



# The Literacy News

FLORIDA LITERACY COALITION, INC.

*Florida's Newsletter for Literacy Tutors, Teachers, Learners, and Supporters*

Number 99

May-June 2002

**Inside:  
The State Literacy  
Referral Hotline**

*The Florida Literacy Coalition provides several different types of promotional materials such as postcards, flyers, brochures, referral pads, or posters that you can use to generate callers. These materials, (as well as the hotline services) are available **free of charge**. All you have to do is call! We can also help you plan your next recruitment effort!*

**Hotline:  
(800) 237-5113**

## Health & Literacy Symposium

### Health & Literacy

Vision Statement

We support sufficient quality of, access to, and resources for the adult basic education system so that adults with limited literacy can gain the knowledge, skills and efficacy to access health information and services and become successful health advocates within their families, workplaces and communities.

*Adopted at the Florida Symposium on Health & Literacy, March 5, 2002*

*Health literacy* is the ability to read, understand and act on health care information. Functional health literacy is the ability to comprehend the concepts and tasks necessary to meet one's own health care needs. This includes reading consent forms, understanding medicine labels, following directions, and keeping appointments. Only about half of the population understand most written health care materials. Most patients receive information written at the 10<sup>th</sup> grade level while most of the lowest level readers understand material no higher than a 5<sup>th</sup> grade level.

Why is this so important? Consider just a few factors:

- People with the lowest literacy levels incur more health problems and incur more health care costs. The estimated additional health care expenditures due to low health literacy skills are about \$73 million in 1998 health care dollars.
- Higher literacy levels correlate with earlier diagnosis, treatment and survival. A Chicago study on prostate cancer found that literacy level is the best predictor when people present for treatment.
- Huge amounts of money are wasted on beautiful slick patient brochures that are not read. Out of those individuals who can read the brochures, many people with low literacy levels prefer information from a trusted source, a video, or materials with pictures.

World Education recently published an Action Agenda for their Health and Literacy Initiative at the national level. Now, Florida has its own Health and Literacy Action Plan. The Florida Literacy Conference was the site for the first Symposium on Health and Literacy on March 5, 2002. Forty-six participants representing both health and literacy professionals discussed the issues in their communities, crafted a vision statement and developed an action

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## Health & Literacy Symposium

plan. The following action plan has been modeled after the World Education Initiative and reflects many of the outcomes recommended. Among the many proposed recommendations are:

- Florida adopts and implements health curriculum frameworks for adult basic education that recognize and address the needs of adult students and provide guidance for health literacy curriculum development and instruction in ABE/ESOL.
- Learners and adult educators work together as partners with community health educators to design and implement health teaching and learning projects that are culturally and linguistically appropriate, relevant, and interactive.
- Adult basic education programs are linked with community health initiatives that will provide appropriate information, services and referrals to meet adult learners' health needs.
- A systematic documentation of exemplary literacy and health collaborations and projects be undertaken and distributed widely throughout the adult basic education system to encourage adaptation and replication.
- State and local agencies concerned with the education, employment, health and general welfare of low literate adults understand the complex relationships between literacy, culture, health, welfare and employment and, therefore, recognize their common and overlapping goals.
- A working group of representatives from agencies concerned with the quality of the adult basic education system and agencies concerned with health literacy come together to explore common goals and set joint policies to improve the health and literacy of low-income adults.

Also during the Symposium, Darlene Kostrub, Region V Literacy Center Director, shared the Tool Box they use to reach out to the

community. The Tool Box was purchased from AMA and is used by medical providers, hospitals and public health clinics. It includes a video of doctors and nurses talking with a focus group of people with low literacy, important statistics, ideas for staff training to work with those with low literacy, recruitment posters (for learners and tutors) and brochures. The goal is to raise awareness and to connect with what is happening with health and literacy.

Darlene shared that they are also involved in *Reach Out and Read* which is now at 16 health clinics as a pediatric intervention program building on the physician's skills. It includes a supply of children's books in the doctor's office. Every well-child visit has the doctor asking, "How is reading going?" The doctor shares information with the family using a developmental chart and milestones for children, signs a "reading prescription," and gives out stickers and bookmarks to the children. Children now come in happy and asking for another new book while parents learn about resources if they need more help to improve their literacy.

