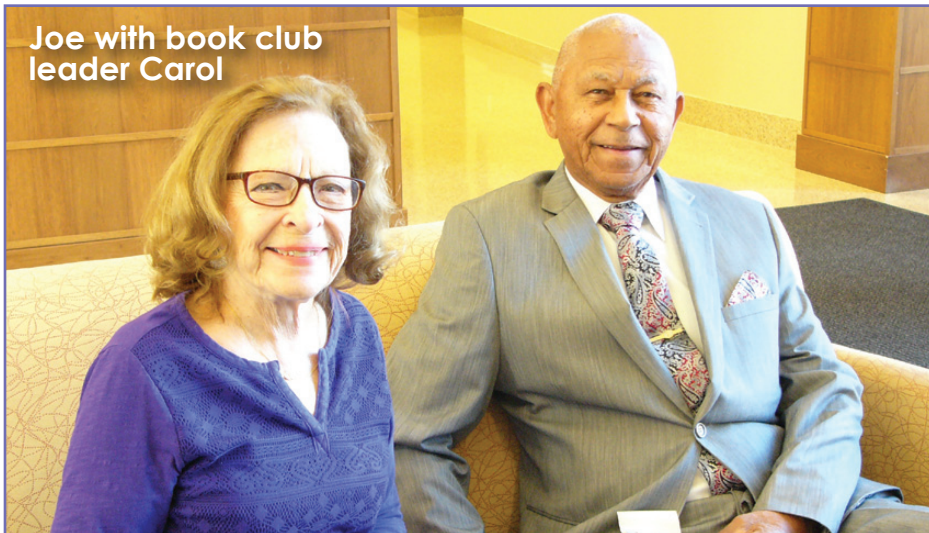


Four Worlds, One Dream

Joe with book club leader Carol



Born to sharecroppers in Surry County, Joe left school at 8 years old. He worked the fields, traveled the world with the Army, and ultimately settled in Williamsburg. He is the proud father of three children, with many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nephews and nieces.

Despite his full life, as Joe approached his 80th birthday, he yearned for a missing piece. He could not read his Bible independently or participate fully in Sunday school. He could not use email or texts to stay in touch with his family. He struggled to read and write. Joe enrolled at Literacy for Life and was matched with his tutor, Louise. Before long, he also enrolled in Carol's Book Club.

Carol's Book Club (aka Tuesday Magic)

Every Tuesday, volunteer tutor Carol Reidy leads a book club that encapsulates the diversity and magic of Literacy for Life (LFL). Carol's roster has included learners from 15 countries. Some have little formal education; others have advanced degrees but limited English skills. Their ages have ranged from 18 to 86. Together, they read simplified biographies of American heroes from Abraham Lincoln to Bill Gates. They learn civics, history, and geography while improving their reading and English skills.

As a retiree, Joe is unusual. His

literacy goals are personal, while most of his classmates—including Yuxuan, Olga, and Merouane—are looking to the future, compelled by goals such as further education or better jobs.

Yuxuan

Yuxuan came to the U.S. from China with his mother and her American husband. He had not quite completed high school when they moved, so he arrived in America with no diploma and very little English. He was 18 and starting from scratch. Now, just three years later, he converses easily, revealing a wry sense of humor. Yuxuan attends multiple



LFL classes and meets with his tutor, Joe. In 2020, he will enroll in the National External Diploma Program to earn his high school diploma.

Olga

Olga emigrated from Colombia in her 40s and faced the daunting task of learning a new language and rebuilding her resume. Her English skills held her back, and she felt overwhelmed by identifying career goals in her new country. Working with LFL's EmployEd coach, Olga identified health care as her career path. She is passionate

about serving others and lights up with enthusiasm when she talks about her future. With the help of her tutor, Karen, she has completed a Certified Nursing Assistant course and is working as a CNA while pursuing certifications as a medication aide and phlebotomist.

