The Shift to Remote Learning
Dear supporters, members, advocates, and friends,

Five hundred years ago the country of Iceland was so remote and barren that many thought it was uninhabitable. Residents decided they would survive through language, literacy, and books. In the 16th century, Iceland instituted mandatory literacy. By the 17th century, every Icelander was guaranteed the right to literacy, with a tutor sent to each farm every year for a month, just to be sure. By the end of the 18th century, Iceland was the only country in the world to achieve near universal literacy.

Today tutors still play a critical role in helping adult students increase their literacy skills. Our recent COVID-19 survey of the adult literacy field found that 85 percent of adult literacy programs in the U.S., while physically closed during the pandemic, were still connecting adult literacy tutors with students through print and digital remote learning options. Despite the resilience of both tutors and students, the path forward will be challenging for community-based adult literacy programs due to lack of funding. ProLiteracy continues to distribute grants to local programs for educational materials through the National Book Fund and the Mobile Learning Fund to help facilitate remote learning activity.

We thank you for your ongoing support and compassion for adult literacy, which continues to help literacy programs operate and students achieve success.

Kevin Morgan
PRESIDENT AND CEO
ProLiteracy Introduces the Distance Learning: Ideas from the Field Webinar Series

ProLiteracy has hosted 11 webinars for programs to obtain ideas from their peers on distance learning. The 11 sessions held in April, May, and June had over 8,000 attendees and another 7,000 people who watched the recordings. These webinars are posted to the ProLiteracy’s YouTube channel for educators to access and share. We are all in this together, and ProLiteracy thanks the programs that shared their ideas and methods to educate their students during this unprecedented time.

NEW! ProLiteracy International Organizational Membership

ProLiteracy is excited to announce the launch of a new membership option—International Organizational. International Organizational membership is available to programs offering adult basic education, adult literacy, or adult ESL services that are not based in the U.S. or Canada. Visit https://www.proliteracy.org/membership to learn more.

NEW! Laubach Way to Reading—Arabic

Laubach Way to Reading Arabic is a free resource, funded by generous donors who contributed to the Dr. Robert S. Laubach Publishing & Innovation Fund. The money raised supports the digitization and translation of Laubach Way to Reading, the bestselling New Readers Press reading and writing series, into multiple languages that can be accessed online and on mobile devices. The first project completed through this fund was the translation of Laubach Way to Reading into Arabic. Learn more at https://proliteracyednet.org/Laubach-Way-to-Reading-Arabic.

NEW! Ruth Colvin’s Memoir My Travels through Life, Love, and Literacy

“I may be 103, but age is just a number. What you do with your number is what is important. What have I been doing with my big number? For the past three years, I’ve been searching my soul and my journals, looking back over my 100-plus years, writing my memoir. . . . As I shared my life experiences, I learned that seeds were planted all my life that made me the person I am. I learned from my mistakes—as well as from my successes—and some disasters were blessings in disguise. Look to your own early years, and you’ll learn more about yourself as I did about myself.” – Ruth Colvin

proliteracy news
COVID-19 Impact Survey

PROLITERACY surveyed its member programs and New Readers Press customers to gauge how local literacy programs and their students are being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our survey was open from May 11, 2020 through June 1, 2020, and it yielded 392 responses. By conducting this survey, we were able to measure the state of adult literacy programs across the U.S. and determine what they need to continue educating their students.

Key findings from the survey include the following:

• 85% of programs indicated that while their class location is physically closed, they are reaching students through some method(s) of remote learning.

• 89% of programs are using an online platform (e.g., Zoom, Google Classroom, WhatsApp) for remote learning, followed closely by phone calls/texting (82%), and printed instructional material sent to students (62%).

• Programs cited “training for staff on digital learning tools” as their number one need (59%).

• While the majority of students have smartphones, programs indicated that they need devices with larger screens (e.g., tablets, laptops) to effectively learn and communicate online. In addition, many students can’t afford the broadband or Wi-Fi needed for remote learning.

