Literacy Action is a place for courageous individuals who commit to bettering themselves and their families through education. There are countless reasons why a person hasn’t received all of the education necessary to move forward; life gets in the way and circumstances arise. However, setbacks and detours are only temporary.

In this year’s annual report, we feature a small sample of our students. We want you to learn about their stories first-hand. We want you to hear from Mary, Eden, and Anthony. These students all have different experiences that reflect back what the philosopher John Dewey described: “Education is not preparation for life, but life itself.”

With gratitude,

Austin Dickson
Executive Director

Althea Broughton
Chair, Board of Trustees
OUR STORY in 2016: WORKING HARDER and SMARTER

Founded in 1968, Literacy Action is one of the leading adult basic education nonprofits in the United States. We teach reading and writing, mathematics, English for Speakers of Other Languages, and life and work skills to more than 2,000 students per year. Literacy Action is a grassroots solution to poverty and a provider of various levels of educational services to advance adults towards employment, citizenship, better wages, and post-secondary education.

Scaling. This year we’ve propelled learning from pilot projects and begun to scale. More classes at libraries are being added, we’re expanding our literacy work with parents into both DeKalb County Schools and Atlanta Public Schools, and we are training trainers in digital literacy throughout the region. True change in adult literacy can only be done on a massive scale with a whole community mobilized. Our movement is on the march!

Strengthening. With Literacy Action’s ongoing development, it has had to invest in technology to oversee its diverse activities. Investments from technology firms like Sage, Salesforce, and MailChimp have strengthened our financial, program, and fundraising management to be tech-centric. We have been recognized in Atlanta and nationally for our use of technology tools that create efficiency and drive results.

A finalist for the 2016 Managing for Excellence Award from the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta, Literacy Action is recognized for its best-in-class strategy, management, and impact.

We offer programs in 20 sites throughout the region.

Our Locations:
- Alpharetta Library
- Boys & Girls Club - Lawrenceville
- Brookhaven Library
- Chamblee Library
- Clarkston Library
- Cross Keys High School
- Decatur Housing Authority
- Decatur Library
- Decatur Recreation Center
- Doraville Library
- Dunwoody Library
- Emmaus House
- Holy Trinity Church
- Northlake Library
- Sandy Springs Library
- Stoneview Elementary School
- Toco Hill Library
- Tucker Library
- Westside Works
- Woodruff Volunteer Service Center

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Stoneview Elementary School
Toco Hill Library
Tucker Library
Westside Works
Woodruff Volunteer Service Center
MARY’S STORY
In middle age, Mary came to Literacy Action. She has not only learned to read, but she has learned to live. Here is her story in her own words:

At the age of ten, my parents took me out of school to work in the family restaurant. Do I blame them for sacrificing my education to wash dishes and clean floors? Of course not! No one in my family finished school, our values surrounded work and supporting each other.

I went through life ASHAMED that I could not read or write. It was my secret, but it was drastically affecting my confidence, family, relationships and quality of living. When my husband died, I realized just how much my “secret” could cost me. Unable to read important documents or bills, I nearly lost everything.

My job prospects were limited to in-home child care. Once my employer discovered that I was unable to read and write with her children, together, she and I found Literacy Action. Then, I was able to start my learning journey.

This organization has changed my life in so many ways. I can read menus, road and grocery signs, and can sign my own name. I enjoy books and read with my own grandchildren. Most importantly, I can hold my head up and know that my family is proud of me and I am proud of myself.
When I first arrived in America, I was intimidated at the thought of learning English. With the help of Literacy Action teachers and other students, I am learning more than I ever imagined about language and life.

Everyday, my English gets better and I hold my head higher. I am no longer confused when people talk in front of me. I can text my friends, and most importantly, I can read what they write back. I am more determined than ever to finish.
ANTHONY’S STORY

People withdraw from the education system for a variety of reasons, and return at all ages. Anthony found Literacy Action’s welcoming, supportive environment helped him achieve his goals. Here is his story in his own words:

This place brings me peace, happiness, and the chance to learn.

My trouble learning started at the age of 10 when I discovered one side of my heart was smaller than the other. I was never able to attend school regularly, and I ended up dropping out. Then I found Literacy Action. The teachers have patience and the students treat me with respect. My family is so proud that I am getting my GED! At times, it feels impossible, but I am doing it!

I know that by improving my math and reading skills, I am doing my part to become a contributor to my community. I eventually want to work for MARTA, and Literacy Action has made that possible.

Literacy Action offers multiple levels of reading and mathematics, including GED prep and job readiness, for more than 2,000 students each year.
FAMILY LITERACY

Family literacy is a two-generational practice of conducting literacy efforts with parents and children together. This approach highlights the role of parents in a child’s success, enhances adult learning, and creates a culture of family engagement.

Literacy Action has deepened its work in family literacy over the past year by engaging with partner organizations and institutions to bring programming to parents and children where they are. Our role is to provide an adult literacy component to English and non-native English-speaking parents, lead empowerment and skill-building workshops to support parents in helping their children read, and liaise with partners to ensure we are meeting joint programmatic goals.

