



Mission Statement:

“... to provide Northwest Ottawa County adults with an opportunity to improve and transform their lives by strengthening their reading and language skills.”

R.E.A.D. is federally tax exempt under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Service.

Can you imagine not being able to read? What if the letters on this paper looked like this to you?




Fjh lsiiek dbire irva erlsk ressn oobn goobn shmuk.

To a person who cannot read, they probably do look just like that...letters on a page making absolutely no sense. Thankfully, there is an organization right here in our Tri-cities area whose mission it is to provide the opportunity to learn to read for any adult who wants to learn. By confidentially pairing tutors with new or developing readers, our goal is to enable development. That’s what R.E.A.D is all about! Reading (truly) Enables Adult Development.

There are approximately 6,500 adults in northwest Ottawa County who cannot read. R.E.A.D. Ottawa’s goal is to reach out and offer them the chance to share what so many of us take for granted: the joy of reading and how it enhances our everyday lives as well as the economic advantages that being able to read brings.

As the Treasurer for R.E.A.D. Ottawa, I can honestly say that we operate on a small budget. It costs approximately \$500 to fund a new student/tutor pair for a year. This includes tutor training and training materials, reading level testing material and student learning materials. Our tutors are all volunteers who spend on average 6-10 hours per month working with their student. R.E.A.D. currently supports 40 tutor/student pairs, and would love to help more students work towards their literacy goals.

Really want to make a difference in someone’s life? Help us end adult illiteracy in Northwest Ottawa County. Read more about our mission and our success stories in the pages of this newsletter. If you would like to help, here is what you can do:

-  Connect a prospective student with R.E.A.D.
-  Volunteer to be a tutor.
-  Make a donation to support a student/tutor pair in the envelope provided.

Lori Koons
R.E.A.D. Board Member

“Books fall open, you fall in. When you climb out again, you’re a bit larger than you used to be.”

Gregory Maguire

R.E.A.D. Welcomes Two New Staff



Thanks in part to a two year grant from the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation (Zenko Family Field of Interest Fund and the Marion A. and Ruth K. Sherwood Family Fund), R.E.A.D. hired two new staff members. Marisol Stork fills the role of

Pair Coordinator and is responsible for interviewing and enrolling potential students and matching up student/tutor pairs. She has volunteered for R.E.A.D. in this capacity for many years and has been instrumental in setting up student/tutor pairs for success. Marisol earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Religion from Coe College and a Master of Social Work from the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee and has brought these talents and skills to the R.E.A.D. organization.



Valerie Martin is the new Volunteer Coordinator and is responsible for all the tutor training and ensures the students and tutors have the materials and tools necessary so they can meet their literacy goals. Valerie has a Bachelor of Arts in

Psychology from Eastern Illinois University and a Master of Social Work from Western Michigan University. She has recently retired as Chief Probation Officer of the United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan. From this role she knows the importance of adult literacy proficiency and wanted to share her skills with R.E.A.D.

R.E.A.D. would like to thank all of our partners for their generous support:

Loutit District Library

Spring Lake District Library

Grand Haven Area Community Foundation

100 or More Women Who Care Tri-Cities

100 Men Who Give

Zeeland/Holland Adult Education

Tulasi & Lorelle

Tulasi is now a United States citizen thanks to hard work and help from her R.E.A.D. tutor, Lorelle Sybesma. Tulasi came to Grand Haven with her husband and daughter from Nepal six years ago. For four years she has been working with her tutor to improve her English reading, writing and speaking skills. They meet weekly and read books about United States' geography and history to not only learn English but learn more about America. They review words that Tulasi has trouble reading or understanding. They have read books about Helen Keller, the Civil War and the Star Spangled Banner.

Tulasi's brothers, sister and parents all live and work in the Grand Haven area. She enjoys going to the beach, parks and shopping with her family.

Tulasi and her husband Gopi applied for citizenship in 2015 and then had six months to study for the test. Gopi works in the community and Tulasi helped him study for the test at night. Lorelle went with them to Detroit and they both passed the Citizenship test with flying colors. They were sworn in as U.S. citizens in July in Kalamazoo.

Tulasi's literacy goals continue to evolve with each obstacle she overcomes. Next on the list: getting her driver's license and starting a job when her son starts school. Lorelle is going to empower her every step of the way to reach her literacy goals.



Ethel went with her family to Wilmington to there cottage they have on the lake. It was a rainie Sunday afternoon. They were playing games in the parlor (at lest trying to). There's 5 of them all together, and they fight about any and everything. Even what game they wish to play. Half wonts to play parcheesi. The others wonts to play Monopoly. I couldn't care less what game we played. I'm just looking for a quick exit to get away from it all. Who'd really notice if I wasn't there. They all see me as just an old moron, anyways.

(Note: The Word list words are underlined in this story.)



Lydia & Diane

Meet Lydia. Lydia is a 20-something young woman from the Tri-Cities area. She is employed and lives at home with her family. Lydia was able to obtain her high school diploma through her home schooling studies. She says she always had a wish to continue her education after high school. However, she recognized that reading and writing had always been a struggle for her. She was concerned that her literacy struggles may prove to be too big an obstacle for her to continue her education. Then, one day, Lydia heard an advertisement on WGHN radio for the R.E.A.D. program. She decided to call R.E.A.D. to request a tutor to help her.

