



# Hivemind

## A SPRING LIKE NO OTHER

In 1920, shortly after the Spanish Flu pandemic, the poet T.S. Eliot wrote, “April is the cruelest month.” How right he was. Certainly April 2020 will be long-remembered as a time of uncertainty and upheaval. Just a few months ago, as winter ended, the Literacy Council was involved in many initiatives: hosting a meeting on citizenship, planning a major new fundraiser, assisting with US Census preparation, making strides with our elementary and middle school students, and onboarding a steady stream of new adult student and tutors. *Then the world was abruptly turned upside down by the COVID-19 pandemic.* We have all had to learn how to navigate the new terrain and adapt to the realities that confront us. The health and safety of our tutors and students is our primary concern; for this reason, we are adhering to all federal, state, and local recommendations for social distancing, including postponing in-person tutoring and shifting our fundraisers to the fall (see page 5). The stay-at-home order has been extended until May 8, so we will continue to roll with the punches until then. While the future is uncertain, our commitment to improving literacy in our community is steadfast. We will persevere.



## MILESTONES

**Completed workbook level:**  
Charlotte Cranford’s student, one of Char Molrine’s students.

**Enter/improve employment:**  
One of Char Molrine’s students

**Created a resumé:** Nan Lund’s student, one of Ed Tezlař’s students

**Registered to vote:** One of Don Doering’s students



*Char Molrine (second from left) pictured with several of her students at the Elizabeth Duncan Koontz Humanitarian award dinner held Feb 27, 2020 at the Civic Center. Char was honored by the City of Salisbury’s Human Relations Council for a lifetime of compassion and volunteerism, including her tireless work with the Literacy Council.*

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

A Spring Like No Other .....	1
Milestones.....	1
Lockdown Got You Down? .....	2
Temporary Library Hours .....	2
Virtual Tutoring.....	3
The Buzz.....	4
Kentucky Derby Hat-i-tude.....	5
By the Numbers .....	6

## LOCKDOWN GOT YOU DOWN?

When you are locked in your house, your options can be limited. You can rearrange the furniture, sanitize things, watch Netflix, bake, lament your dwindling toilet paper reserves, organize your closets, watch depressing news programs...but after a while, you might yearn for something more fulfilling to do with your time.

Steve Combs, Cathy Ryerson, and Tom Pickett found just the activity to break up the monotony and make productive use of their time in lockdown. All three recently completed the New Tutor Training course and are now certified literacy tutors. New tutor Shally Mendez also completed training just before the shutdown.

Combs, Ryerson, and Pickett knocked out the tutor training course online and will be ready to hit the ground running when we all emerge from the cocoon of lockdown.

Steve Combs, a retired minister, explained his reason for volunteering, saying, "My greatest, life-long enjoyment has come from the experience of reading. Tutoring is a way of joining together with another person in the worthwhile pursuit of spreading the joy."

Tom Pickett, also retired, also felt moved to help others in the community saying, "if I can help someone to learn how to read, that would be very, very satisfying."

Cathy Ryerson answered the call to volunteer after

reading an editorial by Salisbury Post editor Josh Bergeron, published shortly before the national emergency was declared. Bergeron had a simple message for Post readers: "a good way to start broadening your horizons is to volunteer." He noted that tutoring helps volunteers "learn about the goals and aspirations of our fellow Rowan Countians, whether they are immigrants or not." Most of our incumbent tutors would wholeheartedly agree with this statement.

Shally Mendez is a fourth-year student at Catawba College who was interested in sharing her language abilities with English Language Learners. She went through certification in February and was matched with two ESL students shortly before the shutdown.

Welcome Steve, Tom, Cathy, and Shally! We are glad you took a break from Netflix to complete tutor training. We look forward to seeing you all in action soon.



New tutors Shally Mendez and Steve Combs. Not pictured, Tom Pickett and Cathy Ryerson.