We are currently working with more than 110 families in both Atlanta Public Schools and in the DeKalb County School District, as well as with the Boys & Girls Club of Metro Atlanta. Family literacy is a significant growth area for 2017.

DIGITAL LITERACY

Digital literacy develops the technological knowledge of software, devices, and online tools that enhance social, economic, and academic outcomes of low-literate adults.

In 2016, Literacy Action was one of 16 organizations chosen nationally by Google for an investment in a digital literacy program — allowing us to bring the digital world into the classroom and connect students, staff, and volunteers through technology. This program served more than 1,100 people in its first year and expanded the organization’s reach in metro Atlanta. With a renewed investment in 2017, the program will continue to grow our digital reach, expertise, and offerings, and get more people connected.
Volunteers

Essential to Literacy Action’s mission are the classroom teachers, class assistants, learning lab tutors, ESOL conversation class facilitators, and other unsung heroes who help transform people’s lives!

Chenoa Adams
Suzanne Adams
Barbara Adle
Lynda Anderson
Petel Anderson
Debbie Appenteng
Alice Barger
Julie Barr
Marian Barr
Amanda Becker
Nicole Blackwell
Candis Bonner
Ben Bowen
Jack Butler
Carrie Canfield
Maila Cargile
Marsha Carroll
David Chesnut
Todd Clack
Ginna Clark
Jacque Clark
Isabelle Claxton
James Coggins
Jennifer Colangelo
Larry Conley
Foster Corbin
David Cosby
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Patti Ross
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Michelle Sanders
Elizabeth Schultz
Farunji Sheth
Yvette Shrum
Tremaine Smith
Marcia Soldat
Barbara Sorensen
Judy Stanton
Charles Starks
Nancy Stoumire
Roman Szlam
Chanel Thompson
Tania Thompson
Lisa Travis

Community Supporters

Community groups and corporate volunteers help with projects, make in-kind donations, and lead creative efforts that support students’ success.

Agnes Scott College
The Cathedral of St. Philip
Citizens of Georgia Power
Cox Enterprises
Emory University
Ernst & Young

Julia Ames
Controller

Deborah Cash Bargabus
Program Director

Subrina Beckham
Receptionist

Angelle Berry
Instructor

Julia Booth
Marketing Associate

Kate Boyer
Deputy Director

Diana Brace
ABE Manager

Austin Dickson
Executive Director

Jaron Gifts
Student Support Assistant

Angela Green
Student Affairs Associate

Olivia Greene
Operations Manager

Karen Gold
Instructor

Regina Hendrix
Receptionist

Terry Hollis
Instructor

Nicole Hooper
Digital Literacy Fellow

Dawn Jackson-Robinson
Instructor

Barbara Kimble
Instructor

Ann Lynn
Instructor

Toby Murphy
Instructor

Michael Northcross
Instructor

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Newell Rubbermaid
Georgia State University
PwC
Emory University
Wells Fargo

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Charlina Trice
Melissa Trifiro
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Emory University
Wells Fargo
A heartfelt “thank you” to our donors! The best gift is the gift of literacy.

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$250+$


$1,000+

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Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation  The Cathedral of St. Philip  Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta  Google  Scott Hudgens Family Foundation  MailChimp  Meracanas Foundation  Susan & David Peterson  Joseph B. Whitehead Foundation

Literacy Action was the beneficiary of the 2016 Cathedral Antiques Show, a major outreach project of the Episcopal Church Women of The Cathedral of St. Philip: the Show raised $223,400 for digital literacy programming. We are deeply grateful to the hundreds of volunteers who made it a tremendous success and a ton of fun!

In addition to these gifts, we are grateful to the Technical College System of Georgia, Fulton and DeKalb County Governments, the Atlanta Housing Authority, and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for working with us.
Financials

FISCAL YEAR 2016

Revenue $2,097,732
Expense $2,157,477
Deficit ($59,745)*
Net Assets $857,492

REVENUE SOURCES

Foundations $569,242  27%
Individuals $385,152  18%
Government $340,188  16%
Businesses $310,944  15%
Events $242,393  12%
In-Kind Support $230,549  11%
Investments $19,264  1%

EXPENSE BREAKDOWN

Programs $1,607,099  75%
Fundraising $352,736  16%
Administration $197,642  9%

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*Since 2010, Literacy Action has been the fiscal agent of the Literacy Alliance of Metro Atlanta (LAMA). At the end of this fiscal year, Literacy Action transferred all of LAMA’s assets totaling $92,045 to the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta as seed money for the Literacy for All Fund. This payment is classified as an expense; without this transfer of funds, Literacy Action had a $26,137 budget surplus for the year. The Literacy for All Fund will provide on-going support for family literacy initiatives in the region. To learn more about the Community Foundation and the Fund, visit www.cfgreateratlanta.org.

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Our mission is to build better futures for undereducated adults by teaching literacy, life, and work skills that empower them to reach their highest potential.