



TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH LITERACY

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



DurhamLiteracyCenter



DEAR FRIENDS,

We have made great changes and progress since our merger with Achievement Academy of Durham in July 2018. The merger has enabled us to seamlessly serve Durham's adults, whatever their literacy needs may be.

Chao Meng is one student who has taken advantage of our collective services over the years.

This August, Chao moved into his dorm room at UNC Chapel Hill. The story of how he got to UNC demonstrates his remarkable determination and resourcefulness. As a teenager, Chao left China by himself. When he eventually arrived in Durham, he knew what he wanted: a high school diploma and a college degree.



Chao on his first day at UNC

Chao worked every resource possible at Durham Literacy. He enrolled in our Adult Literacy and ESOL programs, while also studying at the Achievement Academy long before we merged. In 2016, Chao received his GED® with “College Ready” distinction and by 2018 he had passed the TOEFL exam and scored in the top 98th percentile on his SAT®. He enrolled in college classes at Durham Tech and received a 4.0 GPA his first semester. This year, Chao enrolled at UNC-Chapel Hill and is pursuing a degree in political science with a goal of working with international refugees.

Durham Literacy students, like Chao, have tremendous grit and persistence. We look forward to sharing many more stories like this as we continue evolving to meet the needs of the Durham community.



ONWARD!

Lizzie Ellis-Furlong
Executive Director

769

students
served
2018-19



23,362 hours of student instruction



235 volunteers
volunteered

9,010 hours



33

students
earned HSE
diploma



94

improved
a reading
level

58%

of ESOL students tested
improved a full reading level

100%

of high school equivalency
graduates are employed

**OVER 17,000 STUDENTS
SERVED SINCE 1985**

// FISCAL YEAR 2018-2019 FINANCIALS

Cash Revenue		Cash Expense	
Government Grants & Contracts	\$239,883	Adult Literacy	\$139,601
Individual Donations	\$151,754	ESOL	\$133,696
Corporate Donations	\$30,103	Youth HSE (AAD & YEP)	\$202,036
Foundations	\$330,691	Durham Detention Center	\$100,725
Other Funding	\$19,293	Fundraising	\$33,411
		Administrative	\$111,448
Total Revenue	\$771,724	Total Expenses	\$720,917

*unaudited figures; audit and/or 990 are available upon request





MISSION

We help adults meet their life goals by offering learner-centered educational opportunities.

VISION

All adults have the power to change their lives and their community through literacy.

S**udent-Centered:** We assess the needs of our learners and tailor our approach to address those needs.

U**pward:** Our goal is to help each student reach new heights and achieve success.

C**ollaboration:** We work together with our students, staff, board and community to achieve our mission.

C**ommunity:** We are all vital participants, supporting each other, within our organization and in society.

E**xcellence:** We hold ourselves accountable, seeking the highest level of learning and continuous improvement for ourselves and our students.

E**veryone:** We celebrate differences among our students, staff and volunteers.

D**etermination:** We are determined and resourceful in our efforts to achieve our goals.

// ADULT LITERACY



PAULA AND ANDREW TACKLE AN ASSIGNMENT TOGETHER

PAULA

Paula enrolled in the Adult Literacy Program in 2018. With the help of her tutor, Andrew, Paula has made consistent progress sounding out, reading, spelling, and defining unfamiliar words. “I understand things more when I read and when people talk to me. How I speak has changed, too. Before, I could think of the words and ideas I wanted to say, but I wasn’t sure how to pronounce them. Now I can say them. Sometimes, I hear myself say things, and I’m just shocked. I feel better about myself.”

The thing Paula appreciates most about her lessons is Andrew’s patience. “Andrew is very calm. The first time I came here I just broke down. I’ve tried so many times before. But Andrew took his time and was very patient. If I’m embarrassed, he gives me time to pull myself together. And he never gives me the answers when I make a mistake or when I am not sure. He makes me work for my answers. This makes me want to come every time.”

