



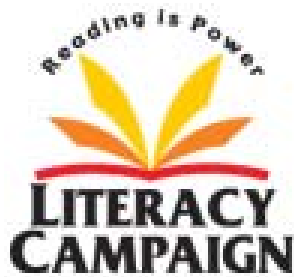
## Literacy Campaign for Monterey County

### 2008 Year-End Evaluation

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Coordinated by the Community Foundation for Monterey County



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## Executive Summary

The following are common findings that are reported across all or most grantees and that relate to the Literacy Campaign's priority areas (page 10):

### ▪ **Learner Outcomes**

In 2008, a total of 1,056 adults enrolled in literacy instruction under the Campaign's Priority #1: *Young adults attain literacy through the high school level*. Of those, 725 (69%) learners completed their course of instruction, with 705 (97%) demonstrating acquired knowledge as measured by learner assessment tests. These results compare favorably with 2007 results, in which 365 adults enrolled in this priority area, 242 completed instruction, and 222 (92%) demonstrated acquired knowledge. **Compared to the prior year, in 2008, 483 more learners completed their course of instruction, representing an increase of 3% in learner retention. Pre- and post-test measurements indicated that 705 learners (97%) demonstrated acquired knowledge, representing a 5% increase over the prior year.**

### ▪ **Learner Demographics**

Learner demographics reflected the race/ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic status of those identified to be the most unserved or underserved residents in Monterey County: 64% of adult learners were ages 18 to 35, 87% were of Hispanic or Mexican Indigenous ethnicity, 80% spoke Spanish as their primary language, and 86% were unemployed or underemployed. This demographic breakdown supports the Literacy Campaign's priority areas #1 and #2: *Young adults attain literacy through the high school level, and young adults are able to become employed and advance in local workplaces.*

### ▪ **Matching learner's needs to instruction**

All totaled, 1,334 adult learners were served by Literacy Campaign activities in 2008. Programs were generally able to fill their class capacities and some saw an increase in enrollees during the course. This capacity outcome supports the Literacy Campaign's priority #3: *All people in the community support literacy as a basic human need.*

*A student who enrolled in 2007 is the mother of a child with special needs. Now that she has obtained her GED, she is attending Hartnell College in King City and plans to become a therapist for children with special needs.*

2008 Grantee

The number of learners is reported in terms of all individuals served by all literacy opportunities offered by the grantees. The numbers of learners served by grantee programs may therefore represent a duplication of some learners.

Grantees noted that in many cases, learners simultaneously enrolled in more than one Literacy Campaign activity, such as literacy instruction and family reading sessions, or literacy instruction and one-on-one tutoring.

While the diverse program curricula, instructional methods, and learning venues make comparisons between programs difficult, the variety of these program aspects were intentionally instituted to best reach the focus population's array of literacy and cultural requirements.

- **Supporting Learner retention**

Anecdotally, grantees that experienced good learner retention rates indicated that steady employment, permanent residency, and the grantee's provision of child care during literacy learning sessions were contributors to this

*Students were inspired by reading books about family, folk tales, and migrancy, "stories they could relate to."*

2008 Grantee

positive outcome. Grantees who nearly exclusively served seasonal workers experienced greater retention by scheduling learning activities around seasonal breaks. Grantees that experienced lower retention rates cited learner migration and the extended seasonal workday as contributing factors. A grantee that provided learner stipends that were paid at the end of a 16-week course believed the incentive contributed to increased enrollment in the subsequent course offering. In 2009, improved program documentation will provide a more accurate analysis of learner retention.

- **Learners reading to children**

Several grantees indicated that their learners were reading more frequently and with longer duration to their children by the end of the program. Of those 568 learners who responded to a post-family reading session survey, 43% reported they read to children at least four times per week, and 52% reported that when reading to children, they read for at least 20 minutes. This outcome supports the Literacy Campaign's requirement for reading to children. Because grantee data regarding children was limited (please see the Evaluation Challenges and Limitations section

of this report for a detailed explanation), the numbers and duration of family reading sessions are considered an underestimate.

- **Child Care**

Organizations that were unable to provide quality childcare indicated this was likely a contributing factor to low learner retention rates. Grantees who were able to provide childcare with staff trained in child development, supplies to provide interactive learning activities, and healthy snacks, appeared to have had the greatest success with learner retention. Grantees reported that parents preferred this type of child care over that which only provided supervision of children watching a TV/VCR.

- **Staffing**

A few grantees experienced slow or late program start up due to difficulties with staff recruitment and hiring, or unexpected staff turnover. Numerous grantees indicated difficulties in retaining volunteer literacy tutors. Many Monterey County organizations experience similar difficulty in hiring and retaining positions, which may be due to the paradox of Monterey County's high cost of living and the skill level of our workforce.

- **Matching Funds**

Most grantees obtained additional grants or contributions to match their Literacy Campaign grant. For 2008, matching funds through grants and other contributions totaled over \$500,000. Some grantees also provided in-kind contributions.

*A student had a 2nd grade education and never thought she would be able to use a computer. Now she navigates the Internet, completes her assignments on-line, and amazes her 14-year old with her computer literacy.*

2008 Grantee