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Learning to Read is Often Harder than it Appears in *Precious*

Orlando, Florida, 2/4/10- With six Oscar nominations recently announced *Precious*, the movie based on the novel *Push* by Sapphire, is again in the headlines. However, Monica Baxley, an adult learner, wants people to know that learning to read can be much more difficult than it appears in *Precious*. Monica, who learned to read as an adult and then went on to get her GED, says, "Everybody learns at a different rate and it can take some people much longer to reach their goals."

Precious is the story of a teenager who faces insurmountable obstacles. Illiteracy, obesity, and two teen pregnancies are just a few of many. *Precious* is invited to enroll in an alternative school in the hope that her life can head in a new direction and with the help of her new teacher Miss Rain, *Precious* learns to read and write. Within a year, *Precious* improves her literacy skills to an 8th grade level, and the movie ends with *Precious*' decision to continue with her education making plans to take the GED.

Greg Smith, Executive Director of the Florida Literacy Coalition, "appreciates the message of hope conveyed in the movie. Literacy can and does open doors to a better life. That being said, it's important to know that it typically takes 100 hours of instruction to advance one grade level." Smith continued, "A movie like *Precious* will reach a lot of people and we want to make sure that adults and teens know that help is available. If they are willing to put in the time and effort, they too can achieve."

In the movie, it was *Precious*'s teacher who provided her with the support and guidance she needed to begin changing her life. Baxley stated, "Having a good relationship with your teacher can make all the difference. I was lucky to have a teacher who was someone I could talk to and someone who cared."

Becoming a literacy tutor is great ways to make an impact in the life of an individual. To learn more about becoming a literacy volunteer, contact the Florida Literacy Coalition (FLC) at 1-800-237-5113 or visit www.floridaliteracy.org. FLC will help you locate an organization that needs volunteers in your community.

About the Florida Literacy Coalition

Established in 1985, The Florida Literacy Coalition (FLC) promotes, supports and advocates for the effective delivery of quality adult and family literacy services in the state of Florida. As a statewide umbrella literacy organization and the host of Florida's State Literacy Resource Center, FLC provides a range of services to support more than 300 adult education, literacy and family literacy providers throughout Florida. Special emphasis is placed on assisting community based literacy organizations with their training and program development needs.

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