



# Center for Literacy

*Learning for Life*

Teach adults to read.  
Create lasting change.

2014-2015 ANNUAL REPORT



Wanda Montgomery  
 What does this class and CFL means  
 to me?

This class and CFL means to me...  
 Its the begining of an opportunity  
 and chance to enhance my reading  
 skills. It is giving me a better chance  
 to get a college degree. And giving  
 my parents and children the assurance  
 that I will have a good life in a  
 Social work career.

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# Dear Friends,

This was a year of planning and creating new partnerships. At the same time, we were able to increase the number of students served and provide more comprehensive services.

With the strength of our staff, our dedicated volunteer tutors, and the generosity of our donors, we were able to serve 1,602 learners. A new outreach campaign spread the word about our services throughout the city, which resulted in a 20 percent increase of students who came to Center for Literacy compared to last year.

Case management and career coaching services were also expanded this year, reaching 263 learners, a 50 percent increase compared to last year. We now have three learning coaches who are responsible for our case management and career coaching, helping our students to improve their academic, social and professional outcomes.

We continue to offer classes in adult basic education, GED prep, English as a second language, and job readiness training. Instruction is also provided to youth and their families in collaboration with community-based organizations. Our tutoring program remains a vital part of our programming, hosting tutoring in small group and in one-on-one sessions.

We were able to plan with board members and staff to become a Career Pathways agency, which will increase job opportunities to our students. Under this new model we will be able to better link education and training services that will enable our learners to advance over time to successively higher levels of education and employment in a given industry or occupational sector.

In June 2015, we were approved by the Mayor's Commission on Literacy to become a "myPLACE<sup>SM</sup> campus," joining Congreso, Community Learning Center and District 1199C to enroll and set appointments for adult learners, while assuring that their needs are being met. We also joined the KEYSPOt Network, now offering free computer use, Internet access and training to the public.

We are deeply grateful to our new partners; our donors, old and new; to our dedicated board of trustees; to our tutors for their many hours of service; to our committed staff; and to our friends who contribute in many other ways to improve the lives of our students and their families.

With greatest appreciation,



*Peggy*

Peggy Leimkuhler  
Chair, Board of Trustees



*Michael*

Michael Westover  
President and CEO

**CENTER FOR LITERACY EMPOWERS  
ADULTS WITH THE KNOWLEDGE AND  
SKILLS TO SUCCEED IN POSTSECONDARY  
EDUCATION, TO COMPETE IN THE 21ST  
CENTURY ECONOMY, TO ACTIVELY  
ENGAGE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES AND TO  
SUPPORT THE EDUCATIONAL  
ATTAINMENT OF THEIR CHILDREN.**

# Center for Literacy Serves Those in Need...

37% of adults  
in Philadelphia are considered  
**low literate**



82% of CFL students  
read at **6th grade level or below**

38% of those living  
in poverty in Philadelphia  
**lack a high school degree**



55% of CFL students  
**live in poverty**

In 2020, 65% of jobs  
will require education  
**beyond high school**



60% of CFL students  
are unemployed and  
**available for work**



...and disrupts the cycle of poverty.

120 volunteer  
tutors

spent 6,061 service  
hours



66 hours  
of instruction per  
enrolled student,  
on average



1,602  
students

391 students

raised their literacy skills  
by at least one grade level

383 students entered employment

43 community  
classes

in Adult Basic Education (ABE),  
GED test preparation, English as  
a Second Language (ESL),  
Out-of-School Youth, Family  
Literacy, at Mastery Charter  
School and  
at EDSI



380 students

achieved U.S. citizenship skills

Above figures are from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015.

# Successful Students



## MELVIN EDWARDS

One would think that not passing the GED test in math by one point would be frustrating. Not for Melvin Edwards, who continued to take classes three or four days a week as part of the CFL's Family Literacy Program. With support from his learning coach, he landed a job as a cook at Movie Tavern in Flourtown, PA. Melvin believes it is a perfect fit for him. **"I work hard and can grow with the company."**

## RONALD ERNST

A recovering addict, Ronald Ernest, 60, came to CFL in April 2014. He is determined to get his GED and is now taking classes two days a week to improve his writing and reading. Ronald has moved up two levels in reading, from 7.5 grade to 9.1 grade. He travels to the CFL on his bike, a 40 minute ride from West Philadelphia, to work in the computer lab before classes start. Before he got a bike he walked to the CFL, a two and half hour walk. His goal is to get his GED and then to enter a trade school where he can work as an electrician or as an auto repair technician.



