



# QUALITY CREATIVITY MOMENTUM

**Minnesota  
Literacy Council**

ANNUAL REPORT / 08-09



# Illiteracy is the greatest solvable social challenge of our time.



OUR MISSION: To share the power of learning through education, community building and advocacy.

Dear Friends of Literacy:

Quality. Creativity. Momentum. If we had to summarize the past year at the Minnesota Literacy Council (MLC), these are the words we'd choose.

**QUALITY.** Our literacy programs are delivering strong results. More adults in MLC's literacy classes moved up a level on standardized reading assessments. Struggling young readers in our Summer Reads program improved their skills over the summer. And our Early Literacy and Families program coached parents to prepare their children for school success.

**CREATIVITY.** To meet the 13% increase in demand for our adult classes, we found ways to recruit and train record numbers of volunteers as literacy tutors and teachers. Our staff continues to be on the cutting edge in developing online programs to support volunteers and learners. Through this technology, our trainers have shared their expertise with literacy instructors around the globe.

**MOMENTUM.** Our classes, with their focus on computers and workplace skills, are giving our adult learners a step up to compete for better jobs. Hundreds of national service members across the state are ensuring all Minnesota children have bright futures. MLC's new three-year strategic plan builds on this momentum and will move us to an entirely new level of performance. Hang on!

Illiteracy is the greatest solvable social challenge of our time – and we are confident we're headed in the right direction. Read on to learn how your support of literacy is achieving dramatic results.

Eric Nesheim  
Executive Director

Robert J. Cocker  
Board President

Cover photo by Brady Willette, Willette Pictures.  
Photography by Brady Willette [pages 3 (top), 4 and 5]; Eli Hamann [pages 2, 3 (bottom) and 6]; and Scott Streble [pages 3 (center), 8-9 and back cover].







## LOCAL IMPACT, Global Reach

### OUR CHALLENGE: Eliminating barriers to education

Geographic and scheduling barriers can prevent a volunteer from attending a training or a learner from taking classes. Online courses minimize these issues, and the Minnesota Literacy Council is leading the way by using and sharing technology to improve our impact and reach. Teachers from as far away as Hong Kong and Argentina are accessing our online tutor trainings.

### OUR RESPONSE:

- As part of a national pilot project with several other sites, we were integral to the development of Learner Web, a quality web-based tool for adults to access self-study educational programs.
- MLC trainers expanded online course offerings for volunteers, professional educators and adult learners to increase access beyond our training room walls.
- Learning center coordinators set up online sites to share volunteer needs and curriculum, improve communication among volunteers and make it easier to step in as a substitute teacher.

### SUPPORT SERVICES:

Literacy programs in Minnesota are strengthened through MLC's training and advisory support for Adult Basic Education, educational technology and volunteer management. There were 35% more participants in our live educational technology trainings and 400% more active users of our online courses this year.

**ABOVE:** Laptops from the COW – “Computer on Wheels” – provide a hands-on opportunity to listen and use English for Antonio, who moved to the U.S. when he married a Minnesotan, and Grace, an expecting mother who wants to communicate better with her doctor. Learning with technology powerfully benefits both the professional and family lives of our learners.

## POWERING WORKFORCES, Empowering Minds

### OUR CHALLENGE: Filling the gap

MLC adult learners were hit hard by the economic downturn. Not only did they experience job loss and greater competition finding employment, they often had to take two or three jobs to make ends meet. These adults turned to the Minnesota Literacy Council to become more competitive in the workforce.

### OUR RESPONSE:

- Literacy classes incorporated additional computer and work skills training to help adults transition more effectively to employment or post-secondary education.
- MLC Learning Centers accommodated learners' varying work schedules and expanded class sizes so learners weren't turned away.
- MLC relied on larger numbers of volunteers to assist in the classroom.

### ADULT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:

2,600 adults in the Twin Cities attended free classes at five MLC Learning Centers in Minneapolis and St. Paul to build English and work-readiness skills and prepare for the GED test. The Adult Literacy Hotline referred thousands of Minnesotans to the nearly 400 literacy programs across the state.

**LEFT:** When we first met Kuleni, she was unsure of how to write her own name. A friend had to help her fill in the registration forms so she could enroll in English classes at one of our learning centers. Now a hard-working learner in beginning English classes, Kuleni continues to improve her reading, writing and speaking. Her sense of humor not only energizes the classroom but brings together students from diverse cultural backgrounds.







## STARTING YOUNG, Starting Strong

**OUR CHALLENGE:**  
Ensuring our children are  
prepared for lifelong learning

Today’s children are our future leaders, workers and parents. Their success depends on a strong foundation in literacy. Imagine yourself as a fourth-grade student trying to keep up with your peers in science or history when you’re unable to read well. The Minnesota Literacy Council knows that by helping children read at grade level by third grade, we are providing the foundation for bright futures.

