

2013 Ann C. Michel Award Winner

About the Program: Kabultec, Afghanistan

ProLiteracy began working in Afghanistan with Nasrine Gross in 2002. (Frank Laubach taught in Afghanistan in the 1930s).

The Roqia Center, ProLiteracy's Afghan partner, has developed an innovative literacy program for couples in some of Kabul's poorest neighborhoods. Attending class often means being in the same room with other men and women not of their own family, with the women's faces uncovered. For the first time couples are doing something together on equal footing with each other's efforts and abilities respected, nurtured, and encouraged. The experience is life-changing. Quite beyond the teaching of adult literacy, the program is transformative both psychologically and culturally.

Every class includes people of different ethnic backgrounds which have historically been in conflict with one another: Hazara, Pashtun, Tajik and Sadat. Typically these groups have few opportunities to interact with the kind of congeniality and mutual respect found in the literacy class. Bringing couples together outside the home is a powerful way to promote overall change in the community. The literacy program creates channels for mutual understanding and respect that transcends traditional barriers of gender, class and politics.

Program Director, Nasrine Gross is an Afghan-American woman, working in her native land, determined to change an enduring legacy of the Taliban regime. The literacy rate in Afghanistan is among the lowest in the world at just 10 percent. Gross started the couple's literacy training by going into the poorest neighborhoods in Kabul, knocking on doors and asking husbands and wives if they were interested. Gross said she launched the project against the advice of the Afghan organization on ethnicities, which said the husbands would not allow it. "When you have such a staggering rate of illiteracy, you have a problem with both men and women accepting the participation of women in society." Gross believes that assisting their cause is an integral part of the country's democratization and reconstruction.

The Ann C. Michel International Women in Literacy Award

The Ann C. Michel International Women in Literacy Award recognizes and helps advance the work of an outstanding ProLiteracy Women in Literacy partner organization. The annual award is given to an international literacy organization that helps women in greatest need in developing countries make significant life changes through literacy. The award consists of a cash prize and a travel stipend.

The Ann C. Michel International Women in Literacy Award is sponsored by a gift bestowed in her memory by Knowledge Systems & Research, Inc., the international firm that she founded and led, and by her family and friends.

The award recipient will be an existing ProLiteracy Worldwide international partner organization that is led by women and serves women through literacy and social action programs. ProLiteracy's international partners are local, nongovernmental organizations that actively provide literacy instruction in the context of addressing the pressing needs of their communities. These partner organizations participate in ProLiteracy Worldwide's training and/or direct grant program and are committed to its model of community development and social change through education.

The award winner will serve women in communities where literacy needs are the greatest. The award winner will support women learners as they become empowered with practices, information, and the confidence to improve their lives. The award winner will demonstrate innovation, ethics, and leadership. The award winner's literacy curriculum will be consistent with the stated learning priorities of the participants and will reflect the needs and priorities of the local women learners that it serves. The organization will have an established, demonstrable track record for effective literacy program management and delivery of instruction. The award winner will participate in reporting the outcomes of its program annually or more often if requested.

Selection Procedure

ProLiteracy International Program staff annually review eligible organizations from four global regions of service: Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. Guided by the award criteria, International Programs makes a recommendation to the ProLiteracy Board of Directors on a candidate that best meets the criteria. The ProLiteracy Board will then present the Ann C. Michel International Women in Literacy Award at ProLiteracy's annual conference.

VOICES

F O R • L I T E R A C Y

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**How One Girl's
Disability Didn't
Stand Between
Her and College**

International Update: Cambodia

Learn about the Kavet—
Khmer Bilingual Literacy
Project

USCAL Conference

A gallery of photos from
our biennial conference

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An adult learner gives back to his program.

Dear Friend,

Adult literacy and basic education continues to be a significant issue around the world. Just recently, UNESCO released a report saying that the “legacy of illiteracy” is more widespread than previously believed and that 1 in 4 young people do not even have basic literacy skills.

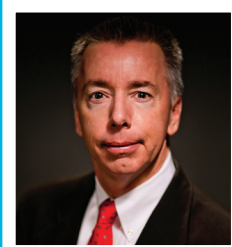
Additionally, the recent Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) confirmed that the United States is lagging behind other industrialized countries—coming in 16th out of 24 countries in the ability of adults to read, write, do basic math, or operate computers.