The connection between health and literacy is a major focus at the national and state level. This issue is recognized by groups such as AMA, NIH and NCI as well as industries such as Pfizer Pharmaceuticals (which has a project in Florida). Many professional journals now ask about the readability levels of surveys used in research studies (e.g., "How blue are you?" in a depression study. This phrase may not translate to many cultures). The University of Miami's Research Approval Committee now considers the readability level of any forms used in studies. Tampa General Hospital is designing a simpler consent form. Clearly, health literacy is a serious issue.

Literacy impacts every social issue in our communities. By working together, health and literacy professionals along with adult learners can develop more effective strategies to foster health literate individuals and families. The ramifications for strengthening our communities is staggering when one considers the impact on employment, Medicaid, and other issues. You may soon be asked to help be a part of the solution.



# Florida Literacy Coalition Program News

## *The Florida Literacy Hotline*

In 1986 a statewide literacy hotline was established in Florida. The purpose of this statewide hotline was to provide a link between students and volunteers with the literacy organizations in their area. This nationally recognized hotline currently provides independent, unbiased referrals to potential students and volunteers. Through the hotline we are also able to provide technical support and collaboration contacts for literacy providers and literacy information to the general public.

This **free service** to adults, who are looking for no-cost or low-cost literacy services is promoted throughout Florida. It is promoted by local literacy providers who utilize the hotline and the Florida Literacy Coalition.

This is also a **free service** to the literacy organizations who receive information about the callers. Approximately 200 literacy providers in Florida receive information on callers looking for help or volunteer opportunities. This is a free, bilingual staffed phone line available for you!

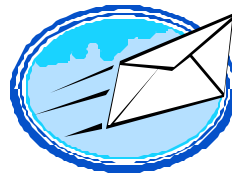
When potential students or volunteers call the hotline, (800) 237-5113, they are greeted by our Literacy Referral Specialist. The specialist fills out a survey on the individual including:

- Name
- Address
- Phone number
- What type of service(s) they are looking for
- How they heard about the hotline
- Email address if they want the list of providers sent to them electronically

We collect the caller's address to send them a list of literacy providers within their local area. We ask them for their phone number so the Coalition or literacy provider can contact them. The information regarding how they heard about the hotline helps us to reach more individuals by studying the trends that are most successful.

Bi-monthly reports of the callers from your

county are sent to those adult and family literacy providers **who have requested to receive them**. If you are not currently receiving reports on callers and would like to, all you have to do is call the hotline and we can get you set-up to receive this **valuable, free information**.



When you receive the caller report, remember that these individuals *want* information about your program. We have already sent the caller your organizations name, address, phone number, and a list of the service(s) you provide— but it doesn't end there. If you take the time to follow-up on the lead by contacting the caller, you may recruit a new student or volunteer!

After you follow-up with the caller, record that information on the report and send it back to us by fax or mail.

To follow-up with the caller, some programs call the individual or mail them information on their program. In order to really make this work for you, following up with the callers that are looking for the services you provide is important.

Please contact us if you have any questions about how the hotline can work for your organization. We welcome any suggestions or comments about how we can better assist you through this service. After all, the hotline was created for you!

*Upgrades to the Hotline currently in progress to ensure fast, accurate information include:*

- Zip code searches
- Service specific referrals
- Electronic delivery of caller reports

**State Literacy Referral Hotline**  
**(800) 237-5113**



# Florida Literacy Coalition Program News

## *The Florida Literacy Coalition Partners with Just Read, Florida!*



Just Read, Florida! is the Governor's comprehensive statewide reading initiative that commits the state to meeting a goal of ensuring that all Florida students read at or above grade level by 2012. An important component of the Just Read, Florida! initiative calls for strong parental involvement by putting effective strategies and activities in the hands of parents so that they can create a positive reading environment at home.

Florida hospitals will provide parents of every newborn Florida child the "I'm a Reader!" kit, which will include a copy of the *Sunrise Skill Builders*, a booklet which provides parents with guidelines about the intellectual, physical, and social development stages for infants through early childhood. Also in the kit will be an application for a library card, a Scholastic book, and a list of reading books available at local libraries.

