

2021-2022 Annual Report



Literacy Changes Everything



ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Dear Friends of Literacy Chippewa Valley,

When I tell people that I serve as the President of the Board for Literacy Chippewa Valley (LCV), the reaction is usually the same. People will say, “Oh, that’s great! I love reading! That’s such important work!” And don’t get me wrong, I absolutely agree with those sentiments! Reading, as we know, is fundamental. However, teaching adults reading skills is only a small part of what our organization does.



Allison V. Shepard

The follow-up discussion about the extent of the services offered by LCV similarly often results in exclamations of, “Oh, I had no idea!” or “Wow!” or “You know what? I might know someone that could benefit.”

It’s hard to come up with an “elevator pitch” that quickly sums up all the work that the staff at LCV does for our community. Literacy Chippewa Valley is proud to offer a wide range of services to the Chippewa Valley. We offer job skills training, GED instruction and testing, English language literacy, and work within the local jails to provide education and training to incarcerated learners. Additionally, Literacy Chippewa Valley was honored to be a community partner for the Afghan refugees who resettled in our area.

This year, with all that in mind, members of the Board, LCV Staff, and community stock-holders joined in a Strategic Planning Meeting to fine tune our Mission, Vision, and Values. Extensive discussions were held about how best to express our goals as an organization and to plan for the future. Lots of buzz words were thrown out, lots of fancy words changed. We wanted to strip it down to the most direct, specific, and thoughtful language we could.

Thus, I’m happy to share a small part of what resulted from our Strategic Plan:

Our Mission: Provide free education services for adults to help them reach their academic, employment, and life goals.

Our Vision: Improve lives in the Chippewa Valley through literacy and education.

Our Values: Accessibility, inclusion, adaptability, progress, and sustainability.

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

There were so many great ideas that came from this meeting, giving LCV a clear vision for the future. We will continue to grow and evolve the organization as the needs of the community require. In addition to re-vamping our Mission, Vision and Values to be more in-line with our current operations, the Board Members and Staff of Literacy Chippewa Valley are engaging with the community through a variety of new opportunities. We proudly partnered with Agnes Table to cook and serve a community meal and hope to engage in similar service activities in the future.

Literacy Chippewa Valley has always been a community organization. We serve the community. We're a part of the community. We're supported by the community. We are able to engage with the community because of the support we receive from our its members: through volunteer engagement, through participation in our annual ScrabbleBee, and through monetary contributions.

The funding we receive from the community is absolutely vital to the operations of our organization. Without your generous donations, we would not be able to continue with the vital services we offer. We are able to touch so many lives in the community because of your generosity. Thank you.

As always, we are looking for new board members! If you are curious about the commitment, or the potential opportunities for serving with us, please don't hesitate to reach out! We're always looking for enthusiastic people who are representative of our community... someone just like you!

It has been my pleasure to serve as Board President, and I look forward to all the exciting things we have in store for the future of Literacy Chippewa Valley.

Thank you,
Allison V. Shepard

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Our Board of Directors

President: Allison Shepard, Herrick & Hart

Vice President: Heather Felty, Inner Peace Connection

Treasurer: Macie Nietzel, Stable Living LLP

Secretary: Heather Felty, Inner Peace Connection

Members:

Richard Jaenke, Xcel Energy

True Vue, Eau Claire Area Hmong Mutual

Assistance Association

Heather Breed, Chippewa Valley Technical College

LEARNING
SKILLS
TEACHING
ENGLISH
OPPORTUNITIES
EQUALITY
CORRECTIONS
EVERYBODY

Our Staff

Executive Director: Elizabeth Hart

Marketing Coordinator: Aryn Widule

Eau Claire County Corrections Instructor: Chad Semling

Chippewa County Corrections Instructor: Chad Semling

Family Literacy Coordinator: Deb Erwin

Family Literacy Adult Instructor: Aryn Widule

Tutor Student Coordinator: Deb Erwin

Chippewa County Coordinator: Stacy Martin

Dunn County Coordinator: Stacy Martin

Work Study: Alena Xiong and Jeremiah Coey

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

Provide free education services for adults to help them reach their academic, employment, and life goals.

