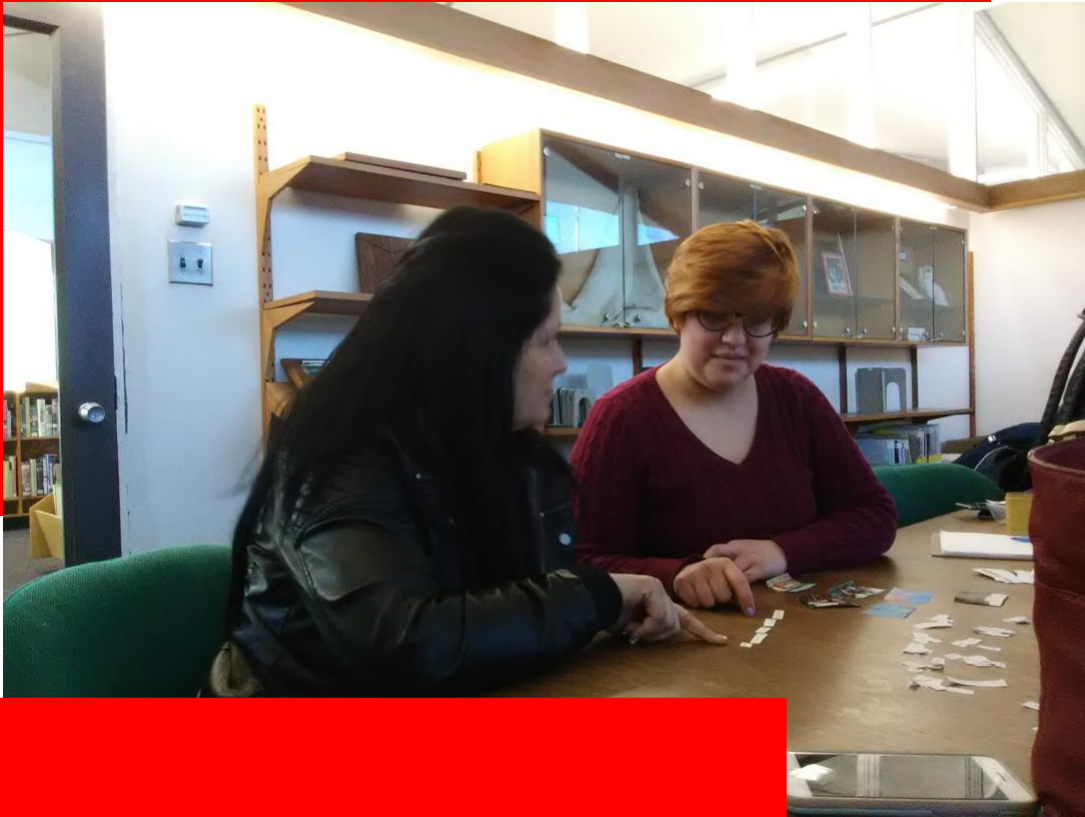




LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF THE MONTACHUSETT AREA



**ANNUAL REPORT
2023**

OUR YEAR, OUR COMMUNITY

Mission

Literacy Volunteers of the Montachusett Area (LVMont) is about bringing people together to make a real difference in our communities. LVMont promotes literacy in the Montachusett area by providing free, confidential and individualized tutoring to adults in basic literacy, and English to speakers of other languages. With improved literacy skills and the confidence that comes with them, adults are able to pursue a better life and future for themselves, their families and communities.



From the President

The months since our last Annual meeting in June 2022 have been eventful for the board of directors and the organization. The LVMONT board members and board volunteers have been hard at work to support and strengthen the organization and its vision for the future. This year LVMONT experienced three major transitions: board leadership, executive leadership, and program location. The board has played a critical role during these transitions. Though transitions can be challenging, they created opportunities for new ideas, a fresh perspective, new community connections and renewed energy for the organization.

I would like to acknowledge several of the board accomplishments during this year:

- The board received a grant for professional consultants Cahners and Donahue to provide training and strategic guidance with the aim of strengthening board roles and responsibilities.
- The forming of an Executive Director search and hiring committee. The board stepped forward to support the organization's operations during the interim period.
- We developed and executed a strategic transition plan to successfully onboard the new Executive Director to the organization and introduce the director to community partners.
- In September, the board attended the first United Way of North Central Massachusetts Board and Agency Connection Fair at Great Wolf Lodge.
- We rebuilt and strengthened our infrastructure by reforming board committees, establishing committee chairpersons, updating the board bylaws, implementing internal evaluations, and working closely with the Executive Director to establish strategic goals and planning.
- We engaged in the ongoing work of fundraising through annual appeals, board giving, and community networking.
- We attended community events to promote community awareness, recruit volunteers, students, potential donors, and board members to the organization.
- LVMONT was nominated to the Greater Women of Giving organization and was selected to present the organization to local businesswomen, community members and other non-profit organizations in the North Central area. This resulted in financial support through donations and community awareness leading to tutor interest.