Part of the Coalition's involvement includes collecting information from organizations that already have a program in place that distributes literacy information to new moms. The goal is to work with these organizations to strengthen their existing programs.

Please email Lesa Kramer at [kramerl@floridaliteracy.org](mailto:kramerl@floridaliteracy.org) for more information.



- Our Literacy in Florida discussion list doubled in members last month! This is a great venue for sharing information about your programs or asking questions. To sign up for the Literacy in Florida discussion list, go to [www.floridaliteracy.org](http://www.floridaliteracy.org) and click on the gold oval at the top that says "Discussions".
- We have received the new LINCS brochures and mailed them out with the May 1st hotline reports. Inside the brochure is information on how to get your materials included on LINCS. We look forward to receiving resources as well as feedback from our providers as the news of LINCS as a resource continues to spread across the state.!

Contact Samantha Sparks, Resource Specialist, at [sparkss@floridaliteracy.org](mailto:sparkss@floridaliteracy.org) for information and if you would like to get your original materials on LINCS.

*The Florida LINCS program is part of our State Literacy Resource Center grant awarded from the Florida Department of Education, Division of Workforce Development. The funding came from the Workforce Investment Act, Title II— Adult and Family Literacy, State Leadership.*

FLORIDA LITERACY COALITION, INC.

# Literacy in Florida

## *The Pleasure of Being a Student*

My name is Gustavo Perez. I was born in Mexico City on April 23, 1974. I have been in this country for a year. I'm a student of the Literacy Council of Bonita Springs. Here I learn English and computer basics. My tutor's name is Debra Giambo; she is an excellent teacher. I admire and respect her very much for being a person who gives all her efforts, support and knowledge to people like me who need it so much. That is why I'm very happy and pleased to have her as my teacher.

At the Council, they also provide a computer basics program. This helps us learn everything related to the functions and use of a computer. Aside from being a good course, it has an excellent instructor whose name is Mary Miller. She, as the other tutors, offers her knowledge to benefit us so we can learn more each day. The computer program and the English classes are very important so that we can better ourselves in this country.

That is why we should be thankful for all the persons who dedicate their time daily. How can we thank them? By showing up for class and on time, paying attention to everything they teach us and giving them the respect they deserve. In this way we will give them the satisfaction of

seeing their efforts appreciated. Let's not forget the support and collaboration that Mrs. Katie Verna and Mrs. Yolanda Heredia give to us. All their efforts and caring are greatly appreciated.

All of these are the reasons I am proud and pleased to belong to this great institution, the Literacy Council of Bonita Springs. It is wonderful to be surrounded by people that dedicate so much time to the education of others.

Gustavo Perez, Adult Learner  
Literacy Council of Bonita Springs  
PO Box 2703  
Bonita Springs, FL 34133  
(941) 495-0999

*Editor's Note: According to Katie Verna, Program Director, Gustavo Perez and his fellow learner and friend, Gonzalo Ramirez, keep the computer lab open on the weekends so that other adult learners can access the facilities when it is convenient for them. We thank Gustavo for being a Learner Leader and supporting his program and peers.*

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The Literacy News is a bi-monthly publication. To get your articles, events, pictures, and other news in the July-August issue, please send your information to [info@floridaliteracy.org](mailto:info@floridaliteracy.org) prior to June 25, 2002. If you have any questions or comments please contact Leah Takacs at (800) 237-5113 or [takacsl@floridaliteracy.org](mailto:takacsl@floridaliteracy.org).

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In preparation for the celebration of Literacy Month, the Florida Literacy Coalition is joining with the Florida Department of Education and other literacy stakeholders. We are collecting information on Literacy Month events and efforts throughout Florida. This information will be delivered to literacy stakeholders to help promote your Literacy Month activities. This is a great opportunity to share and showcase your ideas! **Please complete this one-page survey and fax back to (407) 246-7104 by June 28, 2002.** For more information call (800) 237-5113.

