



ANNUAL REPORT 2013

Dear Friends,

In 1988 the Boston Adult Literacy Fund was founded. Although much has changed in 25 years (including our name), much has stayed the same. First Literacy's mission remains to provide life-changing educational opportunities to adult learners and their families. Your gifts have made possible expanded access to literacy, English language, high school equivalency, and other instruction, college scholarships, and professional development for adult educators. We are proud of the difference we have made in the lives of 45,000 adults and their families.

That difference is best articulated by the recipients of our support:

I received the First Literacy Scholarship when I started my first year of college in 2007. Even though college life has often meant trudging through the snow to bring my son to daycare before catching the train to college, and long nights studying while juggling babysitting and homework, I feel I am closing in on my goal of creating a better future for my family.

—Scholarship recipient

As our oldest and most enduring funder, First Literacy has acted as a stable base from which to take risks, learn from our successes as well as challenges, and weather an ever-changing funding landscape.

—Boston Higher Education Recourse Center

The support of First Literacy is of utmost importance to our program. It enables us to offer the appropriate level of instruction for immigrants, refugees and asylees in our full-time English for Employment Program.

—International Institute of Boston

Not changed is our assurance to you, our donors, that your gifts are used wisely to ensure that adults who need and want to improve their lives through education are given the opportunity to do so. We take this responsibility very seriously.

Thank you for your continued support.

Skye M. Kramer



First Literacy celebrated 25 years of supporting adult literacy in September, honoring Mayor Menino with the Lifetime Literacy Leader Award for his commitment to adult education. Mayor Menino is pictured here with Governor and Mrs. Dukakis and First Literacy CEO Skye Morrison Kramer.

From the Director of Programs

■ As First Literacy celebrates 25 years of supporting adult literacy in Greater Boston, I find myself reflecting on changes in the field during that time. As in 1988, there are still tens of thousands of adults in Massachusetts whose English, math, reading, and writing skills are lacking, unable to complete job applications or communicate with their children's teachers. Every year, as many as 25,000 adults are on waiting lists for adult education classes. In Boston alone, 5,550 adults are currently waiting for classes.

Adult learners continue to include native and non-native speakers of English. Native speakers must overcome socio-economic barriers and shortcomings of K-12 school systems. Immigrants face some of the same challenges, in addition to learning a new language. Today there is greater diversity among immigrants, with more coming from Eastern Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. Some new immigrants lack the ability to read in their native language. Others arrive with higher levels of education, but still need to improve their English for college and employment.

