

THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD

Dear Friends,

Having just joined the First Literacy team in July, I am honored to work with an organization with such a strong mission: to promote and improve adult literacy in our communities.

Here you will find data, which demonstrates the breadth and depth of our work. You will also find a few stories that underscore how truly important this work is, and what a difference your support makes.

One of this year's *Literacy Lab* grant recipients is highlighted here. An adult learning program used the funding that we provided to bring science alive to the students in their classroom. With First Literacy funding, students enjoyed hands-on weekly science labs and new, creative lessons. The students loved the new science curriculum and couldn't wait for their next lab. You can read more about this project below.

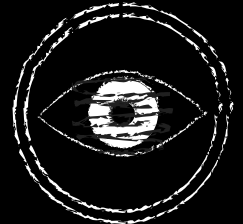
The scientific method also is a great way to approach this year's Annual Report. At First Literacy, as when using the scientific method, we start with some **questions**: Why are there more than 36 million adults in the United States who cannot read, write, or do basic math? Why are less than 10% of those adults receiving the services that they need? And what can we do to change that? Our **observations** and **hypotheses** then follow: that teachers in adult education programs need access to high quality, free **Professional Development** so they have the most current methods and materials they need to teach adult learners; that **Literacy Lab** grants empower teachers to think of new and creative ways to teach adult education and English; and that **Scholarships** provide financial support for motivated adult learners to go on to college.

Our Annual Report provides you with the results of these approaches. You will see that the **impact** is great, and we hope to reach even more adult learners in the coming year. Your support makes all of this possible. Thank You!

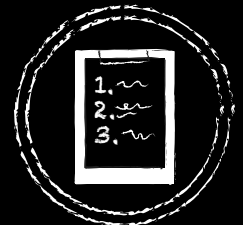
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Executive Director



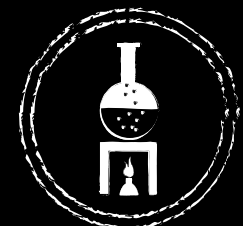
QUESTION



OBSERVE



HYPOTHESIZE



EXPERIMENT



FIRST LITERACY LAB GRANTS

Teaching science in the adult education classroom has its challenges. There is limited science curriculum geared for adult education students, and many programs lack the resources to purchase materials for hands-on science experiments. The result is that science is often taught out of a textbook, with little opportunity to gain experience applying the scientific method. The Joan Brack Adult Learning Center (JBALC) applied for a *Literacy Lab* grant to help address these challenges. The goal of their project, **Science Encounters**, was to develop and implement a hands-on science curriculum, including weekly labs, for their students whose goal is to pass the High School Equivalency Test. The classroom teacher, Ann Colvin, and Program Coordinator, Mary Lou Horn, worked together to develop the plans, purchase materials, and implement the classroom lessons. The result of the project was a 12-week science curriculum that enabled students to apply and evaluate their use of the scientific method. Topics for the lessons and weekly labs included:

- Cells: Plants vs. Animals
- Genetics, DNA
- States of Matter
- Magnetic and Electronic Forces

The program now has a set of excellent lesson plans that can be used in future years, along with the needed lab equipment. Mary Lou Horn shared the long-term benefits of the project:

Going forward, as new students enroll in our program each month, this project will reach future learners. In addition, the equipment and supplies (microscopes, slides, cloud-pump, air balloon, test strips, and other items) are available for repeated use for years to come.

Through First Literacy, the science lesson plans and supporting materials will also be available to other adult education programs in Massachusetts, further expanding the impact of this project.

Perhaps most importantly, the JBALC students enjoyed the science classes, and **100 percent of the students who took the High School Equivalency Test passed the science subtest on the first try**. Students enjoyed the class so much that even after passing the test they still wanted to participate. One student asked, "Can I sit in on the lab today? I know I passed the test already, but I want to join in."

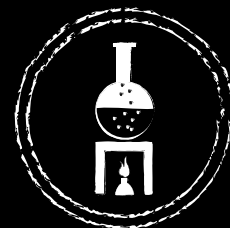
First *Literacy Lab* grants provide needed funding for Massachusetts adult education programs to develop new curriculum resources and strengthen the education available to their students. In addition to Science Encounters, ten other programs received Literacy Lab funding. The variety of projects speaks to the range of programs and students served by First Literacy. Other First Literacy Lab projects included:

- Volunteer in English: ESOL Through Service-Learning Projects
- We Are All Immigrants: a play performed by ESOL students
- What Page Are You On? A program-wide one-book community for ABE students and teachers
- Family Literacy and Storytelling: ESOL curriculum using children's literature and digital storytelling
- Parent Talk: An ESOL Unit for Parents of Very Young Children

In addition to sharing materials from all of the projects on our website, all *Literacy Lab* recipients present to the field at our annual **First Literacy Lab Project Presentations**, held each October.