Quick Response Fax Survey: Literacy Month - September 2002

## What Are You Doing for Literacy Month?

- Special Events** Are you holding a special event? Yes No
- Date/Time? \_\_\_\_\_
  - How are you publicizing the event? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - Name of event? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Where will it be held (address or description)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - Are there any other comments you would like to give about your event? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Special Effort**
- If you are planning an effort to promote literacy in September that is not an event, please tell us about it \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - Can we help? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_

Please feel free to email a short article to [info@floridaliteracy.org](mailto:info@floridaliteracy.org) or attach any information.  
(We reserve the right to edit any information for space purposes)

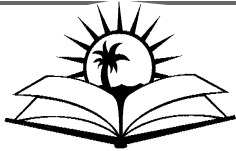
**Thank You!**



## Upcoming Events

- June 4-7, 2002      GED/Adult Secondary/VPI Symposium  
Cape Canaveral, FL  
Contact: Christalee Burkett (407) 622-8951
- June 8 & 15, 2002      Tutor Training Workshop  
Faith Fellowship Church, Pine Hills, FL  
Contact: Haydee Alvarez at 407-889-0100 Ext 227
- June 8-13, 2002      Special Libraries Association 93rd Annual Conference  
Los Angeles, CA  
For more information call (202) 234-4700
- June 26-29, 2002      Head Start's 6th National Research Conference  
Washington, DC  
Contact: (212) 305-4154
- July 22-24, 2002      National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition  
Biennial Partnership Conference 2002  
Clearwater Beach, FL  
Contact: Erica Thomas at 888-873-2674 and press "2"
- August 24-27, 2002      Welfare to Work Self-Sufficiency National Conference  
Fort Lauderdale, FL  
Contact: Ada Phillips at (703) 359-6200
- September 2002      International Literacy Month!
- September 8, 2002      International Literacy Day!
- September 18, 2002      Pfizer Health Literacy Initiative 5th National Conference  
Washington, DC  
Contact: [www.pfizerhealthliteracy.com](http://www.pfizerhealthliteracy.com)
- September 19-21, 2002      Southeast Regional TESOL Conference  
Atlanta, GA  
Contact: [jwlinebe@mindspring.com](mailto:jwlinebe@mindspring.com)
- September 24-27, 2002      12th Annual ACE Conference  
Tampa, FL  
Contact: ACE office at (850) 222-2233

**Please send your event information to [info@floridaliteracy.org](mailto:info@floridaliteracy.org)  
to be included in the state newsletter and web calendar!**



**Florida Literacy Coalition**

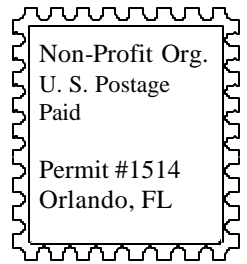
934 North Magnolia Avenue, Suite 104  
Orlando, FL 32803

Phone: 407/246-7110

Fax: 407/246-7104

Email: [info@floridaliteracy.org](mailto:info@floridaliteracy.org)

Florida Literacy Hotline: 800/237-5113



### ***Executive Committee***

- President** Linda D'Olympio  
*PRIME Public Relations and Marketing, Valrico*
- VP Providers** In transition
- VP Business** Ron Drew  
*Verizon, Tampa*
- Secretary** Sandy Newell  
*State Library of Florida Tallahassee*
- Treasurer** Jay Roesch  
*Walt Disney World, Orlando*
- Past President** Renee Hotes  
*Bank of America, Jacksonville*

**Executive Director** TBA  
**Literacy News Editor** Leah M Takacs

## Join the Coalition and Make a Difference for Literacy in Florida!

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ? Individual Annual Membership \$20   | I want to increase my impact of membership: |
| ? Organizational Annual Membership \$40<br>(please indicate primary contact person) | ? Supporting Donation: \$5—\$99             |
|   | ? Sustaining Donation: \$100—\$499          |
|   | ? Patron Donation: \$500—\$999              |

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Company/Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ ? Home ? Business

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make your tax-deductible check payable to the Florida Literacy Coalition.*

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the division of consumer services by calling toll-free within the state, 1 (800) 435-7352. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the state.