

**"Literacy is key to fully understanding the world around us and our place in it."  
(Jonathan Capehart)**

## **MESSAGE FROM BOARD CHAIR KATHLEEN BOYCE**



Hello Friends of Gaston Literacy Council!

Do you feel like, as I do, that we've been standing at the start line, ready to resume our race, for forever? Just when we thought the gun was about to sound, Delta took off instead. And we went back into lockdown. How have we continued to be "a place where hopes and dreams come to life," in the midst of a world-wide pandemic? How have we aided students seeking to improve their lives and their children's lives through literacy when instructors, tutors, and students haven't been able to meet together?

We've stayed strong; we've been resilient; we've adapted. Our director Linda McConnell and her staff have supported students seeking to improve their literacy and earn their citizenship virtually. Since volunteers have not been permitted in Gaston County Schools, Reading Soul Mates, our tutoring program for 2nd graders has been put on hold for the time being, but we were a part of GCS Summer Camp this past summer.

Linda and her team focused on things that needed to be done and could be done, things that are hard to do when our building is full of staff and students. Drab walls received fresh paint. Badly worn, perhaps even hazardous carpet was replaced. Our literacy home is now ready to welcome our family back, and our staff and volunteers are eager to gather with our students as they seek to improve their lives through literacy.

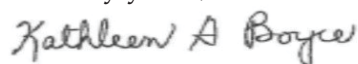
We applaud our director Linda McConnell and her staff for the tough decisions and sacrifices they made in order to uphold our mission. Despite uncertainties, they maintained high morale and found innovative ways to support our students and preserve our organization's future.

Soon our programs will again help students obtain degrees and jobs, assist their children in school, and provide a better quality of life for their families in person. We look forward to again seeing students earn their citizenship, improve their literacy skills at a rate higher than many students across North Carolina, and experience improved health, an added benefit of gains in literacy.

Reading Soul Mates, our tutoring program for 2nd graders in Gaston County Schools, almost tripled in 2019–2020. We anticipate a gradual return to in-person coaching beginning in January, 2022. Likewise, we can't wait to resume our in-person classes in English as a Second Language, High School Equivalency Preparation, Digital Literacy, Financial Literacy, and Citizenship in the new year. We are proud of the work our staff and students have done virtually, but we are certain our students are as excited to gather together as we are.

We believe that the gun is finally about to sound, and we are ready to blast out of the start blocks. Undeniably the past two years have been challenging, but we remain committed to providing this vital free resource that improves the lives of our students and enriches the life of our community. Thank you in advance for your interest, enthusiasm, and support. We'll see you at the finish line.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Kathleen A. Boyce".

Kathleen Golding Boyce

**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.

## YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE...

### The Power of Literacy...Story of a Student and Tutor

As a ten-year-old during World War II, Tommy Frederick helped with deliveries for his uncle's grocery store. Wartime meant many items were rationed, and able-bodied workers were scarce. Young Tommy worked with a driver who could not read, relying on Tommy to read orders and keep up with rationing tokens. At home, Tommy heard his parents say a person was lost if he could not read.



Tommy Frederick grew up to follow in his father's footsteps, making a career at Belk's. As he rose through the ranks of management, he increasingly appreciated how his parents had instilled in him the value of reading and education. Upon retiring, he looked for a way to serve his community. He remembered how his parents had stressed the importance of reading, and he remembered the deliveryman who could not read. He reached out to the Gaston Literacy Council, and was connected with L.P., a student at GLC.

Both men were in their early sixties. L.P. was a successful dairy farmer, but for all the years he had run the farm, his wife had to keep the books because he was unable to read. One day L.P. asked his wife to read something for him, but instead of doing so she challenged him to learn how to read it himself. He took the challenge, went to the Literacy Council, and began working with Tommy Frederick.

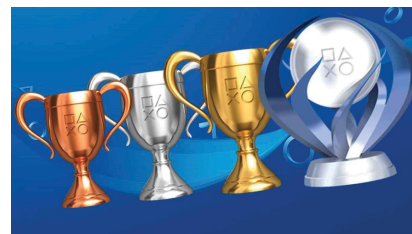
As part of tutoring, Tommy rode around town with L.P. to have him read street names and store signs. On one of those trips, they went into Smith's Drugstore downtown. At the greeting card display, L.P. revealed that he had never in his life sent his wife a card. (Tommy Frederick recalls it may have been around Valentine's Day). With the help of his tutor, L.P. chose a card, wrote a note in it, addressed it, and mailed it to his wife. As Tommy tells it, L.P.'s wife was thrilled to death!

That card is the highlight of this story, and we can imagine that L.P.'s wife has kept it to this day. But this is also a story about two men who formed a trusting relationship and about the confidence that reading gives. These two men, already a successful team, later teamed up to perform a skit at a Literacy Council board meeting with L.P. portraying Elsie, the Borden cow. Each made their families proud, and each did things they hardly imagined, because of the power of literacy.