With your support, First Literacy Lab grants help improve the classroom experience and success of adult learners throughout the state.

To learn more about the *Literacy Lab* initiative, go to <https://firstliteracy.org/services/literacy-lab/>.



EXPERIMENT



Joan Brack Adult Learning Center teacher Ann Colvin leads a science lab with her students.



Blackstone Community Center students visit UMASS-Boston as part of their First Literacy Lab project.



Mujeres Unidas Avanzando students and staff volunteering at The Daily Table as part of their service-learning Literacy Lab project

SCHOLARSHIPS AND MENTORING SUPPORT

Each year, First Literacy awards scholarships to adult learners who have completed their studies at a non-profit adult education program 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.

One of this year's peer mentors is Marie Joseph, a two-time First Literacy Scholarship recipient. Marie came to the U.S. from Haiti in 2010, following the earthquake that devastated her country. Working in jobs from housekeeper to waitress to make ends meet, Marie attended English classes at Cambridge Community Learning Center and went on to attend Quincy College. With a career goal of becoming a nurse practitioner, Marie is currently enrolled in UMASS-Boston's very selective nursing program. In addition to her challenging academic program, Marie works as a certified nursing assistant.

As one of Marie's professors shared, "Marie had a vision for herself, and that included becoming a nurse. Achieving this vision has meant addressing one challenge after another, including adapting to a new culture and home, learning English, obtaining housing and employment, and eventually, starting coursework that would lead to her dream." We are proud to be able to support Marie and all of First Literacy's scholarship recipients, who have inspiring stories of strength and resilience.

Please read more of their stories at <https://firstliteracy.org/services/scholarships/> and be inspired, too.

New Scholars

Stephan Augustin, <i>United States</i>	Livanny Gonzalez, <i>Dominican Republic</i>
Geraldine Calderon, <i>Peru</i>	Izabella Marques, <i>Brazil</i>
Julia Dupere, <i>United States</i>	Tatiana Jean Philippe, <i>Haiti</i>
Axel Ellis, <i>United States</i>	Ariela Santos, <i>Cape Verde</i>
Gabriela Garcia, <i>Venezuela</i>	Luis Urbina, <i>El Salvador</i>

Continuing Scholars

Jocelyn Alleyne, <i>Haiti</i>	Karen Preciado, <i>Brazil</i>
Judelande Antoine, <i>Haiti</i>	Alexandre Santos, <i>Cape Verde</i>
Adriana Echeverria, <i>El Salvador</i>	Oumaima Segmaoui, <i>Morocco</i>
Marie Joseph, <i>Haiti</i>	Vu Tran, <i>Vietnam</i>
Edith Lorfils, <i>Haiti</i>	Yves Verneret, <i>Haiti</i>

Mayor Thomas Menino Scholarship

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 Tatiana Jean Philippe who is attending the University of Southern New Hampshire with plans to pursue a degree in healthcare information technology.

William Berman Scholarship

For the fourth 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. The scholarship was awarded to Geraldine Calderon who is attending Bunker Hill Community College with a major in nursing.

First Literacy Board of Directors' Scholarship in honor of Skye Morrison Kramer

New this year, this scholarship honors Skye Morrison Kramer's nine years of dedicated work supporting adult learners while serving as First Literacy's Executive Director prior to retiring in July. The scholarship was awarded to Julia Dupere who will be attending North Shore Community College with a major in veterinary technology.



Continuing Scholars Marie Joseph (center) with Edith Lorfils (left) and Jocelyn Alleyne.

DID YOU KNOW?

Our Scholars hail from 10 countries, including three from the United States. The students attend nine different colleges, with the largest number (12) enrolled at Bunker Hill Community College.

Scholarship recipients reside throughout the state.

Twelve scholars are pursuing majors in health care, including nine scholars in nursing programs. Other majors include veterinary technology, accounting, business, education, and gaming/computer arts.



Mayor Marty Walsh with the 2019 First Literacy scholars.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Each year, First Literacy strives to provide adult educators with free professional development workshops that offer helpful and relevant resources and techniques for the adult education classroom. We know that by supporting the frontline in adult education, students benefit.

We ask questions of our teacher constituents and pay attention to survey results and the data collected from each workshop's evaluations to inform the timing and topics of our workshops. In FY 2018, surveys indicated that teachers were interested in diving more deeply into a topic, in making better use in the classroom of mobile devices, and in having access to our workshops in more Massachusetts communities outside the Boston metro area.

