

Literacy Advocate

www.kalamazooliteracy.org

May 2023

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**"You make a living
by what you get.
You make a life by
what you give."**

~Winston Churchill

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Right to Literacy Kalamazoo and the 200 Tutor Challenge



Right to Literacy Partners James Devers, Executive Director of Communities In Schools of Kalamazoo, Kristen Potts, CEO of SLD Read, Dr. Kandace Lavender, Executive Director of Read and Write Kalamazoo, and Michael Evans, Executive Director of Kalamazoo Literacy Council stand together at an Everyone Needs to Read billboard.

Last Fall, education advocates from across the community gathered at the Kalamazoo Public Library to celebrate literacy and declare it as a right that everyone deserves. The event featured powerful speakers including Dr. Grace Lubwama, CEO of YWCA Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo City Commissioner Chris Praedel, and former KPS Superintendent Dr. Rita Raichoudhuri. We presented the Declaration for the Right to Literacy and invited attendees to sign the "Literacy Scroll," as a pledge to take real action to reduce low literacy rates and increase support for agencies that have tutoring as central to their work. As part of this initiative, Kalamazoo Literacy Council, Read and Write Kalamazoo, SLD Read, and Communities In Schools of Kalamazoo partnered to draft a joint statement on the importance of achieving a fully literate community and the critical need to replenish our ranks

of tutors who left volunteer service as a result of the pandemic.

To read the full statement for the Right to Literacy, visit kalamazooliteracy.org/right-to-literacy.

How you can help:

- Share your volunteer experience with others who might be interested in helping adults reach their goals through literacy.
- Refer volunteers to the Kalamazoo Literacy Council to become a reading tutor.
- Participate in ongoing training and professional development opportunities provided by the KLC.
- Give to organizations that advocate for literacy for all.

RAWK
Read and Write
Kalamazoo

kalamazooliteracycouncil
#EveryoneNeedsToRead

**Communities
In Schools**
Kalamazoo

**SLD IN
READ**

President's Message: Spring Greetings

By Paul Yancho



Paul Yancho

This season is such an important and productive one for the Kalamazoo Literacy Council (KLC):

- The Everyone Needs To Read Public Awareness Campaign is generating volunteer interest from across the community;
- Our Right to Literacy event brought together advocates

from across the community and the important work continues now as we look to recruit and train 200 volunteer tutors in the neighborhoods we serve;

- The EDISON: Education IS ON initiative is underway, which aims to transform the Edison neighborhood into a community rich with opportunities to learn and thrive;
- The KLC roster is expanding with new staff, college interns, and graduate and faculty support from Western Michigan University.

In its most simple terms, social justice is the idea that everyone deserves equal economic, political, and social rights and opportunities. Dr. Grace Lubwama, CEO of YWCA Kalamazoo and 2022 annual campaign

honorary chair, rightly frames literacy as a social justice issue that everyone should care deeply about. Families that lack access to literacy are disproportionately impacted by poverty, poor health, discrimination, and crime. Individuals are unable to live up to their full potential as employees and community members. But Kalamazoo is a wonderful and generous education-centric community, which has ample resources so no one should have to face inequality because of a lack of literacy. KLC programs help empower adults to reach their personal and academic goals, in a supportive environment with compassionate volunteers.

It is so incredibly important, now more than ever, to stand together and declare that Kalamazoo believes that literacy is a right, not a privilege, and that Everyone Needs To Read.

As ever, we appreciate your generous support in all its forms. The KLC could not accomplish anything without you.

Sincerely,

2022—2023 Board President
Kalamazoo Literacy Council



INSTRUCTION MONDAY—FRIDAY

- **Virtual Classes**
- **One-on-One Tutoring**
- **Web-based Instruction**

Citizenship, Digital Skills, Discussion Group, ESL, JOBS, Health Literacy, Parent Literacy, Success Group, Tutoring, and TOEFL.

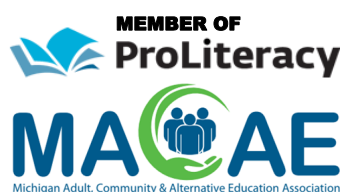
Visit www.kalamazooliteracy.org for a schedule.

