

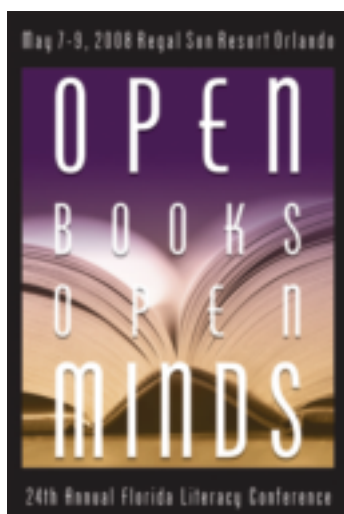
# LITERACY NEWS



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

Number 118

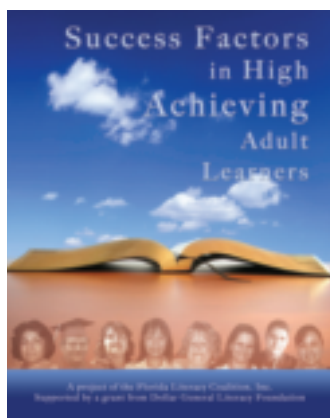
DECEMBER 2007



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## Low Literacy Equals Shorter Life Expectancy: Study Reveals Startling 50 Percent Higher Mortality

Not being able to read doesn't just make it harder to navigate each day. Low literacy impairs people's ability to obtain critical information about their health and can dramatically shorten their lives.

A new study from Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine shows that older people with inadequate health literacy had a 50 percent higher mortality rate during a five-year period than people with adequate reading skills. Inadequate or low health literacy is defined as the inability to read and comprehend basic health-related materials such as prescription bottles, appointment slips and hospital forms.

The Northwestern study began in 1997 when research assistants interviewed 3,260 Medicare patients ages 65 and older in the cities of Cleveland, Tampa, Miami, and San Antonio. Researchers inquired about participants' race/ethnicity, income, education, health behaviors (smoking, alcohol consumption and exercise), and chronic medical conditions (diabetes, asthma, arthritis, hypertension, heart disease, cancer and depression).

The study showed that health literacy was the top predictor of mortality after smoking, surpassing other factors such as income and years of education. The main cause of the difference in mortality among people with inadequate literacy was due to higher rates of death from cardiovascular disease.

*(Continued on Page 6)*

## Study Examines Factors Related to Student Success

Why do certain adult literacy students succeed while others do not? The drop out rate in adult basic education and literacy programs is troublingly high. One third of Adult Basic Education (ABE) students leave their programs before advancing an educational level. In a recent review of adult education programs in Florida, only 25% of students studying for the GED took and passed the test.

Guided by research in adult learner persistence, the Florida Literacy Coalition (FLC) conducted case studies of eight former adult education and literacy students who have successfully obtained their GEDs and gone on to distinguish themselves in admirable ways. Using a qualitative research approach, this study used one-to-one interviews, on-line surveys and personality tests to explore the life influences and personality characteristics that contributed to the educational experiences of these individuals.

The findings do provide some interesting information to consider. The high correlation in a number of areas pertaining to adult learner experiences, perceptions and personality characteristics provides insight into subject matter that may be worthy of further study.

These include:

- 1) Participants overwhelmingly conveyed the importance of having teachers who were

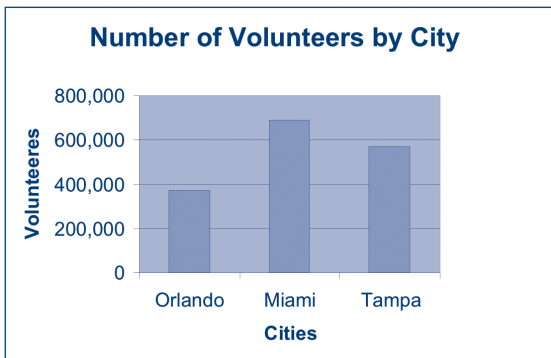
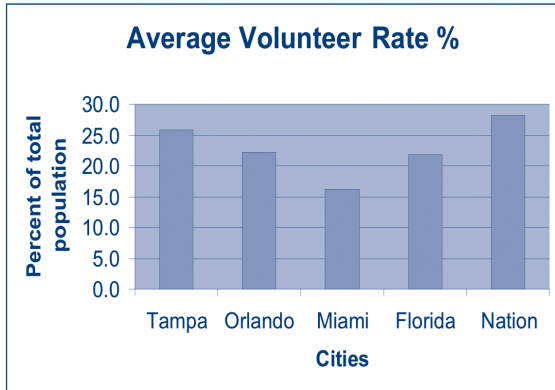
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Florida's Adult and Family Literacy Resource Center

# Literacy in Florida

## Volunteering: How Florida Cities Compare

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNS) recently published “Volunteering in America: 2007 City Trends and Rankings,” examining volunteerism in fifty of the largest metro areas in the country, three of which are in Florida—Miami, Orlando and Tampa. The report reveals that all three regions lag behind the national average and fall within the bottom 25% of cities in the U.S.



