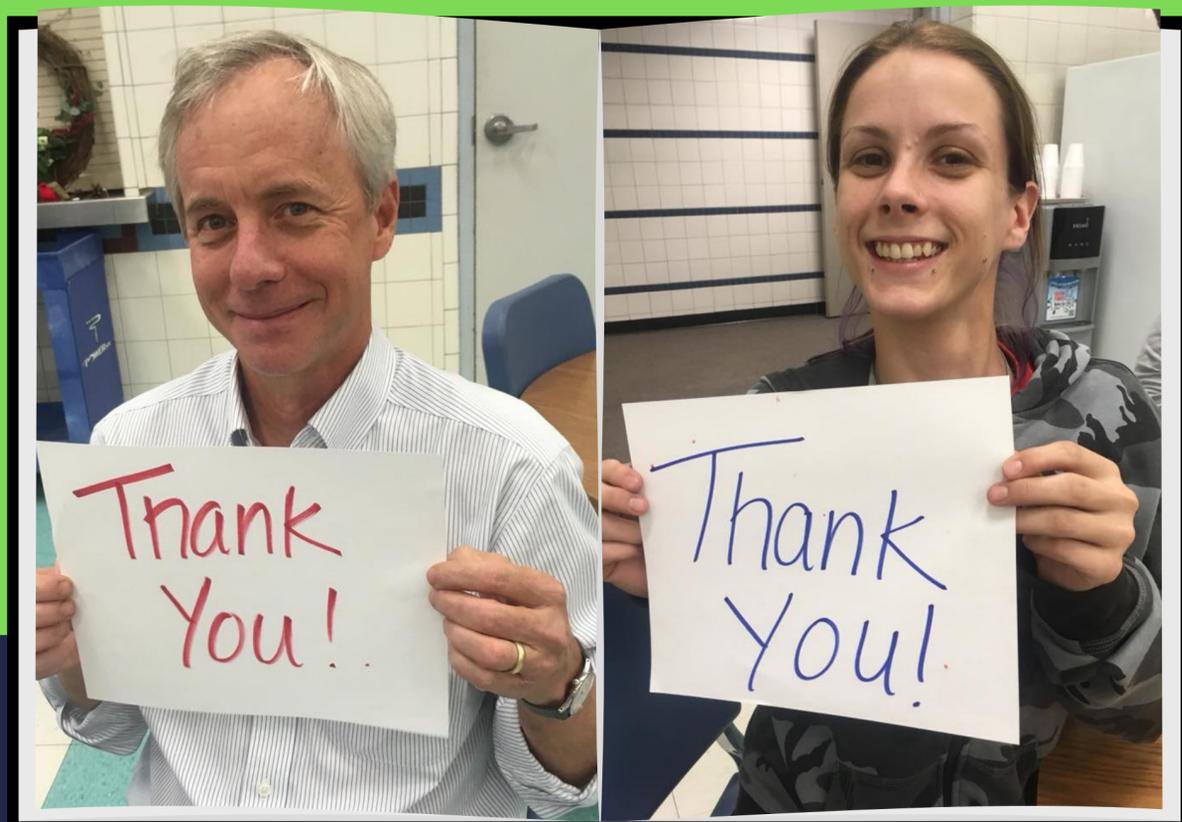


Fall 2020 Newsletter

The Giving! Thanks Issue!



TARRANT LITERACY COALITION

FALL 2020

Our Community Stands Behind Learners in Need

There are many big hearts in our North Texas Community, and that kindness was on display this August and September as new and long-time friends of Tarrant Literacy Coalition joined together to help adult learners rise up through education. The COVID-19 global pandemic has had a major effect on adult education: many community- and faith-based programs closed during quarantine, others had to quickly pivot from an in-person classroom format to a web-based and distance learning format. TLC has been working with these organizations to figure out a way to offer instruction for some of these programs and working with displaced students to find new, now virtual, classes.

