

# An Unimaginable Past, An Unlimited Future.

Meiber Gonzalez's family was living a peaceful life in Venezuela, where she worked as an ICU nurse. But when they became a target for Nicolas Maduro's police, everything imploded.

"They kidnapped my son and myself from our house," she says. "After that, they kept extorting us. We paid them monthly, but they started killing family members. They disintegrated our family and stole our peace." Meiber fled to the United States with her husband and son, leaving behind danger but also the career she loved.

"I had to start from zero, from scratch," she says with tears. "I felt like a baby, you know?" But then she found Literacy for Life. Meiber laughed as she recalled her earliest tutoring sessions:

"I couldn't understand anything. I just sat there and hoped my tutor wasn't asking any questions. I felt sorry for him, like I was wasting his time. But every week, he kept showing up!" Meiber credits her tutor's patience and resolve, along with Literacy for Life's welcoming atmosphere, for her success learning English.

"The most important thing is, there was no judgment," she emphasizes, "and because I didn't feel judged, I thought, 'Okay, I can try.'" A turning point came when she was walking along the sidewalk, and a stranger asked her for the time.

"I understood the question," she marvels, "and I told him it was 2:00! At that moment, I knew it was working." Meiber began pouring energy into her English classes. Her skills improved exponentially,

and the time came when she could focus on her career goals.

She started by volunteering as an interpreter at Olde Towne Medical Center. When she earned certification as a Clinical Medical Assistant, the clinic hired her. Then, upon the departure of



the clinic's nutritionist, Meiber began informally advising patients on the importance of diet in managing their diabetes.

"The patients started getting better. My managers saw something more in me," she says. Meiber was promoted to Health Educator. Before long, Literacy for Life also realized what an asset she was, and invited Meiber to deliver The HEAL Program at her clinic. In September 2022, Meiber began teaching her first HEAL class.

Looking to the future, Meiber's opportunities are limitless.

"I could become a Registered Nurse again," she says. "That is an option. Or a counselor. Also, nutrition—that topic is really calling me." She gazes thoughtfully into the distance and gestures as though picking fruits from a tree. "I want to learn a little of this, and a little of that," she smiles, "and make a salad. A very nice salad."

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'Okay, I can try'

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**198**  
**VOLUNTEERS**

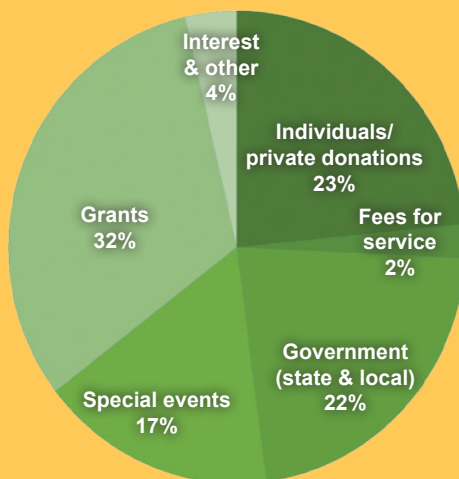
changed lives by tutoring, teaching classes, serving as board and council members, and assisting the staff.



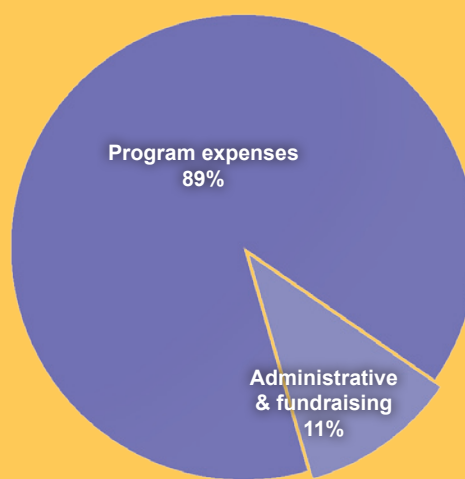
# YOUR IMPACT LAST YEAR

Because of you, we're empowering more adults through education

## INCOME



## EXPENSES



## FORGING CAREERS & BECOMING CITIZENS

The Edarus family, from Kenya, have all thrived with help from Literacy for Life. Salma obtained her high school diploma, pursued further education, and works in nursing. Her brother Hussain enrolled for EmployEd services. He obtained his Commercial Driver's License and loves his new job as a truck driver. Their mother, Zeinab, had never attended school before, but flourished in classes, even learning to Zoom!



Tutoring pairs are the heart of the program! Tutor Portia embraces learner Patricia

**10**  became U.S. citizens after studying American civics and history with their tutors

**\$303,808** saved through volunteering



from a combined 11,268 hours of help in programs & operations

**496** learners served through one-to-one tutoring, in-person and online classes, off-site programs, & computer lab



**18,272** learner hours

**699** personal goals met

such as enrolling in community college, earning a certification for work, reading a book to a child, understanding a doctor's instructions for the first time, and obtaining a GED.



Some of our neighbors lack basic reading and math skills. Alone, they cannot interpret their pay stub. Some speak limited English and come from countries with vastly different financial systems. Alone, they cannot evaluate credit card offers. Some do not know how to download and navigate an app. Alone, they cannot access their online bank accounts.

# On the MONEY

Finances Made Easy

**Literacy for Life is proud to have launched its newest program, On the Money,** to address this critical community need. The On the Money curriculum takes learners on a twelve-week journey in which they learn to complete a W-4, manage credit and loans, create a family budget, and save for the future. Frances Falcón, who developed the curriculum and teaches classes, has seen first-hand the impact of improved financial literacy on learners' lives:

**"Individuals are separated from the community when they are not financially stable,"** she said. "For so many of our learners, finances

are a constant source of struggle, causing anxiety, frustration, and isolation. On the Money provides them with practical information and tools that improve their lives and strengthen their families in immediate, meaningful ways."



## 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 "tear 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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Literacy  
Aprender  
Inglés

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