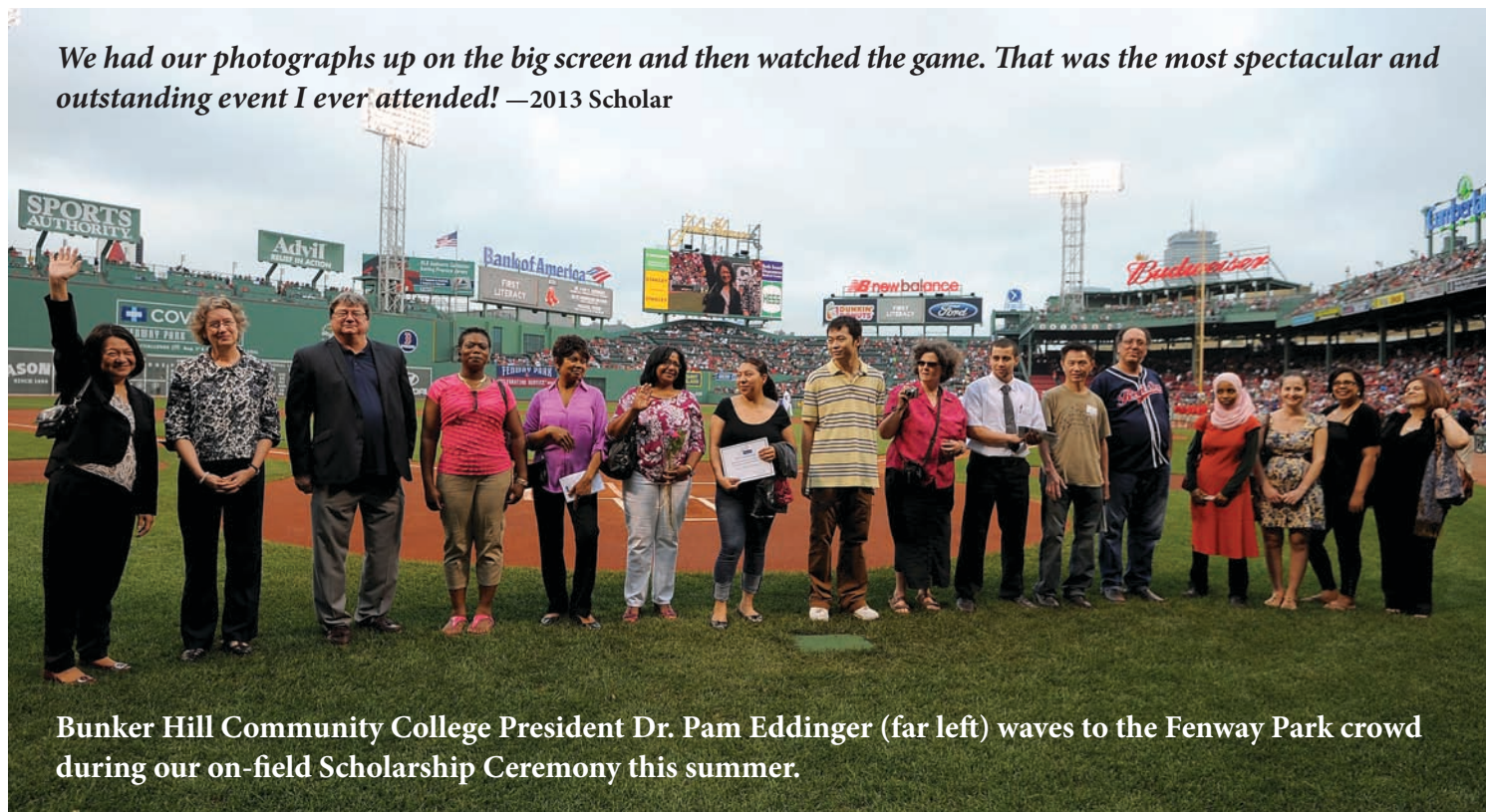
In recent years, a driving force in adult education has become the need for an educated workforce to fill jobs in our new economy. Adult education is now charged with raising the educational levels of students so that they may thrive in college, and become part of this new skilled workforce. To prepare students, adult education now must include instruction that develops greater analytical, problem-solving, math, and computer literacy skills.

With increased research in the field and an emphasis on evidence-based practices, the importance of innovation and professional development is greater than ever. As stated in The Boston Foundation report *Breaking the Language Barrier*, "Experts in both K-12 and adult education agree that the quality of the teacher is the single strongest predictor of student skill achievement.... Teachers need ongoing, supported, accessible, and high-quality professional development before and during service." Our professional development workshops are responding to this need.

Looking ahead, we at First Literacy understand and are ready to meet the challenges of providing adult learners with high-quality classes and services in an ever-changing environment. We remain committed to making a difference in the lives of adult learners and their families in Boston.

Michael Tehr

We had our photographs up on the big screen and then watched the game. That was the most spectacular and outstanding event I ever attended! —2013 Scholar



Bunker Hill Community College President Dr. Pam Eddinger (far left) waves to the Fenway Park crowd during our on-field Scholarship Ceremony this summer.

Program Support

Because literacy, functional English skills, and high school credentials are essential for individuals to function in our society, First Literacy provides capacity-building resources to community-based adult literacy programs in Greater Boston.

PROGRAM	PROJECT	AMOUNT
ESOL Classes and Instructors (\$58,000) <i>These teacher and program coordinator positions provide essential services to English language learners.</i>		
Boston Higher Education Resource Center	Stipends of Adult Educators	\$15,000
East Boston Ecumenical Community Council	Latina ESOL Class, Salary of Coordinator	\$15,000
Educational Development Group	Salary of Program Director	\$10,000
Project Literacy	ESOL Classes	\$13,000
Steps to Success Brookline Learning Project	ESOL Coordinator/ ESOL Program	\$5,000
Basic Education Classes and Instructors (\$55,000) <i>Adult learners preparing to take the GED need focused attention of experienced basic education instructors.</i>		
International Institute of Boston	Basic Literacy Classes	\$15,000
Julie's Family Learning Program	Salary of Teacher/Director of Education	\$15,000
Project Hope	Foundation Classes	\$15,000
X-Cel, Inc. Adult Education	Reading and Writing Instructor	\$10,000
Counseling (\$44,000) <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	\$15,000
St. Mark Community Education Program	Bi-lingual Counselor	\$14,000
WAITT House	Counselor and Pre-ASE Teacher	\$15,000
Digital Literacy (\$36,500) <i>These classes help students learn to use computers and the internet to search and apply for jobs and college.</i>		
El Centro del Cardenal	Computer Literacy Classes	\$15,000
Haitian Multi-Service Center	Computer Tutor Program	\$8,000
YMCA International Learning Center	"Next-Steps" Computer Literacy Classes	\$13,500
Student Leadership (\$29,000) <i>These innovative programs empower students while enlisting them to help their peers.</i>		
Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center	TAG Peer Tutoring and Empowerment Program	\$15,000
Community Learning Center	Student Leadership Classes	\$14,000
Childcare (\$16,500) <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
Mujeres Unidas Avanzando	Childcare Program 1	\$8,500

