



▶ 14.5% of Americans with low literacy skills are unemployed.



▶ Reports show that the rate of low literacy in the United States costs the healthcare industry over \$70 million every year.



▶ One in four children in America grows up without learning to read.

focus on

Literacy

January 2016

HIGHLANDS EDUCATIONAL LITERACY PROGRAM, INC.

About Us

- Committed volunteers and strong partners have enabled us to increase community impact with over **22,700** hours of literacy focused programs and activities in Southwest Virginia.
- With the help of our “Tail Waggin’ Tutors” over **1,340** books have been distributed to children in Washington and Russell counties.
- Out of the **141** students in our TURNING PAGES Reading Program, 88% have increased their reading proficiency.
- H.E.L.P. operates four after school programs with 85 active students. This is a 54% increase in participants from last year. A total of **13,640** hours were spent in academic support to children in Washington County.
- H.E.L.P.’s Adult programs encourage and provide one-on-one tutoring to adults whose early education was interrupted and need to rebuild their skills so they can be productive employees and support their children’s education.



H.E.L.P.’s youth programs continue to gain momentum and community support. Parents, teachers, and principals have enthusiastically embraced the AFTER SCHOOL ENRICHMENT programs operating at four Washington County Elementary Schools.

“Students were able to receive help in a structured environment reducing stress at home and opening lines of communication with parents. This program benefits students who would otherwise have no support with homework/projects.”

Tammy Williams, Principal

“Excellent program. The help provided with the homework was amazing. As a parent that works until 5 p.m. it is difficult to have my child do his homework late in the evening. It was very beneficial having it done prior to pick-up. The staff were amazing and helpful and kept me informed. Thank You!!”

Greendale Elementary School parent

Changing Lives—One Word at a Time



Thank You

Anne Maio for your service on our Board of Directors and 13 years of tutoring low literacy adults in Washington County. We wish you the best in your retirement and thank you for sharing your time and talents with us.

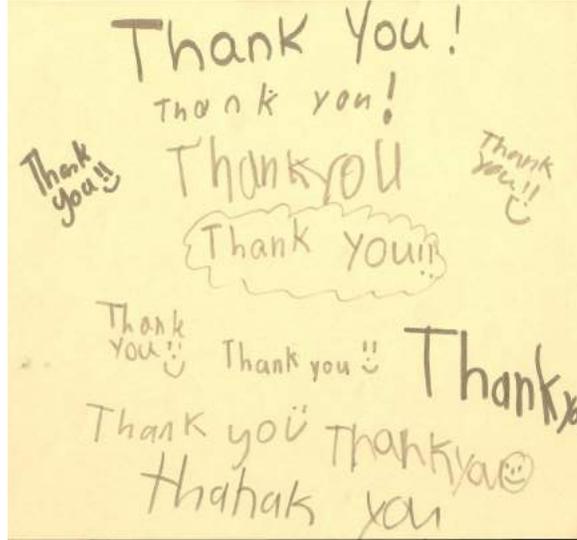
Volunteer Spotlight

Last year H.E.L.P. volunteers contributed **4,549** hours supporting literacy in Southwest Virginia.



Harriet Ray

Harriet wins Volunteer of the Year Award from United Way SWVA for her extensive hours of tutoring children in our TURNING PAGES Reading Program. Harriet also volunteers in our Reading to the Dogs Program and H.E.L.P.'s Adult Learner programs. Harriet is often accompanied by her therapy dog, Shadow, when she goes to the schools and listens to children read.



Welcome back Mary Ragland and Rosie!



Adult Learners

Donnie's Story

Donnie Powell is an adult learner and hardworking family man. He is 51 years old and a long time resident of Washington County Virginia who graduated from Patrick Henry High School. He has worked in manufacturing for 30 years and has recently been promoted to a job that requires a lot more reading and writing. He was hesitant to take this job promotion because he was not confident of his reading and writing skills and didn't think he would be able to do the job. He has struggled with this all his life.