***"A depressing and difficult passage has prefaced every page I have turned in life."***

***—Charlotte Brontë***

### TEMPORARY LIBRARY HOURS

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>Phone assistance</b>	9:00 am - 6:00 pm	9:00 am - 6:00 pm	9:00 am - 6:00 pm	9:00 am - 6:00 pm	9:00 am - 6:00 pm	Closed	Closed
<b>Curbside pickup</b>	Closed	9:00 am - 5:00 pm	Closed	9:00 am - 5:00 pm	Closed	Closed	Closed

Effective March 31, Library operations were limited to **curbside only**. Library facilities, including computer labs, are closed to the public. Library patrons may call to place holds on materials or make appointments, M-F, 9am-6pm. Patrons with an appointment may pick up materials on Tuesdays and Thursdays at their appointed timeslot between 9am-5pm. Patrons without appointments cannot be accommodated. For more information call:

980-432-8670 for RPL's Central Line  
704-216-8243 for RPL Headquarters (Salisbury)

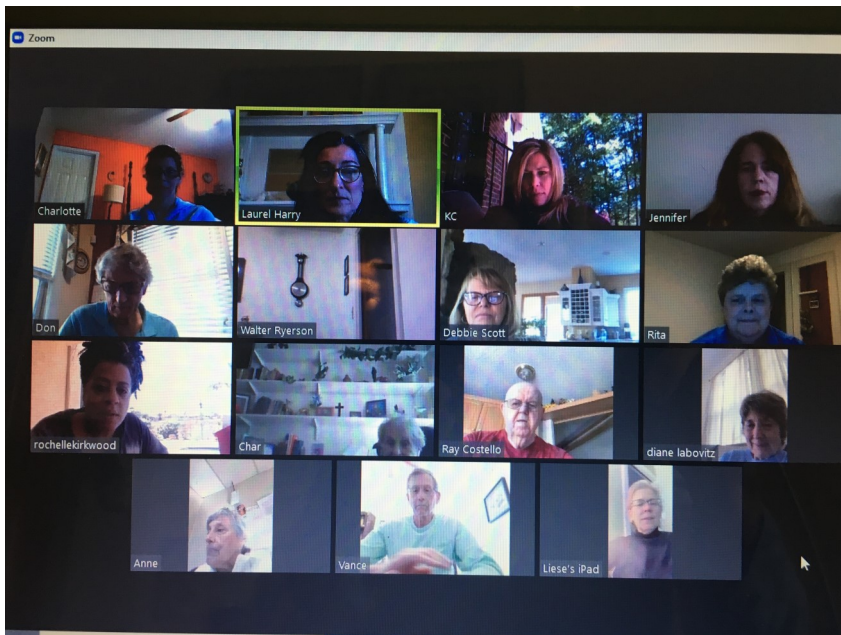
704-216-7840 for RPL East (Rockwell)  
704-216-7730 for RPL South (China Grove)

## VIRTUAL TUTORING

As many organizations have transitioned to working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic, sites that host virtual meetings have skyrocketed in popularity. RCLC tutors have likewise learned to adapt to the new reality of shelter-in-place guidelines by coming up with creative ways to continue tutoring: by phone, by email, and now by video conference.

There are many video conferencing options for use with smartphones and some with both phone and web versions. Zoom has gotten a lot of attention during the pandemic for positive reasons (ease of use) and negative reasons (security snafus). The security concerns have been addressed by adding password protection to meetings (passwords may be user-defined or system-generated) and adding a virtual “waiting room” where participants are held until approved for entry by the meeting host. To try out Zoom, go to [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us) from your computer’s web browser or simply search for “Zoom” in the App Store or Google Play store from your iOS or Android device. When scheduling a meeting, be sure to enable audio and video access for yourself and your meeting participants. Zoom will provide a link that participants can use to join the meeting. Zoom will generate a secure password for attendants to use, but the meeting host has the option to override the system-generated password with a password of their choosing.

