

Message from the Executive Director

We are so very proud of our students! We celebrate their success, whether it was to learn to read for the first time, to speak English, to graduate with a GED certificate or to become a U.S. citizen.

In total, we served 186 students this past year (a 5% increase over last year), equipping them with tools needed to reach their personal objectives and to increase their chances for employment or advancement. By helping these individuals, we also helped enhance the lives of their families.

Our work is accomplished through our volunteer tutors. This past year, 79 dedicated men and women (an 11% increase over last year) gave their time to serve the needs of our students week after week. We are so grateful for their commitment and their many accomplishments.

At mid-year, we introduced a training program focusing on “soft skills” – the qualities, habits, attitudes and social graces that make someone a valued employee in any job setting. In cooperation with local businesses and the community at large, our Soft Skills Program prepares students for the norms and expectations in today’s workplace.

Our success was made possible by the generosity of the many businesses, organizations, foundations and individuals who continue to support us. We thank you!



Executive Director Vicki Newell, Bookkeeper Denise Lynch, Volunteer Coordinator Desiree Cho and Student Coordinator Loyda Estrada

In this report, you will be able to read stories about our students and their achievements. We hope that you appreciate their accomplishments as much as we do. You will also see lists of our donors and supporters. We could not do any of this important work without your continued support.

Sincerely, Vicki Newell, Executive Director

Training helps employees develop qualities valued in today's workplace

SOFT SKILLS

An astounding 85% of job success comes from soft skills and people skills, according to studies by Harvard University, Carnegie

Institute and the Stanford Research Center. Soft skills – communication, teamwork, networking, problem solving and critical thinking – are also important to learning, engagement and community enlightenment.

Envisioning how a targeted focus on those areas could help both our students and local businesses, Chatham Literacy launched a multi-pronged pilot program in April 2016 that integrates soft skills into literacy learning. Anchored in Department of Labor youth curriculum, the program was adapted for adult learning.

Engineered Plastic Components in Siler City became our first volunteer employer, and Plant Manager Stephen Cernava said the program is targeting the right areas. “The knowledge base of the instructor is excellent,” he said. “I noticed a subtle increase in the participants’ confidence level and interaction in the workplace.”

So far Chatham Literacy has offered soft skills training within Carolina Community College’s GED and ESL classes, and for members of the community in Siler City. More classes are in the works, and the program continues to evolve through feedback and assessments.

Program Coordinator David Mateo said participants are learning that there’s more to a job than just showing up for work. “It is important to



Soft Skills Program graduate Nohemi Erazo with EPC Plant Manager Stephen Cernava

build relationships and engage with those around you,” he said. “I have seen participants relate their learning to their personal lives. They take these skills home to their communities, families, siblings and children.”

For more information on this free training opportunity, contact us at 919-742-0578 or at admin@chathamliteracy.org.

THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

186
adult learners
were served

36
improved
their literacy
by one level

13
got a job or
promotion

9
became
U.S. citizens

12
graduated
from soft skills
training

79
tutors worked
with students

4,241
instructional
hours
were logged

Developing skills for a better life

ESL & GED

Three years ago, Oscar Perez-Ocampo came to the U.S. from Mexico seeking better job opportunities in order to support his wife and children. While his family remained in Mexico, Oscar settled in Siler City, went to work and began to study English.

Oscar enrolled in Chatham Literacy's ESL program and has been making great progress. "I am in this country now and I want to speak English," said Oscar, who is 42.

He has improved to the point where he now is co-tutor of a beginner ESL class.

Oscar also wanted to enhance his education. With only nine years of schooling in Mexico, Oscar started GED classes. "It had been years since I studied math and science, so these subjects were hard for me," Oscar said. But after only one year of study, Oscar passed his GED test on the first try.

"People think they don't have time to do this, but I know better," said Oscar. "I am proud of what I have accomplished, but it is not enough. I want to do more."



Oscar Perez-Ocampo tutors an ESL student.

Opening new horizons through reading

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

A lifelong resident of North Carolina, Janet Phillips graduated from high school but never learned to read.

"No one ever helped me," Janet explained. "There was just no one there for me." Despite this, Janet has made a good life for herself and her family, and she is employed fulltime as an aide with a group home agency.

But at age 52, Janet decided she wanted to read. "I wanted to be able to do things on my own," she said. "I want to do this for myself."

In April 2016, she began working twice a week with Chatham Literacy Tutor Lee McLean. "I'm so proud of the rapid progress that Janet is making," said Lee. "She is incredibly disciplined."

Janet now has a new goal: to enroll in Central Carolina Community College in Siler City to become a Certified Nursing Assistant because she likes to be able to help others.

"My tutor has been wonderfully patient with me. As a result, I now have confidence in myself," Janet said. "I know I'm going to be able to do this."



Janet Phillips works with her tutor, Lee McLean.

Making a dream come true

CITIZENSHIP

Ramona Salas-Sanchez is extremely proud that she officially became a U.S. citizen on August 12, 2016, after studying for three years in Chatham Literacy's Citizenship Program.

