

*Life,  
Liberty,*

*and the pursuit of*

*Literacy*



*2007-2008 Annual Report*

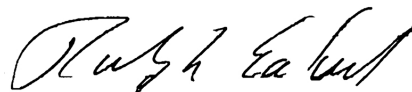
Literacy is truly a liberating skill. It provides a measure of independence that allows individuals to direct the course of their own lives. Yet even as we watch our students gain that independence, we are constantly reminded of how our fates are all mutually intertwined. The health of our community depends on a highly skilled and literate population. With nearly half of adults in Guilford County struggling with basic reading and writing skills, we have a long way to go before we, as a community, can truly declare independence from the bonds of low literacy.

The theme that structured our activities this year was "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Literacy." Although literacy touches every area of a person's life, our special focus was on literacy and civic participation. We developed new classes on civics and on the citizenship process. We sponsored a special workshop with the Guilford County Board of Elections in which students and tutors learned how to use voting machines. We watched with pride as many of our students registered to vote for the first time in their lives and lined up to make their voices heard.

The pursuit of 100% literacy in Guilford County is a challenge that requires the participation of many partners, from our students themselves, to the volunteer tutors that are the backbone of our work, to the agencies and funders in the community that help broaden our reach and expand our vision. As we reflect on the triumphs of the past year, let us also remember to look to the future and the independence that we all long for, and the challenge that lies ahead.



Jennifer Gore  
Executive Director



Ralph Edwards  
President, Board of Directors  
2007-2008



*Chris McGinn of the Guilford County Board of Elections demonstrates a touch-screen voting machine*



*Student Bedor Elnegomi practices using the electronic voting machine.*

## Reading Connections 2007-2008 Board of Directors

Linda Anderson	Leif "Lee" DuVall	Keith Hennessy	Valerie Loffin	Lawrence Simmons
Rosie Boyd	Ralph Edwards	Steve Heston	Beverly McCracken	Michael Turner
Gina Carrick	Jennifer Fountain	Nancy Hoffmann	McLean Moore	Susan Williams
Dr. Judy Cheatham	Kim Gatling	Jamonica Hill	Lori Mowen	Martha Yarborough
Rudolph H. Clark, Jr.	Bob Goldstein	Gina Katzmark	Brian Neal	

**Our Mission: To provide and advocate for free, confidential literacy services for adults in Guilford County and surrounding communities.**

The figures here represent just a snapshot of the year's achievements. Behind every number is a story of hard work and dedication on the part of our students, volunteers, and staff. The following are among our accomplishments for the year:

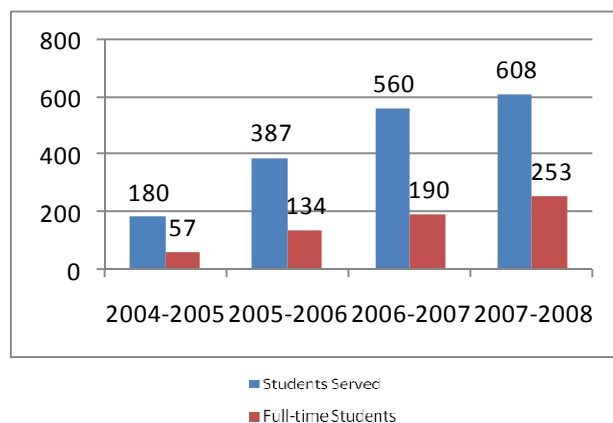
- Increased the number of students who advanced a literacy level to **38%**
- Increased High Point students by **30%**,
- Increased overall student numbers by **6%**
- Increased the number of donors by **46%**
- Increased operating income by **30%**
- Increased the number of revenue sources by **64%**
- Developed new, more **interactive tutor training program**
- Created agency **checklists** and **tutor kits**
- Adopted a new **fundraising & public awareness program**
- Evaluated the **Board of Directors**, determined the types of new Board members sought for recruitment, and added community members to the Board committees to extend the work of the Board.

Number of student served: **608**  
 Full-time students: **253**  
 % who advanced a literacy level: **38%**

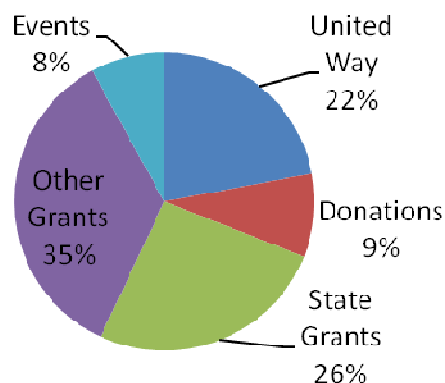
Number of tutors served: **248**  
 New tutors trained: **99**  
 Number of tutor hours: **9023**

The number of students served has increased **337%** in 4 years.

