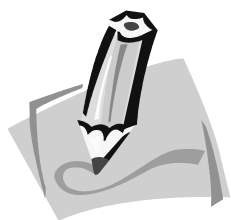


NALA NEWS

JOPLIN NALA READ

Black Marks on Paper



1 BY ONE lives are changed, options are increased, and students experience hope.

Everywhere I go, everywhere I am, my eyes scan print—the teabag on the shelf by my computer: “I Love Lemon.” The brochure: “Live United!” The booklet: “Seize the Moment.” The note from an ESL student: “Today I enjoyed the class. I had a good practice of verbs.” I wonder what it would be like to see print everywhere and not be able to read it.

Literacy students wonder just the reverse: “How can everyone else read signs and posters and words in books so easily when I can’t?”

It is difficult to realize the pain, the lost opportunities, the shame, the feeling of worthlessness that accompany not being able to read. Statistics do not paint the picture of adults struggling to conceal their lack of reading ability.

Barely half of our nation’s population is functionally literate, that is, able to pursue opportunities and make informed decisions. In spite of the fact that so many adults cannot read well, efforts are under way to cut funding for Adult Literacy Programs. We must not let this happen. Our efforts will make the difference between a literate, educated nation and one poorly prepared for the years ahead.

The emphasis on improving our children’s ability to read is a necessary one. But while we focus on that, we must not ignore the adult population which still cannot read well enough to perform such daily tasks as reading a prescription or filling out a job application.

Perhaps more to the point, we must not ignore the impact that parents have upon their children’s literacy skills. Parents who read to their children enable them to acquire literacy more easily than children whose parents are non-readers. The children who are read to at an early age learn that black marks on paper mean something significant.

We must band together to ensure that all who need tutoring in reading, math or English as a Second Language (ESL) have the opportunity to improve their literacy skills. We ask for your support. The return on your investment in the literacy efforts of Joplin NALA Read will be changed lives, increased options, and the gift of hope to our students. Your investment will enable families in the Joplin area to maximize their potential.

Think about the importance of reading in your life. If you could not read, what would you give to be able to read? What will you do to help others make sense of black marks on paper?

Marj Boudreaux
Executive Director

Your Investment Helps

- \$25 allows a new student to complete orientation.
- \$50 provides books for an adult literacy student to progress a level in reading.
- \$100 will provide children’s books for a family literacy program.
- \$150 provides the resources to train ten volunteer tutors.
- \$200 furnishes the ESL classroom with books and supplies.

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1 BY ONE

- ⇒ Reaching Out
- ⇒ Meeting Needs
- ⇒ Serving People



An investment in Joplin NALA Read is more than a donation; it is an investment in the future of our community.

28% of our students are Literacy Students.



72% of our students are ESL students.

Invest in the Future of Our Community

We are thankful for the support we receive from friends like you, support that helps our students who struggle every day with basic literacy skills access all their options as adults. One by one they come, and one by one we help, whether pair tutoring or class teaching. There is no charge to our students, but there is a cost.

The need to invest in community literacy begins with

the knowledge of the staggering impact of illiteracy. Adults who struggle with reading and writing want the same thing as those who read, write, and speak English well—to support themselves and their families. Yet here are just some of the indicators of the impact of illiteracy.

- Low-literate adults are more likely to rely on

public assistance or have low-paying jobs

- They have four times the health care costs but are less likely to have health insurance
- A child who grows up in a home with an illiterate parent is twice as likely to be illiterate.

In order to meet the literacy needs of our community we need your support.

Our Literacy Students

Katy comes into our literacy council, her head hung low. "I want to read better," she says. Each time she comes she looks down and barely speaks. A year passes. Katy walks in and greets us with a smile, head held high. "How are you?" she asks. The light came on for Katy during that year—the black marks on paper made sense for the first time in her life, and suddenly her reading improved two grade levels.

Don came for a different reason. A recovering alcoholic, he wanted to be able to read the preamble and guidelines at AA meetings as he led the group. The first time he stood up and read his part, the whole group applauded, some with tears in their eyes. Don has tears in his eyes as he talks about reading with his son.

Charlie walks in with an attitude. "I can't pass their stupid test," he says. "I can do

the work and know more than the guys above me, but I can't pass the test." Weeks later he walks out of the literacy council with a different attitude, one that says he can learn to read.

Mona wants to read her own mail. A bright young woman with a job she excels in, Mona does not look like a person who needs help reading. She cherishes her privacy and longs for independence—she simply wants to read her mail.