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Our Literacy Partners

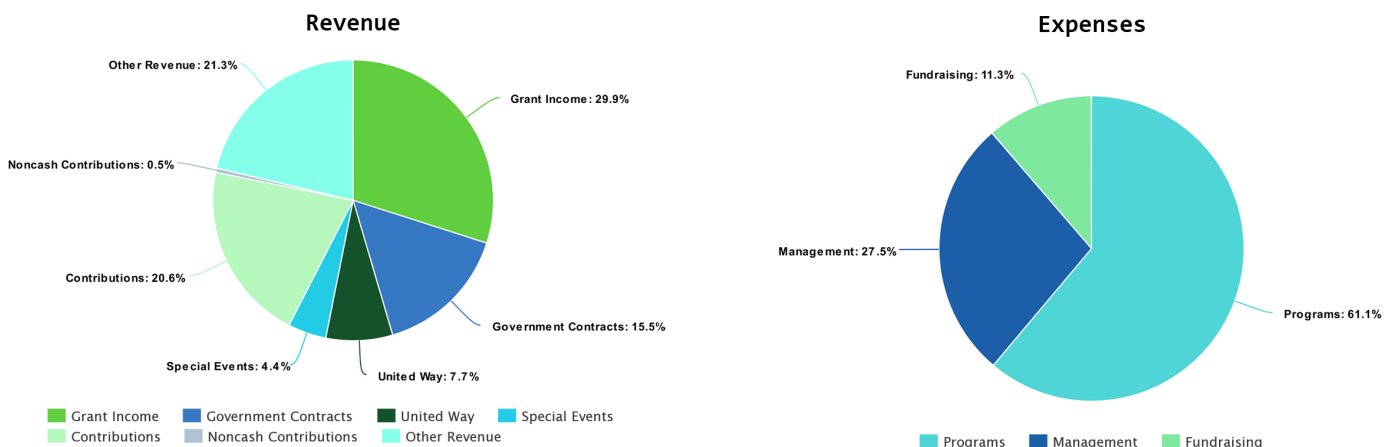
Literacy Chippewa Valley is grateful to the following partners who help us accomplish our mission in many ways.

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

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

Our Students



Mrs. Zambrano: a 2021 GED graduate.

During the 2021-2022 year we served 201 adults in Chippewa, Dunn and Eau Claire counties. This was a 57% increase from the previous year. Our students came from 20 different countries with a majority coming from the U.S., followed by Mexico and Afghanistan. We served a slightly larger population of men (115) than women (86). Caucasians made up the largest ethnic group (57%) with Hispanic or Latino a distant second (19%). Our students worked on literacy for 3800.5 hours in either the Family Literacy, 1-to-1 Tutoring or Corrections programs.



Reina : a 2021 Family Lit Student.

Our Tutors

This year we had 36 tutors provide 1065 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 simply 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 their GED/HSED credentials and moving up the levels in job programs—all in which were accomplished with the assistance of tutors.

Our tutors are amazing volunteers that logged 1065 hours with their students and we had around 36 pairs working on various areas of Literacy throughout the community.

We are continuing to offer safe methods for tutors and students to continue our endeavors. Some pairs are meeting on Zoom or using Google Meet while others are meeting in person with or without masks depending on their comfort level. We continue to be flexible, as safety will always be our priority.



Our tutor training has shifted to a computer-based model after a short in-person meeting. Tutors are able to work at their own pace on a series of short courses on various topics through the Proliteracy Education Network to help them become more successful as a tutors.

OUR STUDENTS AND TUTORS

LITERACY CHANGES *EVERYTHING*

“It was always in the back of my mind and I kept saying I'm going to go back to school and get my GED but it's a lot easier said than done.”

-Susie Gomez

We selected Susie for the spotlight for her great enthusiasm and inspiring story of success. We couldn't be more proud of her accomplishments, and we are truly lucky to have her as one of our students. Susie wanted to tell her story in her own words, and what follows is her story, written by Susie, with a few small formatting edits for the spotlight blog. Thank you, Susie!

