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TO MARCH/APRIL 2015

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



The American Dream starts @your library

Transforming the
lives of adult English-
language learners



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Cover: Oluwaleke Kehinde Ajayi receives his
certificate of naturalization at Schaumburg Township
(Ill.) District Library.

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2013 American Dream Starts @ your library grant recipients

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THE AMERICAN DREAM STARTS @your library **FUNDED LIBRARIES**

CALIFORNIA

COLORADO

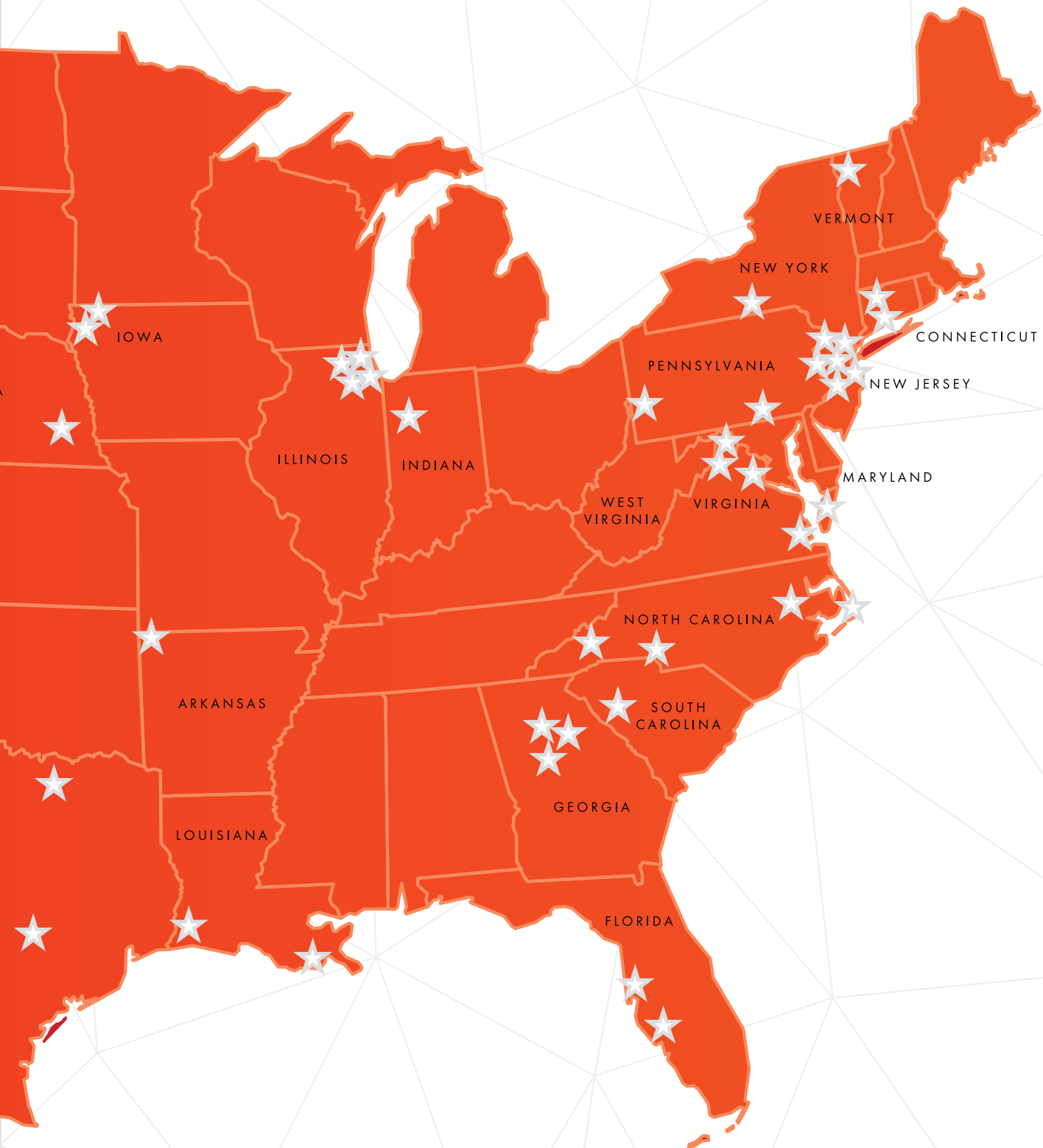
ARIZONA

NEBRASKA

TEXAS

American Dream participants were located within 20 miles of a Dollar General Store, distribution center, or corporate office.

For more information or to connect with any of these libraries, please email americandream@ala.org.



