



READING CONNECTIONS



read



write



ready

2006-2007 Annual Report

2006– 2007
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creating change

We are pleased to report another successful year helping adults in Guilford County make significant and lasting changes to their lives through improved literacy. Over the past year, Reading Connections has also seen significant change as an agency. We have evaluated our services and operations to ensure continuous program improvement, implemented best practices for adult education, and added expertise to our staff to meet student, volunteer, and agency needs. The final result is a robust and flexible agency that is prepared to meet the needs of the community for adult literacy instruction in the years to come.

As we look at the big picture and prepare for the future, we never forget the immediate reality: the day-to-day struggles and triumphs of our students, the constant support and dedication of our volunteers, and the commitment of our staff to providing excellent service to the community. While we are driven by our long-term vision for every individual to live a self-determined life, it is these daily experiences of individuals striving and contributing to others that inspire us.

We hope that as you read this report, you will be similarly inspired by the success of our students and our agency. No collection of words and figures can capture the totality of all that we do and all that our students have achieved. However, the information in these pages may serve as a snapshot of some of our accomplishments.

As the coming year begins, we encourage you to visit our agency to observe first-hand our operations and witness the progress being made by our students. We also encourage you to join us in doing all that we can to ensure that literacy is seen as a high priority in Guilford County.

With heartfelt thanks to all our supporters,

Jennifer B. Gore

Jennifer Gore
Executive Director

Lynn Bennett

Lynn Bennett
*2006-2007 President
Board of Directors*

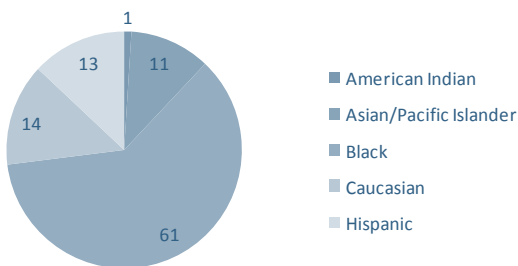
OUR MISSION

To provide and advocate for free, individualized adult literacy services to promote life changes for Guilford County residents and surrounding communities.

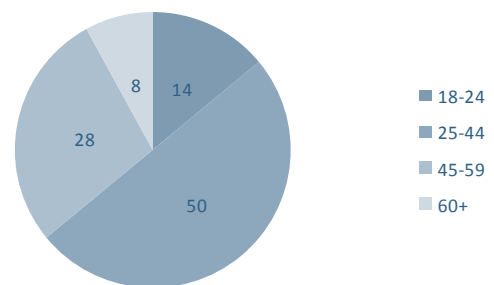
making a difference

This year we served 560 adult literacy students in Guilford County—a 45% increase from the previous year. These students were served through one-to-one volunteer tutors, in small group classes, or in our self-directed computer learning lab. 34% of our full-time students advanced a functional literacy level - each functional literacy level may encompass several grade levels. The literacy level of our incoming students varies greatly, underscoring the importance of providing personalized instruction tailored to each student's needs and strengths. Our program serves a significant number of students learning English as a second language; however, the majority of our students are native English speakers.

