



Top Floor Learning

Vital Statistics

3590 hours of volunteer time were donated by:

- 50 Volunteer Tutors
- 9 Board Members
- 5 Administrative Assts.
- 9 Mailing helpers

102 students matched (One to One and classes)

9 Advanced and Intermediate ESL classes held

37 people took the 1/2 length GED Practice Test

100% of TFL students who applied for citizenship passed the test

100% of those who prepared at TFL passed the GED test

2 Full Battery GED Tests were held, in collaboration with HCC

39 people registered for FB GED

158 Lifelong Learning Classes were offered

413 people attended LLL classes

15 people are on the waiting list for ESL, GED and R/W/M services

2 Tutor Trainings were held

25 towns in the Quaboag Hills and surrounding area served

100 corporate donors, foundations and individuals support TFL

50 local businesses donated food, drink, prizes and gift certificates for the Scrabble Tournaments

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Building the Region's Premier Adult Learning Center

As the year comes to a close on Top Floor Learning's second full year of operations, I'm pleased to report to you that it continues to make a significant and growing impact throughout the region. I'd like to share with you a few of the year's highlights and touch on the plans and goals to add value and diversity to our programs.

It is our declared goal to become the region's premier adult-learning center. The main highlights in the Adult Literacy program and the Lifelong Learning program, which go a long way towards achieving that goal, are explained in detail on pages 2 and 3. We pledge to continue to provide life-long learning classes and adult literacy programs with proven value, and add new ones in dynamic response to demonstrated public interest or need.

In an effort to strengthen the operational and strategic management strength of the organization, Top Floor Learning earlier this spring completed a management consulting project with Babson College. The project, conducted by Babson's MCFE program,

yielded solid recommendations on various aspects of sustainable growth practices and strategies which we have begun to implement. Given the positive results of the consulting project, it's likely that TFL will apply to the Babson program for additional guidance in specific operational areas. The Babson consulting opportunity was made possible through the efforts of Ron Masnicki and his wife Virginia, both long-time supporters of Top Floor Learning, and for their interest and efforts we are extremely grateful.

As we continue to grow we become ever more aware that the need for our Adult Literacy services far exceeds our current abilities to match them. At this writing we currently have a waiting list of twelve for GED or ESL services. Top Floor Learning typically conducts two tutor training sessions per year and we encourage you to explore the possibilities of joining our corps of volunteer tutors.

Our success and growth is impossible, of course, without the dedicated efforts of our staff and

tutors and volunteers. I want to thank personally our executive director, Margaret Boyko, for her energy, her dedication and professionalism. As well I want to express my gratitude to Marsha Gaudette, director of Adult Literacy Programs, and Lisa Remillard, director of Life-long Learning Programs, for their superb management and tireless efforts given to Top Floor Learning.

For the board I want to express our profound gratitude to the Palmer Public Library and the growing number of individuals and organizations who have given so generously to Top Floor Learning. We acknowledge your support and your gifts as an extraordinary vote of confidence in the value of our programs and services and, in turn, we pledge to be vigilant managers of our public trust and ever-worthy stewards of your financial support.

For Top Floor Learning, with thanks and good wishes,

Frederick C. Moody,
President, Board of Trustees

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2006/07 Landmarks

GED Full Battery Test was introduced in October 2006. TFL and Holyoke Community College joined forces to bring this test to Palmer for the first time.

TFL and Babson College.

TFL and a team from the MCFE program at Babson College completed a semester-long study in May 2007. The Babson team designed a five-year strategic development plan for TFL.

Three Scrabble Tournaments

were held in the Community Room in Palmer Library during fall and winter 2006/07. Close to 100 players took part.

Staff

Margaret Boyko

CEO

Marsha Gaudette

Director, Adult Literacy

Lisa Remillard

*Director,**Lifelong Learning*

Stanley Skowyra

Financial Manager

Top Floor Learning

English as a Second Language

Advanced and Intermediate Conversation classes have been successful again during this past year. The Intermediate class from 2005 has become the Advanced class of 2006-2007. According to ESL instructor, Tony Carey who has taught the group for two years, "the increasing skills of the students allow for more 'learner-centered' activities. Through these conversations, the group became very supportive of each other, thus creating a very comfortable learning environment." Twenty-five percent of the students completed all five, 8-week cycles; all the students in the last May-June cycle are planning to return when classes resume in September.

The ESL one to one program is well attended with 27 matched pairs working together; students are usually at a more basic English level or prefer a one-to-one relationship. Fifteen learners attended the Advanced and Intermediate Conversation classes. Beginning this past March, a no fee, monthly evening Conver-

*Advanced ESL class, Spring 2007**Ursula Wright and Libia Vazquez*

sation Group known as **Talk Times** encouraged students of all levels of proficiency to meet others who are enrolled in the ESL program and converse informally in a relaxed setting. Students were invited to bring a dish from their home country. The themed meetings that met for three successive months were facilitated by Margaret Boyko. Ten students shared their thoughts, ate well, laughed,

Reading/Writing/Math and GED

For the majority of students looking to improve their reading and writing skills or obtain their GED, one to one tutoring in the Reading/Writing/Math and GED programs is the best instructional choice, because many students have had negative experiences in the classroom or are unsure in a group. Thirty-four pairs have been meeting during the 2006-2007 year for short or long term tutoring.

In addition, offering the Official 1/2 Length GED Practice Test has continued to be highly suc-

cessful. Thirty-seven people took the test to determine their general readiness for the full-length GED: 30% were prepared to take the full battery test and 14% decided to register for tutoring at Top Floor Learning.

Due to the high volume of registration (each testing period allows a maximum of twenty candidates) for the Full Battery GED test two additional testing periods will be offered in October 2007 and April 2008. This test is administered by Holyoke Community College at Top Floor Learning.

If demand remains high, additional testing periods may be offered in the future.

The thirty-nine GED Full Battery candidates represented nine towns in the Quaboag Hills and surrounding areas. The candidates prepared for the GED in different ways, including one-to-one instruction and GED Practice Tests at Top Floor Learning or instruction at the Ware Adult Education Center. Some had no formalized GED instruction.

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Lifelong Learning

Lisa Remillard is the Director of Lifelong Learning. The goal of the LLL program is to provide the residents of Palmer and surrounding areas with quality adult education classes held in a relaxed and enjoyable environment.

This year a total of 158 classes were offered. The categories included Arts and Crafts, Personal Growth, Life Matters, Health and Wellness, Computers, and the Digital World. The Arts and Crafts comprised 28% of the total of classes offered, while the Per-

sonal Growth classes represented 22%; Life Matters, 21%; Health and Wellness, 13%; Computers, 10%; and the Digital World, 5%.

One of the most popular classes was Ballroom Dance, which highlighted the Foxtrot, Waltz, Rumba and Swing. More than 60 people enjoyed these throughout the year. Knitting also proved to be very popular during the winter months, with students completing scarves and sweaters. In fact, knitting was so popular that more classes were added.

*The quilting class, Fall 2006.*

Spanish One and Two were also well attended, with one student reporting,

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