The report identified several factors that affect the differences in volunteer rates among metro areas. Some of these factors can be thought of as challenges to growing volunteer bases. For example, being overweight or not exercising increases an individual's risk of developing serious health problems; certain factors may work against a community's volunteering potential. Long commutes to work, high poverty rates, low education levels, low volunteer retention rates, small numbers of local nonprofit associations and groups, high percentages of multi-unit housing, and high population densities all tend to increase a community's chance of having low volunteer rates.

Analyzing the factors that affect volunteering can help metro areas create plans and strategies to expand civic engagement. Volunteer retention, for instance, has a potentially substantial payoff with relatively modest costs. Communities can work with their policymakers, residents, and nonprofits to identify how to improve the volunteer experience.

### Ways of Increasing Volunteer Retention

First, keep volunteers engaged in volunteer organizations. Volunteers actually thrive on being asked to do more for an organization they care about. Second, reach out to volunteers who are already involved with another organization. It appears that committed volunteers work with multiple organizations. Third, research shows that different volunteers have preferences for different volunteer activities. Leaders need to see volunteers as important community and organizational assets and try to make the best use of their time and commitment by trying to ensure the best fit between volunteers and the volunteer organization and activity.

Meanwhile, many of the most challenging factors to change are associated with building social relationships across boundaries of economic, geographic, and racial-ethnic difference. For example, it may be worthwhile to create what Robert Putnam calls “bridging social capital”—the social capital that develops and nurtures the types of connections that bring together people with different backgrounds, values and perspectives.

Hopefully this report will increase individuals' desire to raise their community's level of volunteering and thereby collectively raise a locale's stock of social capital. This goal can be achieved in a number of ways, including: having leaders in a community talk about why volunteering is so important, flexible work schedules that reduce the effect of commuting times on volunteering, working with schools and other groups to spur greater community engagement among youth and adults through activities such as service-learning and encouraging nonprofits to reinvent and expand the roles volunteers can play in an organization.

One might also appeal to potential volunteers by noting that service to others may help them be happier and healthier in addition to addressing key community interests. How they spend their leisure time and whether they connect with their neighbors could help determine the level of crime on their street, how well their schools work, and how responsive their government is. While opportunities and efforts to build greater citizen engagement need to fit local needs and culture, communities that work to enhance and expand the range of volunteering among residents will make their community an even better place to live.

Information for this article comes from:

[http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/VIA\\_CITIES/VIA\\_cities\\_fullreport.pdf](http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/VIA_CITIES/VIA_cities_fullreport.pdf)

# Literacy in Florida

## Adult Learner Stories Wanted!

### The Florida Literacy Coalition's 4th Annual Adult Learner Essay Book

The Florida Adult and Family Literacy Resource Center is proud to announce the launch of its Fourth 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 be debuted at the 2008 Florida Literacy Conference next May in Orlando.

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 or teachers are encouraged to work together in writing, typing, editing and submitting a written piece. Teaching tips and exercises to help start the

writing process can be found at [www.floridaliteracy.org](http://www.floridaliteracy.org). We ask that completed pieces be submitted by e-mail to Tom Pattison at [pattisont@floridaliteracy.org](mailto:pattisont@floridaliteracy.org) by **February 14, 2008**. Submissions should be no longer than two pages (500 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](http://www.floridaliteracy.org). Authors can choose to remain anonymous or have a short biographical paragraph included with their submission. Each author will be invited to the Florida Literacy Conference on May 2-4 and will also receive a free copy of the book. Free copies of the book will be made available to all participating literacy organizations. Please feel free to distribute this announcement widely throughout your program.

## Writer's Day

### Invite an Author to Visit Your Classroom in January

The Florida Literacy Coalition and the Florida Writers Association have teamed up to launch an exciting new

program to bring professional writers into adult education and literacy programs. The Writer's Day Campaign is a statewide initiative inviting published authors to visit adult education, literacy and family literacy classes and to share their experiences and advice with students. This is a free program, with authors volunteering their time.