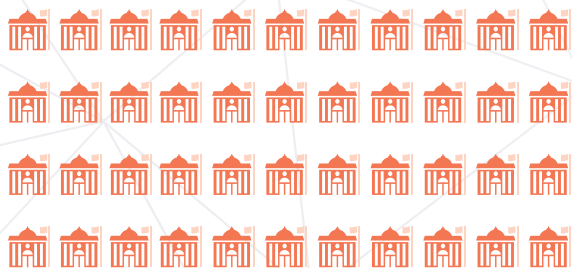
Transforming Lives

A snapshot of the impact that the American Dream Starts @ your library grant initiative is having on libraries and their communities



Number of participating libraries

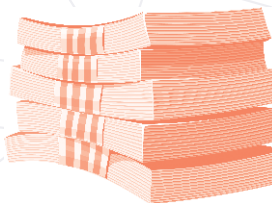
44



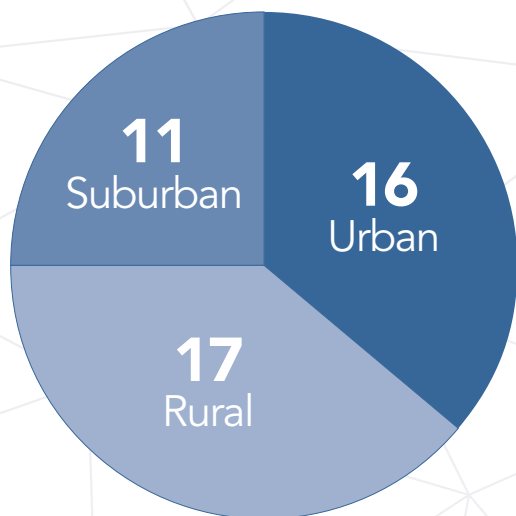
Grant funds played a crucial role in helping libraries expand their core, permanent resources in order to meet current and future needs of adult English-language learners and their families.

Amount of money granted

\$471,000



\$5,000-\$15,000 to each library.



Connection to the community

Number of community partners engaged, including school districts; colleges; literacy, health and faith-based groups; as well as local businesses and government:

145



DOLLAR GENERAL®
LITERACY FOUNDATION

THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS

attended tens of thousands of hours of classes or tutoring in English, citizenship, and adult literacy.



HUNDREDS

of tutors and adult literacy volunteers recruited.

35

libraries used grant funding to purchase new print materials.



\$106,000

of grant support went toward personnel and tutor training.



went toward new digital materials and technology, including iPods and new computers.

Helping New Americans

Dollar General partners with libraries to expand services and build community

by Denine Torr



These 44 libraries have built strong community partnerships with more than 145 local organizations, agencies, and businesses to reach English-language learners and expand services catering to their needs.

For more than 100 years, public libraries have been a foundation of the American Dream. They provide equal access to information of all kinds and learning opportunities for families. Through the American Dream Starts @ your library® grant initiative, the Dollar General Literacy Foundation is proud to support libraries' legacy of being a welcoming resource for all community members.

Since 2008, more than 144 libraries across Dollar General's market area have received funding to help build innovative and effective literacy programs for adult English-language learners. We are looking forward to the impact the current cohort of 44 libraries will have on their communities. These libraries have built strong community partnerships with more than 145 local organizations, agencies, and businesses to reach English-language learners and expand services catering to their needs. The American Dream grants help libraries expand collections, improve technology, and increase public awareness of programs and resources for new Americans.

Dollar General believes learning to read, receiving your high school equivalency, or learning English is an investment that opens doorways for

personal, professional, and economic growth. The Dollar General Literacy Foundation was established in 1993 in honor of Dollar General's co-founder, J. L. Turner, who was functionally illiterate, with only a 3rd-grade education. He was a farmer's son who dropped out of school when his father was killed in an accident. With determination and hard work, he began what has now become a successful company.

We understand that sometimes various life circumstances prevent individuals from learning to read or graduating from high school, but it's never too late to learn. We believe that every individual deserves an equal opportunity to receive a basic education. Since 1993, the Dollar General Literacy Foundation has awarded more than \$98 million to nonprofit organizations and schools that have helped more than 5.8 million individuals advance their literacy and basic education skills. Literacy is the gift that cannot be taken away, and it lasts a lifetime.

We are very proud of the American Dream libraries' accomplishments in their communities and of the people who have participated in the programs. ■

Denine Torr
Director of Community Initiatives
Dollar General Literacy Foundation

Expanding the American Dream

For many new immigrants, the public library is a safe space in a new and complex country

by Courtney L. Young



Libraries are uniquely positioned to help immigrants adapt to a new culture and connect with their new communities. And these programs are designed to be easily replicable for little to no cost and will provide a model for libraries across the country.

