



Fall 2010

# Literacy Partners update

212.725.9200  
www.literacypartners.org

Everyone deserves a chance to read.

lit·er·a·cy part·ners

LIZ SMITH  
JACQUELINE WELD DRAKE  
Honorary Chairs

Board of Directors

MARK H. JACKSON  
Chairman

PETER BROWN  
Chairman Emeritus

PARKER B. LADD  
Vice President

JOHN H. JOSEPHSON  
Treasurer

LEE V. EASTMAN  
Secretary

Executive Committee

SUSAN MAGRINO DUNNING  
JANE FRIEDMAN  
KATHARINE RAYMOND HINTON  
SONIA REESE  
ARNOLD SCAASI  
JEFFREY SHARP

ADELE G. BERGREEN  
BARBARA TAYLOR BRADFORD  
ROBERT BRADFORD  
GINA CENTRELLO  
SHARON KING HOGE  
CHARLES M. JACKSON  
LESLIE R. KLOTZ  
CAROLYN K. REIDY  
MIKE STEIB  
EDWIDGE JOURDAIN THOMAS  
MARK WHITAKER

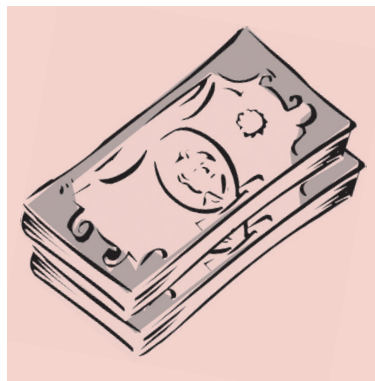
SUSAN A. McLEAN  
Executive Director

Council for Literacy

ANNE H. BASS  
ANNETTE DE LA RENTA  
ANNE FINUCANE  
RENÉE FLEMING  
ANNE EISENHOWER FLÖTTL  
GILLIAN SPRECKELS FULLER  
LYNN C. GOLDBERG  
BARBARA GOLDSMITH  
AUDREY GRUSS  
VERONICA HEARST  
ANN JACKSON  
YOKO ONO LENNON  
BETTY A. PRASHKER  
DAN RATHER  
DIANE SAWYER  
LESLY S. SMITH  
ANNA STRASBERG  
SIR HOWARD STRINGER  
BARBARA WALTERS  
ANN ZIFF  
MORTIMER B. ZUCKERMAN

## Financial Literacy

In the last year, in the midst of the country's financial woes, Literacy Partners invested in updating and revising its Financial Literacy program to ensure that our students were getting useful information in the most effective way possible. Supported by a generous two-year grant from The Dow Jones Foundation, Literacy Partners hired Lucia Perez as The Dow Jones Financial Literacy Coordinator as banks and other financial institutions were dominating the front page news and our students, along with the rest of the world, were feeling the crunch of the slow moving economy.



Lucy arrived at Literacy Partners with a background in financial education in the not-for-profit sector (see Staff Profile on page 3). Her first order of business was to create a curriculum, *Economics for Life*, that could address core monetary issues in a way that would speak to our student population, which often relies

on check cashing services to cash paychecks that they can't interpret. The curriculum, with topics ranging from Values, Goal Setting, Paychecks and Budgeting, to Investment, Credit, Debt and Identity Theft, is adjustable to students' literacy levels, learning styles and needs, and grows from their own life experiences. "Now I know the difference between my [financial] wants and my needs," said Yacouba K. "Also, I opened a savings account and applied for a credit card."

Classroom activities advance from basic tasks, like creating a tracking sheet for expenditures, to more complicated exercises, such as establishing and using a family budget. Students are encouraged to actively accomplish financial tasks and then utilize those skills over time to help them reach larger financial goals. "I learned how to build my credit and what should everyone know about banking and loans," said Asmeret D. "I also learned about having your own business."

In addition to piloting the curriculum in several classes, in the last year Lucy presented a series of financial literacy workshops for students and their friends and family, including retirement planning, first time home buying, scams, the Federal Reserve, taxes, and how to start your own business. She has also compiled a financial literacy

archive as a resource for our instructors, with articles, fact sheets, and interactive exercises covering just about every financial question that might arise among the students.



The impact of The Dow Jones Financial Literacy Program has proven to be both instantaneous and long range, with an immediate benefit of avoiding check cashing fees by opening a bank account, and an improved monetary future arising as a result of budgeting and saving. "They have helped me in every way," said Esther M. "Thanks to the class, I have started to pay off most of my bills without getting into more debt."