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, 2012 and June 30, 2013.

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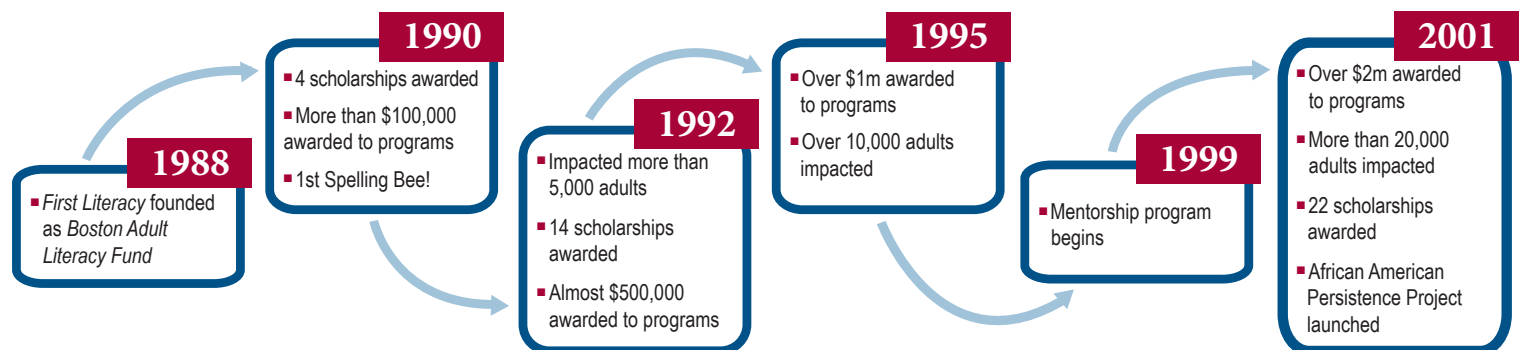
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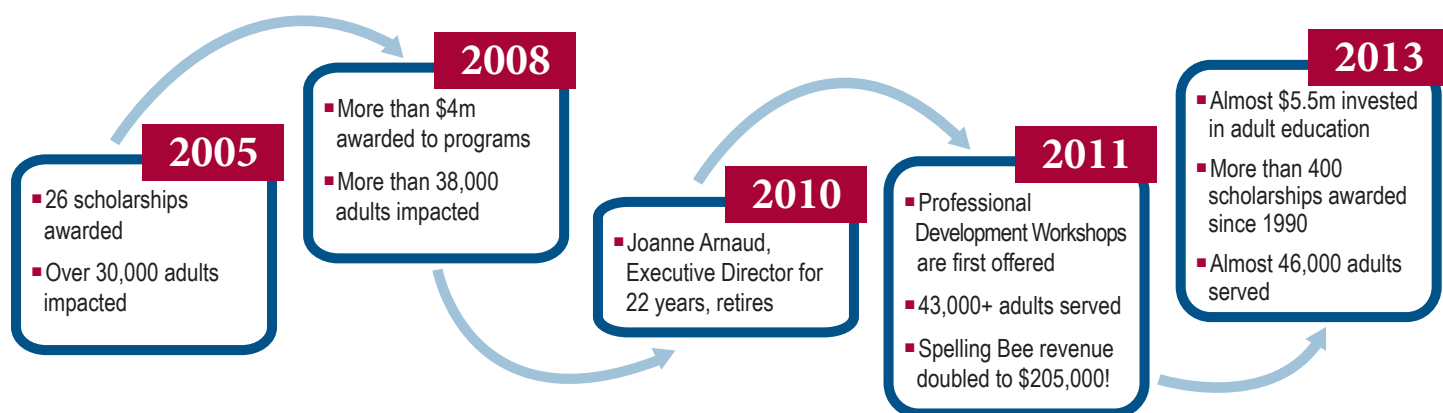
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First Literacy Scholarships

■ The scholarships that First Literacy awards to adults who have completed basic education or English language programs and are continuing on to higher education, and the mentoring that is provided to first year scholars, are important components of our program work. Through these awards, First Literacy is changing lives.