Zoom allows screen sharing so tutors can display text passages for students to work from during the meeting. Zoom also has a chat function, so that tutors can spell out words or share notes during classes.



*Learning the ropes: Recent Zoom practice session with fifteen Rowan County Literacy Council tutors (and three very happy dogs).*

### ADDITIONAL OPTIONS FOR REMOTE TUTORING

Zoom gets a lot of press, but there are numerous options for video conferencing. Most work from either a desktop or from a smartphone. Here are a few others to consider:

**WhatsApp** (platforms: Web, iOS, Android) is extremely popular overseas and especially in Latin America. It’s likely that many of our ESL students already use WhatsApp. Encrypted video calls using WhatsApp can have up to four participants.

**Skype** (platforms: Web, Windows, macOS, Linux, iOS, Android, Xbox, Alexa) has been around a long time and offers free, no-account-required conference calling.

**Facetime** (Platforms: iOS, macOS, iPadOS) Many iPad users are already familiar with Facetime, especially users with grandkids in other ZIP codes. End-to-end encrypted calls can have up to 32 participants.

**Houseparty** (Platforms iOS, Android) lets you play games in a group of up to eight. It does offer in-app purchases, so only use if you don’t mind ignoring sales pitches.

# The Buzz



## RCLC RECEIVES ROBERTSON FOUNDATION GRANT

The **Blanche & Julian Robertson Foundation** recently awarded the Rowan County Literacy Council with a generous grant to help fund our adult literacy programs. The Robertson Foundation was founded in 1998 by philanthropist Julian H. Robertson, Jr. to honor his parents, Blanche and Julian, Sr., as well as his Salisbury roots. Over the years, the foundation has awarded more than \$36 million in grants to organizations and agencies “whose projects address adult and family issues, education, community health concerns, performance and the visual arts, tutoring and child-care, history and preservation, capital improvement, and youth activities.” The Rowan County Literacy Council is grateful for the ongoing support of the Blanche & Julian Robertson Foundation and for the Robertson family’s vision of a strong and vibrant Rowan County.

## STAY-AT-HOME ORDER EXTENDED

Governor Roy Cooper has extended the Stay-at Home order for non-essential businesses in the state of North Carolina until at least **May 8**. Originally set to expire on April 29, the order was extended due to the ongoing threat posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of this decision, our face-to-face tutoring operations will continue to be suspended. Tutors are encouraged to find other means to meet with students, such as by video-conference, phone, or email. Staff remains available to assist with materials, technical issues, and moral support. Keep ‘em reading!

## TUTORS IN THE NEWS

They say you can’t keep a good man (or woman) down, and that is true of our tutors. During this time of uncertainty and duress, two of our tutors made the front page of the Salisbury Post. **Liese Sadler** was recognized for sewing mountains of cloth masks and giving them away to neighbors. **Dan Durett** was featured in a story about an arduous trip back to the United States from Chile, in which the reporter included a big shout-out for Dan’s tutoring work at Overton Elementary School. Thank you for inspiring us.

## CITIZENSHIP MEETING

On March 7, the Rowan County Literacy Council hosted Community Relations Officer Daniel Knutson from the Department of Homeland Security—U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) at an informational meeting on the naturalization process. The well-attended meeting, which consisted of a presentation followed by a question-and-answer session, was held in the Stanback Auditorium of the Rowan Public Library. USCIS is responsible for administering the nation’s immigration system, including conducting interviews and exams for residents who are applying for citizenship. USCIS’ Charlotte field office provides RCLC with ongoing support and guidance, including periodic training events for staff and free citizenship prep materials for our tutors and students.



*Community Relations Officer Daniel Knutson (above) answers questions from the audience on USCIS policies and procedures.*



## HAT-I-TUDE ON HOLD: FUNDRAISER POSTPONED UNTIL SEPT.

Looks like we're all going to have to wait a little longer for that mint julep.

