

## Mayor Kenney Comes to CFL

Mayor Jim Kenney came to Center for Literacy on March 1 to celebrate the grand opening of The Mayor's Commission on Literacy Commission's fifth *myPLACE*<sup>sm</sup> campus at CFL. *myPLACE*<sup>sm</sup>, which stands for "Philadelphia Literacy and Adult Career Education," started two years ago as a way to build the capacity to serve adults who are seeking adult education in Philadelphia. CFL is proud to join the four other campuses: Philadelphia Prison Systems, Community Learning Center, Congreso de Latinos Unidos and District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund.

At the event Kenney spoke passionately about the need for our services. "We are one of the poorest big cities in America and a lot of it has to do with education and literacy," Kenney said. "Adult education is absolutely critical to building a stronger city and I am proud to support the work of The Mayor's Commission on Literacy."

The other star for the event was Omar Diaz, who came to CFL a month ago through the *myPLACE*<sup>sm</sup> program. Diaz immigrated to the United States from Honduras in 2010. "When I first came to the United States I thought that I would find a good job right away. But that didn't happen because I didn't speak English at all, and did not have much work experience. My first job was in Philadelphia in a restaurant as a dishwasher, and earning little money which was not enough to support myself." Diaz came to CFL's *myPLACE*<sup>sm</sup> campus and scored high enough to enter the on-line course, *Introduction to Adult Learning and Careers*. After that he will enroll in an advanced ESL class to improve his English. The next step will be classes in adult basic education. His education goal is to get his GED and then go to college to study computer science.

After Diaz spoke Kenney told Diaz in front of the crowd, "Your English is much better than my Spanish," adding that his first job was also as a dishwasher.

Other speakers included Diane C. Inverso, executive director and associate directors Jennifer Kobrin and Naomie Nyanungo of The Mayor's Commission on Literacy; Michael Westover, president and CEO, Center for Literacy; and Brendan Conlin, vice president of education and workforce services, Congreso de Latinos Unidos.

*myPLACE*<sup>sm</sup> has served over 9,000 people from 89 countries who speak 29 languages. A full two-thirds are women, and 65 percent of participants have a child in a Philadelphia school. Half of the learners enter the program at a 6<sup>th</sup>-grade reading level or below.