Libraries are among the first American institutions that immigrants turn to for help with learning how to read, write, and speak English. In 2013, thanks to the generous support of the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, the American Library Association (ALA) launched a third round of funding for the successful American Dream Starts @ your library® initiative to help new Americans succeed.

This most recent iteration awarded grants of \$5,000–\$15,000 to 44 libraries in 24 states across the US. These libraries, located in urban centers, suburban communities, and rural towns, used the one-time grants to expand library services to adult English-language learners and their families, extending the American Dream to a new generation of Americans.

Each library put its grant funds to work immediately. Over the past year, the American Dream libraries expanded their print and digital English as a second language (ESL) collections, built innovative and successful community partnerships, and engaged local media to enhance public awareness of services available to English-language learners in their communities. What's more, these programs are designed to be

easily replicable for little to no cost and will provide a model for libraries across the country, including a list of proven resources.

Libraries are uniquely positioned to help immigrants adapt to a new culture and connect with their new communities. For many new Americans, the public library is a safe space in a new and complex country that provides free access to print and digital materials, internet access, and the opportunity to learn and improve English skills. These vital services remove barriers, highlight opportunities, and ease immigrants' transition to life in their new home.

ALA is tremendously grateful to the Dollar General Literacy Foundation for its continued support of this successful program. Through the American Dream Starts @ your library initiative, 144 libraries have improved thousands of lives of new Americans in communities across the country. ■

Courtney L. Young
ALA president, 2014–2015

PAYING IT FORWARD

INITIATIVE HELPS COMMUNITY
MEMBERS IMPROVE THEIR LIVES

Forty miles north of Chicago, the Waukegan (Ill.) Public Library (WPL) is giving new Americans the skills and confidence to improve their lives and “pay it forward” to their neighbors, thanks to support from the American Dream Starts @ your library initiative.

Carmen Patlan, WPL’s community engagement and Spanish literacy manager, credits the initiative for giving the library the resources to structure classes that are helping individuals achieve their American Dream.

The grant has enabled the library to hire a coordinator who works with a team of ambassadors to reach out and engage the community, conduct market research, and assess the community’s needs and the barriers that may prevent its members from succeeding. The library can then address these needs.

“These barriers could be the lack of English-speaking skills, the lack of being able to obtain your naturalized citizenship status, the lack of driving ability, the lack of digital literacy,” Patlan says.

Programs at WPL include “Leamos,” which means “let’s read.” Leamos allows individuals who have never set foot in a school to teach themselves how to read and write through a web-based program. These individuals can



Waukegan, Illinois



SOME CLASSES AVERAGE 50 STUDENTS PER WEEK, WHILE OTHER CLASSES HAVE SEEN EXPONENTIAL GROWTH.

then transition into a regular or a conversational English as a second language (ESL) program—and eventually into a general educational development (GED) program, which can result in a certificate of high school equivalency.

Another program is “Conversation ESL,” in which individuals carry on a conversation, targeting an area they specifically need to learn. This could mean situations involving speaking to a doctor or participating in a parent-teacher conference—even something as basic as going on a job interview or as essential as knowing what to say during a 911 call.

Conversation ESL alone has classes that average 50 students per week. The GED program has grown from 11 graduates to classes with 60 students. The library has also implemented a temporary driver’s license program and a citizenship program.

FABIO AND PEDRO

Those who have become successful under the grant and then given back to the community include promoters and GED tutors Fabio Gomez and Pedro Gomez.

In one five-month period, Fabio helped 11 students



The Waukegan (Ill.) Public Library is giving new Americans the skills and confidence to improve their lives and is instilling a lifelong love of literacy within the communities it serves.

obtain their GED. He says his aim was to give back to the community. Fabio tailors his instruction to the lifestyle of the student and says his favorite thing about the Waukegan library is the array of programs, including English, Spanish, math, and GED tutoring. In his words, the American Dream is “to help the community, give back to the community.”

Pedro started as a library volunteer and worked toward his goal of learning to speak English. He began to volunteer with the Conversation ESL class, where he realized the benefits of acquiring his GED, which he obtained after one month of diligent study.

“My American Dream is to keep going and improve my oral skills, and in the future to have a better job,” says Pedro.

The efforts at WPL show that American Dream libraries are not just improving resources and programs but also helping to instill a sense of lifelong literacy and learning within the communities they serve. ■

The American Dream
Starts @your library

BRIDGING CULTURES

NEW IMMIGRANTS ADD TO THE
FABRIC OF THEIR COMMUNITY

The Township of Plainsboro, New Jersey, is known for the global pharmaceutical corporations and advanced technology laboratories that call it home. Located between the Philadelphia and New York metropolitan areas, the community attracts a diverse population from all corners of the globe. More than 46% of its residents speak a language other than English at home—and the number is growing.