For Paula, the Durham Literacy Center is about more than just reading; she has felt “love and appreciation” in all her interactions here, and she wants others to enjoy the same support and success. Paula’s next goal is to earn her high school equivalency diploma in order to pursue a new career. She is currently considering going into counseling. Since she is always counseling family, she says she might as well take classes and do it professionally. In the meantime, Paula reads with her grandchildren and encourages them to spend time reading on their own. While she enjoys being their role model, “This time,” she says, “it’s for me!”

ANDREW

Andrew, who began volunteering at Durham Literacy in 2018, strives to keep his lessons with Paula relevant and engaging. They meet twice a week, rarely missing a session. “Despite all that is going on in her life, she always shows up, pouring all her energy into her lessons,” Andrew says.

The two have made great progress together. “Paula has more confidence. She doesn’t question herself so much now. There is an ease in her reading, and she’s developed a strong foundation,” Andrew reports. Andrew understands the value of being consistent, injecting creativity, and using every lesson as an opportunity to highlight successes. “I make sure to tell her I am impressed by something she’s done to keep her morale up.”

Andrew admires Paula for “how she’s navigated life, raising kids and grandchildren. I hope our lessons provide enrichment for her life, that she is better able to understand things, and that this can help take her to another level.”

“ The center helps adults who finished public schooling without ever mastering reading, or immigrants whose first language is not English, learn to read, to master English – to thrive in the modern economy. This is not just about warm fuzzy feelings. It is about economic development and community stability.”

Robert Ashley, former managing editor of the *Durham Herald-Sun*





A MOTHER & DAUGHTER LEARN ENGLISH TOGETHER

DORIS CALIX AND DORIS ERAZO

When Doris Calix visited the US in 2014, she didn't expect to meet her future husband while waiting for her return flight at RDU. She moved to Durham in 2015, after getting married, and her eldest daughter, Doris Erazo, joined her in 2018.

Mrs. Calix, who earned a university degree as an arts and vocational teacher in Honduras, has opened her own tailor shop here in the US. She started out with just "a single sewing machine and a happy face," but learning English has enabled her to expand her business to English-speaking clients.

Ms. Erazo was born and raised in Tegucigalpa and attended the National University of Honduras, where she earned a doctoral degree in dental surgery. She studied English in primary school and was exposed to English language music and videos from an early age, including one of her favorite bands, Green Day. After moving to Durham, Ms. Erazo signed up for ESOL classes so that she can improve her English in order to recertify as a dentist in the United States.

Mrs. Calix did not speak any English before she came to the US, and Ms. Erazo reports that, while it was difficult for her mom to start learning a new language, she is making great gains. Ms. Erazo is so proud of how hard her mom has worked. Now they text one another in English, motivate each other to attend class regularly, and discuss their lessons afterwards.

“DLC made my children feel comfortable to learn. As a thank you, my husband and I try to help as much as we can with whatever we can get our hands on. I’m thankful to DLC for giving my children another chance to finish their high school education and help them get into college.”

Martha Salinas, Board Member, ESOL student, and parent of 2 students in the YEP program



CANDICE BLOUNT

Candice is a native of Durham and is proud to call the “Bull City” her home. She served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Namibia, during which she taught English as a Second Language in a small village school. It was there that she fell in love with teaching ESL. Upon her return to the US, she became a volunteer teacher in Durham Literacy’s ESOL program, where she has served for several years.

Under Candice’s diligent tutelage, many students have made significant gains in their English language abilities. She recently received her Master of Arts in TESOL from Greensboro College and now works for the International Center for Language Studies. Sadly, these career and life changes mean she has to move on from her tenure at Durham Literacy. We will miss her and are so grateful for her service to Durham’s immigrants and refugees!