Sadly, the PIAAC study made hardly a stir among elected officials. When our public officials do focus on education, the default is to prioritize K-12 education or pre school. Those are important investments. But the investments are incomplete if children are going home to parents and caretakers who cannot read, write, and do basic math.

That’s why private donations from generous people like you are so important. They allow ProLiteracy and its member network of 1,000 community-based literacy programs around the nation to keep opening their doors to adult learners. You’ll read some stories of those inspirational learners inside this issue of *Voices*. I hope you enjoy—and thanks for your continued support.

KEVIN MORGAN

President and Chief Executive Officer
kmorgan@proliteracy.org

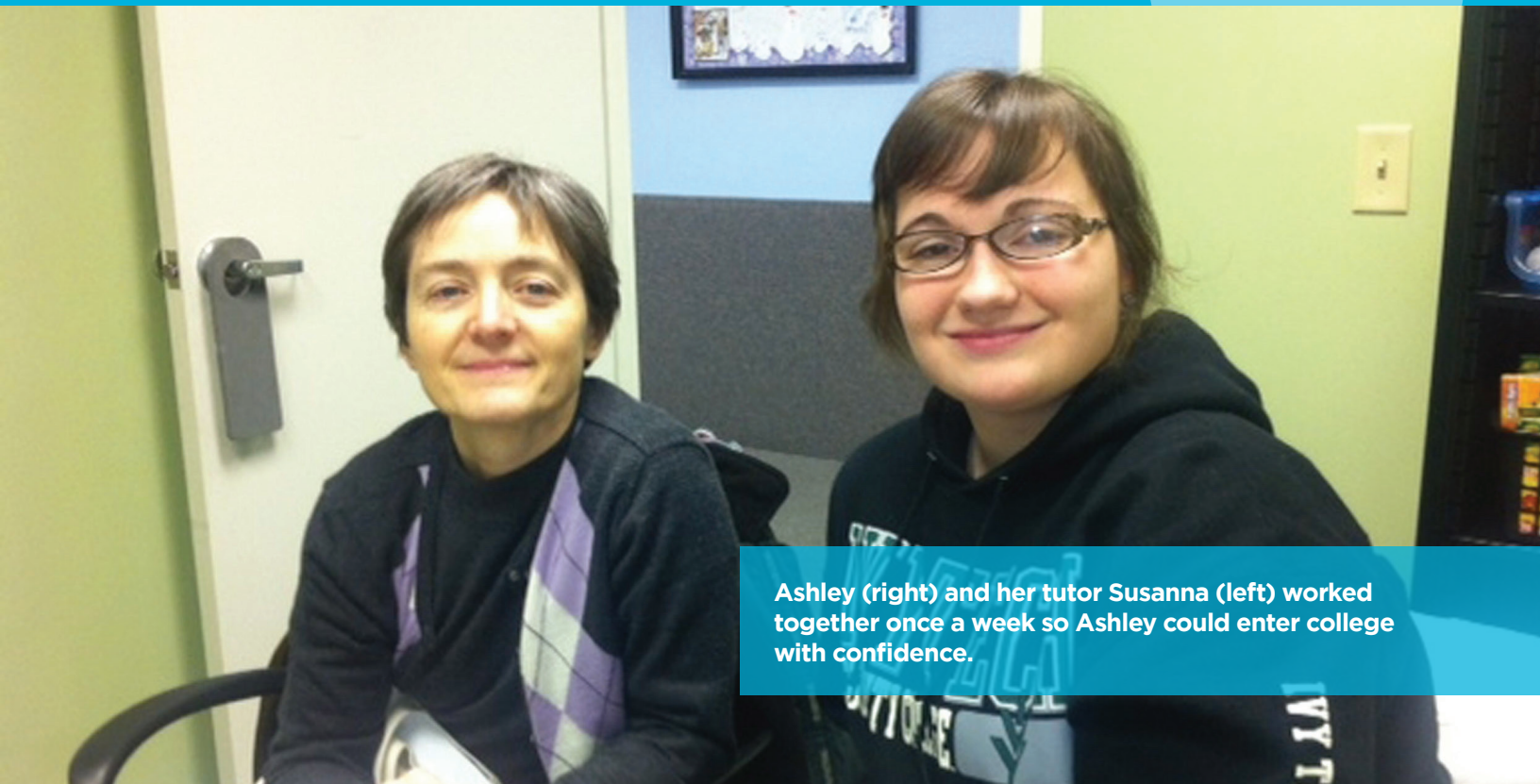


Kevin Morgan has served on the ProLiteracy board of directors since 2007. He was appointed interim President and CEO in November 2012, and became permanent President and CEO in February 2014. He has led the restructure of the organization and the development of a new strategic plan to better serve the mission of developing and promoting adult literacy learning, content, programs, and advocacy. Kevin has an extensive background in marketing and has worked on a wide variety of leading global and domestic brands including MasterCard, Agilent Technologies, Maxtor, Nissan, and Six Flags.


