

THE LITERACY PROJECT OF EAGLE COUNTY

2017 MEDIA KIT

OUR MISSION

To empower Eagle Valley community members of all ages by offering free assistance in acquiring the English literacy skills they need to function more effectively in their daily lives.

OUR VISION

We believe that if every man, woman and child could read, write, and comprehend, our nation would be much closer to solving many of the social problems that face us.

Our programs are based on the whole language philosophy of teaching, which emphasizes individualized lesson plans based on social needs and using real life materials such as newspapers and job applications. Students set their own education and life goals, which may include securing a job, getting a driver's license, and reading to their children.

Instruction is practical, relevant to each student's life and capitalizes on life experiences and knowledge.

CONNECT WITH US ONLINE

Facebook / www.facebook.com/theliteracyproject

Instagram / www.instagram.com/literacyprojecteaglecounty

Website / www.literacyprojecteaglecounty.org



Read Well Speak Well Live Well

THIS KIT INCLUDES

- History of The Literacy Project of Eagle County
- Programs and Services Overview
- Student and Volunteer Profiles
- Staff Profiles and Board of Directors



HISTORY OF THE LITERACY PROJECT

More than 25 years ago, an Eagle County School District task force identified parental illiteracy as a major barrier to their students' educational progress, especially in cases in which parents were unable to help their children with their homework assignments. Colleen Gray was brought on board in 1990 on a part-time basis to help bridge that gap. The Literacy Project of Eagle County was born.

That first year, The Literacy Project served 20 individuals - a number that has grown exponentially as the population of limited English speakers has grown in Eagle County. In 2016, The Literacy Project provided a wide variety of programs to support literacy education and served more than 600 adults and children.

“If someone offered me a million dollars to go back to the way I was before I could read, I would turn them down.”

–Earl Mills, Student

UNDERSTANDING LITERACY

Literacy in its simplest form is the ability to read and write, but there is nothing simple about learning to read and write.

It may take a lifetime to master, and due to the collaborations happening across Eagle County, it may take a village to teach. Public libraries, community foundations, nonprofit organizations, and school districts have been partnering to pool scarce resources, combine talents and make literacy a priority in our community. These creative collaborative projects range from early childhood literacy and kindergarten readiness programs to family literacy celebrations to helping adults achieve financial, educational, and career success.

OUR IMPACT IN EAGLE COUNTY (2016 STATISTICS)

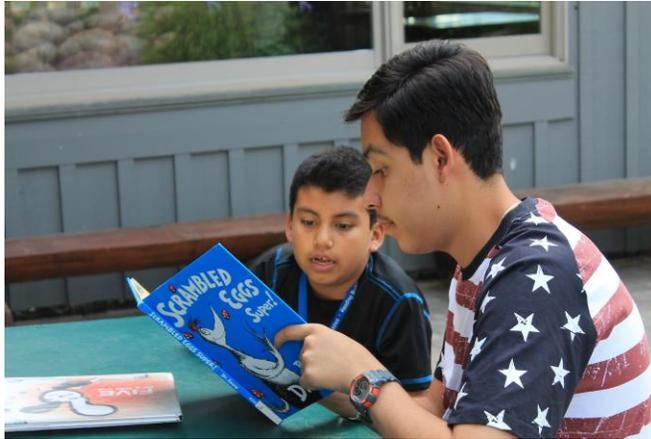
- 200 Adult Learners Served
- 75 Study Friends
- 600 Raising A Reader
- 40 Reading Buddies
- 150 Volunteers

In the U.S. today, there are 36 million adults who cannot read as well as the average third grader. And without these basic reading, writing, math and computer skills, these Americans are struggling to find jobs, stay healthy and support their families. One in five American adults cannot access or use the Internet. Those with only a high school education are among the least likely to have access. While the number of people seeking help keeps growing, overall funding for literacy programs has dropped.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OVERVIEW

LITERACY PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

- **ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL/ESOL) CLASSES:** The Literacy Project offers free English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESL/ESOL) classes weekly at the Avon, Eagle and Gypsum Public Libraries. These classes are taught by trained ESL/ESOL teaching professionals.
- **ONE-TO-ONE TUTORING:** Adult volunteer tutors meet weekly with an individual adult student with low-level speaking and/or reading literacy, for ESL or GED preparation.



LITERACY PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS

- **RAISING A READER:** A preschool program designed to engage parents in the routine of reading daily with their children from birth to age 5. In cooperation with Eagle County preschools, the Raising A Reader program rotates bright red bags filled with award-winning children's books into preschoolers' homes on a weekly basis.
- **READING BUDDIES:** A partnership with the Eagle Valley Library District, high school students (Big Buddies) are matched with elementary school students in grades 1-3 (Little Buddies) for shared reading and literacy-based learning. The Reading Buddies program is designed to give extra reading practice with a caring, creative teen mentor, and to make reading fun. High school students receive training, learn leadership skills, and experience the benefits of giving back to their community. [Link to our promotional video for Reading Buddies.](#)
- **MATH TUTORIAL:** A weekly math tutorial is offered at the Avon and Gypsum Libraries for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students in need of assistance in mathematics. Students in the math tutorial are referred by area teachers.
- **STUDY FRIENDS:** The Study Friends program addresses the academic needs of at-risk students in Eagle County middle schools. Trained volunteer tutors are matched with a teacher-referred student. Staff, teachers and volunteers develop a plan to address the low achievement levels in various subjects.

