

MAKING NEW CONNECTIONS

Annual Report 2022-2023

2022-23 Highlights of the Year

STRATEGIC PLAN

Following an inclusive listening process, the Board of Directors approved a new 18-month strategic plan in August. The plan's four major goal areas focus on building community awareness, increasing revenue, expanding services, and creating collaborative programs.

REBRANDING

At the Annual Awards Ceremony in November, we launched a new identity! Blue Ridge Literacy Council, Inc., was reborn as Literacy Connection. The name comes along with a creative logo and fresh new look.

TRANSYLVANIA

Responding to multiple community requests in Brevard and the surrounding area, we launched a new tutoring program for adults in Transylvania County.

WORKPLACE PROGRAM

Literacy Connection was proud to embark on a new workplace tutoring program in partnership with Lipman Family Farms, offering English classes for nine Lipman supervisors.

YOUTH PROGRAMS

As students everywhere struggled to regain academic footing after school closures during the pandemic, we continued to provide year-round small group and individual tutoring for teens in a safe and caring environment.



LITERACY CONNECTION

Connecting individuals & families with employment, citizenship and education through our programs



Citizenship

25
INDIVIDUALS
SERVED

7 STUDENTS
Obtained Their
US Citizenship

14 STUDENTS
Improved Their
Civics Knowledge

Improved processes led to improved results.
Of the 8 students who gained their citizenship
in this year, 5 of them were in one month!

EmployED Program

Including ESL and ABE

88
INDIVIDUALS
SERVED

40 STUDENTS
Showed Increased
Literacy Skills

52 STUDENTS
Improved Their
Economic Well-Being*

Danielle is a young lady who came to us in the Adult Basic Education Program. She had attended public school until the sixth grade when her parents decided to homeschool her. However, her education at that point was very inconsistent, and she ended up not graduating from high school. Because she did not have her diploma, her job opportunities were very limited. She decided to transition from the Adult Basic Education Program to the GED Program. After working very hard to catch up, Danielle received her GED in 2022, and is currently enrolled at Blue Ridge Community College in the very competitive cosmetology program.

*Goals achieved including increasing wages and getting raises (17), getting a promotion (4), and getting a job or better job (6).



Family Literacy

35
FAMILIES
SERVED

26 CHILDREN
Demonstrated Pre-Literacy Skills
Not Mastered Before the Program

26 PARENTS
Reported an Increase in
Reading with Their Children

It's impressive how most of the parents who attended the classes also work. One mom had a night schedule from 10:00pm to 6:00am and still attended the classes with the desire to improve herself and help their children. Her dedication to learn the systems here in her new environment so her children are better prepared is an inspiration to all of us. This mom told us that she learned many different things that she did not know, and she changed her way of thinking, so that now she feels ready to prepare her children for school.

Youth Programs

58
INDIVIDUALS
SERVED

33 STUDENTS
Improved Their
Academic Performance

25 STUDENTS
Showed Improved
Socio-Emotional Understanding

This year we introduced the Homework Club on Wednesdays, which allows us to help many more students. We have been lucky enough to have three tutors with advanced math degrees willing to tutor groups during Homework Club, and this turned into a tremendous success.

Making new community connections

Thank you to our community partners for their support.



United Way
of Henderson County



Leadership Circle

The Literacy Connection Leadership Circle is comprised of individuals committed to ensuring that our mission is achieved every year through an annual unrestricted gift of \$1,000 or more.

Rebecca Banadyga
Thomas J. Fazio
Diane Jankowski

Kris Wilson
Beverly Edgell

From Our Board President

Danny Hein *Board President 22-23*



What a year we had! By the summer of 2022, COVID was on the wane at last and life could begin to return to something more normal. Small classes and student/tutor pairs could meet in person. We gathered in person to celebrate

the annual awards for learners, new citizens, and volunteers. And staff members traveled to attend the ProLiteracy Conference in San Antonio. Despite a feeling of optimism, however, staff turnover proved to be a challenge during the year, as in so many other workplaces.

Capacity-building was a huge focus of the year. After an inclusive process involving focus groups and listening sessions, the board launched an 18-month strategic plan. Kicking into high gear to implement the strategic plan, the board and staff birthed a new identity for Blue Ridge Literacy Council, Inc. We are Literacy Connection! In addition, we finalized a Diversity and Equity plan as well as revised governance policies. Executive Director Katrina McGuire did a great job of raising our profile and representing Literacy Connection in the community.

Successful programming requires sustainable funding. Literacy Connection was pleased to receive a significant new 3-year grant from WNC Bridge Foundation to support capacity building efforts, and we received our first-ever grant from the town of Mills River. Funding continued from the United Way, Community Foundation of Henderson County, the City of Hendersonville and Henderson County, and the Community Foundation of WNC, as well as other small grants. We launched the first annual Wine & Words Scrabble Tournament in the winter and enjoyed fellowship and fun at the annual Spring Luncheon at Point Lookout. While staff turnover led to a year-end deficit overall, the shortfall was significantly smaller than the year before. The trend is in the right direction.

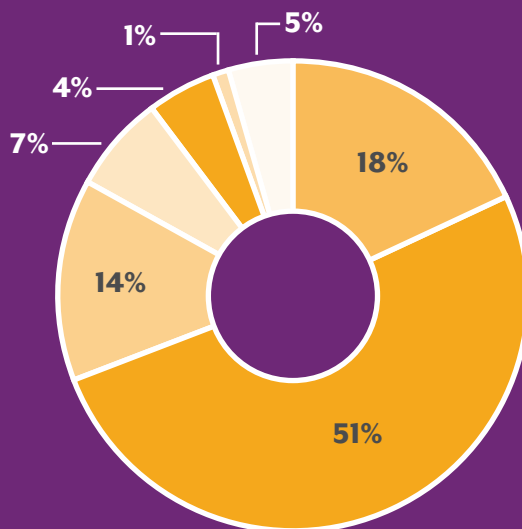
What matters most, of course, is our mission. In the year of this report, our organization continued to make real differences in people's lives in Henderson and Transylvania Counties by **cultivating literacy skills that promote economic and social success**. See inside this report for the outcomes of our EmployED, Citizenship, Family Literacy, and Youth Programs.



Financial Report

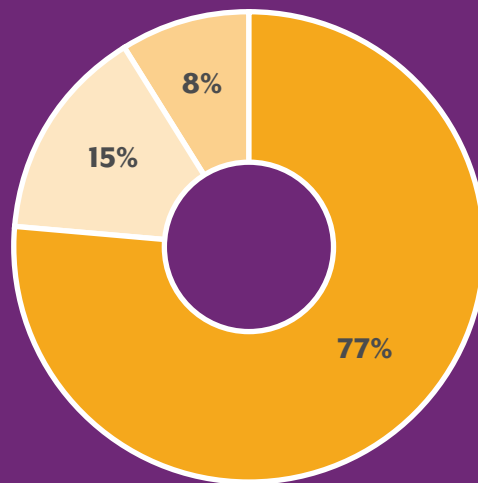
Net Assets Year End: \$183,586

Audited Financials are available upon request.



REVENUE \$264,115

Individual Contributions	\$47,805
Other Grants	\$135,500
United Way	\$36,079
County & Municipal Funding	\$17,900
Events	\$12,289
In-Kind	\$2,885
Other	\$11,657



EXPENSES \$288,081

Program Services	\$220,795
Administration	\$42,081
Fundraising	\$25,205