## ANISHA JEAN-LOUIS

**"I was knocked down so many times. I took my talents for granted. Before I came to the CFL I had quit mentally and didn't believe in myself. When I landed at the CFL I had teachers, support staff and students encouraging me on. They believed in me."** Anisha Jean-Louis received her GED from CFL and attended Newark Young Adults Pre-Apprenticeship Program, sponsored by New Jersey Health Care Employers District 1199J.

## TAMIKA MCCLARY

When Tamika McClary was laid-off after 14 years as a customer service representative at an insurance company she seized the opportunity to get her GED. While at CFL she also received assistance with her job search. Tamika is now employed by a temporary staffing company where she has been assigned a clerical job that is close to her home in Darby, PA. Despite the long commute — one hour from her job to get to CFL — she continued to take GED classes in the evenings.



## FILOMENA FERNANDES SANTOS

When Filomena Fernandes Santos started to take classes at CFL she spoke Portuguese and a little English. **"Studying in class has helped me in many ways such as improving my skills in pronunciation, vocabulary, and understanding what the teacher says. At the beginning I was too scared to get close to people because I was not able to understand what they were saying. Today, I feel more comfortable when someone speaks to me, I am able to observe and answer."** Filomena's goal is to become an American citizen.



# Learning Together

**There's a story behind each interaction between our volunteer tutors and adult learners. Individualized instruction offers the chance to connect beyond a lesson plan. Sometimes all it takes is an ally to accomplish life's goals.**

**Laura McNamara** has always had a fondness for public libraries and adult literacy. When she got her master's degree in 2007 in library sciences from Clarion University the classes were held at the Free Library's central location. She found the Mayor's Commission on Literacy (MCOL), then located at the Free Library, volunteering with different students each time. From MCOL she went on to Center for Literacy (CFL) and was assigned a student in March 2015.

As an "electronic resources librarian" at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital Laura McNamara knows computers and libraries. She put both skills to work — technology and the love of the written word — to help student James Zuber improve his reading and writing, and to show him how to better use his smart phone.

When James bought a new smart phone, Laura helped him learn how to use the features, including how to text and how to access the Internet. He enjoys texting positive messages. "I am now doing things that I never thought I ever would do," says James.

Laura calls James "one of the most motivated people that I have ever met. I'm in awe of his work ethic. His reading has improved, from memorizing words to breaking down the words into sounds. Now he can pronounce words that he didn't know before . . . He does a lot a work outside of our sessions."

James realized in 12th grade that he had a reading disability. He ended up dealing drugs and was in jail

for 10 years. Growing up in North Philadelphia, his family was always a big supporter and prayed for him. He changed his life for the better in 2005 and now, at age 46, he has a good full-time job on an assembly line "catching" boxes that fast food restaurants use to put the food in. He sees his nine-year old son daily and they read together. He would love to work for the City of Philadelphia as a sanitation worker or a laborer.