STUDENT PROFILE: SCHERAZADA MILFELD



Many students have demonstrated the long-term impact of the The Literacy Project's programs on the Eagle County community. Scherezada Milfeld, who was recognized at the Annual Literacy Project Luncheon on August 20, 2015, was a student with Literacy Project 20 years ago. An immigrant from Venezuela, she worked diligently with her tutor each week to improve her English language skills.

Today, Scherezada is an instructor at Colorado Mountain College in Edwards, helping students pass the GED. She is also the editor of *Vail en Español* magazine (which featured an article on The Literacy Project's 25th Anniversary in 2015). She still has the first book that Sloan Munter, her Literacy Project tutor, gave her: *Basic English Grammar*. Milfeld has widely and repeatedly declared it "The best book ever."

"Before, I was afraid to speak. Now I have two interviews in English."

–Alonso Reyes, Student

VOLUNTEER PROFILE: RANDY SCHROEDER



In his 14 years of volunteering with The Literacy Project, Randy Schroeder has helped 19 local students with their reading, homework, and English as a Second Language skills.

"I originally volunteered with The Literacy Project expecting to work with adults, teaching them to read," said Randy, who lives in Gypsum and works for San Isabel Telecom. "Along the way someone thought I'd fit well into the 'Study Friends' program, which provides tutoring to middle school students who need help with organization, motivation, and technical mastery of their school subjects. I've been a Study Friend ever since, and have enjoyed working with some amazing kids."

When asked what has been the most surprising thing about working with young people through The Literacy Project, Randy is candid. "My day job involves working with wires, circuits, and numbers. My time is spent mostly among the racks, chassis, and black boxes that connect the people of this valley to each other and to the larger global community. But my job doesn't provide *me* with much connection," said Randy. "Working with kids is perfect, because I enjoy their youthful viewpoint and I genuinely believe that our future depends on the skills and attitudes we pass to our upcoming generations."

"It is my firm belief that the most important single skill any adult or child can have is that of literacy. It is the key to unlocking the vast potential of an individual life.

Simply put, literacy opens doors."

–Randy Schroeder, Volunteer Tutor



Colleen Gray has served as the Executive Director of The Literacy Project for over 25 years

PROFILES OF STAFF

COLLEEN GRAY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

At the helm of The Literacy Project for more than 25 years, Executive Director Colleen Gray was hired in 1990 on a part-time basis to address illiteracy among parents of students in the Eagle County School District. She had 20 students. Today, it is estimated that 1,500 illiterate adults reside in Eagle County, which has the highest percentage of English Language learners in the state at 34.6%, compared to the State of Colorado average of 14.4%.

As literacy needs in Eagle County have evolved, so has Colleen's leadership strategy. Clearly a proponent of life-long learning in her literacy work, Gray also embraces that philosophy in her own life. In 2006, she earned a Masters in Educational Psychology from the University of Colorado Denver. Colleen continues to attend literacy conferences and non-profit seminars, and find new ways to reach out to the community for support. She is fluent in Spanish and continues to learn every day on the job.

SLOAN MUNTER, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Sloan has been with The Literacy Project since 1995. She earned her Masters of Education in Reading Progress Management from the George Washington University. As the Director of Educational Programs, Sloan recruits and trains volunteer tutors and monitors the ongoing placement of student and volunteer tutor matches. She works closely with the Eagle County School District to recruit students, and manages student referrals from individual schools. Sloan conducts formal and informal testing to evaluate student progress.

SONIA MEJIA, ESL TEACHER AND DOWN VALLEY COORDINATOR

Sonia joined The Literacy Project staff in August 2016 and has increased enrollment at the Eagle and Gypsum Public Libraries. Her energy and warmth as well as her bilingualism and ability to speak Spanish adds to our team.

MARIANA FOSTER, ESL TEACHER

Mariana joined our staff in May 2017. She was an English teacher and Translator in Cordoba, Argentina. She currently teaches third grade at the Avon Elementary School as well as teaching three adult ESL classes for The Literacy Project.

2017-18 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Wendi Hanlon, President
Adina Dean, Treasurer
Melanie Dennis, Secretary
Amy Gornikiewicz
Elizabeth Horvitz
Brian Nestor
Nancy Shane
Jamie Woodworth

CONTACT US

The Literacy Project of Eagle County

PO Box 608, Minturn, CO 81645

970.949.5026 (phone) 970.949.0233 (fax)

Email: literacy@evld.org

www.literacyprojecteaglecounty.org