



# Hivemind

## ADAPT AND OVERCOME

Although 2022 began with a rocky start, things are starting to look up this new year. The first few weeks of 2022 brought a massive wave of COVID cases and the temporary halt of some in-school youth tutoring. Luckily, Isenberg Elementary was able to adapt by starting a pen pal project for tutors and their students (see pg. 2). Similarly, the Annual Meeting was moved from an in-person format to Zoom (see pg. 3). If you have an ESL student who is looking for additional ways to learn or practice their English, we have a few podcast recommendations that could give them the opportunity to listen to native English speakers speaking in a learning-friendly way (see pg. 5). Looking ahead to the rest of 2022, we are cautiously optimistic about the declining number of COVID cases and we hope to have our new and improved Scabble Scramble fundraiser in-person this fall. Keep an eye out on our Facebook page for any new developments about this and other in-person events.



## MILESTONES

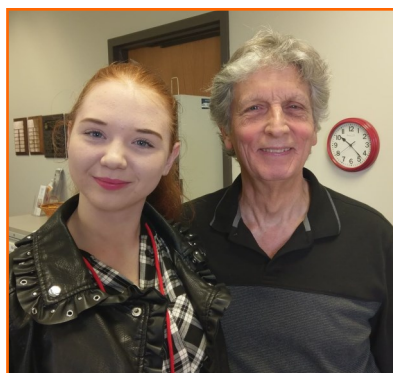
**Completed a workbook:** One of Don Doering's students.

**Increased health literacy:** One of Anne Saunders' students.

**Obtained GED:** Jenny Hubbard's student

**Passed a GED practice test:** Mathias de Comarmond's student.

**Completed a book:** One of Char Molrine's students, two of Anne Saunders' students, Gary Rash's student, and one of Laurel Harry's students.



**Home of the brave:** Don Doering's student Marina Ladygina of Ukraine became a U.S. citizen on the same day her former country was invaded. She is serving in the U.S. Army and currently stationed in Ft. Hood, Texas. Congratulations Marina and thank you for your service!

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## WE JUST GOT A LETTER! PEN PALS AT ISENBERG

Although the emergence and spread of the omicron variant put a damper on early 2022 tutoring, some programs looked at other ways to reach students.

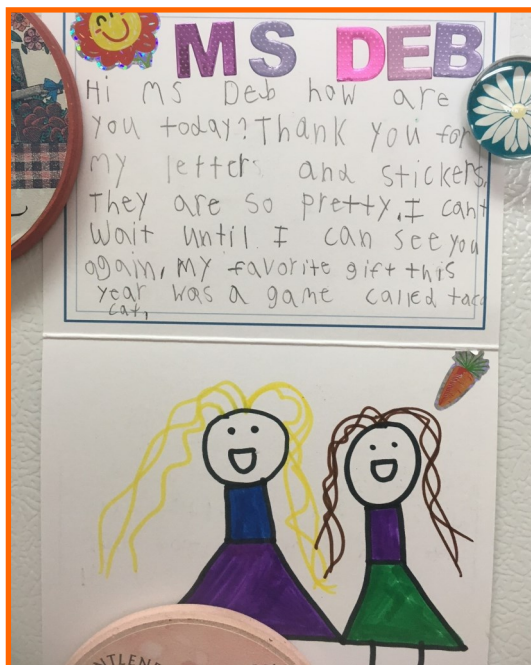
After in-person tutoring was temporarily suspended in January and most of February at Isenberg Elementary School, Student Support Specialist and RCLC Board Member, Bonnie Harrell, came up with a pen pal project to keep tutors and students in contact.

“Between COVID, snow days, and E-learning days, it feels like our students aren’t having a productive year,” Harrell said. “It has been challenging.”

To fight these challenges, Harrell asked Isenberg tutors to mail letters to their students in February. This gave students the opportunity to remain in contact with their tutors and to practice their reading and writing skills.

Although the project was successful, tutors at Isenberg are excited to resume in-person tutoring now that covid case numbers have decreased.

Despite early setbacks, the reading program at Isenberg is thriving. So far, students have increased an average of 2.27 reading levels. Thank you to all of our dedicated tutors who have made this possible!



A letter from **Deb Chirico's** 2nd grade student at Isenberg Elementary.