Our ESL Students

Soledad hesitates at the doorway. "I can learn English?" she asks. "My friend say I come here to study English." We welcome her to our orientation and assessment, then talk to her about the best class for her to attend. Having left school in the 4th grade, she needs help in the four skills: reading, writing, listening, and

speaking. She attends our evening classes since she has small children who need her care.

Olga strides in with purpose and resolve. "I want to study English," she announces. "In U.S.A. must know English to work." We find out that Olga was a professor of physics in her country but cannot find work here because of her

lack of skills in English. Like Soledad, she is assessed and assigned to a particular class at her level. Because both of them are committed to improving their English, they attend every ESL class they can, and both show improvement.

The black marks of the English language are beginning to make sense.

Our Family Literacy Outreach

Two-year old Cael points to a word and asks, "What that say, Grandma?" Sometimes he reads to me, holding the book, telling the story and turning the pages. He is fortunate to have parents and grandparents who read to him every day. Even though he is not actually reading, he has the concept that those black marks on paper mean something, that they tell a story.

Children who grow up in a household where reading is not valued, children whose parents do not read well—these children often enter school two or three years behind their peers. They do not know that black marks on paper have meaning. Education is still the key for realizing hopes and dreams for the individual and the family.

Joplin NALA Read works with Lafayette House in a Family Literacy outreach to bring awareness to parents of the value of reading to children and an offer of help to those who don't read well. We model reading, encourage parents to read to their children, and include a parent-child time activity. Then each child receives a new book!



This year we conducted 12 Family Literacy Programs helping 40 families discover the joy of reading.

Our Tutors

Not enough can be said about the wealth of riches our volunteer tutors bring to our students. Imagine if you were unable to figure out words--those black marks on paper. What would you give to be able to read? That's the priceless gift our tutors offer, day after day.

Or what if you were in another country with no knowledge of the language? Our English as a Second Language tutors teach clas-

ses with students who range in ability from low level to advanced.

The students are grateful.

One says, *"I don't know how to say thanks for all she has done for me."*

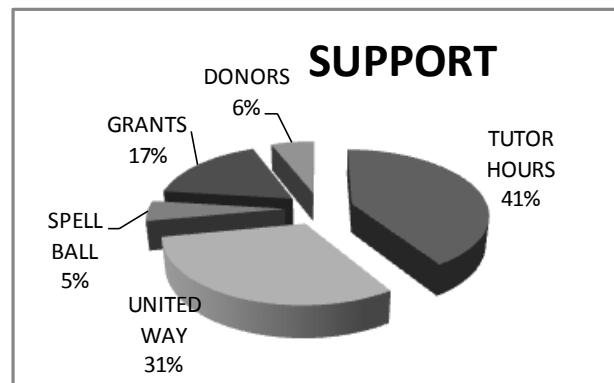
Another tells us, *"He is trying super hard to help me."*

And another one says, *"She is wonderful person who does not worry about using her time in mornings for us."*

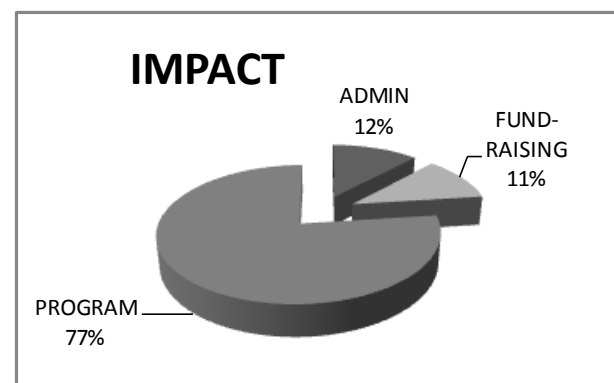
Our Responsibility

Our commitment is to both our donors and our students. Decisions that relate to funds, staff, and volunteers are made under the oversight of the Joplin NALA Read Board of Directors.

With wisdom as our guideline, we commit to using our resources in a fiscally responsible manner and serving our students in realizing their goals.



48 Volunteer Tutors delivered over 1800 hours of instruction allowing our students to log over 4300 hours of guided learning.



GIVE THE GIFT THAT CHANGES LIVES

- ☐ \$25 allows a new student to complete orientation
- ☐ \$50 provides books for an adult literacy student to progress a level in reading
- ☐ \$100 will provide children's books for a family literacy program
- ☐ \$150 provides the resources to train ten volunteer tutors
- ☐ \$200 furnishes the ESL classroom with books and supplies
- ☐ Other \$ _____

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Please include check, cash or money order. Checks are made payable to Joplin NALA Read, P.O. Box 447, Joplin, MO 64802. Donations of any amount are greatly appreciated and are tax deductible



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