

# A HELPING HAND TO A FUTURE CAREER

2020-2021  
**ANNUAL  
REPORT**



Photo by  
Murawski Photography

## **Tania always wanted**

**to be a dentist.** In fact, she laughs as she recalls helping her younger sister pull her baby teeth. Little did she know that she was gaining experience for her future career in the United States.

Tania grew up in Texistepeque, El Salvador, where she completed high school but did not learn to speak English. Three years later, her high school sweetheart—who had immigrated with his family to the United States—returned to El Salvador and proposed. Three years after that, once all her immigration paperwork was complete, she joined her new husband in the U.S.

With “really broken English” and “zero confidence to speak with others,” Tania’s work opportunities were limited. She took a job as a housekeeper, “but always wanted more.” Tania began attending English as a Second Language classes at Literacy for Life in 2018.

Tania’s ESL teachers recognized her potential and before long, to Tania’s surprise, they encouraged her to take steps toward a new career. Tania was extremely nervous about reading textbooks, listening to lectures, and especially participating in class discussions in English, but when she learned about the opportunity to study dental assisting, she could not resist giving it a try.

At that time, Literacy for Life had two additional learners with an interest in dental assisting and, with its trademark flexibility, formed a small cohort and offered a pre-dental assisting class. Tania joined learners from Turkey and

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Cambodia to preview the vocabulary and concepts they would need to succeed in the course. In early 2019, they enrolled with Today’s Dentist.

Tania and her cohort continued to receive support from Literacy for Life throughout the course, meeting weekly with their ESL instructor to reinforce the material. They also met with Literacy for Life’s career coach to develop their resumes, search for job opportunities, and prepare for interviews.

Tania was excited to secure her first job in dental assisting with a practice in Newport News, but she was absolutely thrilled when she received a call from Norge Dental Center in Toano, the practice affiliated with Today’s Dentist. They had an opening, remembered Tania from class, and encouraged her to apply.

Tania loves the work and her colleagues at Norge Dental Center, and they rave about her as well. In fact, when an instructor position opened at Today’s Dentist in 2021, they invited Tania to apply. She eagerly did, and she is now an instructor in the program that she was so nervous to apply for just two years ago. Tania is excited not only to share her love for the dental field, but also to reassure Hispanic students that, like her, they can thrive in the class and in the field.

Tania is extremely happy in her job and grateful to Literacy for Life for giving her confidence, helping her communicate with others, and “never making me feel less.” Tania’s next goal is to apply for United States citizenship, and she looks forward to working with a Literacy for Life tutor to prepare for her interview and test. After that, she says, “Who knows?” She adds, with a shrug, “Maybe I’ll be a dentist!”

**OUR MISSION:** Literacy for Life improves lives by teaching adults literacy skills required for self-sufficiency, better health, and meaningful participation in society.



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Contact Literacy for Life 757-221-3325 and we will correct our records.**



# YOUR IMPACT IN 2020–2021



**375**  
**attended virtual**

classes and/or  
received virtual  
tutor instruction.



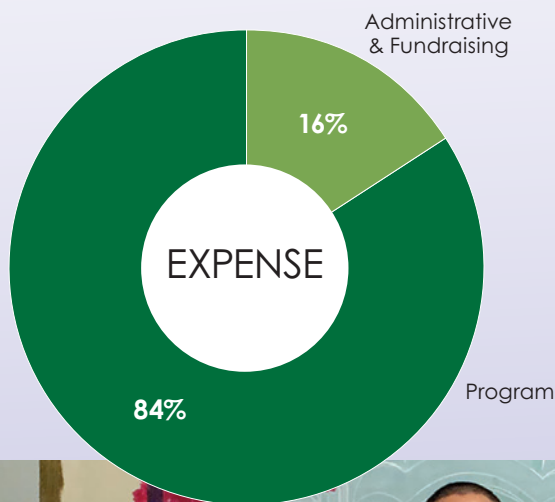
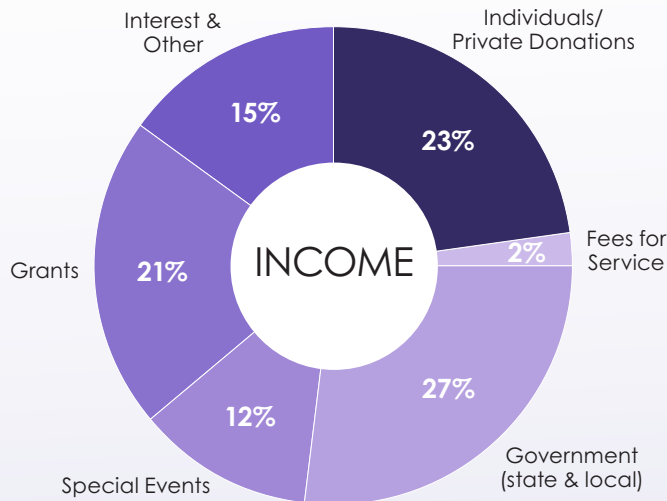
**665**  
**personal goals met**

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



**183**  
**volunteers**

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



**\$246,000**  
**saved through volunteering**

from a combined 8,631 hours of volunteer assistance  
in Literacy for Life programs and operations.



learner  
hours **16,429**

**414** learners served  
despite COVID restrictions for  
in person instruction.

# SHOULD AULD ACQUAINTANCE BE FORGOT?

As we approach the end of each year, we think about our "auld acquaintances" and wonder: Where are they now?



Cesia

**Cesia** is a Honduran immigrant who fled violence, learned English, and passed her Certified Nursing Assistant exam. Where is she now? Cesia is working at Sentara and is enrolled in a course for medical billing and coding. She is studying for the Armed Service Vocational Aptitude Battery. In 2022, she plans to enlist as a Patient Support Specialist in the United States Army.



Anh

**Anh** immigrated from Vietnam speaking and reading little English, but with his tutor's help, he passed the GED, became an American citizen, and enrolled in community college. Where is he now? Anh is completing his final semester at Christopher Newport University and will graduate in December 2021 with a degree in Information Science.

**Jackie** had attended school only through 7th grade when she came to Literacy for Life. Her math skills were holding her back from her dream of continuing her education and pursuing a career in health care. Where is she now? Jackie completed her high school diploma and has been accepted into nursing school. She loves taking care of people and can't wait to get started!



Jackie

## 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.

**English  
Literacy**  
Aprender  
Inglés

**Community and  
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Comunidad y  
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**Math  
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Aprender  
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**Health  
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