

A BIT OF LUCK, A LOT OF WORK

An American Success Story

When Halyna won a Diversity Immigrant Visa—better known as the Green Card Lottery—she was one of the lucky few selected from millions of applicants across the globe. This visa offered a life-changing opportunity: the chance to live and work in the United States permanently. But like many immigrants, Halyna arrived with almost nothing—no network, no job, and barely any English. She could say, “My name is Halyna. I am from Ukraine.” That was all.

Back in Ukraine, Halyna held a Ph.D. in accounting and auditing. She had worked as a social worker and even owned her own restaurant, but in the U.S., her credentials and experience didn't matter. Without language skills, her path forward was extremely limited. The only work she could find was in housekeeping. She felt isolated and overwhelmed, but she refused to give up.

Determined to build a better life, Halyna turned to Literacy for Life, hoping to learn the English she so desperately needed. But learning wasn't easy. She was juggling two—sometimes three—jobs just to stay afloat. Her work schedule was unpredictable and exhausting. Attending classes on a regular schedule felt impossible. That's when she met her tutor, Bert. “One of the best things about Bert was how flexible and kind he was,” Halyna says. “He even rearranged his own work and family schedule to meet with me. He didn't just teach me English—he gave me the tools to survive and thrive. I learned something new every single day.”

With Bert's support, Halyna's confidence began to grow. Slowly but surely, she improved her reading, writing, and speaking skills. That progress opened the door to one achievement after another: she earned her driver's

license, completed apartment applications, and became a proud U.S. citizen!

Professionally, Halyna never stopped climbing. She rose from housekeeper to supervisor, then assistant manager, then manager. Meanwhile, she became a manager and bartender at Kingsmill Resort. Recently, she landed a job at Ferguson Enterprises as Department of Transportation/Driver Compliance Business Partner.

“I am so grateful to everyone who helped me get here,” she said. “I love my job. I finally feel like I'm doing what I was meant to do.” As Halyna settles into her new job, she is already looking for ways to give back.

“When I have more time, I want to come back to Literacy for Life—not as a student, but as a volunteer. I want to help others the way I was helped.”

Halyna tells other learners:

“Don't panic. Never give up. Keep moving forward. I am proud of what I've done, and even though it was difficult, but I wouldn't change anything. To everyone who supports Literacy for Life—you truly make a difference.”



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YOUR IMPACT



31,599
learner hours

1006 learners served

through one-to-one tutoring, in-person and online classes, and off-site programs

612 Williamsburg office

394 Newport News/Hampton office

79 from countries

47 speaking languages

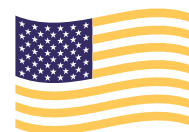


14,371
volunteer hours
of instruction
(a \$479,704 value)



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

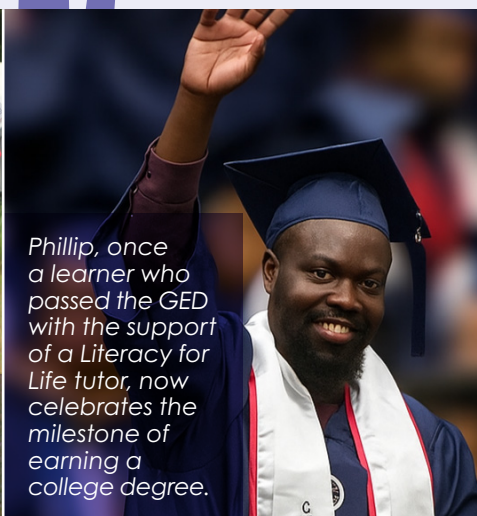
23 learners became
U.S. citizens



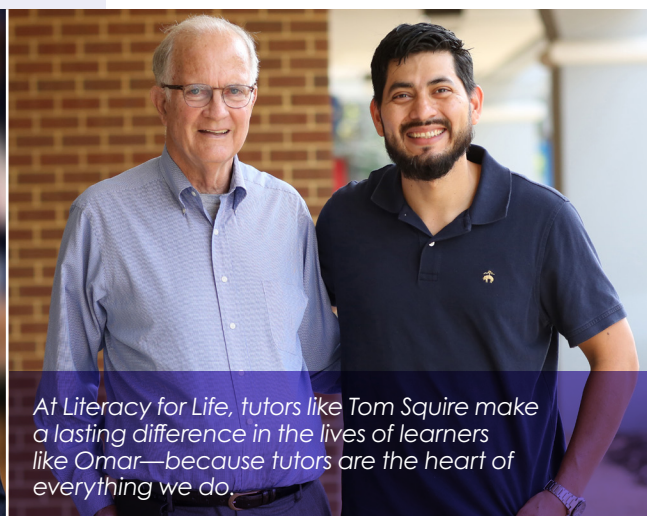
after studying
American civics
and history with
their tutors



This year, Maria joined
22 other learners in
proudly becoming
U.S. citizens.