- The board attended to the finances of the organization with an eye towards the organization's financial health and continued growth.
- We were successful in maintaining and growing board membership. We established board recruitment, interviewing and onboarding procedures to support new board membership.
- We supported the Executive Director during the tedious search for a new location. Board members aided in packing and moving the office to the new location.
- We are partnering with the Executive Director in planning the organization's 50th anniversary gala for fall 2023.

I want to acknowledge the hard work and time given by the board this year. All these board activities were executed by a relatively small group of people. For this, the board can be congratulated on their efforts during the year. I wish to thank all the board members, board volunteers and our new Executive Director for a job well done. Even though we experienced several transitions over the year, the greatest accomplishment was our continued commitment to our mission and above all the service to our students.

Winston Churchill said, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." Thank you for sharing your life with LVMONT. The giving of your time, energy, ideas, and financial donations have contributed to our success this year.

Thank you for supporting LVMONT.

Laura Beauregard

LVMONT Board President 2023

From the Executive Director

Welcome to this wonderful community of tutors, class leaders, volunteers, students and benefactors. I am incredibly excited to be here and to serve all of you as your Executive Director. When I started in July of last year, LVMont was in search of a new office space and soon my whole office had been packed up, ready to move. However, that move didn't happen until May of 2023.

It has been quite the challenge to learn the ropes of this position without having materials, documents and archives readily available, but instead in many boxes surrounding my desk. Now, a year later, I have settled into the new office in Fitchburg City Hall and am excited about the year ahead without having to worry about moving.

This past year we have developed new partnerships; increased our presence on social media; offered new classes and activities and continued with our tutoring, citizenship and conversation classes.

The highlight of my job is to meet our volunteers and students in person. We have had wonderful tutor support circles, which will continue in the upcoming year, a potluck and several additional volunteer opportunities. If we haven't met, I truly hope that we will have the opportunity soon. You are always welcome to drop by in the office.

Looking Ahead

I am excited for the fall and what the new fiscal year has to bring. This year, 2023, we are celebrating our 50th anniversary; 50 years of tutoring in Fitchburg and surrounding towns. We will celebrate this on October 11 in the Fitchburg Art Museum. All our (former) volunteers, donors and sponsors are of course invited.

It will be a year focused on volunteer recruitment as well as volunteer retainment. We will continue to serve the community through our tutoring sessions. I am looking forward to working with all of you, volunteers, donors and students alike.

Zwanieke Visser
Executive Director
June, 2023

PROGRAMS

This fiscal year we continued offering citizenship classes, conversation circles, volunteer information sessions, and tutor trainings. We expanded our conversation offerings. We collaborated with libraries and worked with our tutors to be able to offer more opportunities for our students and other community members in underserved towns to practice their English. We added 3 more conversation circles in comparison to last year while partnering with 2 libraries to set up conversation circles there as well in the new fiscal year.

Conversation circles

Conversation circles are opportunities for students to practice speaking English in a supportive environment. Language production practice is key to developing proficiency in a language. Conversation circles are also a way for us to serve students who are on our waiting list, who can't commit to tutoring, or to supplement tutoring.

We offered the following conversation circles:

- Fall conversation circle in Leominster Library run by Maria Ulloa-Hancock: serving 8 students.
- Winter/Spring conversation circle in the Leominster Library run by Maria Ulloa-Hancock: serving 15 students.
- Winter Read Aloud circle run by Jim Canning: serving 5 students.
- 40 minutes with Jim run by Jim Canning: serving 7 students
- Spring conversation circle in Pepperell Public Library run by Victoria Walker and Sherrill Burgess serving 1 student.

Our conversation circles were supported by a grant from DESE as well as from the Leominster Credit Union.



Citizenship courses

Our citizenship courses prepare students to pass the Naturalization Interview, and Reading, Writing, and Civics Tests in order to gain US citizenship. The Naturalization Interview is where a USCIS officer informally assesses an applicant's Listening & Speaking abilities and is based on the 20-page Naturalization application. We partnered with St. Mark's Community Education Program (SMCEP). We use St. Mark's citizenship curriculum. They send us updated materials and train our instructors on any updated materials. We have four citizenship instructors: Ron Honesty, Maria Barrios, Sharon McCullah and Karen Fusco. Our spring 2023 citizenship class at the Leominster Public Library had 15 students. The students were given a binder with all the materials needed, thanks to a community support grant from the IC Credit Union.

