

# 2020-2021 Annual Report



*Literacy Changes Everything*



# ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Dear Friends of Literacy Chippewa Valley,

“What does literacy mean to you?”

Earlier this year, I was asked that question by our former Marketing Coordinator as he was putting together a profile for the newsletter. I had to stop a moment and think; the obvious answer was “reading”. Then I thought about the wider meaning, “proficiency or skill,” and in this day and age even being “computer literate.” I finally realized that ‘literacy’ describes so much more than simply reading or mastering a set of skills; it’s a way of opening doors, of finding new opportunities. It means having control over your destiny.



*Allison V. Shepard*

Our students come from many different backgrounds. Some are new emigrants, some are new parents, and some are incarcerated. Regardless of their circumstances, each of these learners is at a pivotal moment in their lives where they have decided that they are going to acquire new skills that will help them advance in their employment, be able to read to their children, or get their GED.

This year, Literacy Chippewa Valley served students from 19 different countries, including individuals from Albania, Morocco, Vietnam, and El Salvador. Due to COVID restrictions over the past year, our instructors have had to adapt and adjust in order to reach their learners. The educators have been primarily operating remotely, but some in-person instruction has resumed.

We continue to partner with organizations in the Chippewa Valley community, such as Workforce Resource, and look forward to more of these beneficial relationships with other community organizations. Our educators are present in the local jails, with dedicated educators offering a variety of courses aimed at providing an understanding of skills to assist the learners in obtaining employment, or improving in other areas such as financial literacy, computer skills, or parenting.

Executive Director Elizabeth Hart and her staff have continued to work tirelessly to ensure that resources will be available to those who seek them. There are a number of very exciting programs and partnerships that are currently in the works. These new programs will help to grow our numbers and reach new members of our community.

I would be remiss if I didn’t mention our upcoming ScrabbleBee! This year we will return to in-person gaming, and thankfully, in-person pizza-ing, as well. We are so excited to welcome you to this event at the Lismore on September 30, 2021! There will be fun food, fun auction items, and a really fun way to support Literacy!

# ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

We hope that you will continue to support our organization. Literacy Chippewa Valley depends on monetary donations and volunteer support. Without the generous contributions from our supporters, our organization could not continue with the very important work being done in our community.

So, back to the big question- “What does literacy mean to you?” For some, it’s writing a joke to an old, far-away friend, or maybe it’s being able to fill out a job application knowing that you’ve got the skills to get hired. Or perhaps sitting down with a loved one and reading a bedtime story. The concept of “literacy” is basic, but the implications are anything but. These programs and skills provide our students with the groundwork for successful futures and help them to achieve their dreams. That’s what literacy means to me.

Best,

Allison V. Shepard

# ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

## Our Board of Directors

**President:** Allison Shepard, Herrick & Hart  
**Vice President:** Open  
**Treasurer:** Open  
**Secretary:** Open  
**Past President:** Carlton Brumbelow, JAMF

## Members:

Richard Jaenke, Xcel Energy  
Macie Neitzel, Vault Business Group  
Heather Felty, Inner Peace Press

A special thank you to former board members Ashley Holmes, Emily Cinquegrana, Angie Wald and Carrie Acklin for their dedicated service to our organization.

## Our Staff

**Executive Director:** Elizabeth Hart  
**Marketing Coordinator:** Aryn Widule  
**Eau Claire County Corrections Instructor:** Open  
**Family Literacy Coordinator:** Deb Erwin  
**Family Literacy Adult Instructor:** Aryn Widule  
**Tutor Student Coordinator:** Teresa Pleger  
**Chippewa County Coordinator:** Open  
**Dunn County Coordinator:** Stacy Martin  
**Work Study:** Alena Xiong and Jeremiah Coey

*Thank you to our former staff Chee Vang, Carragh Knudsen and Kevin Xiong for your hard work and dedication to improving literacy in the Chippewa Valley.*

**LEARNING  
SKILLS  
TEACHING  
ENGLISH  
OPPORTUNITIES  
EQUALITY  
CORRECTIONS  
EVERYBODY**

## Contact Us:

Eau Claire County  
510 S. Farwell St.  
Eau Claire, WI 54701  
715-834-0222  
Family Literacy  
715-835-0610  
  
Chippewa County  
770 Scheidler Rd.  
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729  
715-738-3857  
  
Dunn County  
401 Technology Dr. E  
Menomonie, WI 54751  
715-308-8542

## Our Mission

*Our Mission is to empower adults and their families to reach their educational, employment, and life goals through free, learner-focused literacy programs.*

# ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

## Our Literacy Partners

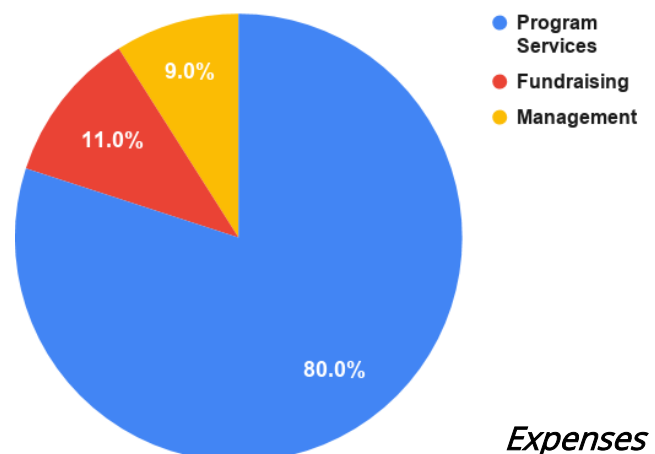
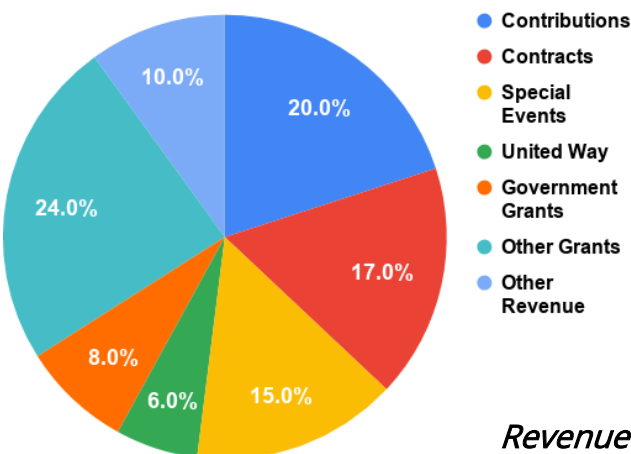
Literacy Chippewa Valley is grateful to the following partners who help us accomplish our mission in many ways.

- |  |  |                                    |
|--|--|------------------------------------|
| Altoona Public Library                   | Community Foundation of Chippewa Cnty. | Rutledge Foundation                |
| Beacon House                             | Dollar General Foundation              | United Way of Dunn County          |
| Bolton House                             | Dunn County Jail                       | University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire |
| Career Development Center                | Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce    | Volume One                         |
| Chippewa County Jail                     | Eau Claire Area School District        | Western Dairyland Head Start       |
| Chippewa Falls School District           | Eau Claire Community Foundation        | WI Dept. of Workforce Development  |
| Chippewa Falls Chamber of Commerce       | Eau Claire County Jail                 | WI Dept. of Public Instructions    |
| Chippewa Falls Community Foundation      | Eau Claire YMCA                        | Wisconsin Job Service              |
| Chippewa Valley Technical College        | Family Resource Center                 | Wisconsin Literacy                 |
| Citizen's Employment and Training        | Feed My People                         | Wisconsin Public Radio             |
| City of Eau Claire                       | L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library  | Wisconsin Technical College System |
| Community Table                          | Lois & Arnold Domer Foundation         | Women's Giving Circle Eau Claire   |
| Community Foundation of Dunn County      | Lutheran Social Services               |                                    |
| Community Foundation of Eau Claire Cnty. | Menomonie Public Library               |                                    |
|  | Otto Bremer Foundation                 |                                    |
|  | Pro Literacy                           |                                    |

## Our Financial Recap

Literacy Chippewa Valley is supported by donations from individuals, businesses, foundations, and community groups. This past year we again held ScrabbleBee, our main fundraising event, which helps to support programs and operations: Although we utilize volunteers wherever possible, we still need a professional staff to train and support these volunteers as well as to teach classes.

We are ethical, transparent and accountable in our financial matters. At the end of each fiscal year, LCV invites an independent auditor to review our financial reporting. This year CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP conducted our review. The results of the audit are presented at our November Board meeting. Our financial statements are available at the Wilson Building office for review by the public.





# OUR STUDENTS AND TUTORS



*Mr. Brooks: a 2021 GED gradu-*

## Our Students

During the 2020-2021 year we served 114 adults in Chippewa, Dunn and Eau Claire counties. This was a decrease from the previous year. Our students came from 26 different countries with a majority coming from the U.S., followed by Mexico and Laos. We served a slightly larger population of men (62) than women (52). Caucasians made up the largest ethnic group (60%) with Hispanic or Latino a distant second (11%). Our students worked on literacy for 1904 hours in either the Family Literacy, 1-to-1 Tutoring or Corrections programs.



