

2013 - 2014 | **ANNUAL REPORT**



READ. LEARN. GROW.



**LITERACY
VOLUNTEERS**
OF GREATER HARTFORD

Letter from the **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Dear friends,

It was Wednesday morning, and I was eavesdropping on the class in Room 2. "Your turn," I heard the tutor say, "Just give it a try." His voice was small and cautious. I could see his mouth carefully forming the words he was sounding out in his head. He got some right, some wrong. Slowly, he made his way through the sentence, punctuating it with a broad grin and sigh of relief.

Motivated by my son's move to Brazil, last fall I enrolled in a Portuguese class we host at LVGH for the Brazilian Consulate. I haven't been to school in decades, but neither had any of my fellow classmates. "Your turn," the teacher said to me, and I quietly mispronounced, "Meu nome é Carol, e o seu?" Ending my first Portuguese sentence smiling and relieved, I thought about that class in Room 2, and truly understood for the first time what it's like to be one of our students. It's scary.

Learning is about taking risks. Learning is uncomfortable. Learning is choosing to be vulnerable to failure. It's hard work, but like most things, it's easier when done within a caring community that's rooting for you. A community like the one we've built here at LVGH.

As an agency, we are also always learning. This past year we took stock of what we know and what we need to learn, in the form of developing a strategic plan. Students, tutors, donors, staff, community leaders, even our "competitors" weighed in on the plan that will guide the agency through the next three years. We learned that we are doing most things well, have some new material to master, and that we have an amazing community, both within LVGH and outside it, that's cheering us on to succeed.



One area we will continue to work on is figuring out the best way to teach digital literacy skills, both to our students and tutors. We've tried some things. Some have worked, some haven't. We learned that to do this well, we need new and expanded resources. Guided by research

in best practices, and with support from our generous donor community, we are continuing to develop a Digital Literacy program that propels our students toward the goals they have set for themselves, and teaches our tutors the digital skills and strategies they need to support that learning.

Also inspired by the strategic plan, we will be moving our Wickham Center in East Hartford to a new location at the New Covenant United Methodist Church. Just a tenth of a mile from its former home at the Wickham Library, the program will now have what we know supports a quality learning environment: classrooms, accessibility, and strong community partnerships. In addition to the church and library, we will be strengthening our partnership with East Hartford Adult Education, with whom we will share this space. Together, we will offer students the full range of adult education services, and likely develop some creative, new learning opportunities as well.

With increasing enrollment and high student success rates, it would be easy simply to maintain the status quo, not try something new, not take the risk of learning how we might do things even better. But we're very fortunate to have a community who believes in us, supports us, cheers us on; and, like a teacher, encourages us to grow in ways we may not have imagined. Thank you for being that community, and for joining us in our mission to create a fully literate Greater Hartford.

Carol "CJ" Hauss
Executive Director

WHAT'S COMING IN 2014 - 2015?

Digital Literacy

This year, we are continuing our work to fully integrate digital literacy into our programming. Your support will help us to purchase new computers and software, ensuring that students are learning with up-to-date technology. All classes will spend a part of class in the lab each week, and our digital literacy tutors will also be offering separate workshops on a variety of topics relevant to our students' interests and needs. Together, we will help our students to build the entire range of basic skills they need to succeed in the 21st century workplace.

Expanded Class Hours and Schedules

During our strategic planning process last year, which included focus groups with students, tutors, and community partners, one message was received loud and clear: students want more instruction time! Starting this fall, most classes will run for an additional half-hour to give students more time in the classroom. Also, as our enrollment continues to grow, we'll be offering more classes at different times of day to accommodate the growing number of adults who need our services. Be sure to check out our website to view our updated class schedule!

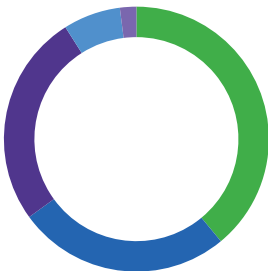
Moving Up in East Hartford

As of August 2014, our Wickham Literacy Center in East Hartford has moved to the educational wing of the New Covenant United Methodist Church, located at 16 Church Street, East Hartford. We're thrilled to be able to offer our ESOL students and tutors from east of the river separate, modern classrooms and more space for learning.

FY 2013 - 2014

Income Sources

(unaudited)



Private Grants	\$222,000
Government Grants	\$147,750
Fundraising Activities	\$145,000
United Way	\$40,000
Miscellaneous	\$11,000

194

194 volunteers
donated over
10,000 hours
of instruction
(average of 52
hours per tutor)

865

865 students
served in
2013-14

2013 - 2014

VOLUNTEERS

They tutor students, staff our computer lab, help with communications and fundraising, and lead us into the future on our Board of Directors.



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"LVGH is a safe place where there is always the time to ask. No one will judge you for not knowing; no one will rush by you. There's so much positive energy here. And so much gratitude! Our students don't even let us erase the board. They insist on helping, giving back in any way they can. And we, the tutors, are so grateful: to hear their voices, to see their faces, to feel their struggles and to witness their accomplishments... so grateful to be crossing these thresholds together."

-Edlyn Blitzer,
 Basic Literacy tutor
 and Annual Gala
 keynote speaker

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53

53 students entered a high school completion program, job training or college/post-secondary education

8

8 students earned U.S. Citizenship

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We are so grateful to the volunteers, board members, and friends over the years who have chosen to leave a lasting legacy by making bequest provisions in their wills to LVGH. This is an exceptional group of individuals determined to keep working towards a stronger, more resilient, fully literate Greater Hartford for as long as it takes.

You can join this special group by pledging to include LVGH in your will with a gift in any amount. By setting aside a little something for LVGH in your estate plans now, you will help to ensure that all adults in our region have the opportunity to build critical skills and improve their lives for years to come.



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The Farmington Club, April 5, 2014

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