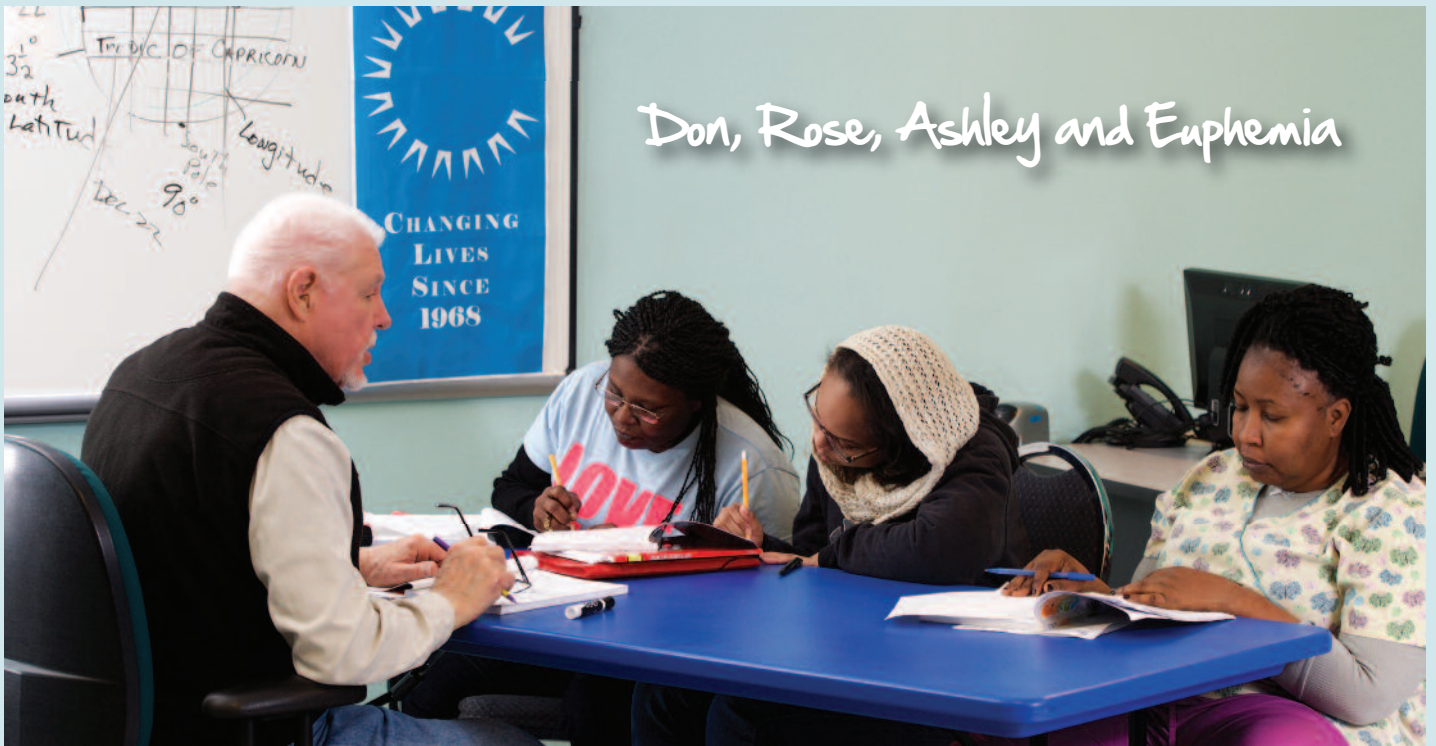
James feels blessed to get the tutoring and one of the exercises that he did with Laura was to write an essay for his church to become a deacon:



*"I thank God For Blessing me to be A Deacon in the Church. I Feel Good about myself that The Lord Gave me a third Chance. My Mother Prayed For me to Get My life in Order and told me that iF I don't get my life together I will go back to Jail. My Sister stayed on my back and I Had to make a change and I asked myself do I want to live or die. Then I went to church and The*

*Lord Blessed my mind and I got Baptised in the name of Jesus. The Lord Blessed me to become A Deacon in the Church. I thank Jesus For Blessing My mind."*

Laura values the opportunities that she received early in her career and wants to give back to the community. James and Laura now spend two evenings a week at CFL.



Don, Rose, Ashley and Euphemia

**Don Simmons'** first job after college was to teach English and French to high school students in Long Beach, California. While a teacher, he used his French speaking and reading skills and signed on to be a tour guide for the National Education Association (NEA), taking NEA members around the world. "I toured in over 100 countries, in all seven continents, including Antarctica," he said.

After teaching for 14 years he decided that he was ready for a change. "It was a quite a leap," he recalled, to give up teaching, California and enter the corporate world.

He moved to Philadelphia and worked at Strawbridge & Clothier as a personnel manager for six years, then became a bank corporate trainer in 1983 at First Pennsylvania Bank, now Wells Fargo. Don retired from the bank after 21 years and began looking for other opportunities.

While he loved traveling, he wanted to do more to help the community. He spotted an article in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* about a retired dentist who was volunteering at Center for Literacy (CFL) and thought volunteering at CFL would be a good fit for him.

Not only was it a good match for Don, volunteering at CFL turned out to be an excellent choice for the students that he began to tutor. Rose Hopkins' fear of reading vanished after several sessions with Don. "Before I came to CFL I told myself I would never be able to read. I'm no longer afraid. Now, I'm on a roll for improvement. I no longer have a fear of reading."

