition, root causes, key factors and interventions of learning disabilities are vastly misunderstood.

"Our findings show an alarming lack of knowledge by parents and educators about learning disabilities," said Stewart J. Hudson, President of the Tremain Foundation. "These findings threaten our children's futures and undermine efforts to improve educational outcomes for all."

Learning disabilities are neurologically based. Research, however, shows that people with learning disabilities have average to above-average intelligence. Reading, writing and mathematics can be challenging for those whose brains process information differently.

Many teachers appear to be confused as well. Forty-three percent of teachers think the home environment is at least partially to blame for children's learning disabilities. Seventy percent of teachers and school administrators incorrectly associated learning disabilities with mental retardation.

According to data from the National Center for Learning Disabilities, 25 percent of students with learning disabilities drop out of high school without a general diploma. Many of whom eventually seek a second chance through adult education. This misinformation may reinforce the stigma around learning disabilities, making it more difficult for educators (including adult literacy programs) to best serve these individuals.

To access the study in its entirety, go to [www.tremainfoundation.org](http://www.tremainfoundation.org).

## Students Should Choose Post-Secondary Education Carefully

*(Continued from Cover)*

While some for-profit colleges and trade schools offer a good value, on average they are approximately 2.5 times higher in cost than their public counterparts. The cost has become so high that the Department of Education is currently proposing penalties for institutions which graduate students with more debt than they can afford. Keiser University, which is cited in the GAO report, currently charges \$28,352 for a terminal associate's degree to become a medical assistant. Comparatively, Daytona State College's tuition and fees is \$4,072 for the same program.

The Obama Administration has recently announced a \$12 billion community college initiative designed to increase student enrollment in local community colleges. The Florida Legislature has also approved legislation allowing qualified community colleges to offer Bachelor degree programs. Students should know that Florida is one of the few states which offers the Two-Plus-Two program which guarantees entry into a Florida university once an individual has graduated with an associate degree from a community/state college in Florida.

Floridians are also fortunate to have access to a wide range of career and technical education centers offering certification programs for many high demand vocations. For a directory of available centers go to [www.fldoe.org/SiteIndex/directories.asp](http://www.fldoe.org/SiteIndex/directories.asp)

To access the full GAO report, visit [www.gao.gov/new.items/d10948t.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d10948t.pdf). Watch a PBS Frontline expose on for-profit institutions entitled College, Inc. free of charge on [www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/view/](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/view/).

## OVAE Continues LINCS Website

With the closing of the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) on Sept. 30, the Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS) has moved to the Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE).

A new LINCS website continues to offer many professional development resources including; the LINCS Resource Collections of subject-oriented instructional resources; adult education research publications, and archives of all NIFL webcasts and discussion lists.

OVAE also continues to support three LINCS Regional Resource Centers providing professional development resources and services to the field.

Visit the LINCS website at <http://lincs.ed.gov>.

## Resources

### Make Sense of Decoding, Spelling: An Adult Reading Course of Study

Developed through a grant from the National Institute for Literacy, this evidence-based course containing 30 scripted lesson plans is designed to teach adult learners to decode and spell words more accurately and fluently.

<http://lincs.ed.gov/pd/msteaching2010>

### Bitesize Literacy

Fun interactive online games teaching lessons about phonics, rhyming words, spelling, synonyms, and sentence construction.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/ks1bitesize/literacy/>

### What English Sounds Like

An Italian singer wrote this song with gibberish to sound like English. If you've ever wondered what other people think Americans sound like, this is it. <http://music.todaysbigthing.com/2009/11/03>

### Misunderstands Minds

This web site is a companion to the PBS special **Misunderstood Minds**, and profiles a variety of learning problems and related expert opinions. It is designed to give parents and teachers a better understanding of learning processes, insights into related difficulties, and strategies for responding. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/misunderstoodminds/>

## Adult Literacy Caucus Established in House of Representatives

In mid-September, the National Coalition for Literacy and ProLiteracy announced the formation of a new House Adult Literacy Caucus co-chaired by Representatives Dan Maffei (D-NY) and Phil Roe (R-TN). This bi-partisan effort is off to a strong start with nineteen members. The Caucus is expected to build awareness and provide leadership to help advance adult literacy issues in Congress and throughout the U.S.

For more information go to [www.proliteracy.org](http://www.proliteracy.org)



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

### BENEFITS INCLUDE:

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\$25 Individual

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