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### Phil Ritter Board Leadership Award

The "Phil Ritter Board Leadership Award" was established in May, 1992, and has been presented annually (almost!) since 1993 to a member of the Gaston Literacy Council, Inc. Board of Directors for exemplary dedication and service. Due to the cancellations of our Meet the Author Luncheons in both 2020 and 2021, when we traditionally make this award, we are delaying the announcement and presentation of the 2020, 2021 and 2022 awards until May, 2022. Although our selections have been made, we are keeping the honorees' names "top secret" until we can be together and present these awards in person.



#### Previous Phil Ritter Recipients:

|             |                 |             |                   |             |                                       |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>1993</b> | Max Erwin       | <b>1994</b> | Jim Baldwin       | <b>1995</b> | Mitchell Moore                        |
| <b>1996</b> | Glenn Parrish   | <b>1997</b> | Jack Page         | <b>1998</b> | Sheri Sellmeyer                       |
| <b>1999</b> | Jennie Stultz   | <b>2000</b> | Elaine Jenkins    | <b>2001</b> | Jick Garland                          |
| <b>2002</b> | Frank Matthews  | <b>2003</b> | Martha Burris     | <b>2004</b> | Caroline Garrison                     |
| <b>2005</b> | Bill Cozart     | <b>2006</b> | Annette Gehle     | <b>2007</b> | Merryman Cleveland & Larry Petty      |
| <b>2008</b> | John K. Long    | <b>2009</b> | David Fleenor     | <b>2010</b> | Richard Rankin                        |
| <b>2011</b> | Judy Planer     | <b>2012</b> | Ed Sadler         | <b>2013</b> | Annabelle Kelly & Maria Matiz-Gihwala |
| <b>2014</b> | Linda McConnell | <b>2015</b> | Julia M. Shovelin | <b>2016</b> | Benette Sutton                        |
| <b>2017</b> | Gayle Kersh     | <b>2018</b> | Ann Woody Drum    | <b>2019</b> | Tim Efird                             |
| <b>2020</b> | ???             | <b>2021</b> | ???               | <b>2022</b> | ???                                   |

## 3rd Time's the Charm??? Meet the Author 2022 ... with NY Times bestselling author, Karen White



We are not easily discouraged and are absolutely not giving up!! After our “initial” **14th annual “Meet the Author” event** was postponed from May, 2020 to May, 2021, the pandemic would still not cooperate and we have been forced to reschedule once again! So, mark your calendars for May 4, 2022 and think positive! We are so thankful that our author, Karen White, is still available and we are looking forward to being together with her at the Gaston Country Club. We are planning for another spectacular “Silent Auction” prior to the luncheon and already have some fabulous items for your bidding pleasure!

If you are not familiar with Karen White, she is a New York Times and USA Today bestselling author of 20+ novels, including the popular Charleston-set Tradd Street mystery series. Who can resist a good mystery novel with a Charleston backdrop!! She also has a new book, *The Last Night in London*, published in April, 2021, a story of friendship past and present, love, and betrayal that moves between war-torn London during the Blitz and the present day.

So while you are waiting, find a cozy spot to curl up with one of Karen’s books, grab a quilt, some coffee or hot chocolate, and start reading!

More information and chances to be a part of this event will be coming soon!

## Reading Soul Mates

Updates from Annie Anthony and Merry Deely...

Not much can hold us back! Despite the pandemic, our Reading Soul Mates program forged ahead to serve students in Gaston County this past year! While not in person, our tutors “mastered” (we use that term loosely!) Zoom skills and coordinated virtual sessions in an effort to read with some third graders in the spring of 2021.



We celebrated the end of the school year with an “in person” get together and presented each student with their own hardback book. We’re still not sure who was more excited, the tutors or the students. Gaston County’s summer program, Camp Gaston, gave us the opportunity to once again work one-on-one with rising second through fourth graders at four elementary schools across the county. During June and July, sixteen volunteers worked in person with over 64 students, which we hoped would bode well for the fall. Unfortunately, the Delta surge forced our program to be placed on pause for the fall semester. Plans are underway to resume limited, in person sessions, starting in January. We are so excited to return to our students and help them on their journey toward literacy, while also providing them with lots of encouragement and support along the way.

Reading Soul Mates remains one of the most exciting and valuable programs operating within Gaston Literacy Council. Research continues to point to the value of early intervention and the difference it can make in the life of a child.





## PROGRAM INFORMATION AND OUR IMPACT

The 2020-2021 school year continued to be an “interesting” one for sure at Gaston Literacy Council! After closing our doors to “in person” instruction in mid-March 2020, we began the 2020-2021 year with mutual concerns for the health and safety of our staff and students, along with figuring out how instruction would continue.

Our staff is to be applauded for their willingness and persistence in learning the ins and out of remote instruction with Zoom and for helping our students, many of them working toward improving English comprehension and digital literacy skills, as they were forced to transition to online learning. The normal “hustle and bustle” at GLC was replaced by a quiet atmosphere, the envy of any library!

