



THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Dear Friends,

Learning to drive is a rite of passage and an indicator of success. I remember how excited I was at 15 to pass the learner's permit test and then a year later (to the day!) to pass the road test to receive my driver's license. In Birmingham, Alabama this milestone meant freedom and opportunity.

Offering adults the means to overcome obstacles to opportunity and success is why we have persisted in our work for 30 years. Our approach both **supports** adults who are improving their literacy skills through drive and persistence and **strengthens** the adult literacy field by providing necessary instruction, tools, and resources for literacy education providers. But we could not do this work without your support.

As you'll read in this report of activities from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018, we have been busy.

Our First *Literacy Lab* initiative continues to encourage and support innovation in the adult education classroom. The project highlighted in this report is an excellent example of creativity at work. Obtaining a driver's license is the first step in many career pathways. For instance, hotel bell men must have a driver's license to park cars, if needed. With this in mind, support from First Literacy enabled International Institute of New England to create and pilot a program that is truly needed in the immigrant community. Do you remember from your own driver's permit test whether high beam headlights allow you to see 300, 350, or 375 feet ahead? You'll find the answer elsewhere in this report.

In addition to offering professional development workshops in our own training room in Boston, thanks to your generous gifts, First Literacy went 'on the road' this year to deliver workshops and technical assistance in Gloucester, Holyoke, Malden, and Nantucket. Adults throughout the Commonwealth now have additional tools and resources to bring to their classrooms.

Supporting adults who have graduated from a program and are pursuing higher education has been a cornerstone of our work for 30 years. We provide additional assistance through our peer mentoring program. Luciana Castilho, who is profiled in this report, knows that success depends on drive and determination, and a little help along the way. She is providing others the help that she has been given.

Thank you for your gifts.

Skye Morrison Kramer

Executive Director

SUCCESS



First Literacy Lab

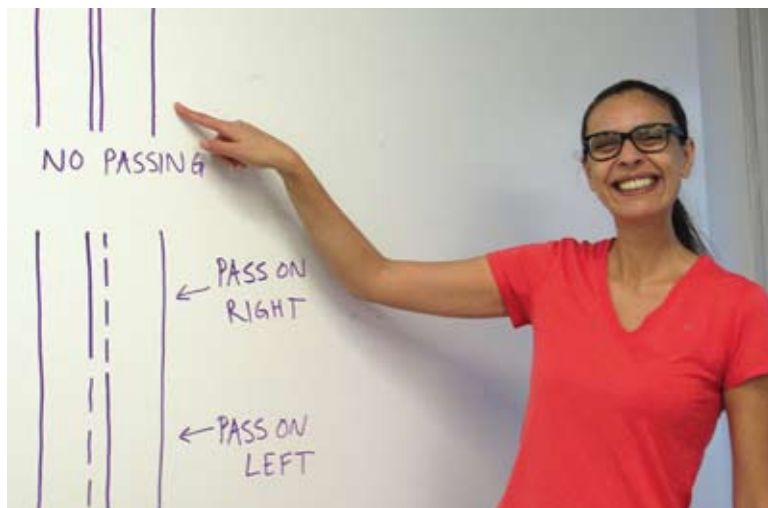
Passing the Massachusetts learner's permit exam is a challenging task, even for native English speakers. Helping their immigrant students meet this challenge spurred staff from the International Institute of New England (IINE) to apply for First *Literacy Lab* funding to develop the DRIVE Permit Preparation Program. The project had three goals: 1) to equip learners with the knowledge to pass the permit test; 2) to prepare students for the electronic exam by improving computer skills; and 3) to foster a safe driving culture.