HELPING STUDENTS ON THEIR WAY TO COLLEGE & CAREER

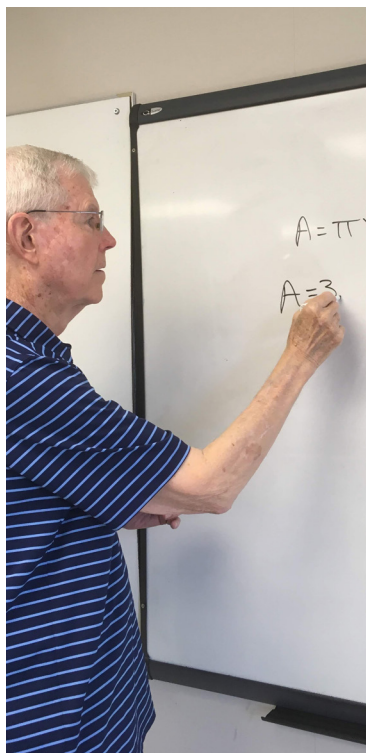
YOUSSOU

Youssou and his family moved from Senegal to Durham a few years ago. Although he previously earned his Senegalese high school diploma, the North Carolina college system did not accept it as an enrollment credential. Fortunately, the Youth Education Program (YEP) at Durham Literacy enabled him to study for his high school equivalency (HSE) diploma—his ticket to NC colleges—while also working long hours to support his family.

The English language was Youssou's main barrier to completing the HSE material. He speaks French and other languages fluently, making English his fifth! He already had a grasp of many of the HSE concepts, having learned them in Senegal, but needed to improve his English vocabulary and learn US social studies content to make it through the HSE tests.

As a YEP student, Youssou also enrolled in the NC Works NextGen program and was placed in an internship at a biochemical company. Although this was initially an entry-level position, Youssou's language abilities allowed him to do high-level translation work for conference calls and other company business. He made himself indispensable and soon secured long-term, living-wage employment.

Meanwhile, Youssou's English became more fluent and he began to pass HSE subject tests. Youssou passed his last test just in time to register for the fall semester at Wake Tech. He plans to transfer to NC State after two years, where he will pursue a degree in biochemical engineering.



BOB

Bob Breitweiser has been a YEP tutor for several years. Twice a week, he works with students on intermediate and advanced math in order to prepare them for their high school equivalency tests. Bob is steady and patient, and his efforts have helped several students increase their math skills and—just as important—their math confidence.

In addition to his work with YEP, Bob also serves as Chair of Durham Literacy's Board of Directors. It's great to have board members who are actively engaged with our programs and mission. Between these two volunteer roles, Bob has given countless hours of service and invaluable support to Durham Literacy's staff and students. Thank you, Bob!

“ I don't know what you did, but we never had a struggle with school when he was enrolled here. Being in this program was the first time he's enjoyed coming to school. ”

Mother of YEP Student





CLARY'S ENTHUSIASM FOR LEARNING SHOWS

CLARY

Clary has been pursuing her GED® at Achievement Academy since 2017. She is a teacher's dream student—the kind who is disappointed to learn about breaks from school because she always wants to be in the classroom! “The (Achievement Academy) teachers are fantastic and they make learning so much fun!” she says.

Clary never got a chance to attend public high school, but she is a tenacious and hard-working learner. “Achievement Academy is the perfect place for me to further my education and accomplish my goals,” she says. At home, school is a group effort. She found Achievement Academy with the help of her foster mom, Tannya, who encourages her to read and get in extra studying in her free time. So far, Clary has completed three out of four GED subjects, with only math left to complete her diploma.

As an animal lover, Clary seized the chance to participate in a paid summer internship at a local veterinary clinic through the NC Works NextGen program. Through her internship, she has learned valuable workplace skills and made new friends (both with and without fur!). Clary hopes to finish her final GED test by the end of 2019 so she can pursue a college degree and work in veterinary medicine or animal protection.

