



The Word on Literacy

Greater Baton Rouge Literacy Coalition
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www.gbrliteracy.org

Winter 2009

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Our Mission

The Greater Baton Rouge Literacy Coalition is dedicated to promoting adult literacy through the creation, maintenance, and sustainability of an integrated, cohesive and well-managed system that supports literacy service providers.

First Local Literacy Week Unites Students, Instructors and Community in Call to Action!

Mayor Kip Holden congratulates adult literacy students Buster Burns and Gearldine Scott, who shared their stories of struggle and triumph at the Leading the Way to Literacy breakfast.



More on Literacy Week at:
www.gbrliteracy.org!

Read the student anthology and watch the Leading the Way to Literacy video (on home page). Also, view the Literacy Week Photo Album (in Press Room) or click the direct link at end of this article!

The greater Baton Rouge community enthusiastically demonstrated their support for local adult students by dining out and buying books during Literacy Week, November 29 – December 7, 2008. Originally scheduled for the first week in September, Literacy Week was rescheduled due to Hurricane Gustav's landing in Baton Rouge. GBRLC's Barnes & Noble Bookfair and Entrée to Literacy fundraiser at Casa Maria Restaurant on Bluebonnet, Counter Culture, Fish City Grill, Fresh Salads and Wraps, Louie's Café, and the Steakhouse at Hollywood Casino generated funds to support literacy services. As part of the Entrée to Literacy Fundraiser, restaurant patrons were introduced to GBRLC through table tents describing the need for adult literacy services and the resources in the Baton Rouge area. Other Literacy Week events included a poetry reading, the release of GBRLC's first student anthology, and two dyslexia simulations, all at Barnes & Noble, CitiPlace.

Literacy Week culminated in the Leading the Way to Literacy Breakfast at Boudreaux's, where 130 guests viewed the premiere of a video featuring fourteen local leaders discussing the community impact of illiteracy. GBRLC staff and Board of Directors extend their thanks to sponsors Cox Communications, Albemarle Corporation, ExxonMobil, and Wal-Mart Supercenter, O'Neal Lane. They also appreciate the many Stakeholders whose contributions enhanced the experience of Literacy Week for adult learners and instructors. With greater community awareness, GBRLC hopes to reduce the stigma associated with low literacy and to support those in need of services as they gain greater self-sufficiency and confidence.

GBRLC seeks Literacy Week 2009 Sponsors and Restaurants!

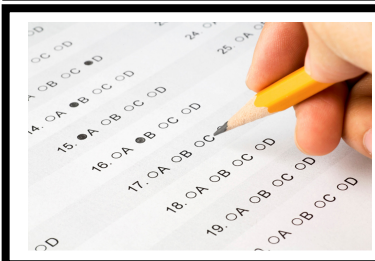
To learn more, visit The Press Room at www.gbrliteracy.org, email Debbie O'Connor at Debbie@brac.org or call 381-7141.

Direct link to Literacy Week Album: http://www.gbrliteracy.org/opendocument.asp?file=Literacy_Week_Photo_Album.pdf&Id=75

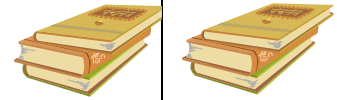
Provider Summit Reinforces Strength of Coalition

GBRLC Executive Committee and GBRLC Executive Director Debbie O'Connor met with the directors and board leadership of service providers Adult Literacy Advocates, Catholic Charities, Literacy Works, St. Paul's Adult Learning Center, and YWCA Center for Family Empowerment, for a Provider Summit on Oct. 16 at St. Luke's Church. The seventeen participants reviewed GBRLC's history, mission, and community-wide Literacy Plan. The group discussed current initiatives designed to expand student access to online literacy resources and to enable providers to track student data. GBRLC partners agreed that communication regarding best practices will enhance services offered to adult literacy students, and that better utilization of the data management system will help guide ongoing program improvement. GBRLC board members enjoyed the opportunity to meet with the service providers and invited providers to join GBRLC Board Directors for their annual retreat in February.

Thank You to St. Luke's Episcopal Church on Goodwood Blvd. for hosting Provider Summit!



New funding Enables GBRLC to Add Four New Sites of Instruction



GBRLC has been named the fiscal agent for new Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) funding. This funding, awarded by the LA Department of Education, has made it possible to establish four new literacy programs. With additional support from JP Morgan Chase, four GBRLC providers will administer services at the following new sites:

- **The Dream Center on Winbourne Avenue**, managed by Adult Literacy Advocates
- **New Beginnings Baptist Church in Zion City**, managed by the YWCA

- **East Baton Rouge Parish Housing Authority at the Thomas Delpit Community Center**, managed by Literacy Works

- **The Pipefitters' Local Union 198**, managed by St. Paul Adult Learning Center

Partnerships such as these allow GBRLC to expand both the number of those served as well as the number of sites available, advancing GBRLC's goal of reaching and serving more adult learners in the geographical areas of greatest need.