The Shift to Remote Learning

THE FUTURE of adult basic education has quickly moved toward digital learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With 55 percent of adult basic education programs having no information or guidance from their state as to when they can reopen in-person classrooms, many programs are struggling to provide the educational content necessary to help learners from a distance.

ProLiteracy quickly assembled a COVID-19 resource page on our website to provide links, tips, and information that can help programs and learners transition to distance education. Extended free pilots of New Readers Press Online Learning, Leamos™, Learning Upgrade®, Voxy®, and News for You® Online were made available for programs across the country. Using digital resources like these, programs were able to continue with remote instruction for low-literate adults.

To learn more about adult education’s response to the pandemic, read the COVID-19 Rapid Response Report from the Field at https://www.proliteracy.org/Resources/Research.

To learn more about these resources visit https://www.proliteracy.org/health.
ProLiteracy Provides Direct Relief with the Literacy Relief Fund

SINCE THE PANDEMIC BEGAN, many adult literacy programs across the U.S. are struggling to connect with onsite learners. Adult literacy programs indicated that while their classroom locations are physically closed, they are reaching students through some method(s) of remote learning. Programs cited that they are in desperate need of staff training on digital learning tools, additional funding, and instructional content that has both print and digital components.

The Literacy Relief Fund was created to provide direct relief to adult literacy programs, tutors, and students. The Fund will provide access to both digital and print learning materials to use for remote instruction.

To learn more or contribute to the Literacy Relief Fund, please visit https://www.proliteracy.org/What-We-Do/Programs-Projects/Relief

Introducing the Great American Book Sale

THE GREAT AMERICAN BOOK SALE will feature a variety of literary genres and authors in a unique shopping experience. Proceeds will benefit the Literacy Relief Fund, which will give adult literacy programs access to digital and print learning materials.

The virtual sale will be held from September 21 through 27, 2020, in conjunction with Adult Education and Family Literacy Week. If you love reading or are looking for an early holiday gift, you can shop for autographed books from Nora Roberts, Michael Connolly, and many more, all while supporting adult literacy programs, tutors, and students. Funds raised during the sale will be matched, dollar for dollar, up to $50,000 thanks to the generosity of the Nora Roberts Foundation.

To check out the list of contributing authors, publishers, and sponsors, please visit www.greatamericanbooksale.org.
Mobile Learning Fund — Responding to the Needs of Adult Literacy Programs

THE MOBILE LEARNING FUND provides adult literacy programs and their students with digital education materials. Today, many adult literacy instructors are faced with the task of switching from in-person classes to remote learning. While programs are working toward integrating digital instruction, they may not have access to affordable, easy-to-use, and engaging technology solutions for adult learners. The Mobile Learning Fund provides programs digital courses like New Readers Press Online Learning, Learning Upgrade®, Voxy®, Leamos™, and News for You® Online.

Since the pandemic began, there has been a 37 percent increase in licenses distributed through the Mobile Learning Fund. To learn more or to contribute to the Mobile Learning Fund, please visit https://www.proliteracy.org/MobileLearningFund.

Many adult students enjoy using digital solutions because they’re flexible—students can use them when it’s convenient. John, an adult learner at the Literacy Alliance of Northeast Florida, loves using the Learning Upgrade® app. It is easy to use, with short lessons that can be completed in 5 to 20 minutes. He has logged about 24 hours of reading instruction and finished 60 lessons on his phone. John explained, “I like doing lessons on my phone. It’s easy. I earned 40 gold medals and I want to get more! I will try the Digital Literacy lessons and maybe even math next.”

LANCÔME USA and ProLiteracy launched the Write Her Future Initiative in September 2019 to increase literacy rates among women. The Lancôme grant to ProLiteracy provides programs with a one-year license to Voxy®, a personalized language-learning platform, to use with women adult learners. The Voxy platform pairs authentic content with personalized live instruction—all delivered in a fully mobile experience.