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Literacy Advocate

is published four times a year by the Kalamazoo Literacy Council — a nonprofit organization committed to quality literacy education that enhances the lives of adults through programs designed to increase reading, writing and spelling skills.

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KLC Partnership with WMU supports learning in the Edison neighborhood

The Kalamazoo Literacy Council and Western Michigan University are expanding learning opportunities in the Edison neighborhood and throughout Kalamazoo. Edison Resident Scholars who recently completed a Place Matters: EDISON Education IS ON class taught by Dr. Karika Parker through the WMU Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) visited the university's campus and met with WMU President Dr. Edward Montgomery and WMU Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Julian Vasquez Heilig. They learned about the history of the Edison neighborhood and are creating ways to improve health and academic outcomes in the community. Special thanks to OLLI Director Toni Woolfork-Barnes for hosting the class and WMU Assistant Vice President for Community Partnerships Lisa Garcia for organizing the campus visit.



Edison Resident Scholars visit the Board Room at WMU in Heritage Hall, which was built by African American builder Albert White. Mr. White was one of the topics covered in the OLLI class.

Community Literacy Fellow and Faculty in Residence share expertise



Dr. Karika Ann Parker joined the KLC at the recommendation of Dr. Joe Kretovcis, her dissertation chair, at Western Michigan University where she was a doctoral candidate in Educational Leadership/Organizational Analysis. In her role at the KLC as a 2022 Community/University Fellow, she supports the EDISON: EDucation IS ON initiative, which serves to transform the Edison

neighborhood into an immersive learning community. The project will feature various learning experiences including skills-building classes, outdoor activities, and professional development opportunities. Dr. Parker has an extensive background in the facilitation of developmental processes and structures for organizations in critical thinking, organizational assessment tools and analysis, policy development, board relations, and complex adaptive systems theory as a Certified TOPs master trainer and facilitator. As an educator and a proud graduate of KPS Adult Education, Dr. Parker has a deep and personal relationship to literacy. She is passionate about using her background and skills to "help others open their eyes in a different way," and is excited to watch literacy grow and learning flourish in the neighborhood. One of the things she loves about the KLC is that "people are made to feel whole, and we're here to support them." At WMU, Dr. Parker was a member of the first graduating class of Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Scholars, a Thurgood Marshall Fellow, a recipient of the PastorsOnCall Ministries, Inc. Dissertation Scholarship, Patricia L. Thompson Dissertation Award, Wegenke Endowed Dissertation Award, University Dames Endowed Scholarship and is a Presidential Scholar. Dr. Parker earned both her bachelor's degree in Sociology and Black Americana Studies and masters in U. S. History from Western Michigan University.



Dr. Joseph Kretovcis is a professor of Educational Leadership, Research and Technology at Western Michigan University and Faculty in Residence at the Kalamazoo Literacy Council. In this role, he will help drive the Memorandum of Understanding established in 2021 between Western Michigan University and the KLC. Dr. Kretovcis will be the key point of contact for ensuring the continued

visibility of the KLC's needs for support from the university, in the form of volunteers, interns, and graduate assistants. He has served as chairperson of the Department of Education and Professional Development and the Department of Educational Leadership at Western Michigan University.

Dr. Kretovcis has directed several highly successful and nationally recognized organizational change and community engagement initiatives. At WMU, he developed and directed two federal grants for over \$80 million to establish GEAR UP Learning Centers in three states. Dr. Kretovcis has also served as a consultant for educational renewal, organizational change, program evaluation, and community engagement. He is co-author of Transformation Urban Education: Toward Creating the Conditions for Educational Equality and All Children Can Learn: The Unmet Promise. In addition, he has made over 100 national and international conference presentations and published numerous journal articles and technical reports. His areas of specialization include complex adaptive systems leadership; organizational change; community, school, and university partnerships; school restructuring; program evaluation; and diversity, equity, and social justice.