To Enroll in a Literacy Program:

► Please call 381-7141 or email Debbie@brac.org.

To View Geographical Areas of Highest Need:

► Please visit www.gbrliteracy.org. Under About Us, Service Provided, view the map showing **seven Baton Rouge census tracts** where more than half of residents aged 18-24 have not earned a high school diploma.

GBRLC Earns LANO's Seal of Excellence

GBRLC is proud to announce that it has been awarded the Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations Seal of Excellence, designating compliance with the Louisiana Standards for Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code

for the Nonprofit Sector. As part of this voluntary certification program, GBRLC exposed itself to a rigorous review of its activities and management practices. Organizations bearing the Seal of Excellence go beyond the minimum

requirements set forth by government regulation. Areas receiving special commendation for excellence in nonprofit management included GBRLC's strategic plan and the internal controls associated with its financial policy.

Career ConnectED Program Pairs Literacy Tutors with Students in Pilot Program

In a collaborative project between Louisiana Technical College (LTC), the East Baton Rouge Parish School System, the Baton Rouge Area Chamber, Baton Rouge Area Foundation, Career Builders, and the Greater Baton Rouge Literacy Coalition, a pilot group of middle and high school students visit the LTC campus three times a week. As students who have been unable to pass the LEAP test, they are considered "overage" and at risk for dropping out. This pilot project provides students with vo-tech classes, career exploration opportunities, and tutoring on the LTC campus.

committed group of volunteers and matched them with students. The training focused on how to work with the students at their particular academic levels, while using materials relevant to their job-related goals. Because the project provides opportunity for the students to explore careers in high-demand industries, volunteers were also recruited for their potential to serve as mentors, offering real-life information on their fields.

"Besides the real help my student requires with his academic skills, I am viewing this entire exercise in a broader context, namely, **'How do we galvanize the broader industry?'**"

For the tutoring component of the project, Adult Literacy Advocates trained a

- Volunteer Detlev Schlorke, General Manager of U.S. Composite Pipe South

Stay Current with local Literacy Initiatives!

Visit www.gbrliteracy.org for our events calendar, list of providers, training and meeting calendar, statistics and strategies, membership registration, and more!

Join Us in Supporting our local Adult Literacy Service Providers:

Become a 2009 Coalition Member for \$25 (free for students!)

Email Debbie at Debbie@brac.org to receive a membership form!

Share GBRLC website with your friends, family, and colleagues!

Print literacy awareness information on your business' marketing materials!

Volunteer as a reading partner for an adult or struggling youth!

Offer space to hold classes at your business or house of worship!

Serve on the Coalition's Marketing or Fundraising Committee!

Help a youth group organize a fundraiser!

Purchase two GED tests for an adult literacy student for \$100!

GBRLC is a nonprofit organization and financial contributions are tax-deductible.

LA Eportal Training Introduces Providers to Innovative Career Planning Resource

In August, GBRLC Stakeholders gathered at the Claiborne Building to receive instruction in utilizing the resource, www.laeportal.com.

The website, which is designed to help elementary age students through adults, is the result of collaboration among the Louisiana Board of Regents, the Louisiana Department of Education, the Louisiana Workforce Commission, and Louisiana colleges, universities, technical schools.

Students can use the website to explore their career choices and to find resources to help them prepare for employment in their fields of interest.

The website allows users to create an account, to track their progress, to update their resume, and to access contact information for potential employers.

GBRLC board member, Dr. Lisa Vosper, Associate Commissioner for Workforce Development and Training for the Louisiana Board of Regents, presented the training.

Dr. Vosper emphasized that the website can assist adult learners who would like to pursue education that can lead to higher-paying jobs.

Mary Stein, Assistant Director at East Baton Rouge Parish Main Library, said, "This is a terrific product. It will be very useful for people of so many ages and abilities. Not only is the generic information that is available to all who enter the portal a wonderful resource, it is a tremendous asset to have each student's profile grow and follow them into adulthood."

Tracking Student Progress- A Collaborative Endeavor

GBRLC's principal providers record student data in LACES (Literacy, Adult and Community Education System). This data management system tracks all federally-mandated performance and outcome indicators required by the Workforce Investment Act and the Adult Education Act. Data tracked includes demographic information, instructional hours, assessments, educational gains, and goal attainment.

With this data, GBRLC providers can better plan targeted instruction for their students, explain to the community the demographics of those enrolled in adult literacy programs, and apply for funding from state and federal resources. Because GBRLC maintains a centralized "hub" of this data management system, it is possible to analyze data across service providers for the purpose of ongoing program improvement.