KAREN

Karen began tutoring at Achievement Academy shortly after moving to Durham a few years ago. As a former high school math teacher, she was looking for a way to keep up her skills and contribute to her community. Her knowledge, dedication, and generous spirit have been incredibly valuable to Achievement Academy's students and staff. Karen gives a few hours every week and specializes in helping those students who "hate math" to realize that it's not so bad after all.

Karen can often be found floating from student to student, available to lend a hand but not afraid to let students struggle through problems on their own. She even graciously agreed to substitute teach when Brett, Achievement Academy's math teacher, had to attend a conference. When there are no students for her to work with, she helps the teachers by organizing papers or making copies. Karen, we appreciate you!



// DURHAM COUNTY DETENTION FACILITY



GRIT AND DETERMINATION IN THE FACE OF BARRIERS

DWYLISHA

Once Dwylisha made up her mind to achieve her goal of obtaining her high school equivalency diploma, she didn't let the fact that she was incarcerated hold her back. She quickly passed all 5 of the subtests needed to graduate, with especially high scores in math and writing.

For our graduation ceremony at the jail, Dwylisha composed a wise and enthusiastic speech that impressed her instructors, peers, Sheriff's Department staff, and members of the Durham City Council. In it she remarked, "To us, this is not just a diploma or certificate. It's the start of a new beginning, it's the evidence of achievement. It gives us encouragement to change. It gives us back responsibility for our lives. It's the hope of a future better than our past. It's a way of loving ourselves. It's the light at the end of the tunnel."

Since then, Dwylisha has been released and is now reunited with her family. Her next goal is to become a peer support specialist so that she can help others who have struggled like she has. Dwylisha believes in the need for supportive people and programs to help individuals make positive change. As she put it, "I chose to take a bad situation and make something good out of it. That is something for every single person here, to change the negative to a positive. To do that, we need people like you to help make a difference, help push for the things we need. Help be our voice."

// GET INVOLVED

BECOME A VOLUNTEER!

DLC has opportunities for volunteers to become tutors, serve on board subcommittees, support students, complete special projects, and provide administrative help in our offices. **Learn more at www.durhamliteracy.org/volunteers.**

MAKE A DONATION!

Support our work to empower adults through literacy! Donations can be made online, via check, or via gifts of stock. **Learn more at www.durhamliteracy.org/donate.**

SPONSOR AN EVENT!

Sponsor DLC's fall author event or Leaders in Literacy Breakfast! Sponsors receive promotional benefits and additional perks. **Learn more at www.durhamliteracy.org/sponsorship.**

**Thank you to all of our amazing
volunteers—we couldn't do it without you!**

To see the full list of our 2018-2019 volunteers,
visit www.durhamliteracy.org/volunteers.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Alliance Behavioral Health
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Autism Society of North Carolina
Book Harvest
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Grade-Level Reading
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Action in Education
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Thank you to all of the donors and contributors who support our programs!

To view the full list, visit
www.durhamliteracy.org/waystodonate.

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JOHN HOPE FRANKLIN LITERACY SOCIETY MEMBERS

The DLC's sustaining leadership donor program, the John Hope Franklin Literacy Society, started in 2009 to honor the late John Hope Franklin—a distinguished and venerated Duke historian and scholar as well as ex officio board member and friend of the Durham Literacy Center.

Members of this giving society allow our programs to thrive and grow. JHF members pledge to give \$500-\$10,000 a year over a five-year period: Bronze (\$500/year), Silver (\$1,000/year), Gold (\$5,000/year) and Platinum (\$10,000/year).

To learn more and make a pledge, visit www.durhamliteracy.org/jhfsociety.

PLATINUM MEMBERS (\$10,000+ PER YEAR)

Jenny Semans Koortbojian
Barbara Newborg
Mary & James Siedow

GOLD (\$5,000 PER YEAR)

Bart Ehrman & Sarah Beckwith
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The Durham Literacy Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Federal Tax ID number: 56-1479534. Copies of our IRS 990 forms are available upon request.