

## Your Contribution Matters

Ashley came to GLC to pursue completion of the GED exam. Her greatest struggle was math, and she worked very hard. Within three months she completed her first level. In short order, she earned a silver Career Readiness Certificate—with a high score on the Applied Math section. She was encouraged and her confidence boosted!

But then, tragedy struck. She was diagnosed with cancer, and shortly thereafter, fire destroyed her home and all of her possessions. The Red Cross and her community donated household goods, furnishings, and clothing for her family, but it would take almost a year for her to rebuild her home. Although disheartened, frustrated, and in the midst of rebuilding, Ashley recommitted to the GED program and started a new job. Not long after, she learned that her biological mother was losing custody of her three half siblings. Ashley fought for custody and prevented them from being split up in the foster care system.

She was driven by a long term goal of becoming an animal control officer or veterinarian technician, both of which require a high school diploma or GED. Passionate about animal advocacy, she worked tirelessly with rescue groups. She got a job in the field, and decided to pursue classes in wildlife rehabilitation. She frequently brought in math problems that required her to convert animal weights from ounces and pounds to grams and kilograms. Staff utilized her KeyTrain account to contextualize conversions in applied math to help her meet her goals. In addition to the KeyTrain curriculum, examples were created from the wildlife rehabilitation study guide.

Today her family is settled in their new home which is a little cramped due to the extra kids, and her cancer is eradicated. She is currently training for a k-9 certification sponsored by her employer. Although she is no longer pursuing her GED, she has a good job and has found a career track that is perfect for her—one that is fulfilling, provides for her family, and offers opportunities for advancement. She stated that all the work we did in math class helped her pass the exams to become an officially licensed NC wildlife rehabilitator. Ashley is happy.



## Low Literacy Students Test Medical Equipment

As many as one-half of American adults lack the skills needed to accomplish health-related tasks such as following directions on medicine labels. Research has proven that individuals with low literacy skills are more apt to be hospitalized and even die because they cannot read and understand the information that doctors give them for self-treatment at home. Finally, researchers are beginning to involve these vulnerable adults in finding solutions to this problem.

In January 2016, Human Factors MD, Inc. contacted Gaston Literacy in search of adults with lower literacy skills to test an inhaler device utilizing a placebo and to answer a few simple questions to improve the usability functions and enhance the instructions for use. Each test was audio and video recorded but the participant's identity is protected. Participants were required to be able to give consent but they had the option to opt out at any time, before or during the session. The studies were not a test of the participants' abilities, but rather of the device and how well it was designed and labeled so that the products will be safe and easy to comprehend once they hit the market. Most of our students were excited about participating.

**DEFINITION:** Literacy is the ability to clearly read, write, and speak English on a level necessary to develop one's knowledge and potential, compute and solve problems, achieve individual goals, and function in our English-speaking society.

**MISSION STATEMENT:** The Gaston Literacy Council, Inc., a private non-profit organization, exists to help people become functionally literate through advocacy initiatives and instructional services.

**VISION:** The Gaston Literacy Council, Inc. serves to promote a thriving, productive community that recognizes individuals in need of literacy services, encourages them to come forward, and supports their efforts to gain essential knowledge.

**VALUE STATEMENT:** The Gaston Literacy Council, Inc. believes that literacy enriches the quality of life for individuals and our community. To this end, we are committed to:

Partnership, Responsibility, Accountability, Inclusiveness, Accessibility, Learner-Centered Instruction, Volunteerism.

## Visit from the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)



Edly Vliet, the USCIS Community Relations Officer for the Atlanta branch, found our citizenship program information on the internet. She was training a new Community Relations Officer, Daniel Knutson, who is now located in the Charlotte office covering this area. She wanted him to see our program. On February 10, 2016, they came to Gaston Literacy Council to meet with our Citizenship Candidates. They walked the students through the process and gave real life examples of how the interview is conducted. The students were given information packets and were also allowed to ask the officers any questions they had. The students were very receptive and engaged in the conversation. Going forward, Daniel will be available to speak to our citizenship students whenever we contact him.