*“To write is human, to receive a letter: Divine!”*

*—Susan Lendroth*

### LIBRARY HQ HOURS

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
9:00 am - 9:00 pm	9:00 am - 9:00 pm	9:00 am - 9:00 pm	9:00 am - 6:00 pm	9:00 am - 5:00 pm	9:00 am - 5:00 pm	Closed

### UPCOMING RPL HOLIDAYS/CLOSURES

Apr 15 & 16

Closed—Easter Holiday

May 28—30

Closed—Memorial Day Weekend

## ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

Our 2022 annual meeting was held on Zoom on February 7th. At the meeting, Executive Director Laurel Harry presented the 2021 Year in Review. During 2021, the Rowan County Literacy Council served 15 Adult Basic Education students and enrolled 59 adult English as a Second Language students.

During 2021, 3 students became U.S. citizens. 1 student passed the GED and another student passed 2 sections of the GED. Several other students are preparing to take the test in early 2022.



*Florelay Ramirez earned her citizenship this past July.*

Overall, our Adult Basic Education students gained an average of 4.7 points on their CASAS skill test. Our English as a Second Language students increased an average of 7.7 points. 64.7% of re-assessed adults increased abilities by 1-4 grade levels.

With continued COVID-related difficulties, we were unable to continue our elementary youth literacy program in Spring of 2021. However, our tutors were able to work with 28 students at North Rowan High School, and 4 students in our after-school program.

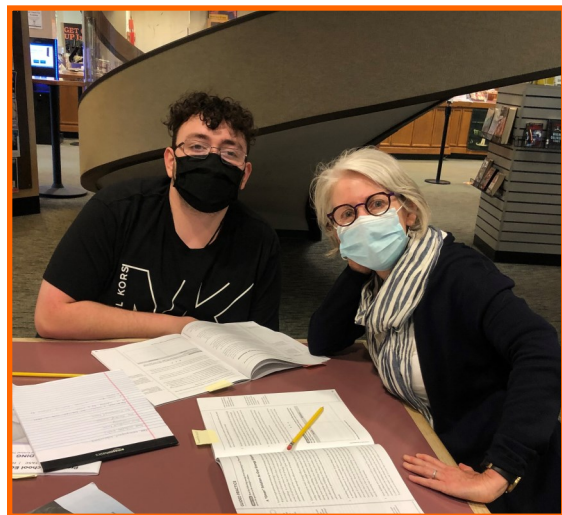
This past fall, we were able to work with Communities in Schools to expand the in-school literacy program,

and we tutored 44 students at various Rowan-Salisbury Schools locations. RCLC was also requested to help with periodic resume clinics for high school students hosted by Rowan-Salisbury Schools' Career and Technical Education department and our partner agency NCWorks.

Our Spring 2021 students at North Rowan had a 97% pass rate for the classes in which they were tutored. Our Elementary students gained an average of 2.2 reading levels during the Fall 2021 semester, and our tutors will continue to meet with them until the end of the school year.

Overall, our dedicated tutors volunteered over 2,725 hours during 2021, delivering the equivalent of \$77,771 of in-kind support.

Although we experienced COVID-related challenges in 2021, we continued providing all core services and even responded to new requests for help from the community. Our work would not be possible without the ongoing support of our tutors, donors, funders, and community partners. Thank you for helping make 2021 a success.



***Working hard:** Tutor Jenny Hubbard and her student Alex Hemmingway working on Writing for the GED.*

## ELECTION DAY SALE

Need an extra incentive to make the trip to the old mall? The Friends of the Rowan Public Library's Bookshop will offer a discount to voters on Saturday, **May 14**. May 14 is the last day of early voting for the 2022 primary.



*Make sure you get your sticker!*

# The Buzz

## IN MEMORIAM: WATKINS, BOYD, DAY

Tutor **Carol Jean McKinney Watkins** passed away in January 2022. Carol was a life-long educator and tutor. She volunteered with the Literacy Council for 14 years and completed over 600 volunteer hours. We are so grateful for her support and extend our condolences to her friends and family.

Long-time student **Claudie Boyd** passed away in January 2022. Claudie worked with tutor Ray Costello for over two years, logging in over 200 hours of hard work. Our thoughts are with his friends and family.