In FY 2019, we experimented with our first four-session mini course, *Learning and the Brain*. This free mini course allowed adult basic education (ABE) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers to explore research on learning, memory, and retention, and to learn strategies to apply research to practice. Each session was registered to capacity and supported a waiting list. In Framingham, we repeated a successful digital learning workshop, *Please Don't Put Away Your Cellphones*, that gave hands-on instruction on 14 cell phone apps designed to support adult learners both inside and outside the classroom. And we continued to bring the show on the road with eight other extended reach workshop sessions held outside Greater Boston.

Overall, 27 workshop sessions, covering 18 different topics offered creative content to inspire new ideas for the ABE classroom including:

- *Teaching the Language of Math in the ESOL Classroom*
- *Bringing English Alive through Improvisation*
- *Teaching Reading and Writing for College Transitions*

Because so many adult education teachers also advise their students on what's next after they've achieved their GED, HiSET or ESOL certificates, we closed the year with a Next Steps Panel—six local experts representing a variety of employment and educational opportunities for the newly-minted adult graduate. In this way, teachers could take what they learned at First Literacy and share next steps with their students when they most need it.

For many adult educators, especially those who teach in programs that don't receive public funds, First Literacy remains their only source of free, consistent, high-quality teacher training. As one volunteer teacher who teaches in two such programs said, "Without First Literacy I would have to Google my way through teaching—please keep doing what you're doing!" With your generous support, we can continue to offer these vital professional development opportunities to volunteers and teachers alike.

To learn more about the Professional Development initiative, go to <https://firstliteracy.org/services/professional-development/>.

*Without these free workshops, I wouldn't have access to this training, and my students wouldn't be benefiting.
Thank you, First Literacy!*

—Learning and the Brain mini course participant



QUESTION



Teachers participate in digital learning workshop: "Please Don't Put Away Your Cellphones."

262 adult educators, including 160 first-time attendees from 82 programs in 31 different towns and cities (including 22 new programs), reaching over 5600 students, were in our training room this year.



Engaged teachers in a First Literacy Professional Development workshop.

First Literacy thanks the individuals, corporations, and foundations whose generosity sustains us. The following list recognizes those donors who made gifts between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019.