KEVIN MORGAN
President and Chief Executive Officer

Diligence

How Ashley Refused To Let a Disability Define Her Dream



Ashley (right) and her tutor Susanna (left) worked together once a week so Ashley could enter college with confidence.

Like so many other young people around the country, Ashley, a recent high school graduate, was having some jitters about starting her first semester at Ivy Tech Community College in Indianapolis, Indiana.

And like many others, Ashley's anxiety was a little bit compounded because she had been diagnosed with a learning disability. High school had been a challenge for her. She knew if she was really going to succeed in college, she would need a little help, or else she was at risk of falling behind. Despite great strides, individuals with learning disabilities are sometimes still at a disadvantage in the United States.

For example, according to the National Center for Learning Disabilities, the high school dropout rate for students with learning disabilities is almost three times that of students without learning disabilities, and among those that do graduate from high school, far fewer choose to go to postsecondary schools when compared to their non-disabled peers.

The center also reports that adults between the ages of 16 and 64 are less likely to be employed if they have learning disabilities. In fact, the unemployment rate for those with learning disabilities was twice that of those without.

So Ashley knew she would likely need some extra help.

The summer before her first semester of college, she reached out to The Literacy Center in Evansville, Indiana. Her goal? Make sure she could test into the required English composition courses at Ivy Tech.

Her first step toward achieving that goal was working in The Literacy Center's Literacy Lab three times a week so she could be quickly matched with a volunteer tutor. In one month, she made it through the first three levels of Lexia Reading and was matched with Dr. Susanna Hoeness-Krupsaw. Dr. Hoeness-Krupsaw has been a volunteer for The Literacy Center for nearly 20 years.

“Ashley is one of the hardest working students I have ever had,”

says Dr. Hoeness-Krupsaw. She meets with Ashley once a week to build on various comprehension and vocabulary skills.

Ashley has gone above and beyond with the program requirements. She has taken advantage of every additional learning opportunity...and it did not take long for her hard work to pay off!

After only a few months, Ashley passed Ivy Tech’s Accuplacer—an assessment that determines which

reading, writing, and math classes students must take. To everyone’s delight, Ashley was able to register for a prerequisite English course for the spring 2014 semester!

Now, with the first semester of college under her belt, Ashley continues to work hard and welcome challenges. She has reevaluated her goals and is pursuing an EKG Technician Certification. Working with The Literacy Center, Ashley learned more than just how to read better. She also learned she can accomplish anything with continued hard work and dedication!



Studying with her tutor paid off for Ashley.

Facts about Adult Literacy in Indiana:



1 Ten percent of the adult population in the state of Indiana is without a high school credential.



2 Sixty-one percent of the men without a high school credential are unemployed.



3 Indiana has nearly **1 million** adults of working age who either haven’t completed high school or speak little or no English.



4 Less than 8 percent of those adults are enrolled in a literacy or basic education program.



5 An estimated 10,500 adults in Vanderburgh County—where Evansville is located—lack basic prose literacy skills.

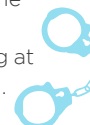
6 The state is expected to have half million “middle skill” jobs open within the next five years.



7 The literacy level required for all American jobs rose by 14 percent.



8 The former governor of Indiana stated that determining the number of new prisons to build is based, in part, on the number of second graders not reading at second-grade level.



For decades, ProLiteracy and its member network of 1,000 community-based nonprofit organizations nationwide have been providing adults like Ashley with the skills they need to thrive—to find sustainable, fulfilling employment; to raise healthy and happy families; and to engage in their communities. For more information about The Literacy Center, visit the website at <http://www.litcenter.org/>.

Please donate by calling 1-888-926-7323 (READ), visiting ProLiteracy.org, or sending your donation to ProLiteracy at 104 Marcellus Street, Syracuse, NY 13204. Your support will equip adults with the tools they need and give them the courage to transform their lives.