This year's students did not have their interview date scheduled yet. However, four former students let us know that they passed the test.



Volunteer Information Sessions

Volunteer Information Sessions are a key means of recruiting tutors and board members, and hence increasing our organizational capacity. We held 6 Volunteer Information Sessions during this fiscal year, leading to 18 tutor applications.

Tutor Training and Tutoring

We offer two different 16-hour tutor trainings in order to prepare our volunteers for either Basic Literacy or ESOL tutoring.

We ran an online ESOL tutor training in March and April. We trained 11 new tutors, 8 of whom were volunteers from the Lowell, Boston, Southbridge and Berkshire affiliates.

Other affiliates trained 6 volunteers for us in three different trainings. The training that we hosted was supported by a Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts Educational Access grant.



IMPACT

*“My tutor didn’t just teach me to read, he opened up my world.”
- Student Rita*

We like to quantify impact: number of students, number of tutoring hours, progress made according to a standardized assessment like the BESTPlus, but there are also qualitative measures of our impact. Our tutors and students contribute to their communities in multiple ways.

Statewide student award: One of our students received the 2023 Outstanding Student Award from the Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education, the adult education professional organization in the state. The Outstanding Student Award is presented to a student who has: improved the life situation(s) of self/others as a result of the learning/teaching experience; demonstrated leadership within the teaching/learning environment; met significant challenges in an effective way; and been supportive of others engaged in teaching or learning in the field of adult education. Hamed Zarei was recognized for his incredible drive, desire to help others in the community, and remarkable pursuit of English studies, while working tirelessly to overcome multiple challenges, including a horrific accident at work that he barely survived. He has been an outstanding student, who has given back to the community as well and to LVMont in particular.

Student Successes

- All students increased their comprehension, comprehensibility, confidence, and independence
- Hamed started his own business
- Maria read at her church
- Rosa has been filling out complex housing applications with great success, she also checked out a non-fiction book with her library card that is not from the children’s section for the first time
- Edith was able to use her new library card to borrow some healthcare books from the Fitchburg Library
- Vivi has obtained her Massachusetts Day Care Provider’s license.
- Suzan applied to MWCC
- Amy is now able to read the newspaper every day.

By the numbers:

- We had 37 students in our tutoring program.
- In the year 2022-2023 we had 40 volunteers: 31 active tutors (including assessors and class instructors), 2 fundraisers, 2 general support volunteers, 5 class instructors
- Our tutors reported 1354 tutoring hours in FY23.
- A third of our students live in Fitchburg.
- We served students from 10 different towns.
- Sixty-five percent of our students have school-age children.
- We served a total of 88 students.

With our classes I've been able to improve my confidence when expressing myself and to communicate correctly.

My tutor has always been very kind and helpful to make our classes dynamic and has always supported me to improve my English language skills, both with reading and history activities and conversations to practice my pronunciation. I greatly appreciate his mentorship and support during this time and wish that more people receive the same support from this program. - Daniela

SUPPORT

We are supported by grants and donations. Our tutoring program is supported by grants from DESE (distributed to us through LVM), the United Way of North Central Massachusetts, the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts, Heath alliance Clinton Hospital and the Literacy opportunity Fund.

We have received Community Support donations from IC Federal Credit Union, Leominster Credit Union, Workers Credit union and Walmart.

Our board's fundraising committee continues to take the lead in our annual spring and Giving Tuesday appeals.

Supporters

Literacy Volunteers of Massachusetts / Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