“Getting my GED was one of the hardest things I had to do this year especially after being out of school for about 13 years. I dropped out of High school when I was 16 going on 17, I remember that day very clearly the vice principal called me down to his office to tell me that I did not have enough credits to graduate and that my only option was to drop out. I was upset but not very surprised. I was not very motivated in high school due to family issues, so that day I told my parents and my dad said you're going to enroll in night school and get your GED and I said ok.

That September I enrolled in night school and started my journey to try and get my GED. I went

to school for about 7 months and in May I took my test. Back then it was one test with all four subjects and no civics test and I passed all of them except for math which did not surprise me at all because I was never really good at math. I did not fail by much but I still failed and that meant that I had to retake just the math.

During that summer I decided to move to Milwaukee with my husband, who was my boyfriend at the time, and I did not go back to do the math test. In 2010 me and my husband got married and had our first child in 2012. Throughout the years I kept trying to get my GED but because of different reasons and I think because I was just not motivated enough it always fell through.

It was always in the back of my mind and I kept saying I'm going to go back to school and get my GED but it's a lot easier said than done, especially when you have 4 kids under the age of 9. In 2019 we decided to move to Whitehall, WI because we wanted a change of pace and a safer neighborhood for our kids to grow up in.

In October of 2020 I got a job offer at the school where my kids attended. They offered me their Interpreter position. They had been looking for a few months and could not find anyone so the interpreter who had the job before me called and ask if I was interested and “I said of course I am but I seen on the job listing that you need to have your G.E.D or a high school diploma and I do not have either.” Her response was “That's ok I don't think they will mind but I can

OUR STUDENTS AND TUTORS

ask for sure". So later that day I got a call from the superintendent's assistant to make an appointment for me to go in for an official interview.

I was so excited! I went for my interview two days later and it went great and I made sure to mention to them that I did not have my GED or high school diploma and they asked if I was interested in getting it, and I said yes so we agreed to revisit the subject after I got settled in to my new job. In January of 2021 I started to look for schools nearby where I could take my GED classes.

After calling a few places and getting information I had not found a place that had what I was looking for, or they were too far. So I kept looking and I found Literacy Chippewa Valley. What interested me right away was that I could do my classes online. I called and they told me to fill out the form and someone would be in contact with me. So I filled out the form and told my boss about it and she said that's great if you need anything from us let me know.

This time I was very motivated. A big part of that motivation was my job and some amazing co-workers/friends and my family who helped motivate me through this process. Stacy (my teacher) contacted me towards the end of February. I went to Eau Claire to meet her and take the tabe test and we talked about the schedule and set up a time each day that we

could meet. We got to work right away and what I loved about Stacy is that she got right to the point and had me study what I needed to know for the test only, which was what I wanted.

My initial goal was to have my GED by September 2021 when the new school year started but that did not happen. Not because of Stacy but because we were on our last subject which was math and like I said before math is not my strong suit. So Stacy decided that it was best if we take it slow to make sure I understood everything so I agreed and we made a new goal which was Nov 20, 2021 .

I took 2 or 3 pre test and did not pass either one but I was close so me and Stacy talked and she said you know what I think that you should just take the real test and see how it goes, and if you don't pass there are other things we can try. So I said ok I'm going to take it. I was really nervous when I went to take it and I honestly didn't think I would pass and to my surprise I did pass! I was so happy I cried because after numerous times and years of trying to get GED I finally passed my GED test! I want to thank Stacy for all her help. She is truly an amazing teacher! Now I am proud to say that I finally have my GED!

"We got to work right away and what I loved about Stacy is that she got right to the point and had me study what I needed to know for the test only, which was what I wanted. ."

-Susie Gomez

OUR PROGRAMS

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. Many thanks to Deb Erwin for taking over the role of 1-1 coordinator as we shifted this responsibility from Dunn and Chippewa Counties to one role for all counties out of the Eau Claire office.

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. The Eau Claire and Chippewa jails shifted to a virtual model for this fiscal year. In Chippewa County Jail, during the 2021-22 Fiscal Year, 19 students participated virtually in the educational and vocational literacy programs. There were 15 students who earned certificates in Customer Service and 10 students earned certificates in Manufacturing 101.

