

2014 annual report



first literacy

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your gifts to First Literacy during our 25th anniversary year.

We began the year with a celebration and tribute to Mayor Thomas Menino, an adult learner himself, who encouraged our scholars to persevere and keep their dreams alive by sharing his own story of success. He is sorely missed by the community he nurtured.

In December, we awarded the first-ever *First Literacy Lab* grants, a new resource that provides funding for adult educators to test new approaches to teaching, to develop and test innovative instructional materials, to increase student learning through the use of evidence-based materials and practices, and to support the use of technology in ABE instruction.

Throughout the year, we hosted Professional Development Workshops believing that excellent professional development prompts teachers to examine their approaches and methods and consider other possibilities. It leads them to integrate new practices and materials which lead to stimulating and innovative classes. This, in turn, leads to stimulated adult learners, who push themselves beyond their own expectations in pursuit of their personal goals.

We continued to support adult education programs that provide crucial classes and services to adult learners. In addition to funding core classes, we subsidized services that promote attendance and enable students to find employment post-graduation.

Your gifts have enabled First Literacy to ensure that Greater Boston adults with low-literacy or limited English proficiency have high-quality educational opportunities that allow them to thrive as individuals and as family members, in their workplaces, and in their communities.

We are very excited by the progress we have made, but we're not done yet! We need your continued help to write the next chapter!

Thank you.



Photos from
our video,
First Literacy 25.
Watch it at
www.firstliteracy.org



Program Support

In 2014 First Literacy supported 19 literacy programs that, with our project specific grants, collectively educated over 1,200 adults. In addition to funding classes, we supported services that promoted attendance and persistence, improved the quality of instruction, and enabled students to find employment post-graduation.

PROGRAM	PROJECT	AMOUNT
ESOL Classes and Instructors (\$47,000)		
<i>These teacher and program coordinator positions provide essential services to English language learners.</i>		
East Boston Ecumenical Community Council	Latina ESOL Class, Salary of Coordinator	\$15,000
Educational Development Group	Intermediate ESOL Class	\$11,000
Project Literacy	ESOL Classes	\$13,500
The Welcome Project	Support for ESOL Coordinator	\$7,500
Basic Education Classes and Instructors (\$29,500)		
<i>A variety of approaches are used to teach basic reading and writing to refugees and immigrants</i>		
International Institute of Boston	Basic Literacy Classes	\$14,500
WAITT House	Basic Skills and Pre-High School Class	\$15,000
Counseling (\$28,000)		
<i>Counselors are a vital support to students struggling to balance classes with life and plan their next steps.</i>		
Jamaica Plain Community Center	Educational Advisor/Bi-lingual Counselor	\$14,000
St. Mark Community Education Program	Program Counselor	\$14,000
Digital Literacy (\$61,500)		
<i>These classes help students learn to use computers and the internet to search and apply for jobs and college.</i>		
BEST Corp.	Technology/Transition Class	\$12,000
Boston Higher Education Resource Center	ESOL, Computer Literacy Instruction	\$14,000
El Centro del Cardenal	Computer Literacy Classes	\$14,000
Haitian Multi-Service Center	Computer Tutor Program	\$8,000
YMCA International Learning Center	"Next-Steps" Computer Literacy Classes	\$13,500
Civic Education (\$14,000)		
<i>This innovative program improves students' civic participation along with their English and literacy skills.</i>		
Community Learning Center	ESOL Civic Education	\$14,000
Parent Support and Children's Services (\$24,000)		
<i>Childcare services make it possible for students to attend classes while their children learn and play.</i>		
Boston Centers for Youth and Families Perkins Community Center	Parent Support Project	\$8,000
Julie's Family Learning Program	Salaries of infant, toddler, and Montessori teachers	\$7,500
Mujeres Unidas Avanzando	Childcare Program	\$8,500
High School Equivalency Instruction (\$21,000)		
<i>Adult learners preparing to take the high school equivalency exam need focused attention of experienced instructors.</i>		
Charlestown Adult Education	Pre-ASE/HS Equivalency Instruction	\$10,000
X-Cel, Inc. Adult Education	Reading and Writing Instructor	\$11,000

First Literacy Scholarships

■ Boston's Mayor Marty Walsh hosted our annual Scholarship Ceremony and spoke of his own experience as a child of immigrants and an adult learner. He presented scholarships to 15 accomplished adults who are pursuing a variety of fields, including accounting, pharmacology, nursing, and automotive technology.

NEW SCHOLARS	SCHOOL
Charlie Ramirez	Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology
Shabbir Ahmed, Maria Choukri, Tirsit Desslegn, Vanessa Dorta, Angelina Gigante, Celia Maraschi, Micheline Ngo Yon	Bunker Hill Community College
Sama Mahmood	Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
Pie Xia	Quincy College
Amalia Dalalelis	Roxbury Community College

CONTINUING SCHOLARS	SCHOOL
Abdelmalik Drief, Sandra Gaviria, Mohamed Janga, Sherrie Thomas	Bunker Hill Community College

The Mayor Thomas Menino Scholarship, created to honor Mayor Menino's commitment to adult literacy education, was awarded to Angelina Gigante.

11-10-02 Foundation Scholars are Mohamed Janga, Charlie Ramirez, and Sherrie Thomas.

Additional scholarships are made possible by the generous support of Bank of New York Mellon, Citi, Eaton Vance Management, and the Hamilton Company Charitable Foundation.

First Literacy Lab

■ For the first time, First Literacy awarded Literacy Lab grants for the development, trial, and sharing of innovative resources and practices. All grant recipients tested their ideas in classroom settings and evaluated their effectiveness using qualitative and quantitative measures.