*Mr. Roberts: a 2021 GED graduate.*

## Our Tutors

This year we had 34 tutors provide 660.25 volunteer hours to students. Tutors were instrumental in the success of our students in 1-to-1 Tutoring, Family Literacy, and in the Corrections programs in the county jails. We could not provide all of these services with out the help of our tutors.

## Tutor Program and Training

It is apparent based on the number of student requests that nothing compares to having a tutor work individually with a student. Our students' value our services and embrace the opportunity to have one person work with them and focus on where they're at and what they need. Our generous tutors stepped up and we saw some wonderful accomplishments including students enrolling in and passing their first college course, obtaining Citizenship, earning GED/HSED credential, moving up the levels in job programs—all in which were accomplished with the assistance of tutors.

While the year continued to be interrupted by the COVID virus and pandemic, volunteers nonetheless logged in 660.25 hours with their students and we had around 34 pairs working on various areas of Literacy throughout the community.

We are continuing offer to safe methods to continue our endeavors, some pairs have eased into meeting on Zoom or using Google Meet. We continue to be flexible as safety will always be our priority, and we realize some students and tutors do not have access or feel comfortable with technology. Change and challenges continue to be evident this year, but this will push us to be more creative and innovative in the work we do.

We are looking forward to offering in person classes this fall for our Family Literacy classes.

# CELEBRATE WRITING

## 2021 Celebrate Writing Book: "Learning Through Adversity"

Each year Literacy Chippewa Valley students are given the opportunity to be published in a book of student writings.

This year's theme was "Learning Through Adversity". The past year and a half has been a difficult time for many people, and particularly so for many of our incarcerated learners. Though not specifically prompted to do so, many of this year's works addressed the authors' introspections, regrets, pain and growth. The theme selected itself after we collected and reviewed the body of work our learners had submitted.

*Celebrate Writing* often has photographs of the authors included with the writings. We were unable to provide these this year, as protocols resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic kept learning remote and made taking student photographs prohibitive. This doesn't lessen the impact of the writing, however, and we are sure that when you read this year's edition you'll appreciate and understand the perseverance and motivation of our students.

## Learning Through Adversity



### *Ashley Ann Gunder Celebrate Writing 2021)*

Addiction is the hardest thing to go against. Trust me , addiction and myself have been battling each other for a few years now. I've been clean off of the needle for almost a year now . This is the longest I've been sober off of meth since I've started. When people say it takes time and a lot of work, it's true . in my eyes and in my mind it's a war within yourself but my mind is clear my body hurts yes but that's only because addiction had a hold on my pain. Now that I've been sober it's time to get my life back. I'm worth so much more than being captive by a drug . I've been told time after time that I'm a rare diamond in a field of coal . IT'S TIME TO BELIEVE IT. The disease does not deserve 1 minute of my time , I deserve my time. I hope one day we all can beat the wars of addiction within ourselves. We just have to remember that we can only take one day on at a time .

### *Ryan Aviña Celebrate Writing 2021)*

#### Beautiful Lies

Looking into the clear night skies  
Twinkles and sparkles of stars we see  
Shooting stars and comets beautiful as well  
The true nature of it all are beautiful lies

A relationship of two with counting and tries  
Feelings and bonds are built strong and deep  
Watching the love grow as time ticks and tocs  
As time passes most relationships become beautiful lies

Songs of life and experience give us natural highs  
The words so beautifully sung in great ways  
With sounds, notes, and beats to help feel those words  
Yet the true message are almost all beautiful lies

Life as we know is filled with laughter and cries  
There's so much to experience and learn everyday  
From the time we awake 'til the time we rest  
Society claims we can accomplish so much but again...  
Beautiful Lies...

# OUR PROGRAMS

Our literacy programs serve two types of students: Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English Language Learners (ELL). Services are provided in Corrections, Family Literacy, and One-to-One Tutoring. Going forward in 2021 we are continuing to provide the option of remote family literacy classes to accommodate the complicated ongoing Covid situation.

## One-to-One Tutoring

One-to-One programming provides weekly tutoring services specific to the interests and abilities of learners based on individual learning goals. The One-to-One program benefits from the skillful dedication of over 30 volunteer tutors in Chippewa, Dunn and Eau Claire counties. Within the One-to-One program, student abilities span pre-literate to high school skill levels. Each learner is assessed and matched with a volunteer tutor. Matched pairs work on job skills training, health literacy, English language skills for a variety of contexts, and preparation for further education at a pace that is appropriate to each learner.