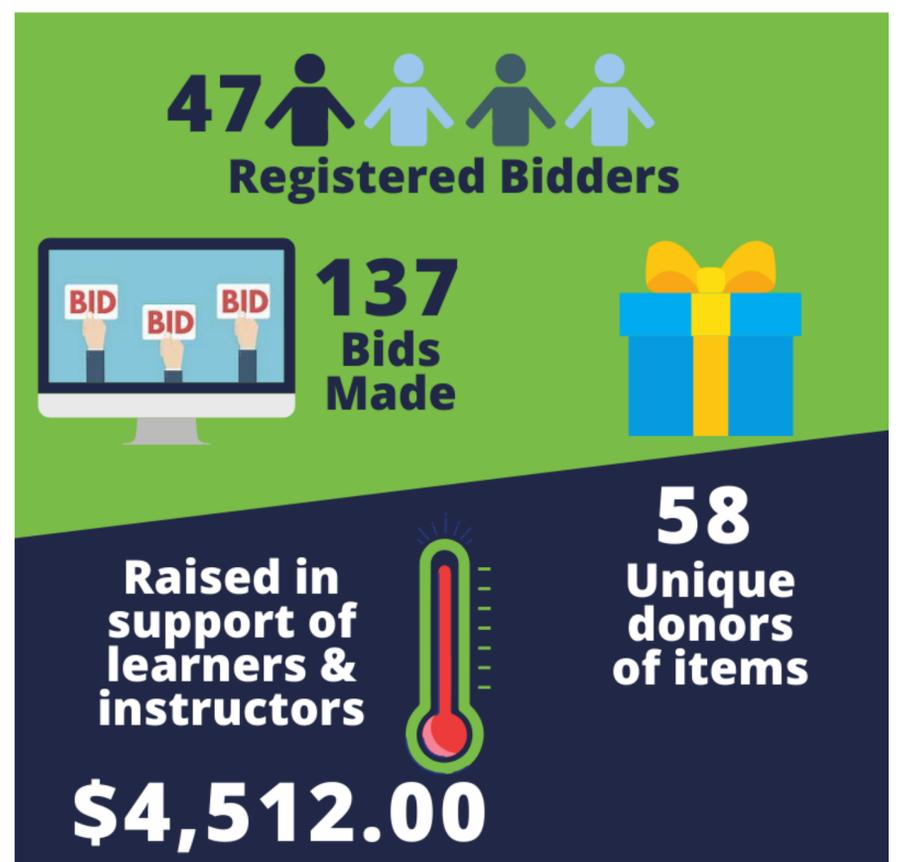
In support of these learners, we had a big ask for our friends and stakeholders: participate in back-to-back fundraisers. For the first time in our eleven-year history, TLC held an online auction called "Bids for a Brighter Community." This year's auction replaced our annual Corporate Spelling Bee which was set to be held in April. Acme Brick sponsored the event, which was open from August 21 - 28, and featured daily live giveaways on our Facebook page and ended with a participant online happy hour.

Not even three weeks later, on September 17th, we asked for support on North Texas Giving Day. This annual event in support of nonprofit organizations throughout North Texas saw the community donate almost 59 million dollars to more than 2,900 organizations. Tarrant Literacy Coalition ranked 844th and 47 supporters raised more than \$5800 for adult learners and those who teach them.

We would not be able to reach the thousands of adults in our community without the help of our friends, who truly care to make our community a brighter one. We THANK YOU!



BIDS FOR A BRIGHTER COMMUNITY



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: SHERRY HAWKINS

Tarrant Literacy Coalition would not be able to reach as many learners as it does without the help of a dedicated collective of volunteers. This is especially true when it comes to L.E.A.R.N. for Life (Literacy Education and Reading Network), which provides one-on-one reading tutorial for adults and referral services to other community programs as needed. Sherry Hawkins is one of our lead volunteer tutors in L.E.A.R.N. and is driven by a personal mantra that “We do whatever we need to do to help someone, however we need to do it.”

How long have you been a volunteer at Tarrant Literacy Coalition?

I want to say a little over three years. I’ve stayed so long because I have a student who needs me.

Why did you choose to volunteer for Tarrant Literacy Coalition?

I had been a tutor previously for a different organization and when I lost my long-term student with them, I guess I just took a break. With retirement, I realized I needed to do it again. That’s when I went on a search and found TLC.

How has volunteering for Tarrant Literacy Coalition impacted your life?

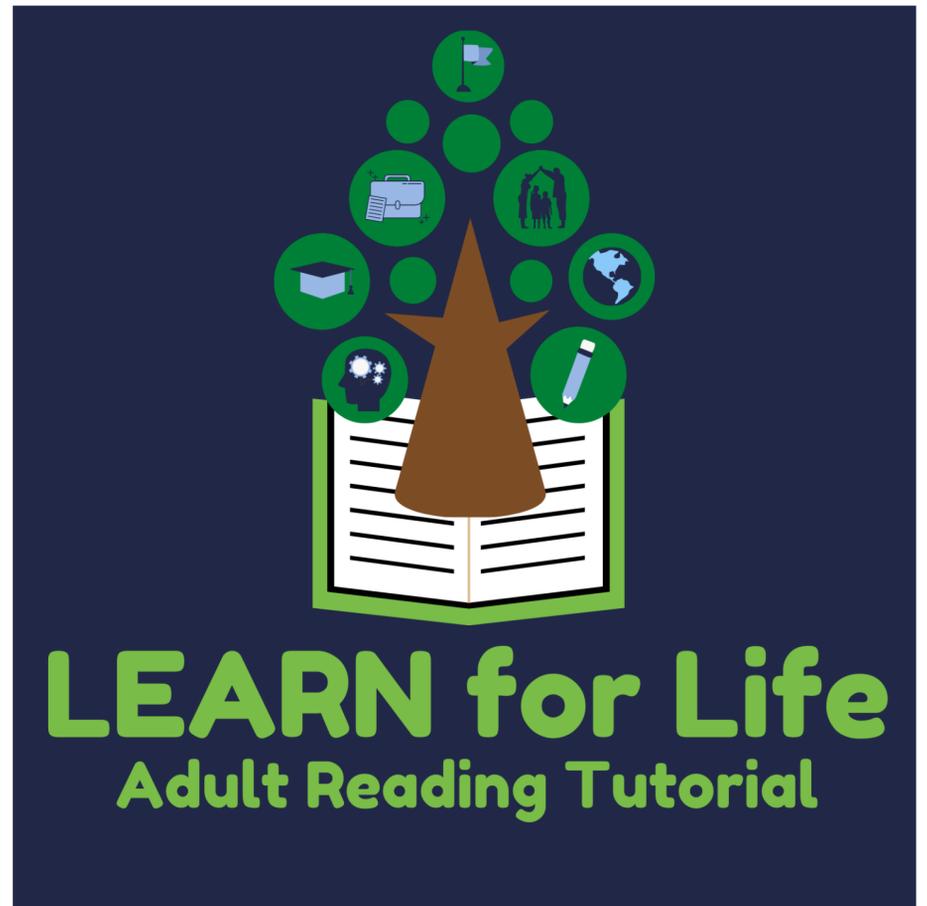
Truthfully, I find the organization is great and is filled with good people able to provide the support I need. The greatest impact comes from the student. In watching their progress, their achievements. I am very fortunate that my student lets me know my impact. My student is extremely grateful to have this opportunity and she is a very sweet person and she tells me how much she appreciates me.