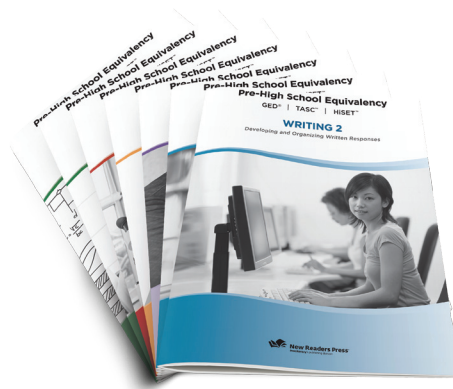
ProLiteracy Worldwide News

Expanding Beyond the GED Test

Recent significant changes to the GED test have given some states the opportunity to explore other options. So far, 15 states have adopted the two other high school equivalency tests—called TASC and HiSET.

And ProLiteracy's publishing division, New Readers Press (NRP), is keeping pace. NRP developed test preparation materials aligned with TASC, which is administered by CBT McGraw-Hill, and HiSET, administered by ETS.

Sue Willey, director of sales and operations, is excited about the new products. "New Readers Press is at the forefront of creating new and test-specific materials for all high school equivalencies, including the GED test, TASC, and HiSET," said Willey. "Our test preparation materials are designed to assist tutors and teachers in each state prepare their students to pass their high school equivalency test."



The test preparation materials feature 11-16 targeted strategies per book, workbooks, lessons, sample test questions, and the answers and explanations students need for feedback. Materials include great tools such as math books that cover fundamental concepts through algebra skills, and math, language arts, and thinking skills lessons.

Honing Tech Skills Among Adult Learners

Twenty adult learners recently celebrated technology and entrepreneurship by graduating from a joint program offered by the North Side Learning Center and ProLiteracy.



The program helped these aspiring entrepreneurs create budgets and databases so they will be more equipped to be small business owners. A graduation was held in December.

Students were trained on computer skills and the Internet while learning the basic building blocks of starting a small business. At the end of the program, students were given the chance to submit proposals of their business plans to a panel of judges. The best entries won additional support to help their visions come to life.

While the program's goal was to teach computer skills, Kofi Addai, ProLiteracy project coordinator and one of the instructors, said it did much more than that. "It helped them with their English and literacy skills, which enabled the students to be more engaged in their communities," Addai said.

One student from China, YF, was completely new to computers in the U.S. Thanks to the program, she learned how to use an English keyboard, and was then able to navigate the Internet in English as well, thereby, allowing her to adjust to life in U.S. more easily.



Nasrine Gross, founder of the Roqia Center, accepts the Ann C. Michel Women in Literacy Award from **Lynn Curtis**, international programs consultant.



(above) **Peter Waite**, executive vice president, and **Alison Hoefler** of Southwest draw names for ticket giveaways; (below) **Shauna Brown** and **Valerie Roberts** from Project Read visit their senator with **Kevin Morgan**, president and CEO.

The U.S. Conference on Adult Literacy (USCAL), held in Washington, D.C., October 31-November 2, 2013, brought together adult literacy advocates and educators to share new ideas, learn from leading thinkers, and inspire one another.

Many attendees described USCAL as the highlight of their year. One of those highlights included more than 115 visits to Congress, where adult literacy advocates met with senators, representatives, and their staff to discuss issues related to our field.





Michele Diecuch, senior program and membership manager, tries on ProLiteracy's "One Word" t-shirt.



Dr. Bob Laubach and **Sue Willey**, director of sales and business operations, stand in front of the New Readers Press booth.



Washington, D.C., **Mayor Vincent Gray** provided opening remarks.



Joe Theismann, former star quarterback for the Washington Redskins, gave the keynote address and passed out autographed footballs.



Maria Rodriguez, one of two Dollar General Students of the Year, receives her award from Denine Torr of the Dollar General Literacy Foundation.



Earl Mills signs copies of his books, *From Illiterate to Author* and *From Illiterate to Poet*.

International Update:

Cambodia



Rok Village students build a literacy classroom in Rieh Long Hamlet, Cambodia.

Have you measured what you really learned in reading and math classes? Not by taking a test or receiving a grade at the end of the course—but by putting what you’ve learned into action in real life? That hands-on nature of education shines in Ratanakiri, Cambodia.

Mr. Eo started teaching literacy in the Kavet villages in 1999 as a volunteer in the

Kavet-Khmer Bilingual Literacy Project, co-led by ProLiteracy. Using the Khmer curriculum, he was the first Kavet person to be hired as a part-time project monitor in 2005 before moving to the provincial capital as chief trainer in 2008. He became a team leader in 2012.