In Dunn County, there were 86 students who participated in Adult Basic Education and vocational literacy classes in the corrections program. There were 15 GED tests taken in the Dunn County Jail. We had 35 students complete the financial literacy course taught by RCU. There were also 11 students that completed their certification in Customer Service and 8 complete their certification in Manufacturing 101 through Workforce Resource. Dunn County Corrections had 25 students participate in creative writing, 12 student completed an iPad course, and 50 certificates through the WISC Online computer system. We also had 5 students complete the nationally recognized certificate from Servsafe. 4 student also completed OSHA and 7 students completed Real Careers.

In Eau Claire County Jail, during the 2021-22 Fiscal Year, 29 students participated virtually in the educational and vocational literacy programs. There were 9 students who earned certificates in Customer Service and 1 student earned certificates in Manufacturing 101. 11 students earned a certificate in Financial Literacy through a partnership with Royal Credit Union.

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, 15 inmates participated in Parents Sharing Books with 41 books being mailed to their children. In Chippewa county, 5 inmates participated in Parents Sharing Books with 10 books being mailed to their children. In Eau Claire county, 25 inmates participated in Parents Sharing Books with 41 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.



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

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 had 25 total students this year, along with 5 children with nearly 500 hours of in-house childcare. Our students racked up over 1400 hours of class time and represented China, Japan, Mexico, Ukraine, Honduras, El Salvador and Afghanistan.

Literacy Chippewa Valley assisted the Welcoming New Neighbors organization with their resettlement efforts for the first group of Afghan refugees that were relocated to Eau Claire. We are grateful that they allowed us this opportunity, and even moreso to have gotten a chance to meet with and assist our new neighbors from Afghanistan. We worked with them on English education, driver's license education and pretesting as well as job searching.

We partnered with UW extension and Family Resource Center to provide Triple P parenting classes with our students. This series consisted of three total classes to help parents learn strategies to reduce stress, increase resiliency, and better communicate with their children and much more.

Our end of the year potluck recognized our students and classroom tutors, with a great deal of delicious food provided by our students, who each received a personalized certificate and artwork. None of this would have been possible without the enthusiasm of our students, our classroom tutors, and the volunteers who helped our students get to class each day.



Our Eau Claire Family Literacy Class, Fall 2021

SCRABBLEBEE

Literacy Chippewa Valley would like to thank:

2021 Buzz on ScrabbleBee

The 20th annual ScrabbleBee buzzed with excitement on Thursday, September 21, 2021 as over \$20,000 was raised for LCV. Twenty-six teams gathered together for a fun-filled, fast-paced evening of Scrabble in the Hare and Tortoise divisions. The event was held in the Lismore in downtown Eau Claire with the game competition beginning at 6 pm. John Murphy from Morning Host 98.1 Greatest Hits served as the master of ceremonies.

The winners with the highest scores this year were:

Hare Division

Winner: Pokemon Go

Tortoise Division

Winner: Calvin's Cadre

Top Pledge:

Winner: Calvin's Cadre (Kathy Schneider—team captain)



Silent Auction, Raffle Basket and Prize Donors: Alena Xiong

Emcee: John Murphy

Judge: Aryn Widule

SAVE THE DATE!

**21th Annual ScrabbleBee
September 22, 2022**

Event Sponsor:



Major Sponsors:



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A DOUBLETREE BY HILTON

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LITERACY CHANGES *EVERYTHING*

“Family Literacy helped me learn English. Although I did learn some English in Japan, it was not at all practical for surviving in Eau Claire.”

-Saori Kojima

This selection for the Literacy Spotlight is longtime Literacy Chippewa Valley student Saori Kojima. Saori was the featured student speaker at the 2021 Scrabblebee.

Saori’s speech at Scrabblebee was so comprehensive, inspirational and enlightening, that we have decided to just present it here in its entirety. She does a better job expressing the impact of the programs that LCV provides than we ever could. We are so proud of the progress Saori has made, and incredibly fortunate to have students like.

“My name is Saori Kojima. My family came from Japan about four years ago for my husband’s job, an overseas assignment.