Her journey began 16 years ago, when she left Mexico with her husband and children and came to the United States. They settled in Siler City, where she took care of the family while her husband often worked two jobs to make ends meet.

The citizenship class that Ramona took met once

a week for two hours at First United Methodist Church in Siler City. The curriculum was very detailed and required student dedication and determination.

"I am so proud of achieving my citizenship," said Ramona. "I feel different now. I feel important. I also feel very honored to be a U.S. citizen."

Ramona's new goal is to improve her English. She is enrolled in Chatham Literacy's ESL program.

"All of my tutors have treated me with respect," said Ramona. "They have such patience!"



Ramona Salas-Sanchez becomes a citizen.

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"To hear of my students' accomplishments - the time they were able to act as a translator, when they could finally read a book to their child in English, and when we spent hours together just hanging out as friends do and their English actually improved from the time we got together to the time we said goodbye - that's just priceless. That's why I continue to do this." - Janet Jorganson, tutor

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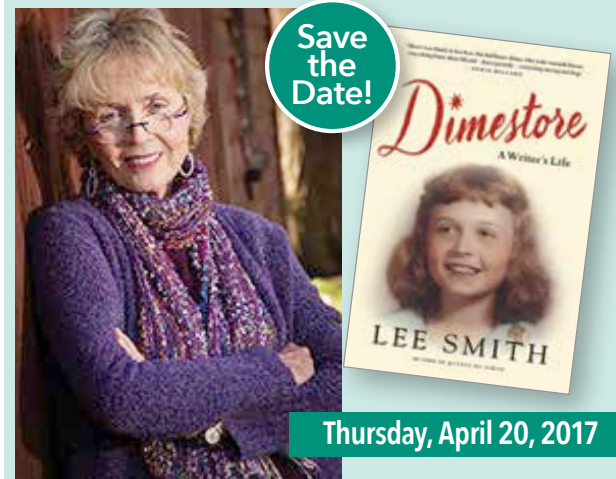
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Lee Smith will be the featured author at Chatham Literacy's 2017 *Spring for Literacy* luncheon at Governors Club. You won't want to miss this engaging speaker and storyteller, who has written 12 novels, four short story collections and a new memoir, *Dimstore: A Writer's Life*. Mark your calendar now!

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Thanks to guest author Daniel Wallace.

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Aggie Tech helps Chatham Literacy thrive

KEY PARTNER

Chatham Literacy's staff is working smarter and more efficiently

thanks to its partnership with Aggie Technologies, an IT consulting/service company based in Durham.

Brian Scott, Aggie Tech's chief operating officer, said he connected with Chatham Literacy three years ago at a training seminar, when Executive Director Vicki Newell sought his advice.

"I could see that they could use some services that were free for non-profits but that they didn't know about. I helped them get those," he said. "Then they didn't know what to do with them, so we did a staff training workshop." From there, over time, came ongoing training, remote troubleshooting, system maintenance, website hosting, and more.

"It's personal for me," Brian said. "I have a heart for helping people, and it's bigger helping people who are helping people."



Brian Scott during a coaching session

With Aggie Tech's guidance, Vicki and her staff have increased their productivity and their knowledge of how technology can help Chatham Literacy grow.

"They are helping us move into the future," Vicki said. "We are so grateful."

"Working with the Literacy Council has added a new dimension to my life. This work has given me the opportunity to enter a person's life and enable that person to gain a new perspective - that of being literate! It is an example of mutual gratification!!" - Ruth Nicholson, tutor

Partners put community spotlight on literacy

Our deepest thanks to these partners for providing space, referrals and collaborations that enable Chatham Literacy to serve students throughout Chatham County.

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Thanks to the generosity of people like you, Chatham Literacy is expanding its free adult literacy programming and helping more adult learners each year. There are many ways you can help. All donations are tax-deductible.

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- by mail to Chatham Literacy, P.O. Box 1696, Pittsboro, NC 27312
- online at www.chathamliteracy.org
- or through planned giving

DONATE SUPPLIES: Provide pens, pencils, notebooks, calculators, dictionaries and other educational supplies for students.

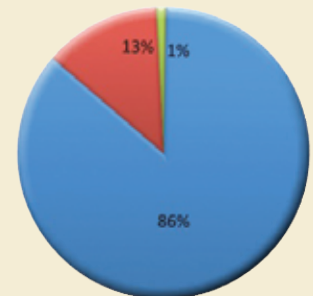
DONATE SPACE: Share safe classroom space in your business, church or agency.

SHOP FOR LITERACY! Shop online through AmazonSmile.com or iGive.com and they will donate a percentage of the price of your eligible purchases to Chatham County Literacy Council - at no extra cost to you!

FY2015-16 EXPENSES

\$127,940

- Direct Services \$110,525
- Management/General \$16,082
- Fundraising \$1,333



Chatham County Literacy Council

919-742-0578

admin@chathamliteracy.org

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606 E. Third Street, Siler City, NC 27344

Mailing address

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P.O. Box 1696, Pittsboro, NC 27312

Mission statement

Chatham Literacy helps adults, living or working in Chatham County, N.C., acquire the literacy and educational skills they need to function successfully in society.