The Kavet-Khmer Bilingual literacy and math classes in six villages help more

than 400 students every year gain an education. In 2013, there were a total of 16 literacy classes and five women’s math classes.

One such learner, Mom, is a math student from Trak Village. She has been attending classes for more than a year now. By trade a farmer, Mom often had no choice but to accept low prices for her crops. But by completing Math



The community meeting house which doubles as a literacy classroom when classes relocate from the hamlet to the central village location.



Teacher Tat of Lamuey Oh practices the math exercises in preparation for teaching in her village.



Theuan of Lamuey Oh village and teacher Yuey of Rok village, working on basic math skills

Books 1-5, she was able to calculate accurate prices for the crops she grows and sell the products for fair-market prices. By taking basic level classes, she increased her profits to support herself.

Another example is Thoht, an 18-year old from Rok Village. He is entering grade nine this year. After working all day in the rice fields and journeying through dark forests to take classes at night, he was the first of his ethnic minority to complete the Kavet-Khmer Bilingual Literacy Program and enter school at the secondary level.

And Ayle None, a 13-year old girl from the same village, walked an hour each way from her village to attend literacy classes. Like Thoht, she worked with her family during the day and took

classes in the evening. After attending courses for four years, she learned how to read and do basic math, and became the first female to graduate the Kavet Program and continue on to grade six.

These are just a few examples of how a basic education can completely change the lives of deserving people. These basic literacy classes in Cambodia taught people how to read and do basic math—and they also helped bring about positive change, such as earning a better income to support themselves and their families. The people from small villages in Cambodia can now go on to attend higher levels of education and continue to improve their lives.

Donor and Member News

Adult Learner and Literacy Program in Little Elm, Texas, Reach Milestone

The Little Elm Adult Literacy Program in Little Elm, Texas, reached quite a milestone recently by helping an adult learner reach his own milestone—**Delmar Yingst** is the first student in the program to reach the highest reading level, Level 4. His tutor, Dianne Wohletz, has helped him every step of the way.

Yingst's personal life posed obstacles in his childhood and prevented him from learning how to read at a younger age. There were some delays beyond his control as he worked to complete the program, but now he has finally made it to the last level.

The Little Elm Adult Literacy Program is made possible by the support of volunteers who take the time to tutor students.



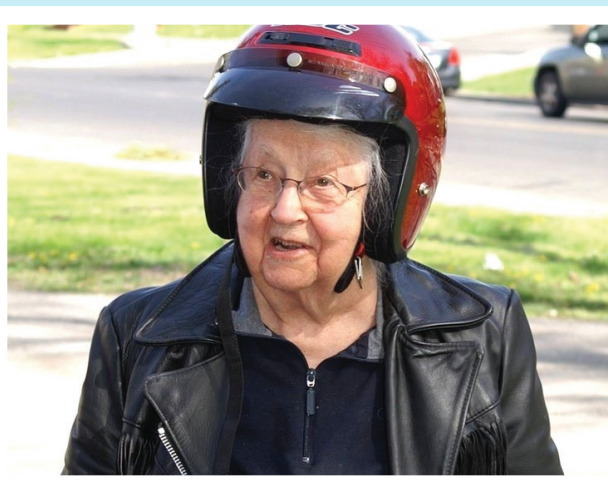
Delmar Yingst (left) is nearing fully functional literacy as part of an adult reading class started by **Diana Russell** (center) and tutored by volunteer **Dianne Wohletz**.

The curriculum uses New Readers Press Laubach materials, and is sponsored by the Little Elm Friends of the Library. It is available to adults who need a tutor through the Little Elm Public Library.

ProLiteracy Fondly Remembers...

Mary G. Smith was born in 1907 in Williamsport, Pennsylvania and died in January at the age of 106. A member of the Syracuse University Class of 1929, Mary taught high school for seven years in Pennsylvania before obtaining her master's degree in higher education administration. She married Edward Smith in 1940 and had two children.

She worked first as a vocational counselor of women at SU and then served as assistant to the Dean of Human Development. She taught at Nottingham High School and also spent nine years as a counselor in University College's Women's Center. She retired from SU in 1972 and became program director at the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), a position she held until retiring in 1991, at age 83. In 1993, she began tutoring at the Learning Place, now the Newland Center for Adult Learning and Literacy. She stopped tutoring at 101 only because of failing eyesight.