Plainsboro Public Library (PPL) offers an English as a second language (ESL) conversation class one evening a week and also provides space for ESL courses taught through West Windsor–Plainsboro Community Education and Literacy Volunteers of Mercer County. Recent classes included



Plainsboro, New Jersey



participants whose first languages include French, German, Hindi, Mandarin, Russian, and Spanish. Many of the participants are stay-at-home young moms and grandparents.

Through funding from the American Dream Starts @ your library initiative, PPL was able to build upon its existing efforts and is now even better equipped to serve its growing ESL population.

After receiving the grant, PPL added a new course that emphasizes grammar and accent reduction, and it developed a portable language laboratory to improve the ESL skills of its patrons. It also provides day care for the children of caregivers during class time.

Attendees of the class expressed a desire to attend cultural events together. To meet their interest, and as an extra reward for course completion, librarians organized group



Plainsboro Public Library offers events and programs that bring together the township's diverse population. More than 46% of its residents speak a language other than English at home.



The library's ESL and cultural programs are popular. Many participants are stay-at-home moms and grandparents whose lessons have included taking children to school, visiting the doctor's office, and learning about health-related issues.

outings to a museum or a play.

In addition to cultural activities, these sessions connected the lessons learned in the classroom to everyday life, from taking children to school to visiting the doctor's office. One of the classes was devoted to health issues and was facilitated by professionals from the Princeton Health-Care System in Plainsboro.

The programs have paid dividends, with former graduates of the ESL conversation class and the community-sponsored classes going on to volunteer or work in the library or elsewhere in the community. Through these programs, PPL has become a place where people from different countries meet and form lifelong friendships.

Peter Cantu, mayor of Plainsboro Township, says the

library recognized years ago that there were many people who came to the US who felt isolated. Programs such as this helped build community.

"We have seen a lot of change in Plainsboro," Cantu says. "Initially, a lot of growth, and more recently a tremendous diversity in our population."

PPL Assistant Director Carol Quick says the focus group that helped the library determine its needs when it was applying for the grant asked for "more conversation, more customs. We want to learn about the country. We want culture. We want more information."

Thus from the grant came the Cultural Crossroads class. The 16-week class involved members of the community and garnered much needed support from the township.

"We had a policeman and a fireman come to explain the services they provide one day," Quick says. "The outreach person from the hospital also came to the library, and she explained how to read food labels, and she gave us a very personal guided tour of the hospital."

Resident Claudia Ruiz, who is originally from Colombia and participated in the class, says, "It is very necessary to learn English, because English is the first language in this country." ■

THE LIBRARY HAS BECOME A
PLACE WHERE PEOPLE FROM
DIFFERENT COUNTRIES CAN
MEET AND FORM FRIENDSHIPS.

.....

Celebrate **April 12–18, 2015** **NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK**

.....

Visit your
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and unlock your
unlimited
potential!

No matter who you
are, the library has
something for you, with
a trained specialist—a librarian—to
set you on the path to adventure
and discovery.

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DAVID BALDACCI

David Baldacci has written 29 bestselling novels for adults, with more than 110 million copies sold. Recently, inspired by his lifelong love of fantasy, he wrote *THE FINISHER*, his first novel for young readers in that genre. His family's Wish You Well Foundation® fosters and promotes the development and expansion of literacy and educational programs.

Photo credit: Alexander James

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The American Dream
Starts @your library

SPEAKING YOUR LANGUAGE

ILLINOIS LIBRARY REFLECTS ITS
COMMUNITY'S DIVERSITY THROUGH
COLLECTIONS AND SERVICES

The Eisenhower Public Library District (EPLD) in Norridge and Harwood Heights, Illinois, serves a diverse array of foreign-language speakers, with more than 50% of its residents speaking a language other than English at home, including Italian, Polish, and Spanish.

Penny Blubaugh, teen and programming librarian at EPLD, says, "It's a very diverse population. We're almost like the first community you come to, a welcoming community to the United States."

That diversity is reflected in the library's collection. EPLD has a large collection of foreign-language materials in both the adult services area and its kids' section. The library collects French, Italian, Polish, and Spanish books and has one of the most extensive Polish collections in the Chicago

Norridge and Harwood
Heights, Illinois



Clockwise from top left: Outside Eisenhower Public Library District in Harwood Heights, Illinois; several audiobooks and books to help residents learn English; the library offers ESL iPods that patrons can check out to learn on their own; the library also has a large collection of foreign-language books, including one of the most extensive Polish collections in the Chicago area.

area. These materials include translations of popular English-language authors as well as works originally created in other languages.