Like many of us, Donnie is worried about job security. If his company were to go out of business, what would he do? Would he have the reading and writing skills to get another job?

While at one of his church meetings, Donnie confided in a friend that he couldn't read or write well. His friend offered to tutor him and contacted us to see what training was needed for him to be Donnie's tutor. Since then, Donnie has been tested and reads on an almost 6th grade level. His church friend has been trained by H.E.L.P. and is meeting with Donnie weekly for one-on-one tutoring.

Along with his wife and children, Donnie has many church friends who provide the support and encouragement he needs to regain and increase his reading and writing skills for this new job.

Donnie wants to share his story and let others know that if he can overcome his shame and reach out for help, then anyone can. His strength comes from Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me".

We are very proud of Donnie and all our Adult Learners. They inspire us every day and each of them has a story.

Life happens, but it's never too late to learn.

Youth Programs

TURNING PAGES

AFTER SCHOOL ENRICHMENT

READING TO THE DOGS



New Program Partner

The Book Wagon is a volunteer-run, nonprofit project with the goal of promoting literacy with books. Volunteers take a wagon full of new and gently used books to pediatric health care settings, like hospitals and waiting rooms, and give a free book to children of all ages hoping to reduce their fears with “a smile and a story”. For more information about how you can be part of giving a book for a *Brighter Day*, visit the website and contact Devon Charlier at:

bookwagonforkids@gmail.com.
www.thebookwagon.org

“When Landon first started reading he really did not take the initiative to read. He enjoyed reading to the “Tail Waggin’ Tutors” and that really encouraged him. H.E.L.P.’s Reading to the Dogs program is very positive and encouraging.”

Debbie Ritchie, Parent



Tail Waggin’ Tutor

Spotlight



Lady is a 9 year old tricolor Cavalier King Charles Spaniel. She is not a watchdog, guard dog, or high energy dog. She is a loyal companion dog who loves to be around people. She received her pet therapy certification in April 2010 and began visiting patients and staff at Johnston Memorial Hospital in June 2010. Her favorite words are “Go” and “Treat”.

Lady is happiest when she is on the dock watching the fish in the lake, riding in the boat, or “squirrel watching” from the deck. She enjoys mentoring her new rescue sister in pet therapy, agility, and how to be a “Tail Waggin’ Tutor” with H.E.L.P.’s *Reading to the Dogs* program.

Lady has not missed any RTD events!

SMART INVESTING:

Investing in Literacy is Investing in the future of Southwest Virginia

Every dollar used to support reading and writing skills for adult learners fosters reading skills in children.

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We extend our gratitude to our Donors and Financial Partners

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Mattie Roundtree Stephenson Women's Club	
Meadowview Farmers Guild	
Meade Tractor	
Med Trim Spa Vanity	
Mellow Mushroom	

Program Partners

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Mt. Rogers Adult Education Program
Russell County Schools
Stepping Stones
The Book Wagon
Therapy Dogs International
United Way Southwest Virginia
Virginia Highlands Community College
Washington County Public Library
Washington County Schools

Highlands Educational Literacy Program, April 3, 2015

Enclosed is a check for \$ 300 to meet the Mattie Roundtree Stephenson Women's Club Challenge Grant.

I worked at the Senior Center when the program began in 1987 and helped as volunteer coordinator at the center. My health does not permit me to volunteer now. However I have saved for a healthy donation for a local cause. I gave up telephone and unordered mail solicitations a long time ago!

My very best wishes as you strive to help more children have better lives. I was an older adult before earning my G.E.D.
Frances L. Ellis
Abingdon, VA

Donor Spotlight

The Mattie Roundtree Stephenson Women's club presented the board with a challenge grant. MRSWC is a group of 21 women dedicated to education and community improvement. Members helped obtain the original funds in 1987-88 to spearhead the formation of the nonprofit — Highlands Educational Literacy Program, Inc. The club has consistently contributed money, books and encouragement to support the mission of H.E.L.P.