# massachusetts reads and succeeds!

A monthly series dedicated to the people and the organizations whose efforts in literacy make Massachusetts a great place to live and learn.

*L to R : Kathy Hughes, Marietta Sbraccia, Kathleen Klose, Sidney Storey, Kathleen Pastore, Linda Saris, Candace Cross, Chris Kane, Marsha Gaudette. Seated: Stephanie S. Lee, Regional Director Public Affairs, Verizon*

*2009 Literacy Champion Megan Lambert at work in The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art Museum's library.*

Literacy Massachusetts CHAMPIONS 2009

verizon MLF

## Massachusetts Literacy Foundation & Verizon in partnership are proud to announce the 2009 Massachusetts Literacy Champions

### Candace Lee Cross
**Wheeler Memorial Library**
**Children's Librarian, Orange**

To many of the 7,800 people living in Orange, Massachusetts, the lively, vibrant children's room at the Wheeler Memorial Library is, simply, "Candy's Room." But Candace Cross' vision is much greater than that. It is a "gathering place, a hub of learning, for young and old alike." Under her leadership, the library has become, as a neighbor says, "the closest thing Orange has to a community center." Whether she is leading a lunchtime reading club in the elementary school, creating a teen drop-in center at the library, or advocating for fair wages for library employees, Candace Cross thoughtfully innovates and invigorates the definition of librarian, engaging in "daily battles with outdated images" – and winning.

### Megan Lambert
**The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art**
**Instructor, Children's Literature Programs, Amherst**

Megan Lambert's story should be told in pictures. As the Instructor of Children's Literature Programs at The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, in Amherst, Massachusetts, Lambert's job is to help children see books as "sources of pleasure, information and excitement." "My work," says Lambert, "is devoted not to teaching children how to read, but to teaching children a love of reading." To achieve this goal, she developed two curricula, The Whole Book Approach and the Book in Hand model, which has been shared nationally with thousands of teachers, librarians, and students. Intensely committed to "providing multiple entry-points to books," Lambert has found multiple entry-points of her own – teaching college-level children's literature courses; writing articles and reviews; and serving on nationally recognized committees, in addition to her work at The Carle. Though Megan Lambert inspires families with the "power and potential of the picture book," it is her own power and potential that we'll all be keeping our eyes on.

### Kathleen Klose
**Immigrant Learning Center**
**ESOL Instructor & Program Coordinator, Malden**

The mission of Malden's Immigrant Learning Center is "giving the gift of language." But Kathleen Klose, a teacher at the school for over a decade, gives her students so much more than that. Through her innovative English language programs, many of which rely on performance, theater, and improvisation, she reaches out to adult learners of all levels. A playwright herself, Klose helps students create performances that are gifts of understanding from the students to the community, "presenting to the public an inside view of the hardworking lives of immigrants." "Kathleen is my first teacher in life," says one of her students. "My life is so much better now…I thank her for believing in me, helping me learn English and making my dreams come true." Those are the gifts that keep on giving.

### Chris Kane
**South Boston Neighborhood House**
**Director, Early Books Program, South Boston**

When Chris Kane gave up her corporate career to run a family literacy program in South Boston, where she was born and raised, she brought more than her passion. She is a "creative force," say her co-workers, always bringing a "new perspective and an innovative mind." She developed a family-centered "Early Books" program, and when other agencies needed support for their literacy programs, she developed "Early Books To Go," and took her show on the road. The rewards for this work are sweet, but perhaps none are sweeter than a letter, written in a childish hand, which says, "Dear Chris. My brothers sister and I loved the books it was Fun I can't wait until the next family Fun night. I love when you read stories to us."

### Marietta Sbraccia
**Cambridge Public Schools**
**Teacher/Staff Developer, Early Childhood Connections**
**Cambridge Community Partnerships for Children**

Over the course of 22 years, Marietta Sbraccia has worked side by side with over 500 child care, preschool and kindergarten teachers, helping them to improve their practice and provide a positive and engaging experience for all the children in their care. She leads by example, and speaks so that others can hear her, not through shouting but through understanding. With the goal of creating a "joyful and purposeful environment," Marietta Sbraccia brings endless patience, a wealth of knowledge, and a deep respect for teachers, children, and families from every culture to her work, thereby transforming the landscape of early childhood throughout Cambridge "one child, one teacher, and one classroom at a time."