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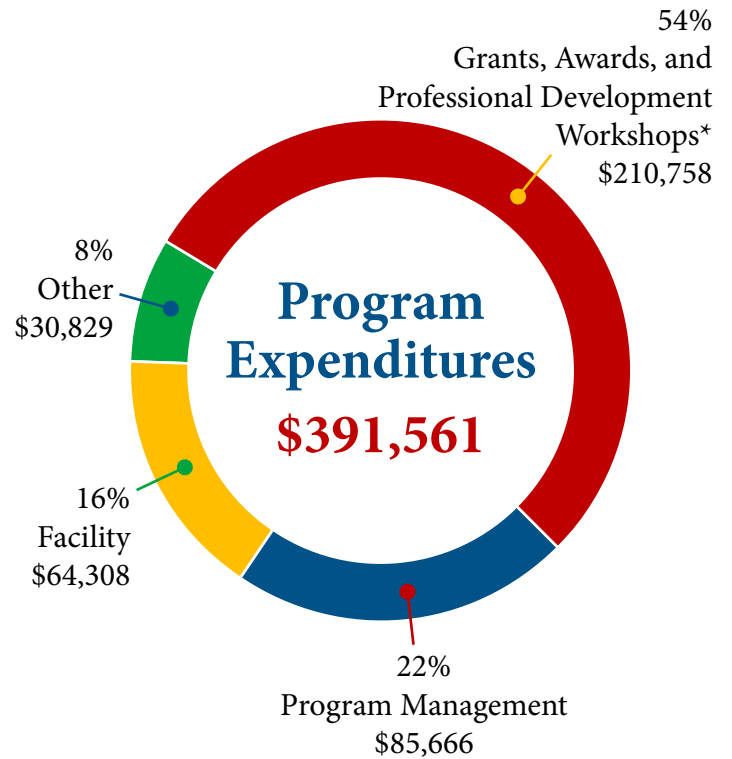
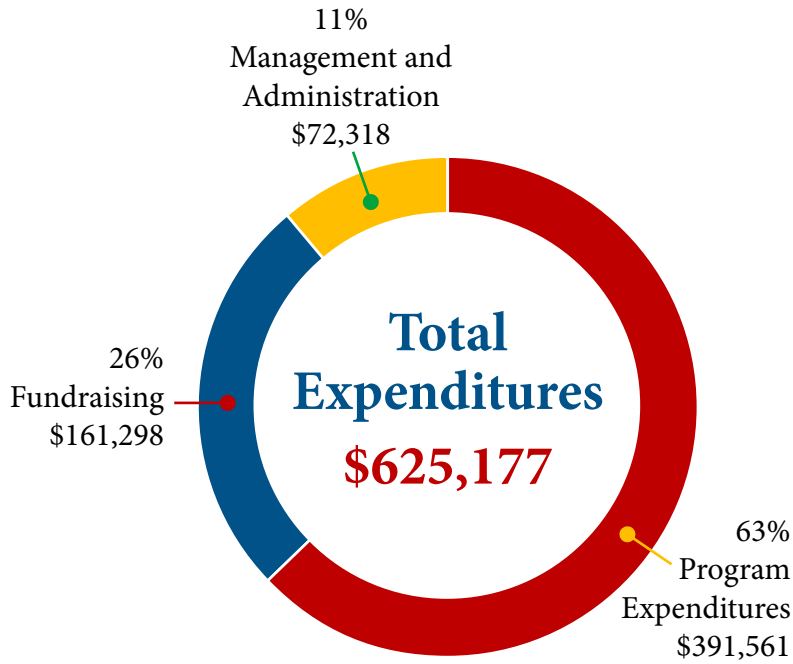
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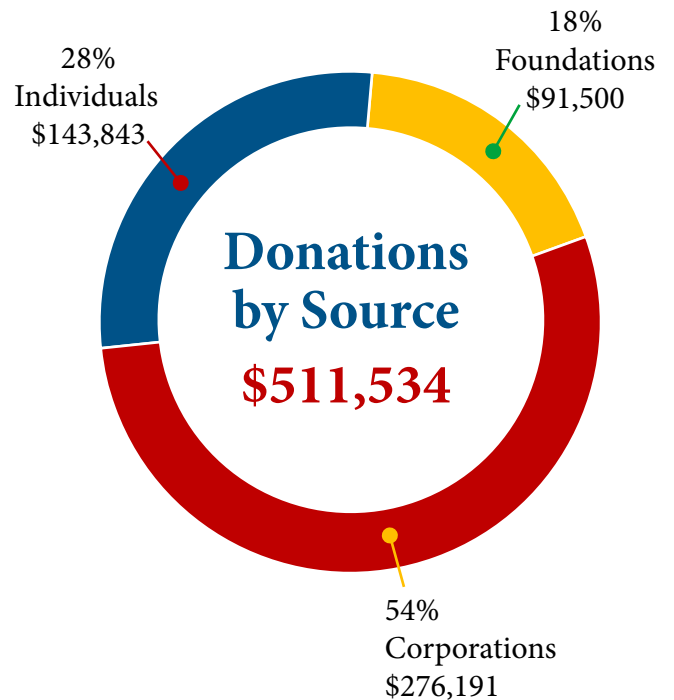
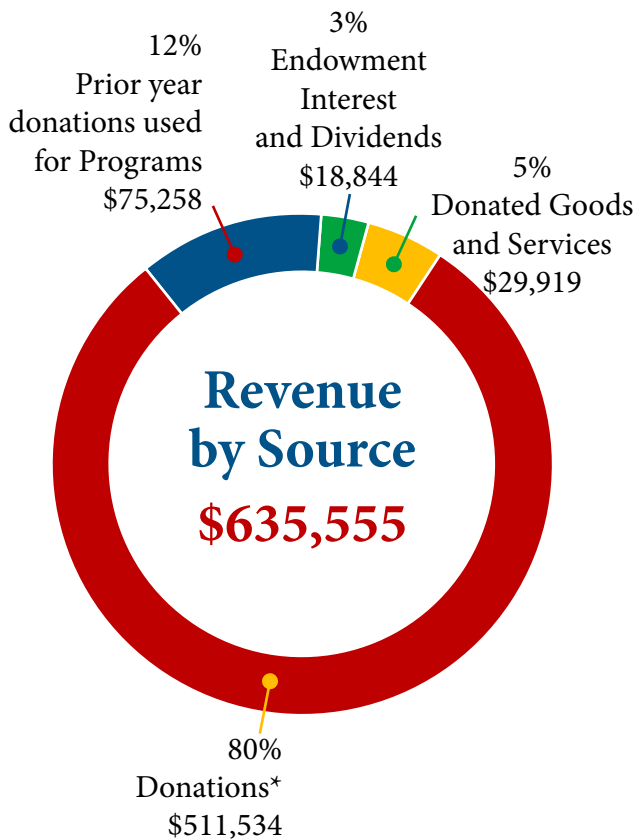
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*\$25,000 is dedicated for future programs.

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