

## READ Educators Participate in Diversity and Inclusion Training

by Dawniece Trumbo, Volunteer Coordinator

The READ Center recently collaborated with the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities (VCIC) to provide a Diversity and Inclusion training for tutors and teachers. **At The READ Center, we pride ourselves on providing an inclusive environment for our students to learn and volunteers to tutor.** When groups of people from different backgrounds come together, as they often do at READ, it's an opportunity for all to learn, grow, and respect one another, but sometimes challenges arise.

The training asked each participant to examine his/her personal lens, perspective, and unconscious bias using real-life READ Center scenarios. The training concluded with best-practices and strategies for successfully creating inclusive spaces for learning.

### Some of the strategies included:

- **Eliminating assumptions**
- **Building relationships**
- **Talking through expectations**
- **Active listening and reflection**

I've been asked why READ needed this training a few times, so I wanted to share my thoughts.

### The READ Center exists to support adults on their journey to improved literacy skills.

That sounds straightforward enough, right? We'd like to think so. However, in reality, we are talking about human interaction between people with a variety of life experiences, family backgrounds, and unconscious biases. Then you add in the beliefs, power dynamics, and perceptions around low literacy and you have a recipe for potential hurt feelings and negative experiences.



One of the activities at the training required the participants to break into groups and discuss scenarios of student-tutor interactions that damaged the effectiveness of the learning environment and stripped away the dignity of the students. Participants were audibly incredulous about the scenarios, and even more so once **I revealed that they were all real-life examples that I have collected over the last year.**

### Some examples include:

- Referring to adults as “boys, girls, kids, or son”,
- Tutor surprise and disbelief that the student they were paired with holds a high position at a major employer,
- A tutor projecting his own insecurities about using a computer onto his student, and
- A tutor providing unsolicited advice on a personal matter to a student in the classroom.

There is no way to eliminate unconscious bias.

-Continued on next page-

-Continued from front page-

**It is our jobs, staff and volunteers, to limit these types of undesirable interactions.** For our part, READ will be providing Diversity and Inclusion training on a regular basis, as well as incorporating a mini-session into tutor training. From our volunteers, we ask you be self-aware, thoughtful, and join us for the next training session. It is our hope that the ongoing Diversity and Inclusion trainings will be one of the ways we can improve interpersonal interactions and students' experience.

-----

**The READ Center received positive feedback from volunteers and teachers who participated.**



One said, "I appreciate that the staff is addressing these issues through workshops and discussion. Are the students given an opportunity to address any issues they may have in a survey or some type of feedback loop?"

READ students provided feedback on their classes during our first class evaluation survey conducted in the fall. In the 2018-2019 academic year, we are starting a Student Council to give students an opportunity to make their voices heard.

## Your Support of The READ Center is Changing Lives

### #FacesofREAD: Student Success Stories



Recently a student e-mailed us to tell us he earned his driver's license. We were doubly proud because students have been learning digital literacy skills, like using e-mail, in addition to working on their reading skills. Another student recently passed part one of her driver's test.



Most READ Center students are native speakers who need literacy assistance, but we do have some English Language Learners in our classes with the goal of citizenship. One student recently passed her citizenship test! She will be officially sworn in as a citizen in May. She emigrated to the United States from Liberia. She is very excited to become an American citizen.



These ladies won Gold, Silver, and Bronze in their class Spelling Bee. It was fun and a great learning experience.

# The Great Richmond

## T R I V I A BEE

**By the time you read this, the 2nd annual Great Richmond Trivia Bee will be nearly here!** We're nearly at capacity for teams, but you can still purchase tickets to attend and play along! Here are the details:

**Wednesday, April 25th • 7pm to 9pm  
at The Hippodrome in Jackson Ward**

Visit [www.readcenter.org/trivia-bee](http://www.readcenter.org/trivia-bee) to learn more and to purchase tickets.

**Can't make it this year?** Consider becoming a Bee Keeper Sponsor! For \$250, we will place your company logo or a small ad in the event program. Details available at our website.