"Any money that is spent to support CFL for someone to arrive at the point that they can overcome the fear of reading and writing is worth every penny spent. That is the reward that I get, for someone to overcome their fears," said Don.

Don asked to tutor a small group of students instead of having the usual one-on-one sessions. In addition to Rose, he tutors Euphemia Yormie and Ashley Wilson twice a week. He sets up a situation which he describes as "an environment in which the learners will value the learning themselves. I show interest, put the burden of learning on the students." He has been tutoring all three for over a year.

For the first time, Euphemia was recently able to fill out a job application on her own. Rose did not realize that she is very good at math. Ashley, who has a high school diploma and needs to beef up her math skills, plans in three months to go to Community College of Philadelphia or take on-line college classes, and study early childhood education.

"The highest compliment is that they come to class," said Don. Euphemia, who is from Liberia and has four children, comes to tutoring after a 12-hour evening shift as a certified nursing assistant. Ashley works two part-time jobs, then comes to tutoring. Rose takes a bus part-way, then walks to her sessions.

Despite these hardships, the doors at CFL will always be open for Rose, Euphemia and Ashley to pursue their dreams.

# Tutors 2014-2015

**WE THANK OUR TUTORS FOR THEIR COMMITMENT AND COMPASSION.**

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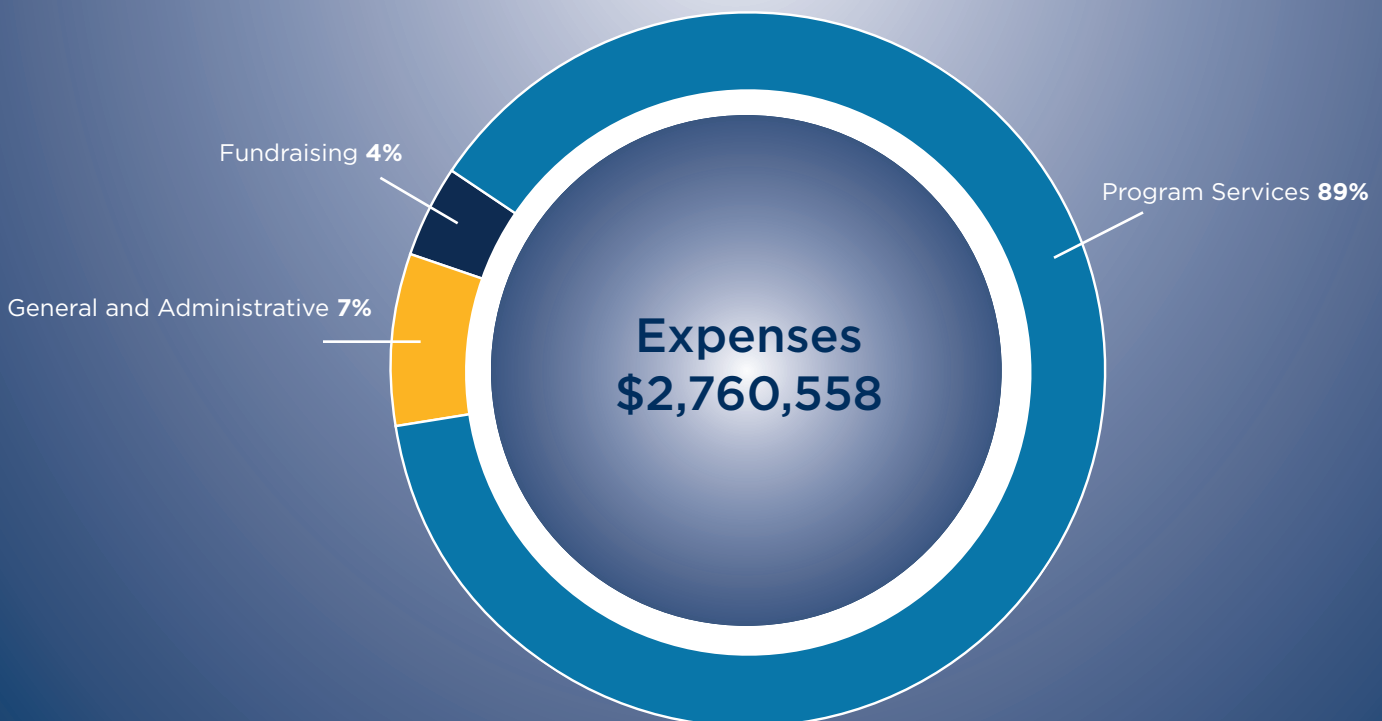
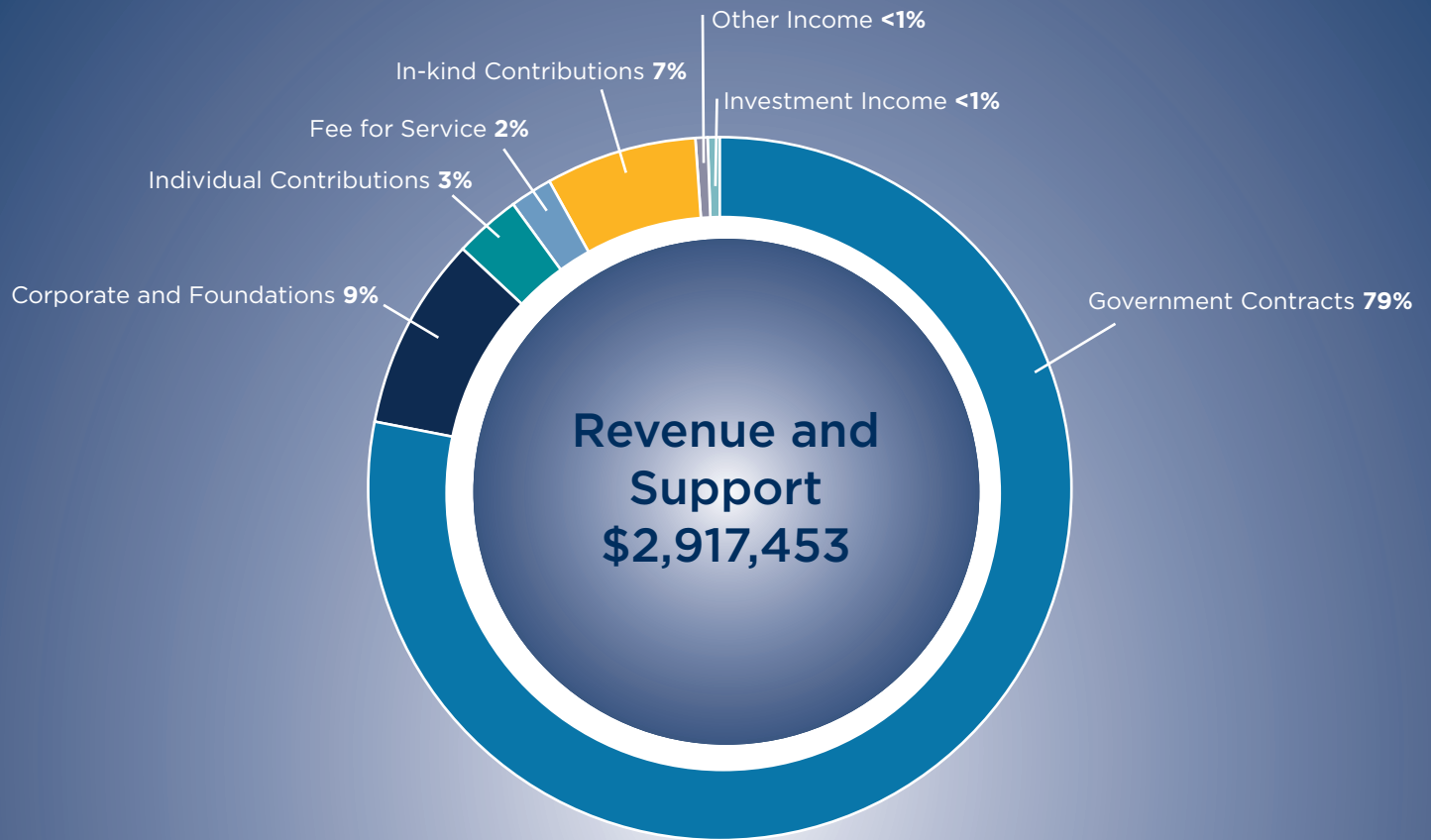
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(FY JULY 1, 2014 TO JUNE 30, 2015)



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