Learner Success: A letter of appreciation

JJ Menter

Dear KLC Team,

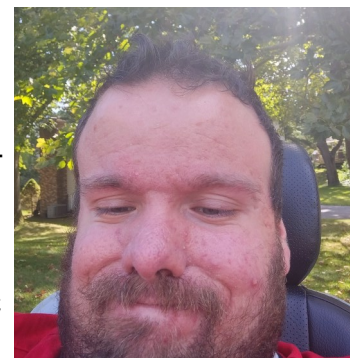
I am writing this letter in appreciation for what I have learned in your free classes over the past two years. My tutor Carl works with me twice a week on improving my reading and writing skills. I have participated in many classes: computer, health literacy, employment and writing 1 and 2. I also like Fun Fridays where the Bronson School of Nursing students teach us health.

Besides the role of learner, I sometimes teach lessons in health literacy class and help with screen sharing. I enjoy putting into practice what I have learned. Making paragraphs, improving punctuation and capitalization skills, and learning reading strategies have helped me progress. I felt excited and proud when I won 2nd place in a writing contest. I learned how to make Google slides. I have also practiced how to assist in and teach a class.

The one addition that I would suggest is a class in practical math applications. It's so easy to take part in KLC programming. All areas of literacy can be studied. Using Webex for the classes makes it possible to participate from my home. I want to let the KLC Team know that they are appreciated for the opportunities they provide me and the community.

Sincerely,

JJ Menter



"The best things about working with the KLC are that they're good at their jobs, they keep things running smoothly, and they let learners participate in programs like our weekly health literacy class."

"Working with JJ on writing skills has been a joy. His willingness to work through difficulties he encounters and to keep going when things get tough make him not only a student but a role model. I love the enthusiasm JJ shows for trying new endeavors. His list of accomplishments grows yearly. KLC provides JJ many opportunities to grow and achieve his potential. JJ is truly a KLC success story."

- Kathy Hays, Writing Tutor

"JJ has made excellent progress, especially in the last year. He works hard and has developed an excellent attitude about working on something that is not only challenging, but that can be very frustrating. His skills have become much better in several areas like mastering verbs and verb sounds, how to attack and sound out new words, learn and apply phonics, pay attention to syllables and word endings, and above all reading for meaning. I have learned a lot about how to approach a student with JJ's learning barriers."

- Carl III, Reading Tutor

Congratulations Tutors!

The Kalamazoo Literacy Council is pleased to welcome 20 new tutors who successfully completed Tutor Training in January and March. Special thanks to Kym Hollars for leading the trainings with support from Michael Evans and Jessi Pavey.

Haffiza Ahmadi-Shaffer
Lori Allard
Bill Caskey
Nancy Colburn
Marlene Denenfeld
Ed Doctor
Angela Erdman
Esther Gray
Devon Kelly
Elizabeth Kraatz

Jeri Love
Maritza Mandry
Phoebe Moreo
Dawne Morgan
Marie Pearson
Pat Ponto
Charissa Oliphant
Mya Veen
John Wise
Wendy Zimmerman

Tutor Trainers Needed

The Kalamazoo Literacy Council is in need of Tutor Trainers to help lead the Tutor Training Program. This role is critical for developing and supporting volunteers to become reading tutors for the adult learners the KLC serves. Qualifications for Tutor Trainers are at least one year of active tutoring with the KLC and/or volunteers with expertise in early literacy development.

Tutor Trainers present training workshops five times a year and are provided free ongoing professional development through the KLC's Master Tutor Program. Tutors interested in becoming a Tutor Trainer should contact Kito Jumanne-Marshall at (269) 382-0490 ext. 211 or kjumanne-marshall@kalamazooliteracy.org.

Navigators join the KLC to help adults remove barriers to learning

The Kalamazoo Literacy Council (KLC) is proud to have a talented team of navigators to support learners. Joining Parent Literacy Navigator Kamaria Nichols are two new navigators to help learners succeed.