Through funding from the American Dream Starts@your library initiative, the library has been able to expand its English as a second language (ESL) collection and begin hosting English-language learning programs, emphasizing this commitment with the slogan “Eisenhower speaks your language.”

The library offers ESL iPods that patrons can check out and use to learn on their own. The program is also available on CD for use on EPLD’s computers. The available courses are English for Arabic, Cantonese, Farsi, French, German, Haitian Creole, Hindi, Italian, Korean, Mandarin, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese speakers.

EPLD also offers programs through the US Citizenship and Immigration Services that resulted in the creation of

**THE LIBRARY OFFERS ESL
iPODS THAT PATRONS CAN
CHECK OUT AND USE TO LEARN
ON THEIR OWN.**

an immigration kit.

“They have been incredibly helpful,” Blubaugh says. “Immigration was thrilled with them, and the people who attended and came out were so happy with these programs.”

She says the library is continuing the program and is trying to increase its collection of foreign-language books, especially in Arabic, Italian, Polish, and Spanish. ■

ESL WITHOUT BARRIERS

LIBRARY HELPS PARENTS CONNECT WITH
THEIR KIDS THROUGH LANGUAGE

The Athens–Clarke County (Ga.) Library Pinewoods branch is a small library with a big heart. Located in a mobile home park and housed in a double-wide manufactured home, the library serves 19,000 in the greater Athens area.

Adult immigrants often make Pinewoods Library and Learning Center their first stop after arriving in the Athens area. The library is enabling these new residents to develop English-language skills that better equip them to thrive in American society and communicate with their children.

Many of the English-language learners at Pinewoods are parents with children in local schools. Immigrant children entering US schools usually want to communicate only in English and often serve as interpreters for their parents, which can create embarrassment if their parents can't understand or respond to messages the school sends home.



Athens–Clarke County, Georgia



Adult immigrants turn to the Athens-Clarke County (Ga.) Library's Pinewood branch for English-language education. The library is often the first stop after arriving in the area.



Aida Quiñones, branch manager at Pinewoods Library and Learning Center, says, “[The adults’] goal is to be able to communicate in English, be able to talk to their own kids, because there is a little gap in language.”

IMPROVING LITERACY

Pinewoods has received the American Dream Starts@your library grants in the past, which have helped it improve literacy services through volunteer training, book and AV purchases, and publicity outreach. With the latest round of funding, Pinewoods is expanding existing literacy services that enable adults to learn how to read, write, and converse in English. By gaining this ability, adults rely less on their children to help them communicate in English with other adults.

With the new grant funds, the library is improving technology used for English-language learning. Purchases included a television for viewing literacy training and promotional videos produced with a previous American Dream grant and “Inglés sin Barreras to Go,” a portable version of Inglés sin Barreras (English without

Barriers)—a self-study ESL course for Spanish speakers in the US—that can be borrowed from the library.

Pinewoods’ English literacy patrons are largely from the mobile home park and surrounding community. Many are recent immigrants to the US, mostly from Mexico, but some are also from other Latin American countries. Others have been residents for a few years and are well-established in the community.

“The kids want to be part of this culture,” says Quiñones. “They start speaking English and they start forgetting to speak Spanish at home, and it’s creating this communication gap with the parents. We feel it’s something that we can help with through these classes.”

She said the library has become the hub of information for most people.

“People come here to find out where to send their kids to school, where to find jobs,” Quiñones says. “The American Dream grant has helped a lot with our classes, because now we have a full-time teacher, and we have purchased the materials needed for the class to be successful.” ■

BETTER TOGETHER

LIBRARY PARTNERS WITH LITERACY GROUPS TO
BRING ESL TRAINING TO RESIDENTS

A map of Essex County, New Jersey, with an orange location pin in the center. The map is set against a dark blue background.

Essex County, New Jersey

Three Essex County (N.J.) libraries—Bloomfield, Montclair, and South Orange—have joined together to provide literacy assistance to all county residents.

Located just outside Newark and New York City, the county's libraries serve a population diverse in background, ethnicity, economic status, and education. Roughly one-third of its population speaks a language other than English. In recent years, South Orange has seen an influx of Haitian immigrants actively seeking English-language learning opportunities.

Working with Literacy Volunteers of America, the public libraries of Essex County provided publicity and space for volunteer training, instruction, conversation groups, and individual and small group tutoring.