In its recent publication, *Guide to Performance Management for Community Literacy Coalitions*, the National Institute for Literacy references

the Quality and Accountability initiatives included in GBRLC's Literacy Plan. It is in this section of the Plan that GBRLC identifies a centralized data management system as a priority. The use of a centralized system is considered "cutting-edge" for literacy coalitions. In fact, GBRLC is one of just two coalitions using such a mechanism to track performance.

With funding from the Huey and Angelina Wilson Foundation, GBRLC purchased the LACES system and trained local service providers.

Providers using the system include:

- Adult Literacy Advocates**
- Catholic Charities**
- Literacy Works**
- LSU Independent and Distance Learning**
- St. Paul Adult Learning Center**
- YWCA Center for Family Empowerment**



Adult Literacy Service Providers are listed at www.gbrliteracy.org

and can be searched by services provided and zip codes served!

Adult Literacy Providers offer:

- Adult Basic Education**
- GED**
- High School Diploma**
- ESL**
- Workplace Literacy**
- Life Skill Training**
- Family Literacy**
- Computer Literacy**

Thank you from a Board Member!

“The Greater Baton Rouge Literacy Coalition thanks the community for their continued support in our fight to reduce the illiteracy rate in our state.

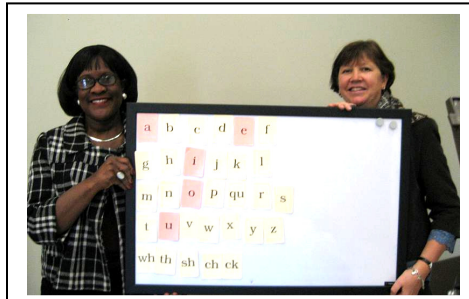
We will be successful because of you.”

Myrtle E. B. Dorsey, Ph.D.
Chancellor
Baton Rouge Community College

Rotary Club Wine and Chocolate Fundraiser Raises \$1,426 for GBRLC!

Held at the City Club, the event was sponsored by The Baton Rouge Rotary Club. The Rotary Club was instrumental in founding GBRLC and continues to offer tremendous support.

Wilson Training Prepares Adult Education Teachers for Multisensory Student Instruction



GBRLC’s Shelia Chavis and Wilson Language Trainer Ann Pearce display phoneme and digraph cards.

Adult literacy instructors earned 15 hours of professional development in January by participating in a Wilson Reading System Applied Methods Workshop. When GBRLC surveyed providers last year about their training needs, they all identified a critical need for new methods to address learning disabilities. With funding from the Powell Group Fund, GBRLC was able to deliver the Wilson Language workshop to meet this need. (More at www.wilsonlanguage.com)

The systematic presentation associated with the Wilson System ensures that students of all ages and learning styles master reading basics before advancing to new materials. The System is based upon 90 minute multisensory sessions, five times per week, and includes reading comprehension, spelling, and writing in each session. Wilson Trainer Ann Pearce assisted the adult literacy instructors at the training with adapting sessions to meet the needs, and availabilities, of adult and out-of-school youth. For future support, Ann encouraged registration with the Wilson Academy, which provides on-going support from Wilson staff as well as access to instructional materials and additional resources. Workshop participant Debbie Launey, who teaches adults through East Baton Rouge Parish, thanked GBRLC for providing all necessary materials to begin instruction using Wilson Reading System.

New Format for Monthly Stakeholders’ Meetings Fills Gap in Professional Development Opportunities for Adult Education

GBRLC’s monthly Stakeholder meetings at Carver Branch Library draw both adult literacy instructors and community supporters working to advance literacy. In 2009, these meetings will include training topics specific to the needs of adult literacy instructors. Topics include accreditation standards, comprehension strategies, using assistive technology, and program evaluation.

To become involved with the Stakeholders’ group, please email Debbie at Debbie@brac.org or call 381-7141. Stakeholder meeting dates and topics are listed in the Events Calendar at www.gbrliteracy.org.



Instructors and other stakeholders experience the sensation of dysgraphia during a learning disabilities simulation at the February meeting.

Welcome Shelia Chavis, new Retention Specialist!

GBRLC Retention Specialist, Shelia Chavis, taught at Baton Rouge and Tara High Schools before working with the Department of Education’s LATAAP program, training new teachers. Thanks to start-up funding from the Lamar Family Foundation, Shelia will work with GBRLC providers to improve student retention and transition to employment or post-secondary education.



Thank you to Dave Luecke!

After three years’ service on the Board of Directors for GBRLC, with two years serving as Chair, Dave Luecke is retiring from the Board as he begins a new opportunity with ExxonMobil in Canada. Willie Johnson, formerly Vice Chair, will serve as Chair.

Join us in the Big Read!

GBRLC Stakeholders are joining in the Baton Rouge community’s Big Read this spring by reading **A Lesson Before Dying**. Author **Ernest Gaines** is a nationally recognized writer from Louisiana.

For a list of events and of resources for schools, book clubs or other groups, visit www.ebr.lib.la.us or www.readonebook.org.