For more information or to request an author for a classroom visit, please contact Chrissy Jackson of the Florida Writers Association at [chrissyj@earthlink.net](mailto:chrissyj@earthlink.net) or by phone at 727-367-9052.



## 5th Annual Literacy Leadership Institute

The Florida Literacy Coalition will host its 5th Annual Literacy Leadership Institute January 29-30, 2008 at the Marriott Village at Lake Buena Vista.

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
- Student Assessment and Reporting
- Data Management and Collection
- Volunteer 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](mailto: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.

# Literacy in Florida

## Upcoming Literacy Events

### FREE TUTOR IN-SERVICE ONLINE TRAINING

*Write Away! Engaging Learners in the Writing and Editing Process*

**When:** December 11, 2007  
6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

**Where:** Online—Participate from the comfort of your own home or office. All you need is a telephone and access to the Internet.

**How does it work?** We will send you a toll-free, call-in number and web address (URL) when you register.

On the evening of the workshop, you simply join the conference call and go to the web site which will allow you to access the slide show.

Are your students reluctant writers? This session, designed with volunteer tutors and teachers in mind, will provide helpful tips and fun activities to encourage and improve student writing. The topics covered will include: Sentence Sense, Editing Activities, Paragraph and Essay Writing, Evaluating Writing Samples and Resources.

**Presenter:** Cynthia Godby, Adult Basic Education/GED Teacher, Seminole Community College.

For more information, contact  
**Yari Payne at (407) 246-7110**  
x 203 or via email at  
[payney@floridaliteracy.org](mailto:payney@floridaliteracy.org).

### WHAT GREAT TEACHERS DO DIFFERENTLY: FOURTEEN THINGS THAT MATTER MOST

**When:** January 16, 2008  
8:30 am - Noon CST  
February 13, 2008  
8:30 am - Noon CST

**Where:** Chautauqua Hall of  
Brotherhood  
South Room  
96 Circle Drive  
Defuniak Springs, FL

This session is a small group, interactive, two-part book study, facilitated by Lisa Jones, in which participants will be

provided with a copy of "What Great Teachers Do Differently" to be used during group discussions. Your copy of the book will be mailed to you before winter break.

Pre-registration is required by November 30, 2007.

For more information, contact  
**Lisa Jones at 850-922-5343 or via email**  
at [jonesl@ACE-Leon.org](mailto:jonesl@ACE-Leon.org).

### FETC 2008 FLORIDA EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

**When:** January 22-25, 2008

**Where:** Orange County Convention  
Center  
Orlando, FL

FETC is one of the largest, most successful conferences in the United States devoted to educational technology. The conference program is designed so educators and administrators have an opportunity to learn how to integrate different technologies across the curriculum. FETC is designed for teachers, principals and deans, district administrators, curriculum designers, media specialists, technology directors and various other educators.

For more information, visit  
<http://www.fetc.org/default.aspx>

### APPLYING TABE RESULTS TO CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

**When:** January 31, 2008  
9 am - 1 pm CST

**Where:** PAEC  
Chipley, FL

For more information, contact  
**Lisa Jones at 850-922-5343 or**  
via email at [jonesl@ace-leon.org](mailto:jonesl@ace-leon.org).

### THE 2008 FLORIDA CELEBRATION OF READING

**When:** Friday, February 15, 2008

**Where:** Hyatt Regency Coconut  
Point Resort & Spa  
Bonita Springs, Florida

For information please contact  
**Ms. Tina Matte at 239-275-5758**  
or [tmatte@gravinasmith.com](mailto:tmatte@gravinasmith.com).

To submit events for upcoming issues of the Literacy News as well as the calendar at [www.floridaliteracy.org](http://www.floridaliteracy.org), please forward information about your event to Samantha Sparks at [sparkss@floridaliteracy.org](mailto:sparkss@floridaliteracy.org).

(Continued from Page 1)

Study Examines Factors Related to Student Success

encouraging, supportive and willing to put in the extra effort to help them succeed.

including conscientiousness.

2) A majority of participants were (A) first born children, (B) grew up in poor or low income families, and (C) moved frequently when they were children.

8) All are involved in their communities, and 7 out of 8 support adult education and literacy as staff or volunteers.

3) The majority had negative school experiences and left school before completing the 9th grade.

9) All clearly articulated that adult education changed their lives.

4) All attended classes or tutoring sessions with a relatively high level of intensity. The average attendance was 16.6 hours per week.

Stories of exceptional individuals can serve to both inform and inspire. It is our hope that the experiences and advice shared by these outstanding individuals will be a resource for adult learners and educators alike.

