

December 2015



Mission Statement:

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

Thank you to our donors and prospective donors...

Without your support our community could lose the only program that addresses adult low literacy in Northwest Ottawa County. Low literacy is an invisible barrier for many adults in our community. Currently, we support 40 adult student/tutor pairs. Since R.E.A.D. was established in 2009, we have helped over 100 students reach their literacy goals.

We need you to support our students as they seek to improve their lives, the lives of their families, and the vitality of the greater Tri-Cities area. Invest your energy and resources in our students and be amazed at what they can accomplish.

Join the ranks of committed public and private institutions that ensure the preservation of the R.E.A.D. adult literacy program.

Kim Senior
R.E.A.D. Board Member

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

“R.E.A.D. is a program that transforms lives. When adults struggle to read; communities and families are not able to reach their full potential. We want everyone in our community to have the tools to succeed and we are grateful to R.E.A.D. for their work in helping adults achieve reading proficiency.”

*Holly Johnson
President of the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation*

“Reading is a basic tool in the living of a good life.”

Mortimer Adler

English Conversation Workshop

R.E.A.D. is thrilled to offer another free service to help our adults in the community improve their conversational English skills. This workshop is offered monthly at Loutit District Library.

Over half of our forty students are ESL (English as a Second Language) learners. They can speak in their native language but long to improve their English skills so they can continue to assimilate into their community and adopted country.

Many of R.E.A.D.'s ESL students have weekly English classes at St. Patrick's and also work with a tutor from our organization. When they return home they tend to speak their native language and do not practice their English skills. Our students expressed an interest in additional time that they could practice speaking and listening with other ESL students in an informal setting.

Since the English Conversation Workshop began in September, tutors and students from different countries (Bhutan, Colombia, Mexico, Italy and Spain) and backgrounds get together and laugh and enjoy each other's stories and improve their English skills.



For more information about the workshops visit readottawa.org.

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

STUDENT STORIES

Volunteer Tutors

Bruce Baker
 Shirley Batchelder
 Nancy Bauer
 Cindi Bunna
 Katherine DuVall
 Pat Elenbaas
 Jean Grossnickle
 Richard Hoffstedt
 Jennifer Jacobs
 Karen Johnston
 Cassie Karr
 Shannon Klop
 Lori Koons
 Paul Koons
 Ron Lindquist
 Steve Lowe
 Susan Lowe
 Mary Marthey
 Paul Martin
 Sandy Miller
 Alice Mohr
 Robin Meyers
 Eunice Peterson
 Art Pruiksma
 Fern Pruiksma
 Laurie Randall
 Michele Ripka
 Penny Smith
 Bill Smits
 Penny Smits
 Mary Springer
 Linda Stansberry
 Susan Strobel
 Mary Sweet
 Lorelle Sybsema
 Joan Tandler
 Pam Tongue
 Amy Van Oordt
 Renate Watters
 Ann White
 Janet Wiessner
 Carol Wilhelm
 Mary Willink



Budha & Alice

Budha Chuwan arrived in the United States from Nepal with her family at the age of 17 and began working with R.E.A.D. tutor, Alice Mohr in 2013. Alice was a reading specialist for 30 years and recently retired.

Budha spoke very little English when she entered Grand Haven High School and was assessed at a 3rd grade reading level. After two years of tutoring Budha improved to a 6th grade level and now speaks English very well. Graduating from Grand Haven High School in January of 2015 she has worked full time at the Holiday Inn to help support her family. Alice and Budha have not limited their time together

to reading. Alice has familiarized Budha with American cultural experiences: dining out, banking, budgeting, and having a pedicure and her hair cut in a salon. Alice even hosted a graduation open house for Budha.

Budha has a goal and Alice has helped make that goal achievable. She would like to become a cosmetologist. Together they researched the requirements to attend French Academy in Spring Lake. They rented the cosmetology book and have been reviewing the vocabulary all summer. Alice helped her fill out student aid applications and put her in touch with Sandy Huber of the Grand Haven Community Foundation Scholarship Fund. Budha was awarded a full Pell grant in addition to a grant from the community foundation. She began classes on August 30th, 2015 and will continue to work at the Holiday Inn as well as attend school. Without a vehicle she depends on a bike or Harbor Transit for transportation.

Alice has been more than a tutor; she is a mentor, a friend, and a second mother to Budha. They are mutually appreciative of each other and love working as a team, an amazingly dedicated and successful team.

Mary & Diana

Student Diana Torres cannot stress enough how much her tutor, Mary Willink, has helped her, "Mrs. Mary is a wonderful teacher and always encouraging. She is like my angel and has made everything possible for me, I love her." A native of Colombia, Diana has a degree in Communications and



Journalism. Her husband's job brought her to West Michigan in the spring of 2014. Diana hopes to secure employment in communications but has not been idle while waiting for her green card. She volunteers at Job Seekers, St. Patrick's Hispanic Ministry, and has attended classes at MCC. Mary, who in her 38 year career has been an elementary school principal and taught English at all grade levels says, "I have great admiration and appreciation for Diana, she is highly motivated, curious, hard working and a joy to work with, she is bright and beautiful."