*"I feel more comfortable about the interview. Before, I was very scared."* – Nancy

## Programmatic Shift – from “WIA” to “WIOA”

2014 amendments to the “Workforce Investment Act of 1998” (legislation that governs the adult education funds – now called “[The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#)” or WIOA) requires partners to provide an integrated education and training program that includes 3 components: 1) adult education and literacy activities including English Language Acquisition and Civics Education, 2) workforce preparation activities, and 3) workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement. Teachers and administrators across the country are being tasked, through the WIOA legislation, to ensure that adult learners are able to gain or improve their livelihoods through their education. To make sure that students gain the skills that they need in order to do this, teachers and counselors must guide students through a process that helps them set career goals and secure the educational services they need to pursue their goals. The NCWorks Commission recommends policies and strategies that enable the state’s workforce and businesses to compete in the global economy.

The Commission is designated as the state’s Workforce Development Board under the federal [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#).



### Meet the Author



The tenth annual Meet the Author event was held on May 11, 2016 at the Gaston Country Club. Featured novelist, John Hart is the author of four New York Times bestsellers, “*The King of Lies*”, “*Down River*”, “*The Last Child*” and “*Iron House*”. His novels have been translated into thirty languages and can be found in over seventy countries. A former defense attorney and stockbroker, John spends his time in North Carolina and Virginia, where he writes full-time.

In a glowing review of “*The Last Child*”, The Washington Post declared: “Hart is still far too young for “*The Last Child*” to be called a crowning achievement, but the novel’s ambition, emotional breadth and maturity make it an early masterpiece in a career that continues to promise great things.” The only author in history to receive the coveted Edgar Award for consecutive literary thrillers, John has also won the Barry Award, the Southern Independent Bookseller’s Award for Fiction, the Ian Fleming Steel Dagger Award, and the North Carolina Award for Literature.

## Rotary Community Garden:

Our participation in the Rotary Community Garden continued in 2015/2016, financed in part by the Glenn Foundation.

The garden was used as a focal point to contextualize GED, ESL and Literacy topics. Students planted and harvested beds in the garden, and they enjoyed small “Farm to Table” experiences at the Rotary Community Garden Pavilion using the vegetables they harvested. This year, students completed a “Harvest Guide” book to be put in the Rotary Community Garden for all of the organizations to use for all plant beds.



**In this Project based learning experience,** students worked in small groups to research proper harvesting, and they fortified the following literacy skills:

- **Listening:** Students used peer dictation to record their information. Instructors used a “listening gap skills” gardening passage for a dictation exercise.
- **Speaking:** Students practiced pronunciation of new words. Class discussed the purpose of a “Harvest Guide”, personal gardening experiences, food preparation techniques, plants native to their countries, health and nutritional benefits of the vegetables and the flower part of the plants. Class discussed companion planting, importance of weeding, crop rotation and the integrated pest management system found in the Horticulture Information Leaflet by the NC Cooperative Extension.
- **Writing:** Students wrote rough drafts for their pages in the “Harvest Guide”.
- **Reading:** A vocabulary list was created from the students’ research papers. Students proof read and self-corrected their documents before the teacher edited. They received the books: “*From Seed to Plant*” and “*The Vegetables We Eat*” by Gail Gibbons. Reading aloud in class, students identified new vocabulary words. Picture dictionaries were used to review farm and vegetable words.
- **Technology:** Groups used computers to find facts and pictures. Then they used Microsoft Word to type facts recorded during their first group meeting. The SMART Board was used in an activity to match garden tools with their names. They viewed a YouTube video on the canning process.
- **Math:** Students had to measure the spacing of plants. As a group, students and the instructor completed the worksheet, “Garden Makeover: Calculating Area” from Education.com. It entailed figuring area with a pond, pavers, grass and a deck and calculating the cost of materials.
- **Science:** A microscope was used to observe plant leaves and identify spores located on the leaves. Instructors introduced photosynthesis, pollination, parts of a plant, the lifecycle of plants, and how plants travel. In their reading, students learned about vegetable families, non-food products made from plants, and how food reaches the market.

Students gained confidence in writing, computing, and gardening skills. They learned how to collaborate with new people and people with different skill levels. Experiential learning also taught them a new way to serve others.

## PROGRAM RESULTS

GLC offers small-group, leveled classes, complemented by individual tutoring. Daily, 100% of our students receive instruction utilizing technology, and GLC provides its students with workbooks and textbooks to keep so that they can study and practice on their own. Owning books is a significant aspect of GLC's programs because it allows students to study independently, which creates an atmosphere of learning in their homes that can positively impact their children and other family members. Gaston Literacy incorporates the computer-based KeyTrain instruction (Reading for Information, Locating Information in Text, and Applied Mathematics) into its Basic Skills, ESL and GED prep syllabi.