Mary was predeceased by her husband and son, Sheridan. She is survived by her daughter, Elizabeth Smith Hakanson; niece and nephews; granddaughters; and numerous grandnieces, great-grandnieces and great-great-grandnieces and -nephews.

Contributions can be made in Mary's name to ProLiteracy, the Newland Center, or to Plymouth Congregational Church.

Donor/Student Profile: Literacy Allows Him to Sing



Sherry Spencer, program director, accepts a donation of \$1,000 from former literacy student and current college student, **Douglas Newton**.

Douglas Newton recently made a donation to the Bradford-Wyoming County Literacy Program in northeast Pennsylvania. This wasn't just a \$10 or \$20 donation, but a substantial donation of \$1,000. And Douglas is not just any donor—he's also a former literacy student.

"I wouldn't be where I am today if it wasn't for the Bradford-Wyoming County Literacy Program," says Doug.

He enrolled in the program in 1992 after his church's choir director asked him to sing a solo. Because he could not read the music, he declined. In 2006, Doug decided it was time to work toward his goal of getting an associate's degree. He enrolled in Luzerne County Community College (LCCC), and six years later, the same year he graduated, he received the school's Outstanding Adult Learner Award. Now Doug is continuing his studies, completing three semesters at Keystone College as he works toward his bachelor's degree. All the while, Doug has continued to work for his family business, Formula One Feeds. When he can, he helps fundraise and acts as a public speaker for the literacy program.

"I'm grateful for the help I received from my volunteer tutors and the Bradford-Wyoming County Literacy Program," says Doug. "And I wanted to give back."

The Bradford-Wyoming County Literacy Program appreciates his generosity. In a time of dwindling public funding, a donation from an individual is special—and a donation from someone who has benefitted from literacy services is very special indeed. Many years after starting his program, Doug now has no problem singing solo in the church choir.

The National Book Fund: 19 Years of Matching Materials with Need

ProLiteracy's National Book Fund® (NBF) meets the needs of adult literacy service providers in the United States by providing instructional and training materials, enabling them to better serve current students and also reach students who are waiting to begin instruction.

The NBF, entering its 19th year of activity, has distributed more than 1,500 grants totaling more than \$2.9 million worth of materials to organizations in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. More than 305,000 adults and children have improved their reading skills as a result of this initiative.

The NBF supports local nonprofit literacy programs providing basic literacy, adult basic education, English-language, and family literacy services. Organizations that receive books from this program use them to provide adults with the

instruction they need to learn to read or improve their English language skills. The materials, from New Readers Press, ProLiteracy's publishing division, are specifically designed to meet the needs of adult students, instructors, and trainers.

Grant applications are available each year on March 1. For more information about National Book Fund grants, visit www.proliteracy.org/nbf.

Help ProLiteracy reach the 20th anniversary of the National Book Fund! To donate to this invaluable program, please visit our giving website and use our fast and secure online form.

Or mail your donation to 104 Marcellus Street, Syracuse, New York 13204, or call (888) 926-7323 (READ).

For questions, contact Michele Diecuch, senior program and membership manager, at (315) 214-2576 or mdiecuch@proliteracy.org.

WAYS TO GIVE

ProLiteracy believes every adult has a right to literacy. We champion the power of literacy to improve the lives of adults and their families, communities, and societies. We envision a world in which everyone can read, write, compute, and use technology to lead healthy, productive, and fulfilling lives.

We can't do it alone! Your support ensures that new learners in every community experience the chance to read to their children or grandchildren, earn their high school diploma, get hired at their first job, or keep themselves and their families healthy.

As always, thank you for your continued commitment to changing the world through adult literacy!



Online.

Make a one-time donation or set up a recurring gift using our fast and secure online form.



Text.

Give from your mobile phone in mere seconds by texting "**READ**" to **80888**. A one-time donation of \$10 will be added to your mobile phone bill or deducted from your prepaid balance.

Message and data rates may apply. All charges are billed by and payable to your mobile service provider. Service is available on Verizon Wireless, AT&T, Sprint, and T-Mobile. All purchases must be authorized by account holder. By participating you certify that you are 18 years or older and/or have parental permission. Donations are collected for the benefit of ProLiteracy by the Innogive Foundation and subject to the terms found at igfn.org/. Privacy policy: igfn.org/p. Text STOP to 80888 to stop; Text HELP to 80888 for help.



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