

**Literacy Council of Buncombe County Annual Report  
2003-2004**

**Letter from the Chairperson of the Board of Directors**

Dear Friends of the Literacy Council of Buncombe County:

For over a decade, the Literacy Council of Buncombe County has worked diligently to help area adults attain the reading and language skills necessary to achieve a better quality of life. As part of this year's annual report, the Board of Directors and staff are reaffirming their commitment to meeting the organization's mission of increasing the literacy skills of our community.

The Literacy Council of Buncombe County is a vibrant resource center for all individuals in Asheville and Buncombe County who desire to develop their talents. As an organization, we support the goals of our students and applaud their successes. We value the volunteer's commitment and the partnership that develops between the student and tutor. We are dedicated to life-long learning.

The Literacy Council appreciates the Asheville-Buncombe County community's continued support of the organization through financial contribution and volunteer efforts. As we look to the future, we thank everyone for their ongoing encouragement, support, and participation. Working together, we can make a difference in our community.

Sincerely,

Walter McConnell and Janna Lutovsky  
Co-Chairpersons  
Literacy Council of Buncombe County

**Our Mission:**

The mission of the Literacy Council of Buncombe County is to improve the basic education and English language skills of area adults by providing them with one-on-one and small group tutoring by trained volunteers.

**Our Organization:**

The Literacy Council of Buncombe County is located at 86 Victoria Road, Building B, in Asheville, North Carolina. The Council started in 1992 as a result of a merger between the Altrusa Literacy Council and the Asheville-Buncombe County Literacy Council. The organization received its 501©(3) tax exempt status in September of 1993. The budget for this fiscal year totaled \$130,494.76 with four part-time staff including an executive director, an adult basic education coordinator, an English as a second language coordinator and an assistant ESL coordinator/office manager. A fifteen member Board of Directors governs the Council.

**Numbers served and student achievements:**

In the last year, the Literacy Council of Buncombe County served **315 students**, trained and supported **242 tutors who volunteered 10,578 tutoring hours**. Some of the student achievements are as follows:

- 80 of the students' reading improved by one or more instructional levels
- 39 students entered employment
- 41 retained their employment with increased reading skills.
- 10 students received their driver's license.
- 13 obtained a better job or received a promotion
- 47 reported increased involvement in their children's educational activities
- 26 reported increased involvement in community activity

**Student Profile**

<b>Participants by educational level</b>	<b>2003-2004</b>
ABE beginning	27
ABE intermediate	15
ASE (adult secondary level)	11
<b>ABE/ASE TOTAL</b>	<b>53</b>
ESL beginning	92
ESL intermediate	136
ESL advanced	34
<b>ESL TOTAL</b>	<b>262</b>

<b>Students' ethnic background</b>	<b>2003-2004</b>
Asian	16
African-American	16
Hispanic	126
White	157
Native American	0

<b>Number of students served</b>	<b>2002-2003</b>	<b>2003-2004</b>
ABE/ASE	51	53
ESL	270	262
<b>Total</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>315</b>

<b>Volunteer tutors and hours</b>	<b>2002-2003</b>	<b>2003-2004</b>
Volunteer tutors	241	242
ABE/GED volunteer hours	1,945	2,199
ESL	9,933	8,379
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,878</b>	<b>10,578</b>

### **Financials:**

#### ***Community Investment:***

Donations	\$39,819.64
Grants and Foundations	\$68,382.38
Memberships	\$950.00
Special Events	\$22,006.00
Other	\$1,692.97

**TOTAL** \$132,850.99\*

\*additional funds transferred to reserves

#### ***Expenses:***

Wages and Taxes	\$87,344.80
Supplies and Services	\$14,302.04
Program Development	\$7,131.81
Other	\$21,716.11

**TOTAL** \$130,494.76

Program cost per student is \$414.

### **Looking forward:**

The success of one-on-one tutoring and small group instruction provided by well-trained volunteers has been and will continue to be the key to the Council's successful literacy program. The program's student retention rate was 87% while 83% of the students improved their basic skills for the 2003-2004 year. Based on these successes, the Literacy Council will continue to work to increase public awareness of the organization and its mission, as well as increase the organization's capacity to serve more students than are currently being served.

The Literacy Council has received three new grants totaling over \$68,000 for the purpose of developing content based programming in the areas of citizenship, health education, money management, workplace skills, and home buying. This new programming has provided adult basic education and English as Second Language (ESL) students and their volunteers with practical, everyday informational lessons and materials. As a result of the citizenship curriculum we had one student pass her citizenship interview and after utilizing the driver's education curriculum 10 students obtained their driver's license.

Additionally, we have also seen a large increase in the number of residents who do not use English as their primary language and these individuals are seeking the assistance of the Literacy Council and our services. As a result, we currently have more than 80 students awaiting a tutor. During this upcoming year, we will seek to increase the number of volunteer tutors that we recruit, train, and retain to the next year. We seek individuals who would like to provide the gift of reading to the more than 7,000 adults in Buncombe County who lack basic English skills.

Another area of focus for the Literacy Council of Buncombe County is improving student test scores. All of our students are assessed upon entering the program and then re-assessed after 50 hours of instruction. Studies show that it takes approximately 50 hours of tutoring for a student to improve their reading skills by one grade level. Our goal is that 35% of our students will progress to the next level. It is also very important that our students obtain a job or obtain a better job. Our goal is that 25% of our students will reach one of these two goals. In order for many of our students to meet their goals, we must focus on developing strategies to meet the learning difficulties that so many of our students face. We will seek funds to develop a learning disability instructional component and training program for adult literacy students and their volunteer tutors.

However, our goals and objectives cannot be met without financial support. The Literacy Council of Buncombe County will seek to expand its financial base through individual donors, local businesses and corporations, and grants. We also anticipate the expansion of annual spelling bee as well as developing and improving upon several of our annual special events.