Eau Claire was our first place to live abroad. Life here is different from the ‘America’ I saw in Japan, but I like it very much because the people are nice and very kind, the nature is beautiful, and living and driving are safe.

A big part of what made me feel this way was Family Literacy. I would like to share my experience of it with you today.

We arrived in June 2017, and everything we did was new. It was both interesting and confusing. I was always filled with questions. For example, is the toilet left open when not in use? Is it true kids can chew gum while they take a test? How far can I go with my shoes in the house? What does it mean when people tear the wrapping

paper roughly when they get a present? How can we join Halloween? What is common sense?

A big concern was to get friends for my kids, who couldn’t understand English. To imagine my kids alone was heartbreaking.

So, I thought I needed to be a good English speaker for us to get a better life. Then I heard about Family Literacy. The fact that Family Literacy offers child care was one of the deciding factors for me. Child care offered my son the opportunity to make friends and learn some English.

Family Literacy helped me learn English. Although I did learn some English in Japan, it was not at all practical for surviving in Eau Claire.

I needed practical English for life. When I had questions about different cultural issues, I asked teachers or assistants during breaks or after class. The topic was solved immediately. Sometimes it became the class theme and was discussed with classmates.

Family Literacy also gave us tours of the public library, special classes for medicine and children’s dental care. It was helpful and I learned a lot of cultural differences there.

Family literacy is an international atmosphere. It was very interesting to hear about other countries from my classmates, such as Mexico, Laos, Central America, Africa, China, Thailand and Europe.

SCRABBLEBEE SPEAKER

We learned about other educational systems, different governments, history, immigration and most common names.

Family Literacy pays attention to the individual students' background and personalities. It responds to them in many ways.

The teachers and assistants listened attentively, understood our thoughts and feelings of what we wanted to speak but couldn't, and found the words hidden in our jumbled pronunciation and shared them with us. Thanks to their help, we students were able to know each other better and become closer.

Family Literacy is flexible. Last year, our life was suddenly forced to change, shutting down society because of Covid. My family was stuck at home, as was everyone. With less information, I sometimes was under stress. Family Literacy offered online classes which helped me continue to gain information like 'what is happening here? What should I do now?' while continuing to learn English.

Fortunately, in September 2017, I came across Family Literacy. By becoming one of the Family Literacy members, I was able to make connections with society. The teachers and assistants always welcomed me warmly, sometimes greeted me in Japanese, and always

told me it is ok to be me.

Not only did they connect the Japanese and English, they also connected me to life in America, life here, and made it stronger.

Now, I feel that living here is becoming more and more comfortable every day. I feel that I am becoming a member of the community. I can't thank Family Literacy enough for the care I received beyond language.

I have a dream. I want to be a person who helps foreigners, when I go back to Japan some day.

Thank you."



“The teachers and assistants always welcomed me warmly, sometimes greeted me in Japanese, and always told me it is ok to be me.”

OTHER EVENTS

Celebrate Writing Book:

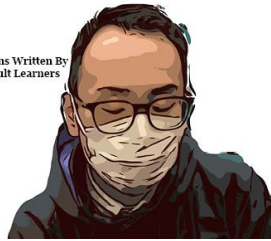
Each year Literacy Chippewa Valley students are given the opportunity to be published in a book of student writings.



Learning Through Adversity

“Learning Through Adversity” was the theme for this year’s book. Students wrote creative writing stories and poems dealing with the experience of being incarcerated, overcoming addiction, or losing family members.

Reflections Written By Our Adult Learners



These experiences were compounded by the continuing Covid 19 pandemic, a situation that made life difficult for everyone, particularly our learners in correctional facilities throughout the area.

We’re proud of all our students, and Celebrate Writing gives them a chance to show the world how far they’ve come.



Agnes Table

Staff and Board Members prepped and served dinner at Agnes Table in Chippewa Falls in March of 2022.

Haiku's by Daniel Brooks (Celebrate Writing 2021)

This distance hurts me
A divide brought between
Hearts reach, never touch

Time, always flowing.
Never enough when wanted.
Fleeting when needed.

Why run away scared?
I face danger like a fool.
Who can take my laughs?



Receiving a donation from The Chippewa Candy Store

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.

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