United Way of North Central Massachusetts

Fitchburg Public Library

Fitchburg City

Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts

Health Alliance Clinton Hospital

Proliteracy

Walmart

Berkshire Bank Foundation

IC Federal Credit Union

Leominster Credit Union

Workers Credit Union

Rollstone Bank

LVMont Board of Directors

Over 40 individual donors

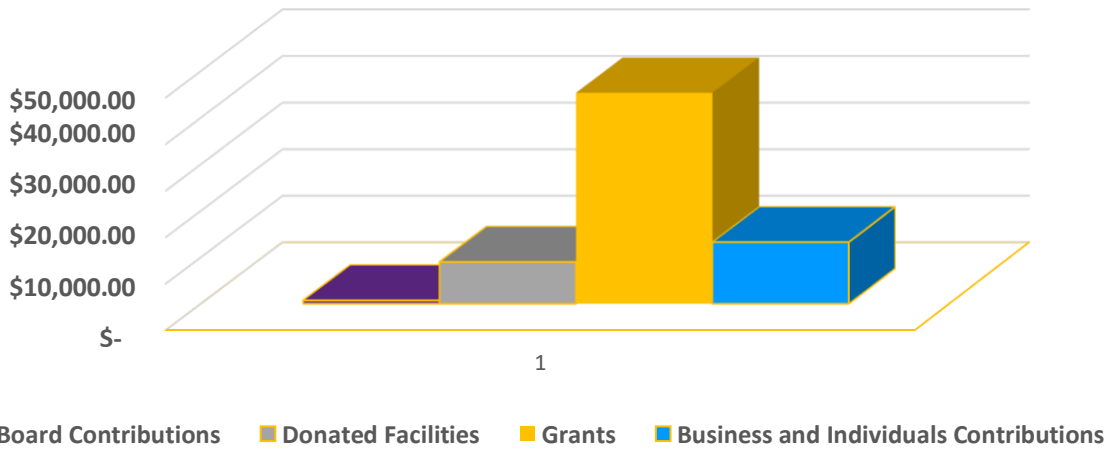
2022-2023 Budget

FINANCIAL REPORT		
REVENUE	2022-2023	2021-2022
Income Sources		
Board Contributions	\$ 1,715.00	\$ 867.65
Business and Individuals Contributions	\$ 12,255.83	\$ 6,709.89
Donated Facilities	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 9,000.00
Grants	\$ 45,324.99	\$ 41,922.26
Total Income Before In-kind Donation	\$ 59,295.82	\$ 49,499.80
In-kind donation (Fitchburg Public Library)	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 9,000.00
Total Income After In-Kind Donation	\$ 68,295.82	\$ 58,499.80

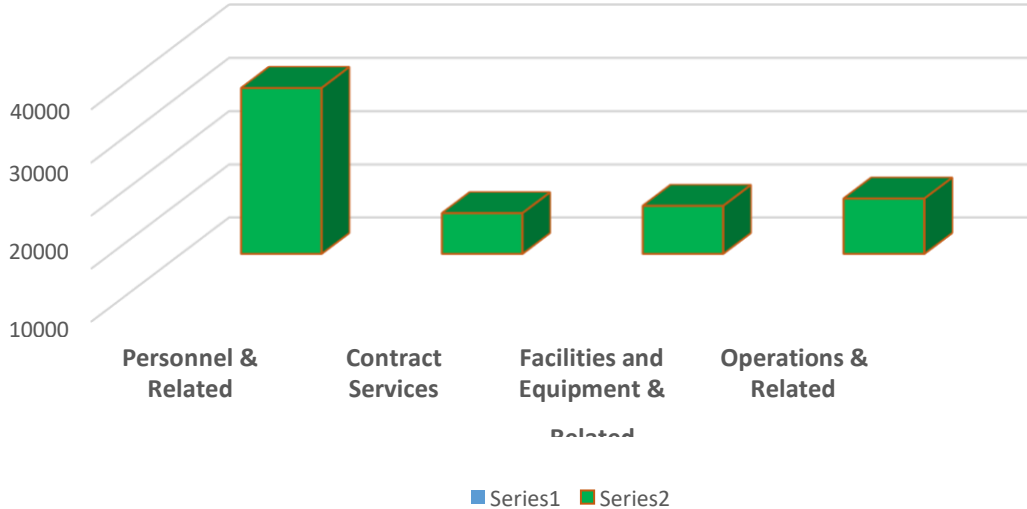
FINANCIAL REPORT		
EXPENSES	2022-2023	2021-2022
Personnel & Related	\$ 31,192.03	\$ 32,899.08
Contract Services	\$ 7,669.49	\$ 8,051.78
Facilities and Equipment & Related	\$ 9,050.00	\$ 9,636.53
Operations & Related	\$ 10,431.70	\$ 11,935.65
Total Expenses Before Donated Space	\$ 49,343.22	\$ 53,523.04
In-Kind Space Donation (Fitchburg Public Library)	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 9,000.00
Total Expenses After Donated Space	\$ 58,343.22	\$ 62,523.04

NET REVENUE	\$ 9,952.60	\$ (4,023.24)
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REVENUE FY23



EXPENSES FY23



BOARD & STAFF

The board's committees continued to work hard to strengthen our organization. The fundraising committee spearheaded our annual appeals. The marketing committee also was able to take advantage of some tabling opportunities to promote our organization in the community. The governance committee has taken the lead in recruiting board members who reflect our community.

2022-2023 Board of Directors

	Expiration of Term
Laura Beauregard, President	2024
Girija Verma, Vice-President	2024
Anne Ndunda, Treasurer	2024
Kelly Calamari, Secretary	2024
Anaili Hernandez	2024
Carolyn Hughes	2025
Luisa Fernandez	2024

Zwanieke Visser, Executive Director.

Thank you to past board members Troy Bailey and Lucille Cormier