**OUR RESPONSE:**

- MLC parent mentors make in-home visits to teach families how to incorporate literacy into everyday activities, like making a snack or doing laundry.
- Minnesota Reading Corps members are trained in research-based methods to bring students up to – and beyond – their expected reading level. Thousands of students falling behind their peers get back on track toward becoming successful readers.
- We distribute thousands of children’s books every year. This helps kids who might not have books of their own gain a love of reading and enthusiasm for school.

**CHILDREN AND FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMS:**

The Early Literacy and Families program inspired nearly 100 parents to be their children’s first and most important teacher. National Service members helped 19,400 children improve their reading fluency through the Minnesota Reading Corps and Summer Reads program, and year-long VISTA members recruited 3,500 community literacy volunteers.

**ABOVE:** His favorite dinosaur is the Triceratops, but today Richard draws a Tyrannosaurus rex. He attends our Children’s English School while his parents take English classes. Richard is only four years old, but he can already write words to add to the word wall in the classroom.

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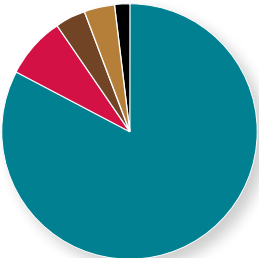
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**BACK COVER:** Treka Hannah reads with a preschooler at PICA Head Start McKnight in Minneapolis. Treka implemented the Minnesota Reading Corps model in her classroom.

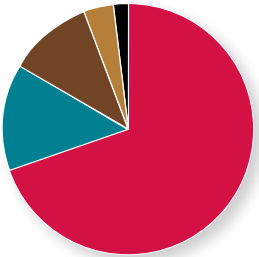
## FINANCIAL SUMMARY Year Ended June 30, 2009

*Dollars in Thousands*



### Support and Revenue

82%	\$7,482	Government Grants
8%	773	In-kind Contributions
4%	366	Program Service Fees, Other
4%	334	Corporate and Foundation Grants
2%	145	Contributions, Special Events
		<b>\$9,100 Total Support and Revenue</b>



### Expenditures

70%	\$6,455	Children and Family Literacy Programs
13%	1,164	Volunteer Training, Technology, Support Services
11%	1,023	Adult Literacy Programs
4%	353	Administration
2%	198	Fundraising
		<b>\$9,193 Total Expenses</b>

### Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 602
Accounts/Grants Receivable	1,086
Other Current Assets	22
Fixed Assets (Net)	41
Endowment	101
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$1,852</b>

### Liabilities and Net Assets

Accounts Payable	\$ 298
Accrued Expenses and Other Current Liabilities	227
Unrestricted Net Assets	223
Board Designated	550
Board Designated Permanent Endowment	100
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	454
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$1,852</b>

*Complete copies of financial statements are available upon request or at [www.theMLC.org](http://www.theMLC.org).*



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### In Honor of:

All learners of English as a Second Language: Catherine Adiang, Dee & Robert Rosenbrook  
Anni's birthday: Marsha Johnson  
Julia Blenkush: Stephen Blenkush  
Katie Blenkush: Julia Albers Blenkush & Stephen Blenkush  
Lisa Burke & Dan Gjeltten: Jess Durrant  
Kuaneng Cheng: Barbara A. Peterson  
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Bridget Kromhout: Caileen Kromhout  
Judith Madigan: Colleen Dawson  
David & Sandi Marrinson's anniversary: Sandi's birthday: Sharon & Bill Torodor  
Jeanna Meyer: Cheryl Jeseritz  
Marsha Milgrom: Ann Cader  
Rosie Moore, my first student 25 years ago: Barbara Hedin  
Mulcahy children's teachers: Diana Mulcahy  
Eric Nesheim: David & Tami Nesheim  
Florence Onslow: Richard Onslow  
Our wedding guests: Krista Barsness  
Sheila Piippo: Stephanie White  
Jim & Mickey Reilly: Jane Reilly\*  
Charlie Roger's father: Marilyn & Greg Sicheneder  
Rowan Rymer: Kirsten Johnson  
Sally's birthday: Sally & Alan Ruvelson  
Niles Schulz: Sara Schulz  
Jackie Sheehan: Dawn Carlson  
Elizabeth Tuckwood: Sheri Smith  
Leta & Morris Vinz: Linda Vinz  
Linda Vinz: Leta & Morris Vinz  
Winter solstice: Robert Lindstrom

## In Memory of:

Bonnie Borchardt: Donna Levene  
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Mary Byron: Peggy Weber & Bob Whitlock  
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