

The Center for Literacy Celebrates Fifty Years of Learning this April

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

The Center for Literacy, founded in 1968, will celebrate its Fiftieth Anniversary with a “Black Tie or Bell-Bottoms” gala on Friday, April 27, at the Pyramid Club, 1735 Market Street, featuring Shirley Alston Reeves, lead singer of the Shirelles. For tickets, visit www.centerforliteracy.org.

The Center for Literacy’s classes help adults at all reading levels including those studying for their High School Equivalency Diploma and immigrants taking beginning, intermediate, and advanced English classes. Students also learn how to fill out job applications or help their children with homework. In addition to classes in reading, writing and math, the Center also teaches life, technology and work skills. Teachers use blended learning, combining online and in-person instruction.

Originated as a volunteer tutoring program, the Center for Literacy, located at 399 Market Street, now has a staff of dedicated professional teachers assisted by 100 volunteer tutors. In 2017, they worked with 1,300 students.

I recently observed a class of English as a Second Language (ESL) students reading a play, and another class doing algebra problems in preparation for their High School Equivalency Test. These students were motivated to learn and were paying serious attention to their teachers!

Robin Robinowitz, Chief Development Officer at the Center for Literacy, describes one of the students: “Ursula Vincente is



Center for Literacy client Ursula Vincente has much to smile about.

on her way to become a registered nurse, a job she has dreamed about since she was five years old. Ursula cries when telling about her children—ages 18, 14, and eight—taking her out to dinner to celebrate her passing the science section of her High School Equivalency Test with an above-average score. For two years, at other agencies, she has been trying to get a High School Equivalency Diploma, and now at last she has passed two tests—Science and English—under the guidance of the Center’s instructor Mark Edmonds.”

The Center for Literacy partners with the City of Philadelphia’s Office of Adult Education and the Free Library,

which hosts the Center’s ESL classes and tutoring. In addition, two public elementary schools offer classes for ESL family literacy.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education, corporations, foundations, United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey, and individuals provide funding to the Center. Private donations help pay for teacher salaries, tutor training, case management, and materials.

Read about the successes of students at centerforliteracy.org/student-portfolios/.

The Free Library, Philadelphia City Institute Branch, To Hold Annual Book Sale

The Annual Book Sale will be held on Friday, April 27, 2 to 4 pm, and Saturday, April 28, 11 am to 3 pm, in the downstairs community room. (Not handicap accessible.)

Donate your unwanted books, DVDs, and CDs to the book sale. Donations will be accepted on Fridays and some Saturdays (February 17 and 24, March 3 and 24, and April 7) from 11 am to 2 pm until April 13. Please separate books into bags marked Fiction or Non-Fiction. The library will not accept for sale: textbooks, medical books, outdated topics in the sciences, finance, or computer technology, or books that have writing on pages, are discolored by age, or are tattered.

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