### Sidney Storey
**SCALE, EL/Civics Teacher, Somerville**

Calling all teachers, organizers, and politicians: how do you engage people in their community? How do you do the hard work of civic involvement in a democracy? If you're Sidney Storey, you write your own responsive, participatory curriculum that "engages adult ESL students in the progress of their community." Over the last 6 years, Storey's students at SCALE in Somerville, who post a higher than average retention rates in their classes, have made presentations to state senators; collected coats for the homeless; created a multi-lingual video on access to healthcare; and advocated for curriculum changes at their own school. By choosing what matters to them, and learning how to take action, these students are changing not only themselves but also the systems and communities around them. "Sidney Storey is a model," says one educational consultant, "not just for teachers in Massachusetts, but for teachers all over the country."

### Linda Saris
**North Shore Community Action Programs**
**Director, Salem Cyberspace, Salem**

You want to work for a woman like Linda Saris. Described as a "stickler for outcomes," and dedicated to innovation, Saris is a master of supporting, nurturing, and mentoring her staff as well as her students, reminding them not to "fear failure, only the inability to learn from it." Saris founded Salem CyberSpace only 8 years ago, after leaving her high level position in a high-tech software company; since then, she has raised over $1 million and provided literacy and technology programs to over 1,200 low-income adults and youth, including a very underserved teen English language learner population. "Everyone," says Saris, "is entitled to be self-sufficient. We must level the playing field by offering a safe and supportive learning environment open to all students." Working closely with the schools and regional partners, Linda Saris is lowering the obstacles and raising the bar, paving the way for success.

### Kathleen Pastore
**Charlton Elementary School**
**Reading Specialist, Charlton**

Although many people believe in the idea of lifelong learning, few of them turn theory into practice like Kathleen Pastore. Constantly seeking out professional development opportunities for herself and others, Pastore's infectious enthusiasm encourages everyone to become a true student. As the reading specialist and "literacy cheerleader" at Charlton Elementary School in Dudley, MA, and an adjunct professor at Anna Maria College, Pastore has actual students under her wing every day. But she also reaches out to colleagues and parents, facilitating training workshops for staff and organizing Family Literacy Nights that bring 150 eager parents and children to her school on Friday evenings. A semi-finalist for the 2007 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year award, Kathleen Pastore has taken her "passion for great stories" one step further, not just telling them but writing an incredible one of her own.

### Marsha Gaudette
**Top Floor Learning Inc.**
**Director, Adult Literacy Programs, Palmer**

Top Floor Learning, Inc. is located in Palmer, Massachusetts, which Marsha Gaudette describes fondly as a "small little town." But it is towns like these that produce leaders like Marsha, who are warm, caring, and deeply tied to the needs of the community. As Director of Adult Literacy Services, Gaudette oversees both the GED and ESL aspects of the program, while also teaching, training, mentoring, and developing partnerships that enhance the regional provision of services. While keeping one eye on the big picture, Gaudette manages to keep sight as well of the details that make a program successful. As one volunteer notes, "most of the groups she leads include food from her own kitchen, presented with warmth and grace." "Her approach," says the Chairman of the Board, "is uncommonly thorough, positive and personal" – just what you'd expect from a woman making a big difference in her small, little town.

### Kathleen Hughes
**Little Sprouts Child Enrichment Center**
**Early Reading First Coach, Methuen**

"I have the pleasure," says Kathleen Hughes, "of working with 3 to 5 year olds daily, and my goal is to have all of them ready to learn when they reach kindergarten." A former teacher and literacy coach for Head Start in Lawrence, MA, Hughes is currently an Early Reading First Coach for the Little Sprouts Child Enrichment Centers, which has 10 centers throughout Northern Massachusetts. Motivated by a commitment to early childhood, an understanding of the science of brain development research, and her own challenges in learning how to read, she is a strong advocate of Universal Pre-Kindergarten and has developed a special 6-part early literacy training to share with her staff, as well as those in other communities. "Under Kathleen's leadership," says her colleague, "teachers have flourished." And when teachers flourish, children do as well, moving ever-closer to the ultimate readiness goal.