5) All participated in small classes or one-to-one tutoring.

Thanks to the Dollar General Literacy Foundation for making this study possible.

6) Goal setting was an important factor for most of the participants.

Read the full study: Success Factors in High Achieving Adult Learners.

7) There were strong correlations in several personality characteristics,

Free copies of this publication are available by calling 407-246-7110 or going online to [http://www.floridaliteracy.org/FLC\\_Student\\_Book.pdf](http://www.floridaliteracy.org/FLC_Student_Book.pdf)



# Literacy in Florida



## 2008 Florida Literacy Conference

**May 7-9**

**Pre-conference May 6**

**The Regal Sun Resort in the  
Walt Disney World Resorts, Orlando**

### Registration Prices:

Full Conference Early Bird: postmarked by March 11:  
Member \$180 Non-Member \$205  
Full Conference: Adult Learner: \$90  
(No fee for adult learners attending Adult Learner Day)

## 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 December 17, 2007. We welcome your participation and encourage you to propose a session by December 17, 2007 with our easy-to-complete online form at [www.floridaliteracy.org](http://www.floridaliteracy.org). To request a session proposal form via mail or FAX, contact Yari Payne, Education and Training Coordinator at [conference@floridaliteracy.org](mailto:conference@floridaliteracy.org) or call (407) 246-7110 ext. 203.

## Make Your Nominations for the 2008 Florida Literacy Awards

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2008 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 8 at the awards dinner and ceremony during the 2008 Florida Literacy Conference. Visit [www.floridaliteracy.org](http://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

# Literacy in the U.S.

## ProLiteracy Appoints New President



David C. Harvey  
President of ProLiteracy  
Worldwide

David C. Harvey was recently appointed the President of ProLiteracy Worldwide, the world's largest organization of adult basic education and literacy programs.

Mr. Harvey has a long history of working on behalf of people in need and the disenfranchised. Prior to assuming his position at ProLiteracy, Mr. Harvey served as founding executive director of

AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth & Families, a national training, research and advocacy organization in Washington, D.C. He is the author of peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters and monographs on health, disability and HIV/AIDS issues. As a project director with the National Disability Rights Network, he directed disability and legal rights education projects and government relations activities for the National Pediatric/Family HIV Resource Center of the University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey. He has participated in several blue-ribbon advisory panels and committees and has testified before Congress.

(Continued from Page 1)

### Low Literacy Equals Shorter Life Expectancy

"It's a matter of life or death," said David W. Baker, MD, MPH, lead author of the study and chief of general internal medicine at the Feinberg School. "The excess number of deaths among people with low literacy was huge. The magnitude of this shocked us."

"When patients can't read, they are not able to do the things necessary to stay healthy," Dr. Baker noted. "They don't know how to take their medications correctly, they don't understand when to seek medical care, and they don't know how to care for their diseases." Dr. Baker thinks this is why they are much more likely to die.

"We need to use plain language," Dr. Baker said. "We're not talking about dumbing down material. We're talking about using simple language the average

person would understand." He'd like to vanquish medical jargon from physician's language and educational health materials. One example is saying "sugar" instead of "glucose" when discussing diabetes.

Changes will benefit all patients, particularly those in late middle age and older. Mental functions begin to decline in the thirties, and reading comprehension is much lower among the elderly. As our population ages, Dr. Baker said, the problem of inadequate health literacy and the need to improve methods of health education and communication are certain to increase.

Source: Northwestern University, Feinberg School of Medicine

## Resources

### GUIDE FOR WORKING WITH REFUGEES WITH DISABILITIES

The U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), Assisting Refugees with Disabilities Program has produced a "Resource Guide for Serving Refugees with Disabilities," available for download at <http://www.refugees.org/DisabilityGuide>.

Written for refugee case managers and those serving refugees with disabilities, the 139-page guide includes information about housing for refugees with disabilities, assistive technology, medical resources, citizenship and disability, and benefits for refugees with disabilities.

### REPORT: UPWARD ECONOMIC MOBILITY FOR IMMIGRANTS IS SLOWING

The Economic Mobility Project, an initiative of the Pew Charitable Trusts, released a report that reflects new immigrants aren't as economically mobile as their predecessors. The new report suggests that decreased immigrant wages may be to blame. Immigrant wages have been decreasing steadily over the past 60 years, while the difference between first- and second-generation worker's wages have also decreased. For more information and to view the full report, visit [www.economicmobility.org/reports\\_and\\_research/?id=0003](http://www.economicmobility.org/reports_and_research/?id=0003).