Lydia was matched with volunteer tutor, Diane. The two have been working together for about nine months to achieve Lydia's goals of improving her literacy. However, those goals have now expanded as Lydia's confidence in herself has increased. Lydia says, "When I thought about continuing my education, I thought I would only be able to study a couple of potential job careers due to my reading challenges. I did not have confidence in my abilities. Working with Diane has helped me realize, now, anything is possible. My choices are not as limited as I once thought."

Diane and Lydia meet once a week on a regular basis. They continue to work on Lydia's literacy skills, but are also now working on "life skills" to help her become more independent in the future: budgeting and finances, basic math, writing in cursive (formal signature). Lydia is noticeably proud of her new found confidence, improved vocabulary, and other recent accomplishments-- and she should be! She says she enjoys working with Diane, because Diane helps keep her interest

piqued by making learning fun and interesting. "We just work well together," Lydia concludes. Diane agrees; and for that reason, they are grateful for the experience R.E.A.D. has been able to offer them as both tutor and student in the program.

Following is a written story assignment completed by Lydia. Diane, gives her weekly word lists to study. Lydia is then challenged to write a story using words from that weekly word list to help improve her writing and vocabulary.

Eric Anderle
Bruce Baker
Shirley Batchelder
Nancy Bauer
Mitchell Borchers
Barbara Crozier
Katherine Du Vall
Karen Egerdy-Bader
Pat Elenbas
Ellie Ford
Jean Grossnickle
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Laurie Randall
Michele Ripka
Kathy Simmons
Penny Smith
Penny Smits
Mary Springer
Linda Stansberry
Betty Sweet
Mary Sweet
Lorelle Sybsema
Joan Tandler
Pam Tongue
Amy Van Oordt
Renate Watters
Ann White
Janet Wiessner
Carol Wilhelm
Mary Willink

2016 EVENTS



The third R.E.A.D. Scrabble Fundraiser was held on November 10th at Seven Steps Up in Spring Lake. Fourteen teams started round one playing off of the word “literacy” to bring attention to the reason for the event. All proceeds from the evening help support adult literacy in our community.

Fourteen teams enjoyed food from Mancino’s Pizza & Grinders and Arturo’s while competing in two rounds of Scrabble. Prizes were awarded from The Bookman, Lemon Creek Winery, Michigan Rag Co., and Seven Steps Up for the teams that had the high score each round, highest scoring word and best team name.

Old Boys Brewhouse

Thank you Old Boy’s Brewhouse and everyone who came out to drink a “Tequila Mockingbird” on April 23rd to support adult literacy. Thanks to our guest bartenders Kate Drake, Beth LaBeff, Dick Tannis, and David Theune.



The overall winning team, the Obfuscators consisted of Allison Boyer, Melissa Heyer, Laura Przybytek and Kristi Walsh. R.E.A.D. would like to thank all the sponsors that made the event a success; Active Manufacturing Corp., D. Baker & Son Lumber Company, Fraternal Order of Eagles Grand Haven Aerie 925, Carol Rickey and Woman’s Life 868.

R.E.A.D. Receives \$26K from 100 or More Women Who Care

“We were so excited to be selected to receive the donation at the September meeting of 100 or More Women Who Care to support adult literacy in our community,” R.E.A.D. Executive Director Susan Lowe said. “These funds enable R.E.A.D. to provide free tutoring, as well as develop ways to better serve our students in areas such as digital literacy support.”

Members of both 100 (or More) Women Who Care and R.E.A.D., from left: Susan Jerovsek, Kelly Larson, Sandy Mercurio, Cindy Anderson, Susan Lowe, Bruce Baker, Alice Mohr, Penny Smits, Ellie Forth, Marisol Stork, Nancy Fortuna, Maxine Kolb, Jeannine Farrer, John Martin, Frederica Bosch and Kim Senior.



Thanks to our Community for their Support!

R.E.A.D.
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NEW CANDY BAR IN TOWN!

Dr. Brian Stork, a urologist with West Shore Urology, and Patty Christopher of Patricia's Chocolate in Grand Haven have combined their talents and products to raise funds for R.E.A.D., the Northwest Ottawa County program that provides help for adults, 18 and over, who have difficulty reading.

Dr. Stork, his wife Marisol, and children Jack and Marin, enjoy keeping bees in their backyard. They produce exceptional honey with an amazing taste and were looking for a way to share their honey locally. Dr. Stork, an avid customer of Patricia's Chocolate shared his thoughts with Patty and her assistant Kylie Bean, they suggested creating a very unique candy bar with Stork family honey.

Patty, who has been trained at the French Pastry School and Callebaut Academy, offers a delectable selection of artisan confections through recipes she creates using only the finest ingredients and with no preservatives or artificial flavorings. Local ingredients are used as much as possible.



This partnership turns even sweeter. A portion of the Happy Hive Chocolate Bar will be donated to R.E.A.D. Over 6500 adults in Northwest Ottawa County struggle with literacy; they cannot read a grocery list, a prescription label, or even help review their child's homework. R.E.A.D. helps these adults reach their literacy goals and change their lives.

Candy bars are available at Patricia's Chocolate, The Bookman, and by contacting R.E.A.D. For additional information on becoming a R.E.A.D. student or volunteer or ordering Happy Hive Chocolate Bars call: 616-843-1470 or email: readottawa@gmail.com.