After receiving a First *Literacy Lab* grant, the staff developed a curriculum for the program, designed to engage English language learners while emphasizing driving safety. The materials include worksheets, quizzes, and practice tests, as well as PowerPoint lessons used to teach the class. Over the course of the year, 30 students participated in the DRIVE Permit Preparation Program. Running the program for two class cycles allowed the IINE project team to fine-tune the curriculum based on the results of the first session. After the first program cycle, the team decided to increase the intensity of the program, boosting the second session from 24 to 42 hours. The curriculum was also adjusted to dedicate more time to particularly challenging topics, such as mandatory suspensions.

At the close of the program year, 15 students had successfully taken and passed the learner's permit exam, a required first step in becoming a legal driver in Massachusetts. Chloe Walker, the project leader and a teacher at IINE, shared the story of one student from Nepal who had studied on her own and previously failed the learner's permit test twice, before enrolling in IINE's DRIVE Program.

"At the end of the course when we took students to the Registry of Motor Vehicles, she was the first one to pass and came out of the exam room with a big smile."

IINE plans to continue using the DRIVE Permit Preparation Program to help future students pass this important test. This successful project is just one example of the innovative and impactful programming funded through First *Literacy Lab* grants.



The First Literacy Lab grants support and encourage programs to think creatively and expansively about education in order to nourish students' whole selves.

—Riva Pearson and Brian Jordan,
ABCD Mattapan



DID YOU KNOW?

- 361 adult learners participated in 12 First *Literacy Lab* project grants.
- 58 students in three programs made gains in computer mastery.
- 51 students expressed pride and increased confidence in writing in English.
- 31 students in two programs increased English-speaking confidence by exploring their communities.
- 47 students expressed increased interest and confidence in reading in English.
- 110 students reported improved proficiency in mathematical thinking and vocabulary.

Professional Development

In my second year as Director of Programs at First Literacy, I welcomed the opportunity to plan and present a rich series of workshops and information sessions that brought Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers together to deepen our practice. We paid attention to the survey results from the field when selecting topics, and welcomed experienced and new teachers to our sessions. I'd like to share some new initiatives with you that we successfully accomplished over the past year.

Supported by a grant from the Harold Whitworth Pierce Charitable Trust, we expanded our professional development services beyond Greater Boston, offering technical assistance and on-site workshops in Gloucester, Holyoke, and Malden. This was a huge leap for us, and we were happy to bring our work on the road to teachers who find it difficult to travel to Boston for workshops. We even extended our reach to Nantucket, where the ESOL volunteer program at the Atheneum Library requested a workshop for tutors who serve the growing year-round immigrant population on the island.

Teachers work hard and need rejuvenation. Last summer we brought teachers together for a full-day retreat at a community center in Gloucester, where we engaged in expressive art, creative writing, and Shinrin Yoku, the art of Japanese forest meditation. Revisiting the theory of multiple intelligences was a way to enliven us and inform our creative energies for the year ahead. We hope to repeat the retreat in summer 2019.

This winter, we are offering a four-session mini course on brain-based learning, allowing teachers the opportunity to dig in beyond the typical two-session format. In response to requests from the field, we are also building a collection of high-interest, low-literacy books for students. Watch for details on our emerging lending library!

Lenore Balliro

Director of Professional Development

During the 2017-2018 academic year, First Literacy presented workshops on diverse topics including:

- Promoting Reading Fluency for Mixed Level ABE and ESOL Classrooms
- Advocating for Our Adult Learners and Programs: What ABE Programs Need to Know
- Digital Literacy Community of Practice: Using Apps and Other Tech Tools for Teaching and Learning
- The Effects of Trauma and Chronic Stress on Learning: What Teachers Can Do
- Retro, Vintage, Time-Tested Interactive Activities for the ESOL Class
- Integrating Math into the ESOL Curriculum
- Citizenship Forum: A Panel and Discussion on Citizenship Preparation



Any time I attend a First Literacy workshop that excites and/or invigorates me, I take that enthusiasm and those new ideas into my classroom to share with my students. It's like the gift that keeps on giving.

—Workshop Attendee

DID YOU KNOW?