When programs were forced to shift to distance learning because of COVID-19, the Write Her Future Institute helped already-enrolled programs to seamlessly transition learners to distance learning. Women using Voxy licenses were already familiar with the platform and were able to continue their studies, even if they were unable to meet face-to-face with instructors. Since the pandemic began, ProLiteracy has seen a 50 percent increase in applications to the Write Her Future Institute. To learn more about the Write Her Future Institute, please visit https://www.proliteracy.org/write-her-future.
In Memory of Two Literacy Giants — Mary Anne Nelson and Lee Collins

MARY ANNE NELSON, a long-time trainer and supporter, passed away at the age of 92. Mary Anne started training with her good friend, Nena Kelty, in the 1970s for Laubach Literacy, under the guidance of California Literacy (now defunct). Mary Anne trained tutors nationally, as well as throughout southern California. Those who worked with her will remember how important it was for her to take extra time to work with individuals so they could become more effective volunteer trainers. She touched thousands of students both directly and indirectly through her literacy training work.

Even in retirement, Mary Anne was still available when asked to tutor or train. She was always humble and unassuming, and she felt privileged to be able to help. A couple without children, Mary Anne and her husband traveled the world and would often go by railroad as he was fanatical about them. Later in life, after Mary Anne’s husband passed, she became a generous donor to literacy, to her mother’s long-term care home, as well as to local individuals in need. She was active and vibrant until the end of her life, and she was a joy to be around. She made a big difference to many who will never know her, but those of us who did will remember her fondly.

LEE COLLINS, a former ProLiteracy Board member, and steadfast advocate for literacy, passed away at the age of 98. Lee was a renaissance woman. The wife of a State Department intelligence officer, she and her husband, Foster, raised three children while moving from post to post. Lee was a gracious hostess and took special interest in the local populations, often volunteering in local initiatives. It was in Colombia that she met Bob Caswell, a long-term employee of Laubach Literacy International, and “got hooked” on literacy.

Once the State Department landed the Collinses in the U.S. permanently, Lee continued to remain active in literacy. She volunteered as a board member for the Northern Virginia Literacy Council, and later she became involved with Laubach Literacy. As the Chair of the Board, Lee was always upbeat yet assertive in pushing to gain more public awareness for the issue of adult literacy. The Foster and Lee Collins Endowment at ProLiteracy remains an everlasting tribute to them and their dedication to advancing literacy nationally and in and around Northern Virginia.

Lee never made an enemy and was a competitive tennis player well into her later years. Her contributions will not be forgotten, and she will be missed by all who knew her.

Do You Give through a Donor Advised Fund (DAF)?

IF YOU MAKE A GRANT to ProLiteracy and commit to putting half your DAF to work by September 30, we will be eligible to receive up to $25,000 in matching funds. Check for details at www.halfmydaf.com. It is ProLiteracy’s mission to change lives and communities through the power of adult literacy, so we must continue to provide relief and guidance to adult literacy programs facing challenges due to COVID-19. Your contribution can spur other donor-advisors to give to ProLiteracy; and with more resources, we can ensure that local programs continue to provide quality instruction and services to adult learners.
Find more ways to give at proliteracy.org

ProLiteracy believes every adult has a right to literacy. We champion the power of literacy to improve the lives of adults, families, and communities. We envision a world in which everyone can read, write, and use technology to lead healthy, productive, and fulfilling lives. We can’t do it alone!

Thank you for your continued commitment to changing lives and communities through the power of adult literacy!

Leave your legacy with ProLiteracy. Planned giving gives you the peace of mind to know that your future is planned and gives ProLiteracy the resources to plan for the future. Contact Wallace Barkins at wbarkins@proliteracy.org to find out how.

Online
Make a one-time donation or set up a recurring gift using our fast and secure online form. To donate, visit proliteracy.org/donate.

Employer matching gifts
Many employers match employee gifts. Find out if yours does at doublethedonation.com/proliteracy.

Mail
101 Wyoming Street, Syracuse, New York 13204

Call
888-926-READ
(888-926-7323)