In July we awarded 14 scholarships to new and continuing scholars at an on-field event at Fenway Park (see page 2). Dr. Pam Y. Eddinger, the President of Bunker Hill Community College, presented the scholars with their awards. We are so grateful to the Red Sox for hosting us. It was an experience that our scholars will long remember.

NEW SCHOLARS	COLLEGE
Evelin Benitez, Dave Du	Roxbury Community College
Maria Castaing	Boston Career Institute
Abdelmalik Drief, Selima Endris, Mohamed Janga, Roule Mompoint, Sherrie Thomas, Donna Toscano, Yong Zheng	Bunker Hill Community College
CONTINUING SCHOLARS	COLLEGE
Blanca Gomez, Mark Moses, Roxana Ramirez, Elona Toro	Bunker Hill Community College

The scholarships are made possible thanks to the generosity of Bank of New York Mellon, Citibank, Eaton Vance Investment Management, and the Hamilton Company Charitable Foundation.

Meet the Scholars

■ **Roule Mompoint** grew up the youngest of six siblings in a village in Haiti. When Roule immigrated to the United States, she spoke no English,



“...not being able to communicate with others has been a challenge. But I’ve always dreamed about continuing my education; I just hadn’t had the opportunity.” With support from the Cambridge Community Learning Center and a scholarship from First Literacy, Roule works in the medical field and is pursuing a degree in sonography at Bunker Hill Community College. “I believe that education is the key for success... It’s never too late to learn.”

■ **Cassia Silva**, with her husband and daughter, immigrated to the United States from Brazil in 1997. She enrolled in English language classes and worked to support her family. Through hard work and a scholarship from First Literacy in 2011, Cassia enrolled at Bunker Hill Community College to study business administration. Currently, Cassia works as a medical interpreter at Cambridge Health Alliance and continues to take classes at Bunker Hill Community College through a continuing scholarship awarded to her in 2012. Because of her commitment to education and helping others succeed, Cassia joined the First Literacy mentorship program, and now mentors other scholars.



■ **Mohamed Janga** was a reporter for the local newspaper during the civil war in Sierra



Leone, but out of fear of persecution, he immigrated to the United States as a refugee in 2002. Since moving to Boston, Mohamed has been employed at the Ritz Carlton Hotel, which has shifted his commitment from journalism to the hospital-

ity industry. “My personal disposition and the manner in which I deal with the guests and co-workers give me the courage to go back to school and learn something new as I choose hospitality as my lasting career. I believe education is the best way one can reach his desired goal in life.” With a scholarship from First Literacy, Mohamed is now pursuing a degree in hospitality management at Bunker Hill Community College, while supporting his two teenage children.

Professional Development Workshops

■ For the second year, First Literacy hosted Professional Development Workshops. The topics presented included:

- Incorporating Phonics into ESOL and Basic Skills Instruction
- Life Skills, College, and Career Readiness Classroom Activities
- Computer-Based ESOL Instruction
- Flourishing as an Educational Advisor/Academic Counselor
- Creating a Classroom Environment to Promote Mental Health and Improve Learning

Over 100 adult educators, including program directors, teachers, and counselors, from more than 30 programs throughout New England, attended our workshops in 2013. On average, these educators serve 52 students per year. Not only are we making a difference in the professional lives of adult educators, we are making a difference in the lives of 5,000 students who benefit from their teachers' improved skills and added resources.

Meet the Teachers



After teaching in Washington, DC and Memphis through Teach for America, **Kelly Folsom** began working with adults at X-Cel Education in Roxbury five years ago. Kelly is driven by the determination of the students and explores innovative and creative ways to engage and educate. "Students are able to utilize the skills they are practicing and implement them immediately in their workplace, at home, or as they prepare for their next move—often to college or a training program. Ultimately, those skills and mindsets lead to better career pathways, support for families, and engaged citizens." Kelly knows of no greater objective in education.