The One-to-One program celebrates learner accomplishments that include acquiring various job skills certifications, obtaining citizenship, developing GED test-taking skills, earning a driver's permit, securing employment and gaining skills necessary for pursuing further education and accessing CVTC programs.

We are incredibly grateful to our tutors, and we sincerely appreciate their time and dedication to helping learners in our communities reach their learning goals.

## Corrections

Literacy Chippewa Valley is contracted to work in the Eau Claire, Dunn and Chippewa County jails. LCV teaches adult basic education, workforce and job readiness classes, and GED education. In addition, LCV teaches financial literacy, creative writing, and assists students with applying to Chippewa Valley Technical College. Due to the pandemic, the Eau Claire and Chippewa jails remained closed for the majority of the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year.

In Chippewa County Jail, during the 2020-21 Fiscal Year, 6 students participated virtually in the educational and vocational literacy programs. There were 2 students who earned certificates in Customer Service and 2 students earned certificates in Manufacturing 101.

In Dunn County, there were 53 students who participated in Adult Basic Education and vocational literacy classes in the corrections program. There were 24 GED tests taken in the Dunn County Jail with 3 students completing their GED. We had 25 students complete the financial literacy course taught by RCU. There were also 13 students that completed their certification in Customer Service and 12 complete their certification in Manufacturing 101 through Workforce Resource. Dunn County Corrections had 24 students participate in creative writing, 1 student completed an iPad course, and 4 students earned 22 certificates through the WISC Online computer system. We also had 4 students complete the nationally recognized certificate from Servsafe. 1 student also completed the job readiness class.

The Eau Claire County Jail was closed for all programming during the pandemic. We are looking forward to starting virtual classes in the Eau Claire Jail during the next fiscal year.



# OUR PROGRAMS

## Parents Sharing Books

Literacy Chippewa Valley again provided the Parents Sharing Books program in the three jails in Chippewa, Dunn and Eau Claire counties.

In Dunn county 14 inmates participated in Parents Sharing Books with 29 books being mailed to their children.

In Chippewa county 18 inmates participated in Parents Sharing Books with 47 books being mailed to their children.

The ability of the parents to give this gift to their children during the holidays would not be possible without the help of our volunteers, and book donations from the Chippewa Falls High School Honor Society, and the La Crosse Diocese of Catholic Women.

A warm **thank you** to the Chippewa Falls High School National English Honors Society, Friends of the L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library, La Crosse Diocesan Council of Catholic Women, and Mid-West Family Broadcasting Back to School Bucks (and Books) for providing new children's books. Thanks also to LCV volunteers for recording, wrapping, and running packages to the post office.



*Thank you to the Chippewa Falls High School National English Honor Society for the book donation.*

## Family Literacy

### My time in Family Literacy

By Jackie Sanchez, Former Student

What Family Literacy represents to me? My name is Jackie Sanchez and I describe myself as an architect, artist, mother, wife, and English learner. Six years ago, to be precise my path got cross with this institution and the amazing teachers, volunteers, and workers that happily give their time to help foreigners to learn the English language.

In my experience, I could not have landed in a better place to learn the idiom. Family Literacy members do not just made me feel welcome or motivated, they also made us feel part of a community. It does not matter what nationality we were, inside the school we could feel comfortable despite customs, cultures, and language. I have to say feel comfortable or adapted when you cannot express yourself is not something easy at all.

Living in a country where the language spoken is different than yours is tough, the daily activities become challenges. There is when I realized that learning the language was essential to feel that I belong to this country. I can tell you with certainty that more than once I have wondered if I am on the right track

This is where the school plays an important role in the life of each student, giving us the opportunity to learn, to encourage us to set goals, to get involved in the community, to offer us benefits that complement our learning. In my case, one of the services that benefited me the most was the childcare where my children could stay and be watched while I continued learning.

At that time when my children and I went to school I could see my kids involved in a learning environment which I really liked because in a certain way they were growing and learning the language too. In these six years living in the United States, I have learned that learning the language is not something that can be achieved in an instant. It is a process, a long process, however it could be simple if you have the commitment, dedication and a lot of patience.

# OUR PROGRAMS

## Workforce Education with Workforce Resource

Students in the three jails can earn certificates in Manufacturing 101 and Customer Service skills through LCV's collaborative efforts with Workforce Resource, Inc. Workforce Resource Inc. provides the vocational online training, and LCV staff and volunteers assist students with learning math skills and workplace jargon. In addition to the webinar training, students learn job readiness skills in how to draft a resume and cover letter, interview skills, and about federal bonding.