The 2015/2016 outcomes for major programs are detailed below. (Note: Adult client improvement outcomes are based on formal pre-/post-testing utilizing federally-recognized adult assessment systems. Eligibility for post-testing is based on the test developers' prescribed number of instructional hours.)

**286 unduplicated adult students were served in the following Adult Basic Education Programs:**

Adult Basic Skills    4                      GED Prep    41                      English Language Learners    241

**In addition to the required core curriculum classes, students elected to attend the following complementary classes:**

KeyTrain    3                      EL/Civics    85                      Citizenship    40                      Community Garden    118

**National Reporting System literacy level advancement as measured by CASAS and/or TABE:**

	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Math</u>	<u>Listening</u>
Post-Tested	123	11	110
Demonstrated Improvement	83%	100%	83%
Advanced National Literacy Level	59%	73%	55%

**Personal Goals Achieved:**

Earned GED	1	Earned CRC	2	Got a Job	11
Earned Citizenship	3	Retained Employment	1	Other Personal Goals	8

Two Advanced level ESL students were trained in the Reading Soulmates program and volunteered as tutors in the ESL Immersion program at Hawks Nest.

## READING SOUL MATES

Reading Soul Mates is a preventative program offered by GLC to all public schools in Gaston County. While many organizations offer homework assistance, GLC's focus is reading and comprehension. Reading Soul Mates matches at-risk second-grade students with supportive role models who tutor, set expectations, and provide motivation and guidance. Using the Gaston County Schools-approved curriculum Scholastic Guided Reading, children develop a positive attitude toward reading, achieve success, and build self-confidence. The program includes a variety of language skill building activities and incorporates a multi-style approach to teaching. Students learn to focus on meaning and use problem-solving strategies to



figure out words, deal with difficult sentence structure, and understand new concepts. Discussions and open-ended questions help children develop higher order thinking skills by inspiring imagination. The Accelerated Reader (AR) approved curriculum is also used in tutoring sessions. This change is positive for the students because the computer-based AR testing provides immediate and more frequent feedback on their reading and comprehension skills improvement, helps students gain computer skills, and helps both the students and schools achieve their annual AR goals.

Twenty-five students were served at 3 schools (Gardner Park, Hawks Nest, and Robinson). Twenty-three students post-tested and 22 demonstrated improvement in reading.

Special thanks to volunteers **Larry Beck, Mark Ludwig, Elizabeth Lowery, Allison Miles, Anne Kaul, Pastor Gomez, Bob Franco, Rebecca Franco, Adriana Zapata, and Ana Garcia.**

## Audited Financial Statement

July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016

<u>Beginning Balance</u>	<u>\$155,378</u>
Receipts	383,193
<u>Subtotal</u>	<u>538,571</u>
<u>Disbursements</u>	<u>-406,884</u>
<u>Ending Balance</u>	<u>\$131,687</u>
Liabilities	0

### **Endowment**

<u>Beginning Balance – Fair Market Value</u>	<u>\$837,949</u>
Deposit – Contributions	1,700
Withdrawals	-32,706
<u>Net Earnings</u>	<u>-33,155</u>
<u>Ending Balance – Fair Market Value</u>	<u>\$773,788</u>
Designated Scholarship Fund (included above)	\$10,008

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Gaston Literacy Council has participated in the Community Foundation's Run for the Money each year since its inception. This year's proceeds totaled \$16,270. We wish to express a special thanks to those of you, included in the contributors list, who helped us receive the maximum allowable matching gift of \$3,400 from the Community Foundation.

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**David Belk Cannon Foundation**  
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**The Carrie E. & Lena V. Glenn Foundation**  
**NC Community College System**  
**United Way of Gaston County**



*When individuals learn to read, write, or do basic math, they can find and keep jobs, enjoy better health, and educate their own children. Their new skills enable them to dream big, do more, and move forward. And that means society can move forward, too.*

# Thank You

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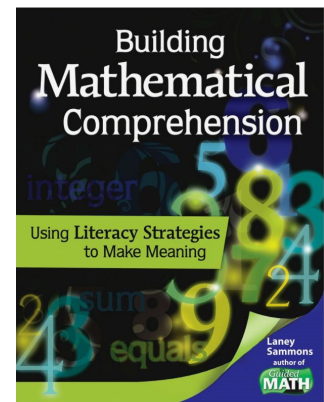
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