

UPCOMING EVENTS



Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County Presents

Elizabeth Gilbert

Author of Eat, Pray, Love

Lecture and Book-Signing to benefit adults struggling with illiteracy

Tuesday, February 22, 2011

Dickinson Hall, Wilson Auditorium,
Fairleigh Dickinson University, Teaneck

Lecture at 7:00 pm

Book-signing at 8:00 pm

with purchase of her latest book, *Committed*, available on ticket website for \$16.

Tickets \$28

Order tickets at www.project-literacy.org or call to charge them at 201-489-7066

Dance Extravaganza - Saturday, April 23, 5 p.m., Bergen Academies, Hackensack

Performances by Dance Theater of NJ to raise money for Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County.

Location to Be Announced

Cousin Brucie - Friday, May 6, 2011 - 7:00 PM.

Annual Awards Ceremony - Keynote Speaker: Geraldo Rivera

Wednesday, June 15, 2011- 5:30 PM

The numbers are staggering, but are important to show the direct effects that low literacy levels have on our society.

- The United States ranks 49th out of 158 modern nations in literacy.
- Only 16% of all inmates who have received literacy help return to prison, versus 70% who did not.
- In 2004, the average cost to keep an individual incarcerated was over \$22,000 per year. The average cost of adult basic education is \$850 per person.
- In 1980, the United States had 30% of all college students in the world. Today, that number is 14%.
- 43% of all adults at the lowest level of literacy live in poverty, compared to 4% of adults with strong literacy skills.
- The World Health Organization found that the most effective way to improve children's health was to raise the literacy level of their mothers.
- Except for smoking, low literacy level is the highest risk indicator for premature death.

Sources: ProLiteracy Worldwide, Census Bureau, Pew Charitable Trust

Mission Statement

Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County, Inc. is a non-profit organization established to increase the level of public consciousness on the issues of adult literacy, and to serve as a catalyst for literacy initiatives.

Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County

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e-mail: read@project-literacy.org • www.project-literacy.org • We are now on Facebook (Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County)



PROJECT LITERACY
of Greater Bergen County, Inc.

WINTER 2011

Serving Literacy Since 1987

NEWSLETTER

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Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County Holds 8th Annual Fundraising Gala

Over \$75,000 was raised during this fun and worthy evening. Money raised will go to our various programs that address the issue of adult illiteracy.



Sandy Sroka with Board members Warren and Corethia Oates

Student of the year Aissatou Berrette with her tutor, Roberta Sable



Guests of the 2010 Gala dancing to the sounds of Eastside Mix.

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Project Literacy would like to thank the following for their recent financial support:

County of Bergen
The Estee Lauder Companies
Hudson City Savings Bank
Konica Minolta Business Solutions
Le Papillon, Ltd.
Lillian P. Schenck Foundation
Morgan Stanley Foundation
Corethia V.E. Oates
Oritani Bank Foundation
Paramus Rotary Club
TD Bank
Verizon
Chris Yegen

Project Literacy Receives Accreditation from ProLiteracy

(The following is excerpted from the letter sent to Project Literacy from ProLiteracy, April, 2010.)

"It is a pleasure to inform you that Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County, Inc., has been awarded ProLiteracy accreditation. Accreditation is designed to recognize literacy organizations that are distinguished by superior professional leadership, effective programs, committed governing boards, and outstanding volunteer support. We are recognizing Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County, Inc. for its excellence in each of these areas. Please extend our congratulations to all of those within your organization who contributed to your success.

Your accredited status will enhance your credibility in your community and will be an asset as you seek public and private funding for your organization's work.

ProLiteracy supports your organization's commitment to continuous improvement, and we will continue to work with you by sharing promising practices and identifying resources that will enable you to strengthen your services. Remember, you must keep your ProLiteracy membership current throughout the four-year accreditation period to maintain your status and to take full advantage of the benefits associated with it."

Awards Ceremony Honors Outstanding Achievements



Jonathan Blitt, CEO of Aztec Software receiving the Corporation of the Year Award from Executive Director Scott Reddin and Board President and MC, Cynthia Forster.

Each year, for the past 22 years, Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County, has held an awards ceremony in recognition of outstanding accomplishments in the field of adult literacy. The event was held at the Hekemian Conference Center at Hackensack University Medical Center. Our keynote speaker was Rabbi Schmuley Boteach, who was listed as one of the ten most influential rabbis in America by *Newsweek* magazine. In addition to Aztec Software being honored as one of our Corporations of the Year, other honorees included: Alfiero and Lucia Palestroni Foundation, Distinguished Award of Merit; Michelle Tucker, Volunteer of the Year; The Stremler Family, Special Service Award; and John O'Hara and Karla Cino, Special Recognition. Hackensack University Medical Center donated space for the awards program, and also hosted a reception for attendees.



Volunteers from our tutoring program receiving Certificates of Appreciation from elected officials and members of the Board of Directors of Project Literacy

One Tutor's Journey

Becoming a Project Literacy volunteer has been one of the most rewarding things I've ever done. Although I was aware of adult illiteracy, I didn't realize the scope of it. I learned there are people from every walk of life who are simply just victims of circumstance and are not able to fully achieve their reading skills.

I joined Project Literacy in February of 2008 and was assigned a young man who received a high school diploma, yet he had very limited reading skills. It was always hard for me to imagine how this could happen, but it does so often. Now I was given the opportunity to empower and build someone's self esteem.

At first, my student seemed embarrassed and ashamed of not being able to read as well as everyone around him. I thought after our initial meeting he wouldn't return, but he did.

The first several meetings were not only difficult for him but they were for me as well. Most of us take things such as reading for granted and never stop and think about how challenging it is to learn the English language with all its exceptions.

Over time I could see my student looked forward to our meetings and, slowly but surely, he realized that reading was not something to fear but to embrace. He also learned it was a way of obtaining information and inspiration, and sometimes it could even be fun.

I, too, learned that with a little determination and perseverance each of us can conquer something. All you need are encouraging words and a helping hand.

By Jackie Garrison

A Student's Story

The following remarks were made by Student of the Year, Aissatou Berrette, at our Annual Gala

I like this program because it is good for me.
I learn how to read, how to write sentences, and how to speak English.
In my country, I never went to school.
There is no reading or writing in Mandingo.
Girls only learned to say prayers in Arabic, not read or write.
When I came to the United States, I could not read or write.
There was no ESL class I could take.
This program gave me a chance to start at the beginning.
Thank you, Project Literacy!

Project Literacy would like to recognize our latest addition to our Board of Directors.

Paul Ragusa was recently named the interim Director of the Meadowlands Campus of Bergen Community College. Before taking on his new position, Paul was the Director of the Ciarco Learning Center, Bergen Community College, which is where Project Literacy is housed. Prior to coming to BCC, Paul served as the Director of the Community After School Academy at the Hackensack Board of Education. Paul has been honored for his service to the community, including being honored at Project Literacy's 2010 annual awards reception.