- **27 free teacher training workshops** were offered covering **14** topics.
- **272** adult educators attended workshops.
- **110** attendees were first-time participants.
- **88** programs participated, including **27** NEW programs.
- **63** different towns and cities were represented, including **5** NEW state regions.
- More than **7,400** adult students were impacted.

Scholarships and Mentoring Support

Each year, First Literacy awards scholarships to adult learners who have completed their studies at a non-profit education center and have been accepted to an accredited college or training institute. As part of the award, we pair scholarship recipients—experienced with new—for peer mentoring.

We would be hard pressed to find a more giving, supportive, mentor to new adult college students than Luciana Castilho, a two-time recipient of a First Literacy Scholarship award. Luciana came to the U.S. from Brazil in 2003, supporting herself by cleaning and waitressing while she studied to improve her English skills. At the Bridge to College program at the Cambridge Community Learning Center, her teachers singled her out as an outstanding candidate for our scholarship. When we paired our scholarship recipients for mentoring support, Luciana went above and beyond, helping two new students succeed in their initial semesters at Bunker Hill Community College, where she is studying accounting.

In her letter of recommendation, Luciana's advisor at Bunker Hill wrote, "It is rare to witness a student that has an inner drive to maintain excellence in the classroom, and at the same time, exhibit a willingness to lend assistance to fellow students in need." We, too, have witnessed Luciana's generosity and have heard first hand from her "mentees" that she has made a difference in their college success.

We are inspired by First Literacy's 2018 scholarship recipients. Please read their stories at www.firstliteracy.org/services/scholarships/ and be inspired, too.

New Scholars

Jocelyn Alleyne
Dimas Barrera
Priscilla Chan

Adriana Echeverria
Marie Joseph
Edith Lorfils

Karen Preciado
Alexandre Santos
Oumaima Segmaoui

Vu Tran
Jennifer Urrego
Yves Vernet

Continuing Scholars

Dora Ajanel
Kamala Areesamarn

Eliene Lima da Silva
Sherita Dawson

Diandra Drivas
Girleene Green

Patrick Mbanga
Rasha Habis Obyat

Marie Regine Paul
Junying Zhu

Created in 2013 to honor Mayor Thomas Menino's commitment to adult literacy education and the potential in all students, this year's scholarship was awarded to Edith Lorfils, who is attending Bunker Hill Community College with plans to pursue a career in nursing.

For the third year, we awarded a scholarship to recognize William Berman's years of dedicated service to First Literacy and his love of learning throughout his life. This scholarship was awarded to Adriana Echeverria, who is attending Bunker Hill Community College with a major in accounting.



DID YOU KNOW?

- Our Scholars hail from **15** countries.
- **20** Scholars attend Massachusetts community colleges;
2 attend four-year programs.
- **100%** are first-generation college students.
- **60%** of Scholars are parents.
- Continuing Scholars maintain an **average GPA of 3.6**

**THANK YOU
FOR MAKING
THIS POSSIBLE!**

**First Literacy thanks the individuals, corporations, and foundations whose generosity sustains us.
The following list recognizes those donors who made gifts between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018.**