The initiative values innovation and offers ample opportunity for outreach and collaboration with community organizations such as the Adult School



Working with Literacy Volunteers of America, the public libraries of Essex County, New Jersey, provide publicity and space for volunteer training, instruction, conversation groups, and tutoring.



of South Orange and Maplewood, which promoted the program to target populations.

“With the American Dream Starts @ your library funds, we were able to add much more to the English as a second language (ESL) materials than we had before,” says Linda Cani, head of reference and library services for the South Orange Public Library. These materials included DVDs and CD-ROMs.

“People use them a lot,” she says. “It’s made our life easier. We didn’t have the funds before to purchase more materials.”

Lydia Samatar, ESL instructor, has been working with Anabella Cirrincione, a student from Argentina who wanted to improve her English when she came to the library and learned about the program.

“It’s been really helpful for me,” Cirrincione says. “I want to learn English and also to travel. I have been traveling all around, from Chicago to Miami. I have

THE LIBRARY’S ESL LESSONS HAVE PROVIDED STUDENTS WITH PRACTICAL ADVICE, SUCH AS HOW TO GO GROCERY SHOPPING.

friends from different countries. I like to know about different cultures.”

“We have a lot of fun,” Samatar adds.

Ayesha Makhdoom, a junior library assistant, says her mother, who is from Pakistan, went through the program.

“She had a great tutor who helped her out, not only in learning English but also in getting the basic idea of the culture of living in the US,” she says. “You don’t realize, but even grocery shopping is completely different here than it would be in Pakistan.” ■

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BECOMING NEW AMERICANS

STUDENTS—AND TEACHERS—FIND
LIBRARY CITIZENSHIP PROGRAM HAS
MUCH TO OFFER

The Schaumburg Township (Ill.) District Library in Chicago's northwest suburbs promotes citizenship training as well as English as a second language (ESL) courses. Schaumburg, home to several global corporations, attracts workers from around the world. As a result, the library found that citizenship training was very much in demand.

Pat Barch, literacy coordinator for the library, says, "Our American Dream project is really very important to us, because the library has been providing citizenship classes for about five years now."

In recognition of the library's five-year-long commitment to citizenship education, the US Citizenship and Immigration Services invited the library to host its third naturalization ceremony on September 20, 2013.

Barch says the library partners with two local high school districts, one of which provides teachers for citizenship classes in two of the library's branches.



Schaumburg, Illinois



Oluwaleke Kehinde Ajayi receives his certificate of naturalization. For the past five years, Schaumburg Township (Ill.) District Library has provided citizenship education for many area residents.



“It’s really a great opportunity for people in those areas of our township, because we don’t have public transportation,” Barch says. “They’re not able to get to the library unless we go to them.”

For one of the teachers, the students’ experiences are familiar.

Diane Bucko, the library’s ESL instructor and the daughter of Polish immigrants, says, “This has been a wonderful opportunity for me to learn about American history. I kind of knew it, but I found out how much I didn’t know when I started teaching and researching for other students.”

She grounds her students in the political process, as well as current events, and puts it in the context of what they would experience as citizens.

One of her students, Isolde Naleck, an immigrant from

Germany and a new US citizen, says, “Coming to this class at first I had the attitude of, ‘I know everything. I don’t really need this. I don’t have time.’ Much to my surprise, after the first session, I was like, ‘I am glad I came.’ There is so much I don’t know. So much I need to learn.”

Naleck says she is grateful for the guidance the classes provide.

“I think it is awesome that the library offers this,” she says. ■

The American Dream
Starts @your library

ENGLISH IS EASY

ADULT LITERACY PROGRAM EMPOWERS
STUDENTS TO FIND JOBS, GAIN CITIZENSHIP

Riverside, California

Riverside County, California, has an estimated 50,000 people who are eligible for US citizenship. However, several barriers are in their way, including the ability to speak, read, and write English in order to take the citizenship exam.

With funding from the American Dream Starts @ your library, Riverside Public Library has been able to expand its English as a second language (ESL) classes for adult learners to help these new residents overcome such obstacles. Through its ESL programs, volunteers are offering one-on-one tutoring to help individuals learn to read and write. Riverside's revamped community-based program not only improves students' lives but also those of their families.

"The program has not just made a difference in my life, but it's made a difference in a bunch of my learners' lives," says Rolando Olivo, an ESL instructor who has been with the adult literacy program for 12 years.



Clockwise from top left: Riverside (Calif.) Public Library's ESL instructor Rolando Olivo dresses up like Santa; literacy classes offer both one-on-one tutoring help as well as larger group training; students show off their ESL program certificates.