Kathy & Angie

Katherine DuVall, a retired educator has been meeting with student, Angie DeVries, two times a week for two years. Angie shared, "We are friends and I love my time with her." She came to R.E.A.D. wanting to improve her reading skills, increase her independence, and pursue gainful employment. Angie loves reading and has a personal account at the local used bookstore, Booked for the Season. She is excited about new opportunities coming her way. With Katherine's help she has submitted multiple job applications to local businesses and is currently an active volunteer at Love INC.



Her goal at this time is to continue improving her reading and math skills. Katherine says of Angie, "She is an extremely motivated and dedicated student. I know she appreciates everything I have done for her and I love seeing her improve week to week, it has been a wonderful experience."

C A N Y O U S P E L L L I T E R A C Y

The second R.E.A.D. Scrabble Fundraiser was held on November 12, 2015, at Seven Steps Up in Spring Lake. Fourteen teams enjoyed food from Mancino's Pizza & Grinders, Arturo's Tacos, and sampled recipes from the R.E.A.D. cookbook while competing in two rounds of Scrabble. Prizes were awarded from The Bookman, Harbor Restaurants, Lemon Creek Winery and Seven Steps Up for overall highest scoring team, round one high score, highest scoring word and best team name. The champion team was Bruce Baker, Christine Baker, Annie Baker, and Nada Edson. R.E.A.D. would like to thank the teams, volunteers, and sponsors that made the event a success: D. Baker & Son Lumber Company, Brilliance Publishing, Fraternal Order of Eagles Grand Haven Aerie 925, Inc., Tri-Cities Kiwanis, and Woman's Life 868.



Overall Champions: The Woodchoppers



Best Team Name: It's All Fun & Games Until Someone Loses an "I"



Round 1 Winners: The Has-bros



Highest Scoring Word: The Griswolds

Old Boys Brewhouse

Thank you Old Boy's Brewhouse and everyone who came out to drink a "Tequila Mockingbird" on April 24th to support adult literacy.



Celebrity Guest Bartenders: Jeff Marcus, Principal of Robinson Elementary and Bruce Baker, Owner of D. Baker & Son Lumber Company.

3rd R.E.A.D. Volunteer Appreciation Picnic

Over 70 tutors, students, volunteers, board members, and their families enjoyed food, prizes and a book exchange at Pottawatomie Bayou Park on July 19th.

Thanks again to all our volunteers for the time you give to adult literacy!



Excerpt from an Essay Written about R.E.A.D. by Student Ian Johnson for David Theune's class at Spring Lake High School

How often do you read? When did you first learn to read? First book? First word, even? These are things we take for granted, and you probably can't even begin to answer any of these questions because to us they are virtually irrelevant. Everyone can read, can't they? A New York Times article, published in 2009, reported a study by the University of California that concluded that around 100,000 words cross the average American's eyes each day. However, many adults struggle with reading and understanding even a few of these words: "In the United States 63 million adults of the country's population, 16 and over, -- don't read well enough to understand a newspaper story written at the eighth grade level". Right here in our own community 7% of all adults lack these basic literacy skills. Ottawa County has a population of over 270,000 people, that is over 18,000 adults who lack the basic skills to read and write efficiently.

Fortunately, we have an organization right here in our community that is devoted to lowering the illiteracy rate in adults in Ottawa County. R.E.A.D. (Reading Enables Adult Development) Ottawa is a non-profit organization where volunteer tutors meet with people in our community who lack efficient reading and writing skills once a week to help them obtain those skills. All of R.E.A.D.'s tutors are strictly volunteers and do not receive any sort of compensation, which is why R.E.A.D. needs the support of our community. These volunteers must be qualified by taking a 10 hour training session prior to tutoring. That is what the money would go towards, sending these volunteers through the training session so they can start helping out the people in our own county.

Being able to read is something we often take for granted and we are fortunate to have had great parents and a great school system to teach us these important literary skills at such a young age. But not all people have been given the same opportunities as we have and it is important we try and give them the wonderful skills of reading and writing so they can succeed.

R.E.A.D.
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100 Men Who Give Award Funds to R.E.A.D.



Stan Fortuna from 100 Men Who Give hands a donation of \$7000 to Susan Lowe, executive director of R.E.A.D. Also pictured are Marc Holman, Kyle Williams, Scott Curtis, Pete Murdoch, Andy Cawthon, Lal Garung, Amy VanOordt, Nancy Fortuna, John Martin & Marilyn Reichardt.

In April of 2015, members of 100 Men Who Give voted to support adult literacy in Northwest Ottawa County.

R.E.A.D. relies on community funding to be able to provide their free tutoring services. R.E.A.D. supports 40 tutor/student pairs.



The Lighthouse Quilt Guild
Donated a "Bookcase Quilt"
to Benefit R.E.A.D. and Adult Literacy

Thanks to our Community for their Support!