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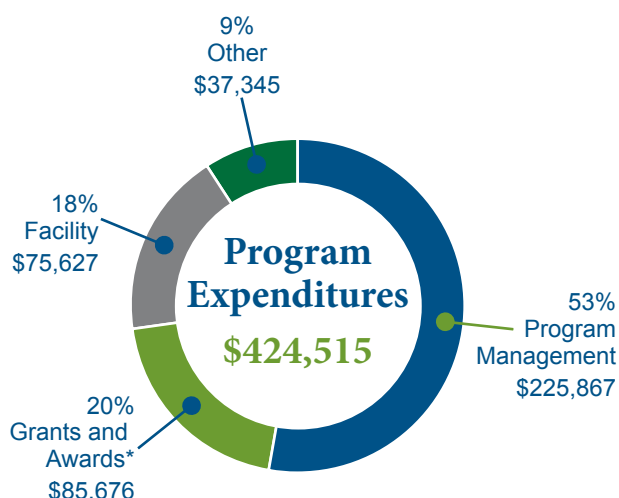
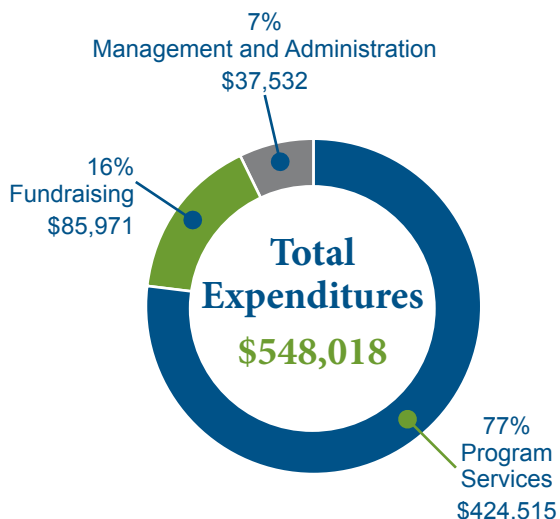
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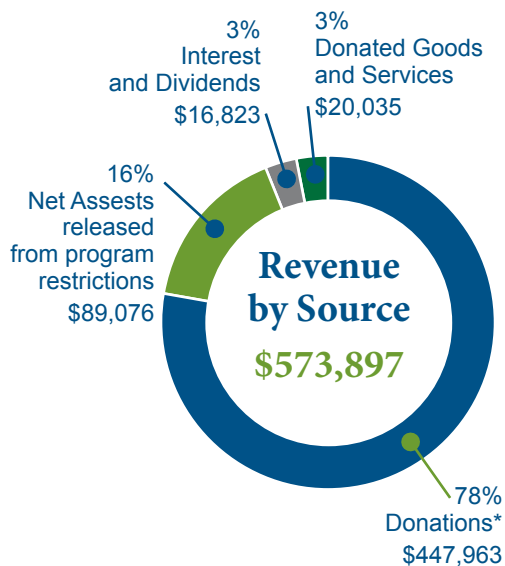
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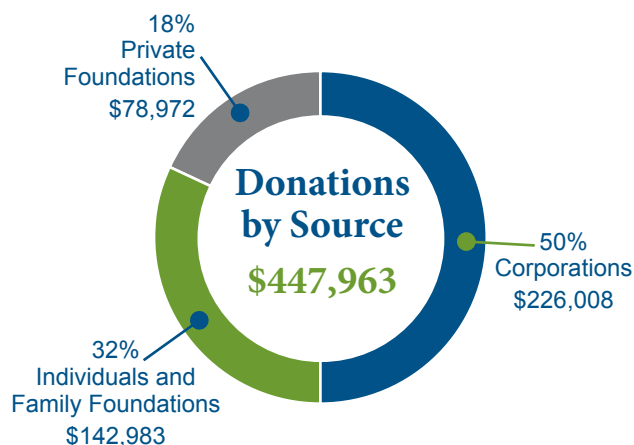
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*Includes \$57,500 for First Literacy Lab grants, \$22,500 for scholarships and mentoring, and \$5,676 for literacy awareness activities.



*\$25,850 is temporarily restricted.



Answer to the Executive Director's question:
High beam headlights allow you to see 350 feet ahead.

Demographics

Demographics reflect the ethnicities, gender, and ages of the students who benefit from First Literacy Lab support and our Scholarship Initiative:

ETHNICITY

Asian	83
African	47
Haitian	117
Latino	125
Caucasian	2
Middle Eastern	2
Other*	7
TOTAL	383

*Includes learners from Brazil, Burma, Eastern Europe, Nepal, and Pakistan

GENDER

Female	261
Male	122

AGES

16-24	37
24-40	185
40-65	146
65+	15