With training completed for all our instructors and volunteer tutors, *Economics for Life* is now a part of all Literacy Partners classes, which is great for Eduarda G. who participated in the pilot program: "I want to continue to learn more, as for me everything about finances is important."

# From Literacy Classes to the Workforce: Bridging the Gap

Susan A. McLean, *Executive Director*



*Susan A. McLean*

**W**ith outsourcing rampant, corporations tightening their belts and competition high, it is no secret that jobs are in scarce supply. The literature shows that adults who are deficient in basic skills have a greater incidence of unemployment than their better skilled counterparts. One well-documented reason that adult learners choose to join literacy programs is to increase their skills to be able to get a job, advance in their current job, or increase their overall job prospects

One technique that is gaining recognition for helping illiterate adults is

an integrated approach that embeds literacy lessons within vocational training. This enables students to prepare for the work force as soon as possible, without waiting to attain literacy skills before turning to vocational training.

In early October of this year, the White House put forth its own agenda in this area, with a major new initiative entitled Skills for America's Future. In his remarks announcing this new focus, President Obama said, "The idea here is simple: we want to make it easier to connect students looking for jobs with businesses looking to hire. We want to help community colleges and employers create programs that match curricula in the classroom with the needs of the boardroom... The goal is to ensure that every state in the country has at least one strong partnership between a growing industry and a community college."

Literacy Partners understands these objectives and we ensure that our lessons reflect students' interests and needs, including the incorporation of financial literacy, health literacy and pre-employment skills in our curriculum

to address needed areas of expertise. Our long-time staff position of Employment and Education Counselor assists students with occupational issues of all kinds, delivering workshops at our learning centers as well as working one-on-one to help interested students look for work, prepare them for employment, and/or connect them with opportunities for higher education and vocational training.

Our new strategic plan emphasizes the importance of building on this foundation and addressing all the barriers that may keep our students from succeeding. Over the next three years we will be increasing student access to technology to build computer literacy, including helping them find employment. We are also working to develop a network of educational and training organizations and other service providers to coordinate resources for illiterate individuals and their families that can offer permanent pathways out of poverty for this seriously disadvantaged population.

*Susan A. McLean*

---

## Mark H. Jackson, New Chairman of the Board

**M**ark H. Jackson, Executive Vice President and General Counsel of Dow Jones & Company, was elected Chairman at the Literacy Partners Board of Directors annual meeting in June. A dedicated community leader and philanthropist, Mark brings a wealth of experience and connections to his new leadership role in the organization. In his professional life, Mark has represented a broad array of media interests in the newspaper, magazine, book publishing, motion picture and television industries. As Chairman of Literacy Partners, Mark will be leading the implementation of a new, three-year strategic plan, which is designed to ensure that Literacy Partners continues to successfully execute, strengthen, and expand core products and services; enhance the organization's profile in the literacy community; strengthen and ensure the organization's fiscal future; and maximize Board and staff effectiveness. As Executive Director Susan McLean noted, "We are delighted that Mark will be leading our organization to even greater achievements over the next three years."



*Mark H. Jackson*

## STAFF PROFILE: Lucia Perez



Lucia Perez

Lucia Perez, Dow Jones Financial Literacy Coordinator, came to Literacy Partners after five years as a loan officer at Accion US, specializing in personal and starter business loans. “There was a financial literacy

component to those transactions. We were not just providing funds, we offered seminars, training and assistance. I knew [financial literacy] was what I wanted to do.”

At Literacy Partners Lucy set to work researching, writing and piloting lessons for a nine-unit, fifteen-part curriculum for students at different learning levels. The previous curriculum was “too basic in some ways and too complicated in others,” she said. “I was saying that from experience. I knew exactly what it was the students really needed.”

Indeed, Lucy had experienced situations identical to many her students now face. “I came to this country when I was 14 years old from the Dominican Republic with my mom and dad and three sisters. We came without knowing the language at all.” Her father found work in a factory; Lucy and her two sisters dove headfirst into school. “I always saw my father playing around with a piece of paper. And I’d say, ‘Daddy, give me five dollars.’ He’d say, ‘You have to wait til Friday.’ And I’d think, ‘What’s wrong with this guy? I need five dollars now.’ He was following a budget. He sent all three of us to college through a budget. That stuck with me.”