Merouane

Merouane earned an associate degree in Morocco but faced extremely limited opportunities due to the stagnant economy. He immigrated to the U.S. and wasted no time pursuing his

American dream: he enrolled at LFL only four days later. Despite a demanding work schedule, Merouane attends LFL regularly, and his English has rapidly

improved from an intermediate to advanced level. LFL has assisted him in accessing Virginia CareerWorks funding to pursue a certification in auto technology. With support from his tutor, Bob, Merouane is thriving in his course and looks forward to his career as an auto mechanic.

Pursuing What is Possible

Where else but Literacy for Life would a former sharecropper find himself among immigrants from China, Colombia, and Morocco, all striving together to improve their skills? Joe not only attends Book Club, but he recently found himself Carol's "star pupil." As the group discussed a biography of Martin Luther King, Joe shared his memories, including seeing Dr. King speak in Williamsburg in 1962. Moments like these define Literacy for Life—a place where a diversity of learners, volunteer tutors, teachers, and staff share a commitment to education and the pursuit of what is possible.



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How you made *a difference*

FIVE

learners became U.S. citizens

after studying American civics and history
with their tutors at Literacy for Life!



LITERACY FOR LIFE



327

VOLUNTEERS

changed lives
by tutoring,
teaching classes,
serving as board
and council
members, and
assisting the staff.



768

LEARNERS

served through
one-to-one tutoring,
small classes,
off-site programs,
on-site computer lab,
and distance
learning programs.



1,476

PERSONAL GOALS

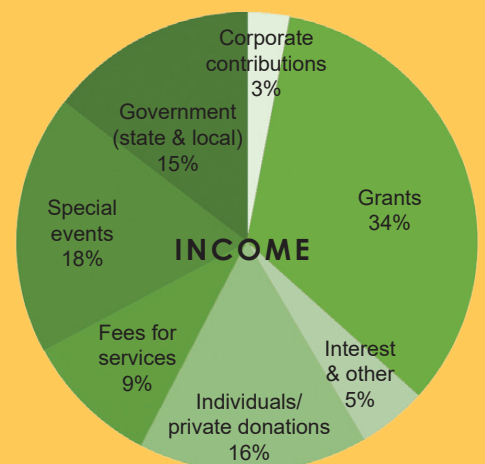
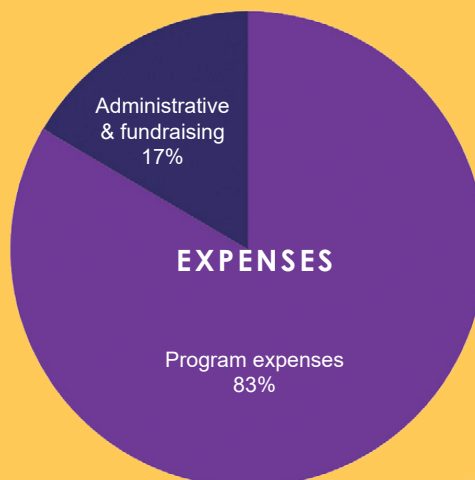
met, such as getting
accepted into community
college, earning a certification
for work, reading a book
to a child, understanding a
doctor's instructions for the
first time, and receiving a GED.



\$424,352

SAVED

through volunteering,
from a combined
15,431 hours of
volunteer assistance
in Literacy for
Life programs &
operations.



You helped change Martha's life!

"I moved to the U.S. to escape a bad situation in my native country of Peru, where I worked as a CNA. Because I didn't speak English, I cleaned houses here. I also didn't drive, so my life was very limited. I felt trapped and dependent on others. Providing a good life for my son is my greatest motivation. I attended

Literacy for Life and step by step, with the help of patient, encouraging tutors, I slowly achieved my goals:

- I learned English
- I got my driver's license
- I became a U.S. citizen
- I became qualified as a CNA here last month, letting me return to my passion of caring for people I could never have achieved all of this on my own. Literacy for Life really does change lives."

– Martha Suarez-Shaheen



Martha with her son, Harrison

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HOW TO HELP MORE LEARNERS:

1. Spread the Word

If you know of someone who needs help with their literacy skills, tell them about Literacy for Life. Share the "fear off" below and help them set an appointment to start improving their future.

2. Volunteer

If you have time to help someone improve their literacy skills, please call us. Our need for tutors is great, as we always have eager students who want to remove the barriers in their lives through education.

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