### NATIONAL STUDY ASSESSES U.S. ADULTS' FINANCIAL LITERACY

Networks Financial Institute at Indiana State University has released results of a national survey that assesses U.S. adults' self-reported levels of financial literacy. The findings indicate that less than 30% of U.S. adults view their personal financial knowledge as very good or better. A copy of the "Adult Financial Literacy Study" is available online at [www.isunetworks.org](http://www.isunetworks.org)

# Funding Opportunities

## Funding Opportunities

### Barnes & Noble Booksellers

Barnes & Noble offers support for non-profit literacy organizations throughout the U.S. Opportunities include book fairs and gift wrapping fundraising opportunities, along with a limited number of program sponsorships and donations. If you are interested, submit a proposal to the manager at your local Barnes & Noble Booksellers. For more information, visit [www.barnesandnobleinc.com/our\\_company/our\\_company.html](http://www.barnesandnobleinc.com/our_company/our_company.html) and select Sponsorships and Charitable Donations.

### The Gannett Foundation

The Gannett Foundation offers grants and assistance to programs that support the mission "to invest in the future of the communities in which Gannett does business, and in the future of our industry." The Foundation values projects that address issues such as education, neighborhood improvement, community problem solving and environmental conservation. For more information, visit <http://www.gannettfoundation.org>.

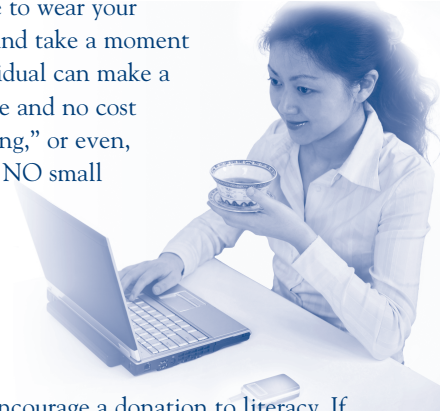
## Tea Time! Try a Virtual Tea Party Fundraiser

Is your organization looking for a creative fundraising idea requiring minimal costs? Hosting a tea party may be the answer! The premise behind this fundraiser is to "invite" people to attend a tea party; however, the "guests" enjoy a private tea party at home and send in a financial donation to benefit literacy.

Here's the idea: First, create a fun invitation. Use wording like, "Please feel free to wear your pajamas, enjoy a cup of tea, and take a moment to remember how each individual can make a difference," or, "No dress code and no cost associated with NOT attending," or even, "Think about the pleasure of NO small talk." Each mailed invitation would include a tea bag and a return envelope.

Make certain to mention that the tea bag should be used for the tea party and the enclosed envelope is to encourage a donation to literacy. If invitations are sent to individuals familiar with the organization, there is no need for a detailed explanation about your organization's mission.

The hosting organization can choose to let each "guest" choose the date of his or her tea party, or select a date for a "virtual tea party." Hosting an online literacy chat could provide a way for guests to enjoy their cup of tea and come together for a web-based event.



## Tutor Tip Using a Thesaurus

This exercise can help increase your student's vocabulary while teaching them to use a thesaurus. Choose a descriptive paragraph for the exercise and underline key words. Before the lesson begins, explain what a thesaurus is and then ask the student to read the chosen paragraph. The student then looks up the underlined words in the paragraph and finds synonyms for each and writes those words down as well. The student then re-reads the paragraph, inserting the new words in lieu of the underlined ones. The student can also copy the paragraph with the new words.

A tutor at Second Start notes:

"Reading through the second time there was less hesitation. There were some words he decided not to change because another word would not have made as much sense. After he

had rewritten the paragraph, he read it again with almost no hesitation. He really liked doing this and seemed pleased to use the bigger words which are in his vocabulary."

Source: <http://www.oaklandlibrary.org>





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### Executive Committee

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<b>Vice President (Providers)</b>	Darlene Kostrub, <i>Palm Beach County Literacy Coalition</i>
<b>Secretary</b>	Sandy Newell, <i>State Library of Florida</i>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Nishad Khan, Esquire
<b>Executive Director</b>	Gregory Smith

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**Yari Payne**, Florida Literacy Coalition

**Greg Smith**, Florida Literacy Coalition  
**Samantha Sparks**, Florida Literacy Coalition

## 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](mailto:sparkss@floridaliteracy.org)  
or visit [www.floridaliteracy.org](http://www.floridaliteracy.org) and click on Become a Member.