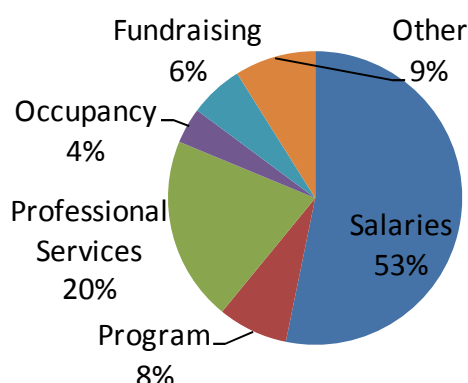
Students Served 2004-2008



### 2007-2008 Income Sources



### 2007-2008 Expenses



### 2007-2008 Staff

Executive Director: Jennifer Gore  
 Program Manager: Sarah Humpal  
 High Point Program Coordinator: Claire Dixon  
 Student Services Coordinator: Rhiannon Kelly  
 Development & Communications  
 Coordinator: Marcy Ray

Office Manager & Family Literacy  
 Coordinator: Kim Taylor  
 Reading Specialist: Mary Lester  
 Health Literacy Coordinator: Jennifer Kimbrough  
 Office Assistants: Barbara Law & Katie Watson  
 High Point Program Assistant: Michele Abbott

AmeriCorps Interns: Emily Cabrera, Keeley Murray, James Stewart



# Program Highlights



Our **Motheread@family literacy program**, funded by **Smart Start** through **Guilford County Partnership for Children**, continues to grow. This year we served 82 parents with over 130 preschool children at sites including Anderson Grove Baptist Church, Merritt Drive Church of God, and Allen Jay Elementary School. We distributed over 800 books to participating families and helped parents improve their literacy skills and be better equipped to help their children enter school ready to learn.

The **workplace literacy program** at **High Point Regional Health System** flourished in the past year. A total of 46 employees enrolled in the program as students, and 39 employees were trained as tutors. Five of the students received promotions at the hospital as a result of their improved skills, and three others have entered classes at Guilford Technical Community College. The Environmental Services Department saw turnover reduced from 50% to 3% after its employees began participating and is now ranked # 1 at the hospital in employee satisfaction.



Our **faith-based network**, supported by funding from the **Bryan Foundation**, grew to a total of 16 sites throughout Guilford County. These sites helped us serve a total of 85 new students this year and helped recruit 18 new volunteer tutors. The program is designed to expand our reach into the community, providing convenient and safe locations where students and tutors can meet and helping to recruit new tutors from local congregations.

Our **Workplace Essential Skills** classes have produced remarkable results. **Jeffrey Hamilton**, who participated in the class at Open Door Ministries in High Point, was highlighted as an "**Honor of Hope**" award recipient in "The President's Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in 50 States: A Report to the Nation," released by the White House. Through our Workplace Employment Skills class Jeffrey was able to improve his skills enough to qualify to take the GED exams, which he passed in December 2007. He is now enrolled at Guilford Technical Community College studying to be a substance abuse counselor.



Capping off the year, our annual **Awards Ceremony** honored the accomplishments of our students and tutors and celebrated our theme of "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Literacy." Featured speakers Greensboro Mayor Yvonne Johnson and Michael Prioleau, Executive Director of the High Point Alliance for Workforce Preparedness, spoke before a crowd of more than 150 students, volunteers, donors, and Board members.

Tutor of the Year awards were given to Andrew Young, Eddie Bass, Farid Wissa, and Linda Kennedy. Students Steven Moore, Dora Lewis, Tom Justice, Hassan Muslim, Robert Wilson, and Carrie Thompson were recognized for their outstanding achievements. Jeffrey Hamilton and Tacara Riley received awards as Students of the Year.



**Left:** Rhiannon Kelly presents a Student Achievement Award to Tom Justice. **Right:** Tutor of the Year Eddie Bass

**From left to right:** Board member Ralph Edwards, Executive Director Jennifer Gore, Board President Jennifer Fountain, Mayor Yvonne Johnson, Michael Prioleau



Reading Connections was proud to host the first annual **Literacy Leadership Breakfast** at the **Proximity Hotel** in Greensboro. **Lee Kinard**, former host of the Good Morning Show on WFMY, served as master of ceremonies. Guests heard from Reading Connections students, tutors, and staff, and watched a moving video, portraying the stories of several students. Guests also had an opportunity to join the **Literacy for Life Circle** by making a substantial pledge of multi-year support. The event was tremendously successful, raising nearly \$70,000 in pledges. We wish to thank all those who attended. We are especially grateful to Quaintance-Weaver

for donating the use of the meeting room, Wade Journey Homes for their sponsorship of the breakfast, and LeBauer Health Care for support of the video.

Reading Connections also began offering "**Connect With Reading Connections**" tours this year. During these tours guests meet Reading Connections staff and Board members; explore our offices, resource rooms, and computer lab; and hear first-hand accounts from our tutors and students about how working with Reading Connections has changed their lives. Even long-standing supporters learned something new about the agency. If you would like to "Connect With Reading Connections" please contact our office or check for a schedule of upcoming tours at our web site, [www.readingconnections.org](http://www.readingconnections.org).



For the 8th year, our annual **Scrabble Challenge** was a smashing success! Over 130 people participated, helping us to raise over \$29,000 to support literacy services for adults in Guilford County. Team honors went to Anderson Contractors (1st place), Lipscomb Productions (2nd place) and American Express (3rd place). Individual trophies were awarded to 1st place winner Elizabeth Stiles, 2nd place winner Andrew DeVoid, and 3rd place winner Patricia Scheidel.

# Many Thanks to Our Supporters



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