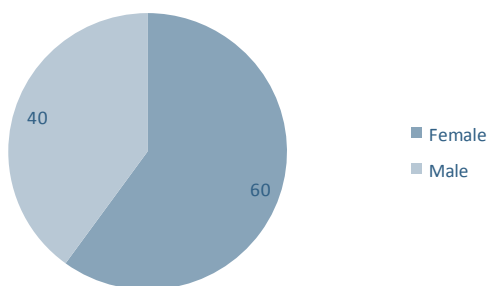
Percent of students by race



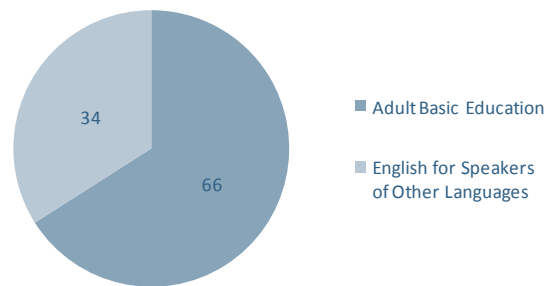
Percent of students by age



Percent of students by gender

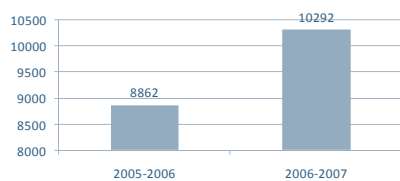


Percent of students by program

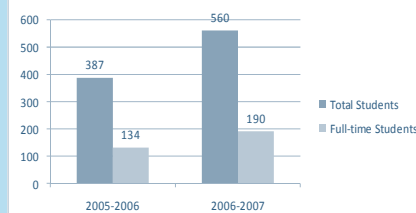


Current vs. Last Program Year

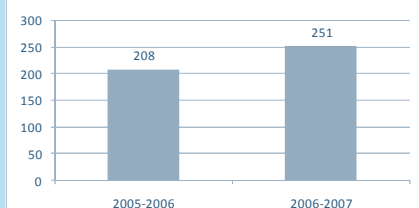
Total hours of student instruction



Total and full-time students



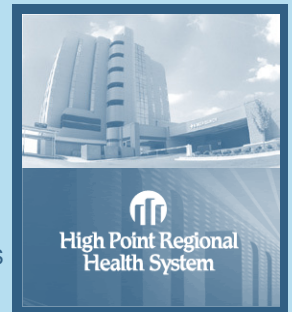
Total tutors served



WELCOME TO HIGH POINT

expanding opportunities

Based on the shared vision for a community focused on life-long learning, Reading Connections and partner agencies have made significant strides toward establishing adult literacy services in High Point. Reading Connections began offering services in High Point in 2005-2006 when we served 46 students and 9 tutors. This year we served 152 students and 35 tutors through key partnerships including the City of High Point, Community Development & Housing, Joblink, Allen Jay Elementary, Open Door Ministries, and Community Bible Church. Most significantly, we opened a High Point office at the Employment Security Commission, which provides office space and computers and also provides student referrals.



Our expanded number of adult students includes those served at a successful Workplace Literacy program at High Point Regional Hospital. In this setting, hospital employees have been trained to tutor other employees to help staff advance within the hospital's internal career structure. A total of 39 students were served, and of those students who received post-instruction assessments, 45% advanced a functional literacy level. This work would not have been possible without the support and dedication of hospital staff.

Innovative New Programs Bring Literacy to Everyone



Health Literacy: Our health literacy programs help people understand medical information and navigate the health care system. We implemented new projects funded by United Way using the book *What to Do When Your Child Gets Sick* in cooperation with the UNCG Center for Youth, Family and Community Partnerships and members of the Guilford County Health Literacy Forum.



Family Literacy: *Motherhead*® is a family literacy program that combines the teaching of literacy skills with child development and family empowerment issues. Parents and children learn to use the power of language to discover more about themselves, their families, and their communities. This year we initiated three program sites (two at churches and one at an elementary school) through a grant from the Guilford County Partnership for Children and Smart Start.



Workforce Development: Through a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, we implemented a workforce development program to reach a broader audience of adults desiring to improve work-related literacy skills. Workplace Essential Skills classes help improve basic reading and math skills as well as employment-related skills such as searching for employment, practicing for interviews, writing a resume, and communicating on the job.



Computer Literacy: Basic computer classes are taught to meet the needs adults have to become more computer savvy in a world that functions with a high technological standard. These classes then enable our students to access literacy skill building software, search for employment opportunities, and complete word processing tasks.

celebrating success

Our programs reach community members who otherwise would not access literacy services, promoting the concept of ongoing education toward self-sufficiency, raising levels of self-esteem, creating a support network for participants, and connecting individuals to other agencies to advance employment and education goals. In addition to improved literacy skills, many of our students also experienced increases in their self-confidence and their ability to meet personal goals. Here are a few examples:

- A single mother left an abusive relationship, passed a written driver's license exam, and found employment.
- A father read to his child for the first time.
- A workforce development student earned a culinary arts certificate and is employed as a cook.
- A young mother learned what it takes to help her child be prepared to enter school.
- A student learning English as a second language received a promotion to supervisor.
- A student working in environmental services earned her CNA certification and received a promotion.
- A student obtained a home loan and purchased his first home.
- A student who started the program 5 years ago at the low intermediate level has advanced to the highest ESOL level and passed her citizenship exam.