Marianna Geraskina, an immigrant from Russia with 30 years of experience in the adult education field, now teaches English and Academic Skills at El Centro del Cardenal in Jamaica Plain. She believes that her job is as much about helping people to get ahead in the most practical aspects of their lives as it is about helping them develop and realize their dreams. Making sure that her students become comfortable with technology has become an increasingly important part of Marianna's work with adult learners. "Literacy skills critically affect our students' ability to access information, which in this economy means that if our students do not have access to the education that they need, they will be left behind."



"I'm passionate about teaching ESOL because I was an ESOL student." Prior to moving to Boston in 2003, **Malky Sousa** had been a preschool teacher in Brazil for seven years. She found herself in the role of the student again when she began learning English. After spending several years taking classes in the Boston area, she was anxious to get back to teaching. She now runs her own business and volunteers teaching English at The Welcome Project in Somerville. Malky knows first-hand the challenges of navigating a new society while

learning the language. As a teacher, she draws on these experiences to teach her students the skills they will need to succeed.

From the programs:

Our staff, and by extension our learners, benefit from the professional development workshops, both as participants and as presenters. Being funded by First Literacy connects Julie's to other adult education providers and enriches our understanding of the field.

— Julie's Family
Learning Center

First Literacy was instrumental in helping our teachers to become even more effective in the classroom through the professional development opportunities it offered this year. By bringing our staff into a community of other ABE/ESOL programs, the workshops provided a cohort of colleagues with whom to share experiences and insights.

—Project Literacy

I commend First Literacy for the initiative taken to provide Professional Development Workshops for teachers. There is a wealth of knowledge and experience in the ESOL teaching community that the organization has tapped into in a very creative way and made it accessible not only to First Literacy grant recipients, but to many other adult learning organizations.

—East Boston Ecumenical
Community Council

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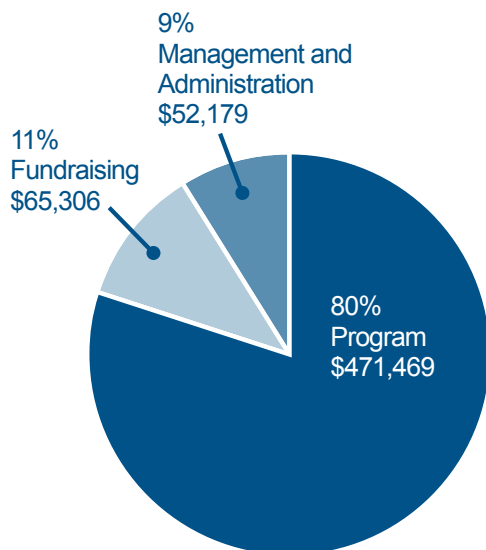
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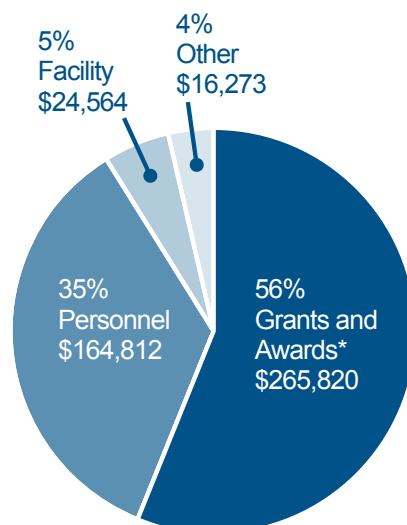
www.firstliteracy.org

*Dedicated to the memory of
Anne Serino,
Director of Adult Education,
Massachusetts Department
of Elementary and
Secondary Education.*

Total Expenditures | \$588,954



Program Expenditures | \$471,469



*Includes \$239,000 for program grants, \$15,922 for scholarships and mentors, \$7,545 for literacy awareness activities, and \$3,353 for program development assistance.

2013 by the numbers

Learners Served

Classes	515
Counseling	408
Coordination	110
Tutoring	165
Childcare	62
Scholarships	14
1,274 learners	

Learner Accomplishments

Made measureable education progress	645
Demonstrated improved computer skills	539
Entered employment	201
Entered college	49
Obtained their GED or high school diploma	18
Helped their child(ren) with homework	244
Joined a parent organization at their child(ren)'s school	43
Entered skills training programs	57
Upgraded their employment	60

Many learners achieved more than one goal!

Demographics