## Financial Literacy with RCU

Royal Credit Union (RCU) is a partner in delivering financial literacy in the jail with LCV. This year RCU Community Financial Education Coordinator, Cooper joined us in the jails virtually in Eau Claire and Dunn counties. Curriculum was tailored towards the needs of incarcerated persons. The class offers budgeting basics, credit information, and the importance of saving.

## Family Literacy

Family Literacy was virtual this year. The class used Google Meet and Zoom to connect with students.

We had 5 students throughout the year. The countries represented in class were: Japan, Mexico, and Ukraine.

There was a total of 200.25 hours, which is lower than previous years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The virtual component limited class time with students.

It was a challenge to do a class longer than one hour due to children also working virtually. It was a challenge for parents to be both student when working with us and teacher trying to help their students navigate the same virtual world that they were learning at the same time.

We collaborated with UWEC and CVTC to assist students' in successfully completing their service learning, work study and volunteering hours during the year.



# OUR EVENTS



## Major Sponsors:



## 2021 Buzz on ScrabbleBee!

At the time of this printing we are still a few weeks away from the 2021 Scrabblebee, as it has been moved from the traditional Spring date to September 30th this year, so we don't have any results yet to report.

With that being said, we're excited to be moving back to an in-person event at the Lismore in Eau Claire, and we can't wait to see our friends, sponsors and players.

We anticipate roughly 30 teams this year, some familiar faces and a whole lot of fun and fundraising. We will be holding a silent auction and during the event, and anticipate increased interest in those two items as we move them to an online system that will allow us to get them in front of people a week before Scrabblebee, along with some greatly anticipated billboard exposure around Eau Claire.



Literacy Chippewa Valley would like to thank:

## Event Sponsor:



## Game Sponsors:

BMO Harris Bank  
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Royal Credit Union  
Great Lakes

## Game Sponsors:

Herrick & Hart, S.C.  
WIPFLI

Special thanks to the ScrabbleBee Committee, emcee John Murphy, Geno's Pizza, Sam's Club, and all of our sponsors and volunteers. We truly could not do this without you!

# OUR INVESTORS

Literacy Chippewa Valley is thankful for the generosity of our Investors. We strive to accurately recognize our donors. If we have omitted or incorrectly spelled your name, please do not hesitate to contact our office so that we can ensure correct recognition in the future.

## LEGACY

### \$25,000 & ABOVE

Otto Bremer Foundation

## VISIONARY

### \$10,000-\$24,999

Chippewa Valley Technical College  
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## SUSTAINING

### \$5,000-\$9,999

Chippewa County  
Eau Claire County  
Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration  
Workforce Resource, Inc.

## BENEFACTOR

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Festival Foods  
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Rotary Club of Eau Claire  
United Way of Dunn County  
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Sally Webb

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### Up to \$99

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## In Memory of

Phyllis Snustad



# REFLECTIONS AND THANKS

## Reflections on the COVID year.

It goes without saying that 2020-21 was a year that demanded assessment and adaptation. Literacy Chippewa Valley was able to continue service during 2020-2021 but many were not able to take advantage of those services. We grew from the experience and have adopted changes in format and vision in hopes that we will be able to handle what comes next.

Our Corrections Education programs in the Chippewa, Dunn and Eau Claire counties were shut down for the first half of the year. Dunn County opened to only our teacher in January and face classes resumed to served over 53 people. Chippewa and Eau Claire counties remained closed all year. In Chippewa a handful of students work on GED preparation through a folder exchange. Both counties invested in the construction of distance learning rooms and have since reopened to receive video conferenced classes indefinitely. We are currently holding classes in all three counties.

Family Literacy converted to a virtual format with teachers and students alike quickly learning how to use Zoom and carry on their English lessons. We had five regular students who met this way for the entire year. We did not hold childcare classes, however early literacy kits were distributed to participating families. While some of our 1-1 tutor pairs continued to meet in a socially distanced manner the majority of our 30 pairs converted to a virtual format.

As a result of everyone's effort LCV operated at 20% of a normal year. The community responded to meet our funding needs and enabled us to support our entire staff. We quickly learned how situations create and remove barriers to communication, something that our students face everyday. As a result we are using what we have learned to reach more people. Our ELL classes will now be streamed for those who face transportation barriers or simply can't make it to class. Our Corrections Education will take place over distance learning format. Our 1-1 pairs find that an easy lunch hour Zoom session will work in their busy schedule and eliminate the 45 minutes of commuting that sometimes prevented meeting at all.

We are looking forward to the coming year as we continue to help people improve their lives through education.

*THANK YOU!*

