

# 2022 ANNUAL NEWSLETTER



## HOLLAND EXPANSION AND SHAHZYA'S STORY

READ Ottawa is excited to share that we have officially expanded to Holland and Zeeland during this year. READ Ottawa held four Tutor Trainings in Holland and Zeeland between January and September. Currently, we are serving 21 adults in Holland/Zeeland and enrolling more each month! Shahzya came to Holland a year ago with her husband and their six daughters from Afghanistan and has been working with her tutor Connie since May. Connie taught elementary and reading during her career. Shahzya is highly motivated to learn in her studies how to read, write, and speak in English, so she asked Connie to meet with her twice a week. Shahzya never learned how to read or write in her native language Dari. Shahzya says, "Mrs. Connie is good teacher." Connie is eager to continue working with Shahzya to meet her learning goals and says, "Shahzya is a highly motivated, eager learner. She has embraced this opportunity to study and learn, an activity she was not allowed to do in Afghanistan. I love our time together; she has become a good friend and my life has been enriched by our time together."

## HAMID'S STORY

Hamid immigrated to the U.S. from Sudan in 2014 and came to READ Ottawa soon after. He has been working with his tutor, Paul Martin for most of his tenure. Hamid has said that "READ improved my reading and writing skills, helped me pass my driving test, helped me become a U.S. citizen, and READ helped me get better paying jobs." Currently, Hamid wishes to continue tutoring in order to improve his skills to use at his workplace. With a smile, Paul said, "In the six years I have worked with Hamid, he has flourished in his communication skills. His reading skills have enabled him to find a better job, learn to drive and attain his citizenship. It has been a pleasure to watch him grow." Hamid is one example of over 200 adults that READ Ottawa has served.



Tutor Paul Martin and his adult learner Hamid

### Our Mission:

*"Providing adults who live in or near Ottawa County with an opportunity to improve and transform their lives by strengthening their reading and language fluency."*



Adult learner Shahzya and her tutor Connie



**229**

Learners Served  
in 13 Years



**91**

Volunteers in  
12 Months



**1,758**

Hours of  
Tutoring



**FREE**

One-on-One  
Tutoring

## FORMER BOARD PRESIDENT RETIRES

Paul Martin, who has been tutoring Hamid has officially retired from READ Ottawa's Board of Directors. Paul became a tutor in 2009 at the second Tutor Training held. After tutoring for five years, Paul joined the Board in 2014. After a year, Paul was elected to serve as READ Ottawa's Board President from 2015-2020. Over the last eight years, Paul has given extraordinary passion and time to READ Ottawa and he is retiring from the Board of Directors. Paul will continue to tutor Hamid in his goals. Paul says *"Working with other board members, three Executive Directors and staff members has been a joyous, wonderful experience for me. It's what has kept me in the position for so long. READ is an amazing organization. Helping adults who want to learn better communication skills to improve their lives is very, very rewarding. In the future, I hope to find other volunteer work but I will always be a tutor for READ and volunteer to help when needed."*

## ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL SCRABBLE TOURNAMENT

Every year, READ Ottawa holds their annual Scrabble Tournament Fundraiser in March for National Reading Month. Due to the unforeseen circumstances caused by the pandemic, READ Ottawa held its first Scrabble Tournament Fundraiser in two years in May of this year. Thanks to our partnership with Fraternal Order of Eagles #925, which allowed for a large venue, we had our most successful fundraiser to date and raised \$8,000 to help our adult learners succeed. Next year, READ Ottawa intends to hold a Scrabble Tournament in both Grand Haven and Holland for twice as much fun. Check our website and social media often in 2023 for details to come!



## LARGEST TUTOR TRAINING IN READ HISTORY

In September, READ Ottawa held its most attended Tutor Training in history! The Howard Miller Public Library & Community Center welcomed and trained 23 tutors, in which most have been paired with an adult learner from the Holland/Zeeland area. READ Ottawa evaluates every Tutor Training in order to improve it for the future to ensure that every tutor has resources, tools, and materials to use with their paired learner.



19 of 23 new tutors. Training instructors Lynn Groothuis & Carol Wilhelm also pictured.