Worldwide, major sporting events and whole seasons have been cancelled, placed in suspended animation, or postponed. The Masters, Wimbledon, the summer Olympics, and countless other events have been tabled due to the Coronavirus outbreak. The Kentucky Derby is no exception. Originally scheduled for Saturday, May 2, 2020, **the Derby has been postponed until Saturday, Sept. 5, 2020.** Accordingly, our first-annual **Kentucky Derby Party with "Hat-i-tude" fundraiser has also been postponed until Sept 5.**

The event will still be held in The Heritage Room on 118 E. Council St. and will still center around a live viewing of the Kentucky Derby horserace. We will have awards for Best Hat, a silent auction, and other exciting race-day activities. The menu will include Derby-themed hors d'oeuvres, an iconic mint julep welcome drink, beer and wine, and of course, the thrill of watching "most exciting two minutes

in sports." Guests may also try their luck by entering a Win-Place-Show drawing with terrific prizes.

The Literacy Council would like thank our generous (and patient) event sponsors: (GOLD) David Post and First United Church of Christ, (SILVER) Gildan, (BRONZE) Custom Glass Products, UFP Salisbury LLC, Ting Hao Restaurant, Sharonview Federal Credit Union, Dr. Nan Lund/Paul L. Dunbar Group, Susan and Edward Norvell, and Mean Mug Coffee Company, and KC and Matt Scott.

Tickets to the event are \$40 each for the general public and \$30 each for active tutors. Tickets may be purchased online at [www.rcliteracy.org](http://www.rcliteracy.org) or by cash or check at the Literacy Council office.

Many non-profits have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Fundraising enables us to continue to provide quality instruction to our adult and school-age students. We are hopeful that by September circumstances will permit us to show off both our resilience AND our "hat-i-tude."



ROWAN COUNTY LITERACY COUNCIL  
*invites to you a*

*Kentucky*  
Derby

PARTY *with* HAT-I-TUDE

*Best Hat Contest · Hors d'oeuvres · Mint Juleps  
Beer & Wine · Win-Place-Show Drawing*

SATURDAY, **Sept. 5** 2020 · 5:00 P.M.  
HERITAGE ROOM  
*118 East Council Street, Salisbury*

Purchase tickets at [rcliteracy.org](http://rcliteracy.org) or call 704-216-8266  \$40.00 per person

## RCLC WHO'S WHO

### 2020 Board of Directors:

Don Doering-President  
Melody Moxley-Vice-President  
Maggie Blackwell-Secretary  
Vance Meek-Treasurer  
Helen Peacock  
Nan Lund  
Gary Rash  
Wen Ye  
Scott Maddox  
Davian Ellison  
Kelly Freeze-RCCC Representative

### Administration:

KC Scott-Executive Director  
Laurel Harry-Program Coordinator

## BY THE NUMBERS...

# 70%

Preliminary COVID slide estimates suggest students will return in fall 2020 with roughly only **70% of the learning gains in reading relative to a typical school year**. In other words, students will be almost one-third of a year behind in reading. In math, students may be a half-year behind.

—NWEA Collaborative for Student Growth report, "The COVID Slide"

# 3

**Number of new tutors certified during lockdown.** Now is your big chance! Get certified \*in your pajamas\* in the comfort of your own home. Only takes 3-4 hours. Write to us at [info@rcliteracy.org](mailto:info@rcliteracy.org) and we will get you started.

# 21

**Number of students currently on RCLC's waiting list.** Even though we continue to train new volunteer tutors, we need more hands on deck to help bring the waiting list down. If you have 1.5 hours a week to spare, please contact us at [info@rcliteracy.org](mailto:info@rcliteracy.org) to get started.

### Rowan County Literacy Council

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Phone: 704-216-8266  
E-mail: [info@rcliteracy.org](mailto:info@rcliteracy.org)



PLEASE  
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HERE

Mailing Address Line 1  
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Mailing Address Line 3  
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Mailing Address Line 5