- Innovative computer-literacy curriculum (BEST Corp)
- Project-based curriculum preparing adult students for the new high school equivalency test (Charlestown Adult Education and Dimock Center)
- Basic literacy curriculum and assessment for English language learners (Project Literacy)
- "Spoken English Portfolios" using tablets (Quincy Asian Resource Adult Education)
- A story-telling project for low-literacy English language learners (Welcome Project)
- An "Interactive Homework" resource for adult learners using technology (Welcome Project)
- A "History of Medicine" curriculum for Pre-ASE/high school equivalency students (X-Cel)

Results were shared at a forum in October which was attended by over 60 adult education professionals from throughout the region.

Professional Development Workshops

■ This year, First Literacy hosted 14 Professional Development Workshops on the following seven topics:

- *Helping Your Students Pass the GED—While There's Still Time!*
- *Approaches to Managing and Improving Your Students' Attendance*
- *Wonderful Weebly: The Friendly Website Creator for Teachers and Programs*
- *Getting Set for HiSET: The New Massachusetts High School Equivalency Test*
- *From Objectives to Assessment: Breathing Life into Your Lesson Planning*
- *Speech and Pronunciation Instruction To Improve English Language Learners' Understandability*
- *Keeping Your Students Connected and Engaged in the Summer*

Many of the workshops included two sessions, giving participants the opportunity to incorporate ideas and techniques learned during the first session into their classes and then report on the results during the second session. We also launched an online forum to enable participants to access the materials presented, pose questions, and share resources, further magnifying the impact of our workshops.

**First Literacy thanks the individuals, corporations, and foundations who believe in and support our work.
The following list recognizes those donors who made gifts between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014.**

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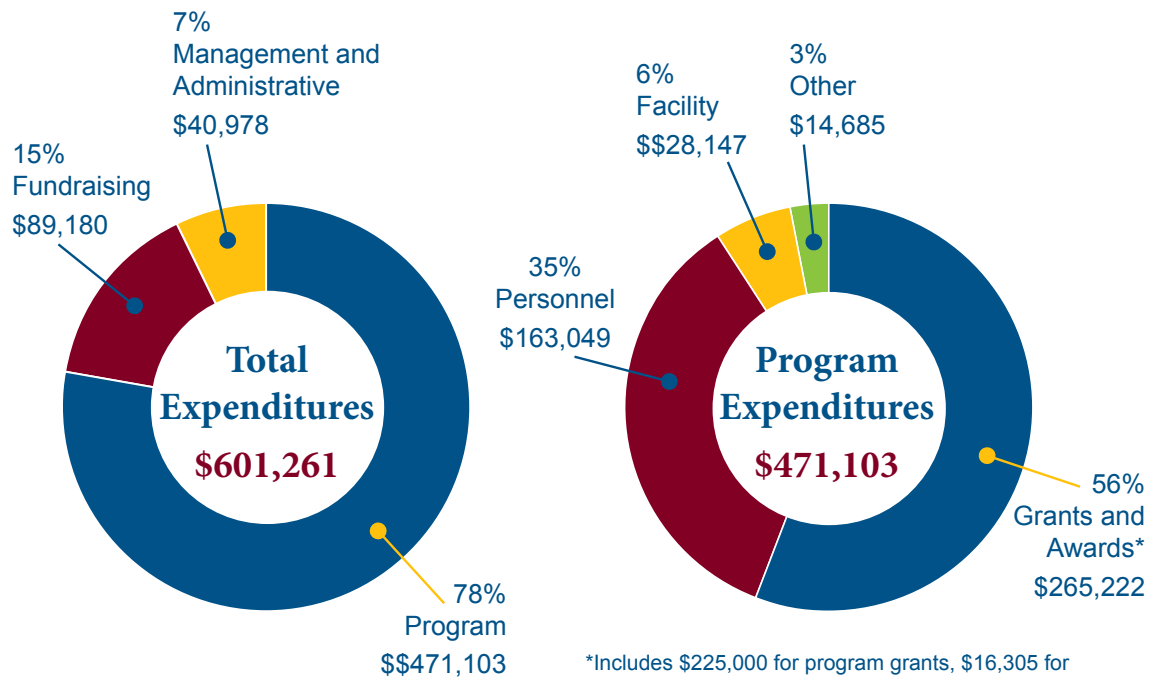
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State Street sponsored "The Bards and the Bees"**



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*Includes \$225,000 for program grants, \$16,305 for First Literacy Lab grants, \$16,400 for scholarships and mentors, and \$7,517 for literacy awareness activities.

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*Dedicated to the memory of
Mayor Thomas Menino,
a champion of
adult education and
long-time supporter
of First Literacy.*

2014 by the numbers

Learners Served		Learner Accomplishments	
Classes	438	Made measureable education progress	697
Counseling	458	Demonstrated improved computer skills	672
Digital Literacy	246	Obtained GED or high school diploma	30
Tutoring	233	Entered skills training program	47
Parent Support	79	Entered college	15
Scholarships	15	Upgraded their employment	69
	1,236 learners	Entered employment	185
		Began to help their child(ren) with homework	188
		Increased participation at child(ren)'s school	169
		<i>Many learners achieved more than one goal!</i>	

demographics

67% Female | 33% Male

African	85	Caribbean	139	Latino	307
Black (U.S.)	46	Chinese	25	Vietnamese	57
Brazilian	90	East European	21	White (U.S.)	31
Cape Verdean	23	Haitian	338	Other*	74

*Includes learners from Afghanistan, Albania, Armenia, India, Iran, Israel, Italy, Korea, Japan, Nepal, Pakistan, Syria, and Turkey