Outstanding Achievements

Special recognition goes to a few individuals whose achievements this past year drew notice from the staff, other students, tutors and community members. Ricky Hodges was awarded **Student of the Year** for his commitment to improving his literacy skills (he advanced two literacy levels!) and for his service on the Student Council. Rebecca Roorback was awarded **Tutor of the Year** for her year of service and dedication to her student. Her student advanced a literacy level and wrote the winning essay that nominated Rebecca as her tutor. Finally, Steven Hairston was awarded **NC Student of the Year** for a community-based organization by the NC Community College System. Steven competed against state finalists for the award in New Bern, NC where he delivered the winning speech to an audience of hundreds of adult educators. Steven won a \$100 stipend and a new laptop computer.

In Special Memory

We were saddened this year by the loss of Melissa Baynes, a former tutor. Melissa began volunteering with Reading Connections in 2003 and tutored students for several years until her death in 2006. She was a dedicated tutor with a strong commitment to education and literacy. Her generous bequest of \$20,000 to the agency's endowment fund ensures that her commitment and legacy will not be forgotten. We are truly grateful and proud to carry on her memory.

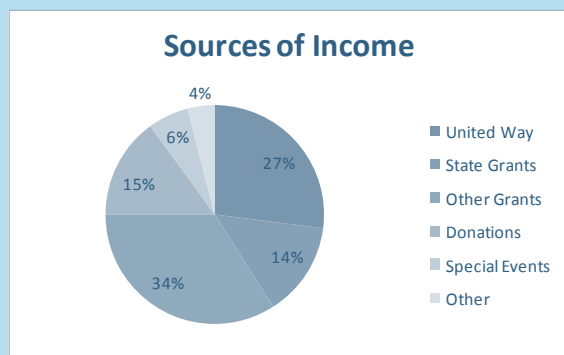
read write ready

changing lives

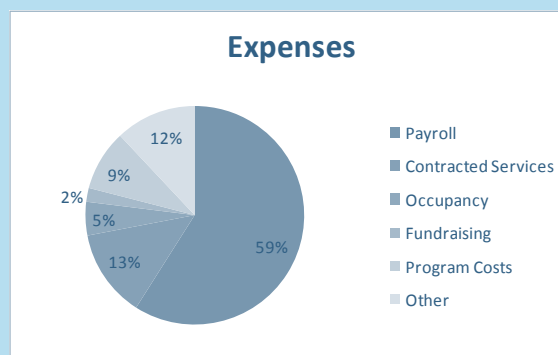
2006-2007 Financial Summary

Our capacity to serve is proportional to the financial strength of the agency. It is only through local support that we are able to impact lives every day. We celebrate these successes by acknowledging the leadership of those who provide direct funding and individual support. Primary financial support is provided by the United Way of Greater Greensboro, NC Community College System, Guilford County Partnership for Children/Smart Start, US Department of Labor, local foundations and corporate support of our annual Scrabble® tournament.

In 2006-2007 we were awarded one of three Endowment Challenges by the Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro and received a \$10,000 match for \$20,000 raised to establish a new agency endowment. We now have \$70,000 in endowment funds. New donors represented 32% of annual fund giving this past year. A copy of our audited financial report is available on request.



Total: \$430,953



Total: \$378,428

Scrabble® fundraiser—everybody wins!

Our 7th annual Scrabble® Challenge fundraiser was a smashing success. The evening helped raise over \$24,000 to support Reading Connections' programs. Over 140 participants enjoyed challenging wordplay at the Empire Room in downtown Greensboro, with musical entertainment provided by The Moe Greens. We extend our thanks to the many volunteers and sponsors who helped make possible another successful fundraiser. Brush up on your skills—next year's Scrabble® Challenge is just around the corner!



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Marcy Ray, Communications Coordinator
Kim Taylor, Office Manager

Program

Sarah Humpal, Program Manager
Rhiannon Kelly, Student Services Coordinator
Mary Lester, Reading Specialist
Claire Dixon, High Point Program Coordinator
Michele Abbott, High Point Program Assistant



READING CONNECTIONS



Adult Basic Education



Computer Literacy



English for Speakers of Other Languages



Health Literacy



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Family Literacy

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