He says the program allows his students to practice speaking English in a public or group setting, which helps them feel comfortable in situations such as looking for jobs. It also enables them to gain citizenship and to help their children with homework.

One student, Laura Serrano, a mother of two whose first language is Spanish, says learning English is important in order to get a good job.

"This program is very good for me, because it's free and close to my house," she says. "I have very good teachers."

Olivo says classes have had an impact on the library itself, because learners have turned into library users, often coming in on a daily basis. Among other things, they use the computers to research jobs.

**MANY ESL STUDENTS HAVE
TURNED INTO REGULAR
LIBRARY USERS, OFTEN COMING
IN ON A DAILY BASIS.**

"It's a pride in ownership for them to have a library card," he says, adding that without the support of Dollar General and the American Dream Starts @ your library grant, "we wouldn't have this opportunity to continue these critical services in Riverside County." ■

GETTING UP TO DATE

FUNDING HELPS LIBRARY ADD NEW LITERACY
MATERIAL, TECHNOLOGY, OUTREACH

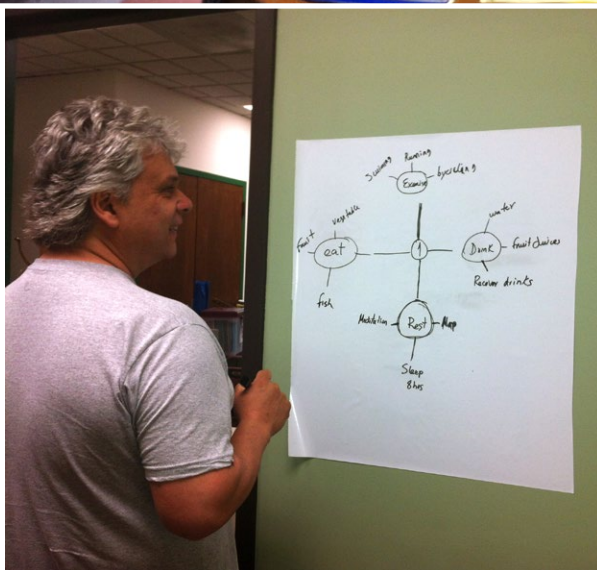


Berwyn, Illinois

Only a little less than half the population of Berwyn (Ill.) speaks English as a primary language. Despite this statistic, Berwyn Public Library's literacy collection was firmly rooted in the 1970s and 1980s, according to BPL Literacy Coordinator Esther Chase.

"We are very appreciative of the funding, because it has allowed us to do quite a few things," Chase says.

With American Dream funding, BPL updated its old and deteriorating English-language learner collection and adult literacy materials. In addition



to these new materials, the library was also able to add technology through the grant, including an interactive whiteboard and six iPads.

The library partners with nearby Morton College's Project CARE (Community Adult Reading Experience), which provides the library with trained tutors and tests students to track their academic progress.

The library was also able to expand its outreach to adults, partnering with a middle school to provide classes for parents while their children attend school.

In addition to providing literacy services, the library has helped the people it serves prepare for US citizenship. On October 22, 2014, officials from the US Citizenship and Immigration Services provided a mock citizenship interview for prospective new citizens and tutors at the library. ■

Clockwise from top: Students attend a weekly ESL study group at Berwyn (Ill.) Public Library; BPL Literacy Coordinator Esther Chase (left) with student Maria Camacho, who is holding her GED certificate; a flip chart exercise helps students identify activities of healthy living.

The American Dream
Starts @your library

ANYTHING BUT RUN OF THE MILL

A COMMUNITY'S ECONOMIC CHANGES HELP LEAD
TO A LIBRARY'S TRANSFORMATION

Greenwood County, South Carolina, was founded in 1786 and grew dramatically in the late 1800s as a textile and paper mill hub. When Greenwood County Library System Director Prudence Taylor arrived at the library in 1997, the unemployment rate was 4%. But that changed when the mills, which had been sustaining the community, closed after 2000. As a result, unemployment was as high as 11% at one point.

“People had planned to work for the mills all their lives, as their fathers and grandfathers had done,” says Taylor.

The population also changed, as more Latino residents moved in to work at a meat-packing plant. As the library recognized the growing needs of these new residents, it began beefing up its bilingual and English as a second



Greenwood County,
South Carolina



language (ESL) collections to serve this burgeoning community.

A small county, Greenwood serves a population of 70,000. The fastest-growing sector is Latino. According to the 2010 census, 6.5% of the county's population speaks a language other than English at home.

The American Dream Starts @ your library grant has enabled the library to buy computers for classroom use, as well as the Mango Languages program. Literacy Coordinator Lois Strauss says it helps to have the computers, because when instructors are stuck on a phrase, they can use Google Translate. People also take laptops into the soundproofed rooms to use Mango.

A COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENT

Yuki Kato, who's from Japan, says her American Dream is for her daughter to go to college in the US and ultimately give back to the community by helping people in the US



Top: A volunteer tutor provides ESL instruction. Above: Advanced student and volunteer Nina Manelashvili demonstrates how to use the Mango Languages program and new computers for additional ESL training.

and Japan understand one another better.

Kato started with the program from its inception and participates in both one-on-one sessions and group conversation sessions. Of the latter, she says it provides a comfortable environment.



"THE PROGRAM HELPS ME TO SPEAK WITHOUT BEING AFRAID OF MAKING MISTAKES."



Above: A tutor offers English-language education at the Greenwood County (S.C.) Library System. Left: The library's literacy coordinator Lois Strauss (seated, center) with staff and the many volunteers who help make the program successful.

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Strauss says the library partners with a neighboring Episcopal church, which had been looking for a project that would embrace the local community and focus on younger children. Since the church was undergoing a renovation, church leaders asked if they could use the library's space and become a partner.

"We take a child and basically work with them for an hour a week. The same coach is always with the same child," says Chris Jayne, volunteer head of the after-school coaching program for K-5 through the Church of the Resurrection. "We help with their homework, because often the Hispanic family cannot read instructions and therefore guide the child."

Strauss says that while a child is downstairs receiving tutoring, his or her adult guardian is often upstairs in the library attending a literacy program.

According to Jayne, there are more than 30 children in the program. In many cases, the child's exposure to English is limited to school.

"It's been a very successful program," Jayne says. ■

"It helps me to speak without being afraid of making mistakes, because I know all of the students there are not really native speakers, so I'm not ashamed if I make a mistake in English," she says, adding that it's good to know people in the same situation.

"If I'm talking to a local person, and she says to me, 'I beg your pardon,' or, 'Say it again,'" Kato says she sometimes gets discouraged. But if she can share this experience with others in the class, "[it] just lights up my life."

She says her teacher is patient and lets her talk as much as she wants.

"I feel like my teacher has become one of my best friends," she says. "It helps me a lot."

2013 AMERICAN DREAM LIBRARIES LIST OF GRANTEES

ARIZONA

- ★ Pima County Public Library

ARKANSAS

- ★ Bentonville Public Library

CALIFORNIA

- ★ Riverside County Library

COLORADO

- ★ Montrose Regional Library District

CONNECTICUT

- ★ Hamden Public Library
- ★ New Haven Free Library

FLORIDA

- ★ DeSoto County Library
- ★ St. Petersburg Public Library

GEORGIA

- ★ Ocmulgee Regional Library System
- ★ Piedmont Regional Library System
- ★ Pinewoods Library and Learning Center, Athens Regional Library System

ILLINOIS

- ★ Berwyn Public Library
- ★ Eisenhower Public Library District, Harwood Heights
- ★ Schaumburg Township District Library
- ★ Waukegan Public Library

INDIANA

- ★ Monticello–Union Township Public Library

IOWA

- ★ Sibley Public Library
- ★ Sioux Center Public Library

LOUISIANA

- ★ Calcasieu Parish Public Library
- ★ Lafourche Parish Public Library

MARYLAND

- ★ Wicomico Public Library, Salisbury

NEBRASKA

- ★ Bennett Martin Public Library, Lincoln

NEW JERSEY

- ★ Livingston Public Library
- ★ Lodi Memorial Library
- ★ Plainfield Public Library
- ★ Plainsboro Public Library, Plainsboro Township
- ★ South Orange Public Library
- ★ Westwood Public Library

NEW YORK

- ★ Southeast Steuben County Library

NORTH CAROLINA

- ★ Burke County Public Library
- ★ Charlotte Mecklenburg Library
- ★ Kill Devil Hills Public Library
- ★ Martin Memorial Library, BHM (Beaufort, Hyde, Martin Counties) Regional Library

PENNSYLVANIA

- ★ Martin Library, York County Library System
- ★ Osterhout Free Library, Wilkes-Barre
- ★ Whitehall Public Library, Pittsburgh

SOUTH CAROLINA

- ★ Greenwood County Library

TEXAS

- ★ Little Elm Public Library
- ★ Smithville Public Library

VERMONT

- ★ Fletcher Free Library, Burlington

VIRGINIA

- ★ James M. Duncan Jr. Branch, Alexandria Library
- ★ Newport News Public Library
- ★ Samuels Public Library, Front Royal

WEST VIRGINIA

- ★ Martinsburg–Berkeley County Public Libraries

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