



# Project Literacy Update Newsletter

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Project Literacy U.S. of  
Bergen County

Opening Doors, Changing Lives

Spring/Summer 2008

## Barbara Walters Headlines Fundraiser for Project Literacy

Barbara Walters, the most famous woman in broadcast journalism, will appear at Bergen Community College Gymnasium on Wednesday, June 11 at 7:30 p.m. She will be interviewed as part of Project Literacy's "Authors for Literacy" series by Dr. G. Jeremiah Ryan, president of Bergen Community College, in conjunction with her new memoir, "Audition."

Ms. Walters will also take audience questions and autograph books at the event.

Barbara Walters has probably interviewed

more statesmen and stars than any other journalist in history. She is so well known that her name and a brief biography is listed in the American Heritage Dictionary.

Walters' long-awaited memoir, "Audition" is an honest look at her private and professional career, reflecting on the choices she has made, the work she has done, the people she has met and the challenges she has coped with and overcome.

Tickets for the event are \$20 for regular seats or \$45 for VIP seats

which include a free pre- autographed copy of Walters' book (\$29.99 list price).

For tickets call: 201-447-7428 or go to <http://tickets.bergen.edu> for online orders.

Photo by Yolanda Perez, ABC, Inc.

## Become Part of Project Literacy's Volunteer Program

Project Literacy needs volunteers to work as tutors with adults who can not read, write, speak English or who are preparing for their GED exams.

One hour a week of

working with an adult student could change their life—and yours.

Please call the Project Literacy office for information about volunteer tutor training programs at 201-489-7066.



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**“Let us dare to read, think, speak and write.”**

**John Adams,  
1765**

#### Literacy Fast Facts:

- The current average reading level of adults is the eighth grade.
- 50% of the chronically unemployed are not functionally literate.
- 43% of adults at the lowest level of literacy live in poverty compared to four percent of adults with strong literacy skills.
- Nationwide, 44 million adults, or 23% of the population, struggle at the lowest levels of illiteracy.

Source: [ProLiteracy Worldwide, State of Adult Literacy Report.](#)

**A special thanks... to Robert White, Trustee and Executive Director of the Bergen County Cooperative Library System, for distributing copies of the Project Literacy Volunteer Program brochure to every library in the county for display. Thank you, Robert!**

## The Hidden Problem of Illiteracy

How can you tell if an adult has low level reading skills or may be illiterate? There is not a certain “type” of person who has reading difficulties. It may be surprising to learn who can and cannot read.

Many people who cannot read often find it very difficult or embarrassing to admit it. However, there are many common recurring signs that a family member, co-worker or

a friend might see in a person who needs help. The following is a list of those signs provided by the ProLiteracy Online Information Center:

- ◆ Ordering the same item whenever he or she goes to a restaurant.
- ◆ Saying he or she can’t read because of forgotten eyeglasses.
- ◆ Rarely responding to written mes-

sages.

- ◆ Paying bills in person to avoid writing checks.
- ◆ Avoiding ATM machines.
- ◆ Asking for directions when there are clearly marked instructions.
- ◆ Trying to take paperwork home to fill out or get someone else to complete.

## Project Literacy Takes on GED Math

To answer the overwhelming need to assist adults trying to pass their high school equivalency tests (GED), Project Literacy is recruiting college graduates who wish to tutor adult students in math.

“Many students who fail to achieve their GED usually score low in the math section of the exam. We hope to assist them with one-to-one help that will get them a passing grade and help them take that next step in

life,”

said Kathy O’Hara, Tutor Services Liaison for Project Literacy.

The math program adds to the current volunteer tutoring programs already established in basic reading

## ABC News Shines Light On Adult Illiteracy

“World News Tonight with Charles Gibson” presented a special series, “Living in the Shadows: Illiteracy in America” which examined the hidden problem of adult illiteracy. The series aired in Feb-

ruary on ABC.

ABC News Correspondent Pierre Thomas explained that undiagnosed learning disabilities, poverty, and unstable homes were among the contributing factors to the “nationwide crisis” affecting an estimated

30 million people

The news program reported that the problem of adult illiteracy persists, in large part, because many actively try to conceal it or avoid seeking help.



## From the Executive Director: Farewell Message

Twenty years ago I met Walter Hecht and found that we were both quite passionate about adult literacy. At the time, Walter was the director of the Bergen Community College Adult Learning Center, and I, as Regional Coordinator with Literacy Volunteers of America New Jersey, was developing numerous literacy programs in New Jersey communities. Our new collaboration resulted in the formation of Project Literacy U.S of

Bergen County Area (PLUS) for the purpose of promoting adult literacy.

Over the years Project Literacy has recruited and referred thousands of volunteers and adult learners to basic literacy education providers, and given guidance and assistance to an abundance of literacy initiative in the workforce and the community. Over the past ten years we have seen Project Literacy add a scholarship and a one-to-one tutoring program.

I have felt honored to serve

as executive director of this organization, and it is now time for me to move into the next chapter of life. I would like to thank our staff for their continuing support; I shall miss, but never forget, my daily contact with adults eager to improve their basic skills as well as the volunteers eager to help them. I look forward to continuing my service to the adult literacy effort as a Project Literacy trustee, and extend a warm welcome to Mr. Scott Reddin who is taking over the reins as executive director of Project Literacy



## Celebrating Literacy Achievements On June 12th

Project Literacy will hold its 20th Annual Literacy Awards on Thursday, June 12th in the Hekemian Conference Center of Hackensack Hospital at 4:00 p.m.

The awards are a

yearly celebration of achievements in the field of adult literacy. Recognition goes to those who have made a significant contribution in the workforce or community to adult literacy. Outstanding students as well

as Project Literacy volunteer tutors will be honored for their hard work and commitment.

If you know of an individual, organization, or company doing outstanding work in the area of adult literacy in Bergen

County and would like to nominate them, please contact the Project Literacy office at 201-489-7066.

## Become a Member of Project Literacy

A contribution of \$50 or more entitles you to become a member of Project Literacy of Bergen County. With membership, you will not only receive the satisfaction of helping an adult open the door to a new life by learning to read, but you will also receive:

- ◆ **An autographed copy of Barbara Walters new book, "Audition: A Memoir." (List price of book \$29.99. )**
- ◆ A formal certificate of membership embossed with the official seal of Bergen County.
- ◆ Invitations to all Pro-

ject Literacy events including our annual gala and our Author for Literacy evenings.

To belong just fill out the enclosed contribution form and return it in the enclosed envelope with contribution of \$50 or more.

*"Outside of a dog, a book is a man's best friend. Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read."*

*Groucho Marx*



## Project Literacy U.S. of Bergen County

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We're on the web at [www.project-literacy.org](http://www.project-literacy.org)

*Opening Doors, Changing Lives*

### Executive Director

Scott Reddin

### Director of Development/ Editor

Susan Podbielski

### Tutor Services Liaison

Kathleen O'Hara

**Project Literacy U.S. of Bergen County** is a private, non-profit 501(c)3 organization established to increase the level of public consciousness on the issues of adult literacy. It consists of individuals from corporations, social service agencies, colleges, small businesses, community groups, and the media working together to attack the overwhelming problem of adult illiteracy by:

- \*Implementing new literacy initiatives.
- \*Developing basic skills programs in the workplace.
- \*Referring community members to appropriate literacy programs.
- \*Providing one-to-one tutoring in basic skills to adults.
- \*Rewarding literacy efforts on the part of volunteers and others in the community.
- \*Formulating literacy action plans for groups, companies, or individuals.

Project Literacy wishes to thank  
**Konica Minolta Business Solutions** for  
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