## Thank you to our 2018 Trivia Bee Sponsors:

**Queen Bee Sponsor: Union Bank & Trust**

**Hive Sponsor: Crouch Family Giving Fund, In Memory of Robert H. Newton, Sr.**

**Honey Bee Sponsor: Sands Anderson, PC**

## Financial Literacy & Health Literacy Classes Begin



**The READ Center's first Health Literacy class** began on March 14th at the Bon Secours Sarah Garland Jones Center in the east end of Richmond. Students are learning about medications, preventative care, life care plans, and more, while they practice their reading skills.

**"A Conversation About Your Health"** will be held on Saturday, April 21st at the Sarah Garland Jones Center from 2pm to 4pm. Students will hear from local health experts on various health topics.

**The READ Center's pilot Financial Literacy class** launches on Friday, April 13th at The READ Center office. The curriculum, developed in partnership with Union Bank and Trust, covers banking and budgeting, all things credit, and growing your money (stocks, bonds, IRAs, etc.). The program includes a behind-the-scenes tour of a Union Bank branch. The curriculum will be shared with the Virginia Adult Literacy Resource Center and presented at the 2018 Virginia Literacy Conference in the fall with the goal that it will be adopted statewide.



We're really excited about all of the great new offerings for READ students! **If you would like to be involved in any of these programs**, please contact Nausha Brown Chavez, [nausha@readcenter.org](mailto:nausha@readcenter.org).

# Local Trends in Adult Literacy



ProLiteracy recently released its 2016-2017 Annual Statistical Report of adult literacy programs across the United States. Here is how The READ Center compares:

- When it comes to gender, READ and the nation align pretty closely. READ serves more female students than male, and a strong majority of our volunteers are female also.
- READ serves a higher number of African American/Black students than the national percentage. This could be because many of the other organizations surveyed provide English as a Second Language classes, and READ does not.
- 69% of READ's students are emergent readers (0-3 grade level). READ focuses on serving beginning readers. They can "graduate" to continue their studies at local adult education or training programs.
- The percentage of READ volunteers who are aged 60 and older is pretty close to the national percentage. Many volunteers come to us in retirement when they have time to give back to their community.
- The READ Center has a relatively high number of individual donations compared to the nation. 95% of READ's support is private donations. Thank you to all who make READ programs possible.

## Students Served

<u>Locally</u>	<u>Nationally</u>
204	216,681

## Students: Gender

	<u>Locally</u>	<u>Nationally</u>
	54%	65%
	<u>Locally</u>	<u>Nationally</u>
	46%	35%

## Students' Literacy Levels

0-3:	<u>Locally</u>	<u>Nationally</u>
	69%	24%
4-5:	<u>Locally</u>	<u>Nationally</u>
	22%	24%
6-8:	<u>Locally</u>	<u>Nationally</u>
	5%	30%
9-12:	<u>Locally</u>	<u>Nationally</u>
	5%	22%

## Students' Ethnicity

<b>Black:</b>	<u>Locally</u>	<u>Nationally</u>
	89%	18%
<b>Asian:</b>	<u>Locally</u>	<u>Nationally</u>
	2%	13%
<b>Latino:</b>	<u>Locally</u>	<u>Nationally</u>
	2%	43%
<b>White:</b>	<u>Locally</u>	<u>Nationally</u>
	7%	21%

## % of Private/Individual Donations

<u>Locally</u>	<u>Nationally</u>
27%	7%

## Active Volunteers

<u>Locally</u>	<u>Nationally</u>
112	88,404

## Volunteers: Gender

	<u>Locally</u>	<u>Nationally</u>
	79%	73%
	<u>Locally</u>	<u>Nationally</u>
	17%	27%

## % of Volunteers aged 60+

<u>Locally</u>	<u>Nationally</u>
52%	48%

You can check out the rest of the stats at our blog at [www.readcenter.org/blog](http://www.readcenter.org/blog), and you can read the ProLiteracy Annual Statistical Report at [www.proliteracy.org](http://www.proliteracy.org).



The READ Center was recently recognized for our transparency with a **Gold Seal on our GuideStar Nonprofit Profile!** GuideStar is the world's largest source of information on nonprofit organizations. Now our community members and potential donors can find in-depth information about our goals, strategies, capabilities, and progress. We're shining a spotlight on the difference we help make in the world. Check out our GuideStar Nonprofit Profile and tell us what you think: <https://www.guidestar.org/profile/54-1364885>.