One item in Lucy’s curriculum teaches students to refrain from doing or signing anything they can’t read or don’t understand until it is explained to them. “One student said he had a bank account and told me, ‘Teacher, this guy came and told me to do so-and-so, and I told him I can’t do anything without talking first with my financial advisor.’ And he would come to me and ask, ‘Do you have time now?’ I was really happy that day. Glorified, I’m a financial advisor! Do something to my students, and you’re not going to get away with it!”

## Food for Thought: Great Ideas Served With Lunch



Event Chair Jacqueline Weld Drake, Lauren Weisberger and Liz Smith.

April 6th, and Erica Jong on June 1st. Tickets and information: [www.literacypartners.org/events](http://www.literacypartners.org/events) or call 646.237.0105.

## Literacy Associates: Games for Good!

Over 150 young professionals joined in the fun at Carnival at Bowlmor on April 27, 2010 for the second annual Literacy Associates Benefit. They amused themselves at Coney Island-style games like Drown the Clown, Ring Toss and Goldfish Pong, as well as having their fortune told and caricature drawn



Literacy Associates Chair Andrea Rosen (4th from left) with fellow party-goers.

over the course of an evening filled with food, sweets, and specialty cocktails. An online auction accompanied the event and included the opportunity to have lunch with executives at HarperCollins and Random House to pitch a book concept, autographed collectibles from the Yankees and Knicks and much, much more. Planning is underway for 2011 and we welcome new members to the Literacy Associates. To volunteer or learn more, email [literacyassociates@literacypartners.org](mailto:literacyassociates@literacypartners.org) or call 646.237.0105.

## Save the Date



Honorees, authors, student readers and event chairs from the 2010 Gala, which raised over \$1.2 million!

Join us on Monday, May 16, 2011 for the 27th annual Literacy Partners Gala Evening of Readings at the David H Koch Theater at Lincoln Center. Best-selling authors will be joined by students from our programs, who will talk about their journey to literacy. Information will be posted on our website, [www.literacypartners.org](http://www.literacypartners.org), as we move head with our plans in the coming months.

## Literacy Partners Appreciates Appreciated Stock

Gifts of appreciated stock can be extremely beneficial to both you and Literacy Partners. Securities that have risen in value and that you have held for at least one year are a great gift option. The benefits of making a gift of appreciated stock include:

- A charitable income tax deduction for the full fair market value of the stock;
- No capital gains taxes on the appreciation;
- A substantial gift to Literacy Partners that will help illiterate adults in New York City learn to read!

Executing a gift of appreciated stock is simple. You only need to contact your broker and instruct him or her to transfer the shares to Literacy Partners. For more information about making a gift of appreciated assets or instructions for executing a stock gift, please contact David Nathanson, Director of Finance & Human Resources, at 646.237.0123 or davidn@literacypartners.org.

## A Promise for Continued Success

Literacy Partners is proud to announce that The Dorothy Strelsin Foundation and its President, Enid Nemy, has made a promised gift of \$1 million to establish *The Dorothy Strelsin Education Endowment* to further the work of Literacy Partners. In making the gift, Ms. Nemy noted, "I believe so strongly in the work of Literacy Partners because I cannot visualize life without being able to read."

The Endowment will help us to continue to provide the essential educational services our students need. It will also further Literacy Partners efforts to create pathways out of poverty for New York City residents through new collaborative models with other agencies that combine literacy programs with related social services.

Literacy Partners appreciates the long-term support of Ms. Nemy and The Dorothy Strelsin Foundation, which has given hundreds of adults the opportunity to better their lives through education. Thanks to the establishment of *The Dorothy Strelsin Education Endowment*, that legacy of giving will continue for years to come.

## A Celebration of our Students and Volunteers

At the Annual Student and Volunteer Recognition Celebration on June 24, 2010, nine students from our seven learning centers shared their stories onstage with the hundreds of fellow students, friends and family members in attendance. Awards were given to outstanding volunteers, including one for outstanding student volunteer. All attendees received a compilation of 150 student stories, printed courtesy of Simon & Schuster. To receive a copy of *Student Stories 2010*, please contact Paige Williams at 646.237.0105 or paigew@literacypartners.org.



*Laura Dotterer (right), Family Literacy Instructor, with some of her students and volunteers.*



lit·er·a·cy part·ners

### Literacy Partners, Inc.

30 East 33rd Street, 6th Floor  
New York, NY 10016  
[www.literacypartners.org](http://www.literacypartners.org)

Everyone deserves a chance to read.