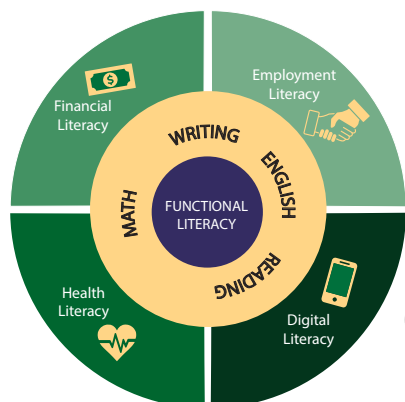


Phillip, once
a learner who
passed the GED
with the support
of a Literacy for
Life tutor, now
celebrates the
milestone of
earning a
college degree.

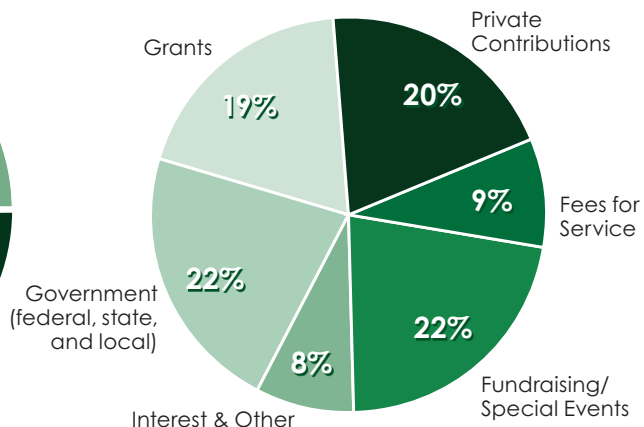


At Literacy for Life, tutors like Tom Squire make
a lasting difference in the lives of learners
like Omar—because tutors are the heart of
everything we do.

Multiple literacies



Multiple funding sources



1,299
personal
goals
met



such as
earning a
workplace
certification,
getting a driver's
license, creating a
family budget, and
becoming a U.S. citizen

50 YEARS OF CHANGING LIVES THROUGH LITERACY

For half a century, Literacy for Life (LFL) has been a beacon of hope, transformation, and empowerment. What began humbly in 1975—helping just 30 William & Mary employees learn to read—has blossomed into a dynamic, community-rooted organization that served over 1,000 adult learners last year.

At the heart of LFL's success is its unwavering belief in the power of education to change lives. Thanks to the passion of dedicated volunteers, staff, and community partners, thousands of individuals have gained not just literacy skills, but the confidence and tools to build better futures. From one-on-one tutoring to small-group instruction, LFL has always prioritized personalized learning that honors everyone's unique journey.

Over the decades, LFL has evolved to meet the changing needs of its learners—whether it's a refugee starting fresh in a new land, a parent working toward a better job to support their family, or an adult determined to earn a high school credential. These learners are more than statistics; they are stories of resilience, courage, and growth.

Fifty years in, LFL remains as committed as ever to its mission: empowering adults through education. As we celebrate this golden milestone, we raise a toast to the past that built us, the present that inspires us, and the future we are shaping together.

Here's to 50 years of Literacy for Life—and to brighter, more literate tomorrows.

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.

Williamsburg Office:

School of Education | William & Mary
301 Monticello Ave. Suite 1076
Williamsburg, VA 23185

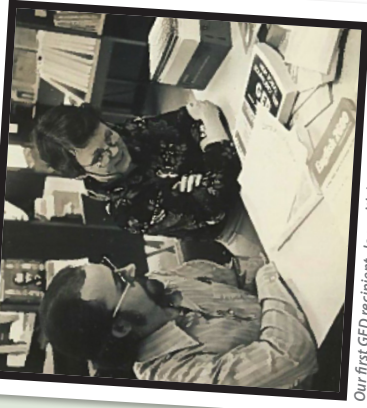


Peninsula Center Office:

Grace United Methodist Church
1209 Country Club Rd
Newport News, VA 23606



The College of William & Mary
P.O. Box 8795
301 Monticello Ave
Williamsburg, VA 23187



Our first GED recipient, Joe, with his tutor Rita Welsh, Literacy for Life's first Executive Director.



One of the first year's 30 learners (all William & Mary employees) receives literacy lessons.