How has volunteering been affected by COVID-19?

It’s made everything more difficult. We have yet to return to in person. With this particular student, she does have a limitation of no learning experience having come from a different country, it has been difficult trying to communicate with her without face to face interaction. It has taken a while to regroup and figure out how to proceed. We try to meet by phone on Mondays, we spend an hour working on reading something with her 10-year-old son’s assistance. The entire dynamic has changed completely, but she wants to keep going, and as long as she wants to keep going, I’ll go along with her.

If you could give one piece of advice to someone interested in volunteering at Tarrant Literacy Coalition, what would it be?

Be patient and be respectful. I think that there is potential to deal with students from many different walks of life and until you’ve spent a bit of time with that student and understand what their ability is, what their goals are, you have to be willing to respect the place they’re in. You can’t teach an adult student the same way you teach a child. It would be demeaning. The patience just has to be there. My husband hears me on the phone with my student and he says he could never be that patient.



You just have to wait. You have to give them the opportunity to just figure it out. It can be a challenge for them at times and you just have to allow that. I think that the patience and respect are so tied together.

Do you have anything else you'd like to add?

After a lifetime of volunteer work for a lot of different organizations, TLC is the best volunteer work I could ever do. Incredibly uplifting, incredibly grounding, when you find out where people came from and what their life has been like. I learn as much from her as much as she does from me. If you love to read, more people should consider doing this. If you’re a reader, you can do it. That’s what got me into it in the first place. My entire life, I’ve just read voraciously and I could never imagine not being able to read.

LITERACY AND LEARNING CORNER

DFW Literacy Symposium is going BIG in 2020:

Teachers, tutors and volunteers throughout North Texas are always seeking out new and innovative ways to instruct the learners they work with every week. The shift from in-person classrooms to virtual ones has added new challenges from engaging learners and presenting content to navigating technology glitches and bridging the digital divide. We've heard the calls for help and will be bringing solutions to an online format of the DFW Literacy Symposium. And because we know that one day of training is not enough, we have partnered with Literacy ConneXus to provide back to back days of the most impactful and relevant professional development and training for adult education and literacy available! This virtual event will be on Friday, October 23rd and Saturday October 24th (8:45 AM -3:15 PM), and, as always, is free to everyone. This Collaboration of Symposiums will kick off with a general session on Identity, Respect, and Justice in the Time of COVID and will continue with topics on basic literacy, English language acquisition, digital literacy and resources, high school equivalency, social media and navigating the world of adult education during COVID-19. Whether you are a seasoned teaching veteran, a passionate new volunteer or just someone curious to learn more about ways to improve our community through education, this is THE must-attend conference of the year. Scan the code to learn more and get registered for free!



TLC's Big Book Giveaway: A fall staple supporting programs

When the Coalition first began in 2009, we made it a priority to get books and other resources into the hands of those who need them the most! It's a tradition that continues every November with the Big Book Giveaway. This year, we'll be holding the giveaway on Friday, November 13, from 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM. We're opening our doors and bookshelves to everyone: find supplemental curricula to fill in gaps in lesson plans, pick up something for your student(s) or grab a guilty pleasure read or audiobook for yourself! The first 20 guests will receive a Half Price Books tote bag and for the third year we will also be collecting new pairs of socks for the Friends Helping Friends Community Sock Drive supporting Presbyterian Night Shelter in Fort Worth - bring a pair or bundle to receive a special thank you gift. Join us for hot chocolate, cider, baked goods and books in November!