Renee Hammond

Renee Hammond joins us from Gull Lake Community Schools where she served for 14 years in several roles with varying levels of responsibilities. Renee primarily taught Spanish to middle schoolers and in that role helped design engaging and skills-driven curriculum for novice and heritage English speakers. She also accepted additional leadership positions including serving as Department

Chairperson for the Unified Arts, to create meaningful literacy and cross-curricular experiences for students and their families. For the KLC, Renee will be the ESL Adult Learning Services Navigator, serving English language learners and providing support to instructors and volunteer tutors. One reason she was attracted to this role was to expand her reach into the ESL adult learner population and knowledge of their unique needs. She's excited to continue working through curriculum ideas and looks forward to broadening her connections in the community. Renee is a WMU Bronco who is originally from Grand Rapids, MI. She and her husband live in Kalamazoo with two cats, Maxine and Bobby. Renee loves to kayak any chance she gets. She can be reached at (269) 382-0490 ext. 224 or rhammond@kalamazooliteracy.org.



Katy Laws

Katy Laws joined the KLC in Fall 2022 as the Adult Learning Services Navigator. In her role, she helps guide adult learners who have a GED goal along the appropriate path to success. She also leads Workforce Literacy programs including JOBS, a six-week series where participants gain critical skills they need to excel at work. In addition to providing navigation services for learners, Katy

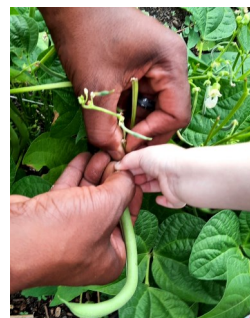
supports volunteers at various levels of instruction and maintains strategic partnerships like the Edison Early Childhood Education Career Pathway. One of the aspects of her role she most enjoys is watching an adult become more empowered as they progress along their learning journey toward their goals. She also appreciates the challenge of serving people from different backgrounds and perspectives. Previously, Katy was an E-commerce Specialist with Goodwill Industries. She lives in Kalamazoo's Edison neighborhood and has two cats, Eevee and Cheeto. In her free time, Katy has fun with hiking, camping, swimming, and bonfires. She can be reached at (269) 382-0490 ext. 253 or klaws@kalamazooliteracy.org.

Family Literacy Days are back and better than ever

Adult learners and their families can have fun and learn in the Read and Seed Community Garden during Family Literacy Days. The events are held the third Wednesday of each month from May through November. The first event will be held on May 17 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the garden located at Goodwill Industries of Southwestern Michigan at 420 E. Alcott Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49001. The program is a collaboration between Kalamazoo Literacy Council and the Adult Education and Training Program at Goodwill.

Event participants will explore gardening and literacy activities, learn about eating and growing healthy food, and learn about adult education programs and services while having fun in the outdoor classroom and community garden.

For more information contact Parent Literacy Navigator Kamaria Nichols at (269) 350-4595 or email knichols@kalamazooliteracy.org.



420 E. Alcott Street, Suite 400
Kalamazoo, MI 49001

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#EveryoneNeedsToRead

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MISSION:

The Kalamazoo
Literacy Council is
committed to
enhancing the lives of
adults by improving their
reading, writing and
spelling skills.

*Serving
Kalamazoo County
since 1974.*

EVERYONE NEEDS TO

READ

EVERYONE NEEDS TO

READ

EVERYONE NEEDS TO

READ

CALENDAR

Board Meetings

May 9, June 13, & July 11 11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m.

Adult Literacy Collaborative Meetings

May 22, June 26, & July 24 12:00 p.m. — 1:30 p.m.

Navigation Work Group

May 18, June 15, & July 20 10:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m.

Tutor Forums and Workshops

New Tutor Orientation May 4 6:00 — 7:30 p.m.

Tutor Training May 8, 11, 15, & 18 6:00 — 7:30 p.m.

ESL Tutor Forum

May 23, June 27, & July 25 4:00 p.m.— 5:30 p.m.

Parent Literacy Forum

May 26, June 23, & July 28 2:00 p.m.— 3:00 p.m.

Workforce Literacy Forum

May 12, June 9, & July 14 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Annual Meeting May 25 5:00 p.m.— 6:00 p.m.

All above meetings are virtual. ↑

Family Literacy Day: Read & Seed Garden

May 17, June 21, & July 19 5:00 p.m.— 7:00 p.m.

Visit www.kalamazooliteracy.org for details.



2023

ANNUAL MEETING

Resilience IN ADULT LEARNING



MAY 25

5:00 p.m.—6:00 p.m.



RSVP to kjumanne-marshall@kalamazooliteracy.org