Tutor **Amanda Day** passed away in January 2022. Amanda became a tutor in 2021 and hoped to inspire others with a passion for writing. She was a loving mother and we extend our heartfelt sympathies to her loved ones.

## NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The Rowan County Literacy Council would like to welcome Ana Livia Avila Araniba and Al Heggins to our board of directors.

Ana is a past student and a current tutor. She is from Honduras and has a degree in psychology. She is a great resource for our ESL and Youth programs and we are grateful for her time and expertise.

Al is the former mayor of Salisbury and is also an experienced ESL teacher and business owner. She is a strong force in the community and we are very excited to welcome her to the board.

With the addition of new members, one board member has cycled off. Wen Ye was a former student turned board member and business owner. We are so grateful for her many years of service and we wish her the best of luck in her future endeavors!



*A huge thank you to Wen and her many years of service! Above: **Wen Ye***



*Our new board members! Left: **Ana Avila**; Right: **Al Heggins***





## THERE'S A POD FOR THAT

Many English language learners struggle with the sounds and rules of English pronunciation. For students who may want to get some more practice, podcasts can be an excellent tool.

There are several podcasts available that are designed for English Language Learners. Most are designed for intermediate learners, but some may be helpful for beginners.

The **Voice of America Learning English** podcast is a great option for beginners and intermediate learners. This program offers basic lessons for beginners and multiple podcasts on a variety of subjects including education, news, and English in a Minute, which explains common English phrases. To see a full list of their podcasts and lessons, check out their website at [learningenglish.voanews.com/podcasts](http://learningenglish.voanews.com/podcasts) or look for their podcasts on Apple Podcasts or Google Podcasts.



*Voice of America Learning English offers lessons and podcasts for all levels.*

For intermediate learners, the BBC offers **6 Minute English**, a 6 minute program on various topics including current events, technology and science, and health. Transcripts of the episodes are also available on their website. The podcast is available on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify, and YouTube.

For the particularly adventurous student, **English Learning for Curious Minds** creates 20 minute episodes on loads of topics including biographies, current events, language, and history. The podcasts are available for free on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, and iVoox.

For students who want lessons on English grammar, vocabulary, phrases, idioms, and more, **Espresso English** offers five minute episodes on specific topics. Espresso English is available on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, and Spotify.

Even if your student is not quite at a high enough level for these podcasts, listening to English speakers can help students become more comfortable with the language and how it sounds. Encourage your students to listen to a talk radio program or watch the news in English. This can expose them to new vocabulary and give you something to talk about in your next session.

## RESOURCES FOR THE DRIVING TEST

Driving is a necessary skill for many people in our community, but for English Language Learners or adults with lower literacy levels, it can be difficult to navigate the process of getting a license. Here are some ideas to help your student:

- Obtain a copy of the N,C, Driver's Handbook. Digital copies are available in English and Spanish on the NC DMV website. Hard copies can be picked up at the local DMV office.
- Go over the types of identification needed for a driver's license.
- Give students practice with street signs. OER commons.org offers free lesson plans and resources for learning road signs and preparing for a driving test.
- Create a vocabulary list of common driving terms. Make flashcards and work with the students to make a definition for the word and have students write the definition on the back.
- Use the vocabulary and definitions to create a matching activity to practice comprehension.



## RCLC WHO'S WHO

### 2021 Board of Directors:

Don Doering-President

Nan Lund-Vice-President

Macon Stewart-Secretary

KC Scott-Treasurer

Scott Maddox

Davian Ellison

Kelly Freeze-RCCC Rep

Allison Doby

Bonnie Harrell

Ana Avila Araniba

Al Heggins

### Staff:

Laurel Harry-Executive Director

Samantha Jones-Program

Coordinator

Miguel Bustos-Adult Programs

## BY THE NUMBERS...

16%

The percentage of Rowan County Residents over the age of 25 who **do not have a high school diploma**.

9.4%

The percentage of **Rowan County Residents** who speak a language other than English at home.

2,725

Total **hours volunteered** by RCLC tutors in 2021.

### Rowan County Literacy Council

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E-mail: [info@rcliteracy.org](mailto:info@rcliteracy.org)



PLEASE  
PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

Mailing Address Line 1  
Mailing Address Line 2  
Mailing Address Line 3  
Mailing Address Line 4  
Mailing Address Line 5