But instruction continued and we are proud to have served 81 students during this fiscal year. 68% of those post-testing in Reading demonstrated improvement in their Reading skills; 50% demonstrated improvement in Listening skills; and 3 students earned US Citizenship.



Literary trivia can be educational and is always fun! Test your knowledge on the following 10 questions...if you are “stumped,” you will find the answers on last page!

1. In which state do Mark Twain’s characters Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn live?
2. What novel written by Oscar Wilde has to do with immortality?
3. Which classic book by J. M. Barrie opens with the line “All children, except one grew up”?
4. The Bobbsey Twins featured two sets of twins. What were their names?
5. What is the best-selling children’s book of all time?
6. Who were the four sisters in Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women*?
7. In Carlo Collodi’s *Pinocchio*, what are all the bad boys on Pleasure Island changed into?
8. What was the name of Dick and Jane’s baby sister in elementary school reading primers?
9. What is the name of Stephen King’s first published novel?
10. What popular author wrote about Willy Wonka in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*?

## Financial Statement Summary \*\*

July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

|                          |                  |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Beginning Balance</b> | <b>\$104,987</b> |
| Receipts                 | 367,153          |
| Subtotal                 | 472,140          |
| Disbursements            | -315,270         |
| Ending Balance           | \$156,870        |
| Liabilities              | 0                |

### **Endowment**

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| Beginning Balance – Fair Market Value        | \$822,586   |
| Deposit – Contributions                      | 0           |
| Withdrawals                                  | 0           |
| Net Earnings                                 | 218,710     |
| Ending Balance – Fair Market Value           | \$1,041,296 |
| Designated Scholarship Fund (included above) | \$10,008    |

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\*\*Audited statement prepared by Butler & Stowe and available on GLC website



Gaston Literacy Council has participated in the Community Foundation Run each year since its inception. And, although COVID-19 did not allow for an “in person” event in 2021, GLC’s supporters and donors worked hard with total proceeds of \$28,625. We wish to express heartfelt thanks to those of you, included in the contributors list, who helped us receive the maximum allowable matching gift of \$4,900 from the Community Foundation.

The 2022 RUN, set for April 9, 2022, will be here before you know it and your support will be more important than ever! So, hit the streets and build those miles, improving both your own health and the health of your chosen non-profit organization! #laceupforliteracy

***Gaston Literacy Council, Inc.***  
*gratefully acknowledges the following  
supporters who made this report and our  
mission possible.*

### *Major Funders*

**NC Community Colleges System**

**United Way of Gaston County**



***“A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies. The man who never reads lives only one.”***

**George R. R. Martin**

# Thank You

## Contributors

*Gaston Literacy Council, Inc. gratefully acknowledges the following supporters who made this report possible:*

### *Read! Read! Read! Club (\$1 - \$49)*

Delia, Carole  
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### *Olna Daves Leadership Givers (\$5,000+)*

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United Way of Gaston County

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**In memory of Nancy Albright**  
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**In memory of Laura Daphene Allran**  
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**In memory of Harold Andrews**  
B. F. and Eleanor Beasley

**In memory of Erin Barrett**  
Sybil and Eddie Barrett

**In memory of Martha Caldwell**  
The Review Club

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Dr. Jerry Petty

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Patricia Dukes

**In memory of Nadine Wilson**  
Morgan Rhoney

**In memory of Jeffrey Worley, II**  
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**All contributions support adult students working toward high school equivalency attainment, English as a Second Language, Citizenship, and the Reading Soul Mates Program (second graders learning to read on grade level)**

*Your contribution changes lives!*



### *2020-2021 Grant Awards*

- Dollar General Literacy Foundation
- Gaston Community Foundation
- Gaston County (Family Advisory Board)
- Gaston East Rotary Literacy Endowment Fund
- NC Community Colleges System (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act)
- Presbyterian Endowment Trust (First Presbyterian – Gastonia)
- The Carrie E. and Lena V. Glenn Foundation, Inc.
- United Way of Gaston County

### *In Kind*

CC Communications (Web Site)  
First United Methodist Church -Rent Reduction

### *Literary Trivia Answers*

1. Missouri
2. The Picture of Dorian Gray
3. Peter Pan
4. Bert, Nan, Freddie, Flossie
5. The Poky Little Puppy (hardcover); Charlotte's Web (paperback)
6. Meg, Jo, Beth, Amy
7. Donkeys
8. Sally
9. Carrie
10. Roald Dahl

Literary IQ Scale: if you answered correctly...

- 0-3 Give Us a Call...
- 4-6 Keep Reading
- 7-9 That's Impressive!
- 10 We're Hiring!!



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*NC Center for Nonprofits Sector Stewards Award*

*All-America City Project*

*Gaston Together's Circle of Caring Award*

*Kiwanis Club Tablet of Honor*

*United Way of Gaston County Award of Excellence*

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