

# Literacy Summit

## April 11, 2006

### *REPORT OUT Session Responses, Question #1* What ABCD Possibilities Exist for Literacy?

Community publishing--

Stories/pamphlets how-to

Neighborhoods

Create reading "circle" places in shopping centers

ESOL -- teaching Spanish in workplace

Family Reading Parties

Teaching parents to read to children

Go to where people are

Neighborhood reading circles with potluck dinner

Sharing cultures

Intergenerational exchange

Partnering with business

PBS can be partner -- Read to Learn

People want to use their gifts

Reach One/Teach One

What can citizens bring to government?

## *Individual Responses, Question #1*

### What ABCD Possibilities Exist for Literacy?

Individual Responses (Total of 158) Fell into the Following Categories:

- Centralize Literacy Services (9/158)*
- Change the Way Services are Provided (Philosophical) (23/158)*
- Change the Way Services are Provided (Specific Ideas) (24/158)*
- Identify Needs (8/158)*
- Increase Publicity (6/158)*
- Invite Literacy Students to Share their Gifts (19/158)*
- Involve Businesses (14/158)*
- Involve the Community (11/158)*
- Involve Families (11/158)*
- Involve Nonprofit Agencies (11/158)*
- Involve Volunteers (22/158)*

#### *Centralize Literacy Services (9/158)*

Book and provide a place (organize).

Clearinghouse.

Communication between organizations.

Do need one central agency to coordinate all organizations -- don't have funding figured out (community).

Identify neighborhood "satellites."

Keep the "stakeholders" talking.

Mobilize by joining forces and combining gifts to mobilize action.

Need centralized leadership body.

Need information on people's abilities -- central database?

## *Change the Way Services are Provided - General (23/158)*

All learning takes place within the context of relationships. The first action step would be to connect families in their communities, first around socializing and then around reading and literacy. Social isolation is the foremost barrier to the kind of relationship that can propel literacy forward.

Connect with community leaders.

Connect with people already trusted by families.

Create programs that are equally give and take, rather than the existing model that only provides one-way services.

Develop trust by beginning with someone the "underserved" groups already trust.

Empower those who are needy.

Encourage individual contributions of resources.

Engage in open conversations with organizations, paper, institutions to tap into needs and frustrations/informal assessments; break down territoriality.

Engage people in conversations.

Engage the folks who need to improve literacy skills in a place that's comfortable for them; e.g., churches, sports fields, etc.

Find methods to help people of other languages teach English.

For ESOL -- an exchange of language and teaching/sharing -- accept that all Americans need to be at least bilingual.

Grants available? (PBS "Ready to Learn.")

Have refreshments, advertise. Take that group and plan other activities.

How to reach into the homes and learn to know the people as individuals? If we can do this, we can become friends and find what they can share with us. We have so many opportunities for these people to give gifts.

Invite people to the table; not the same people. Make everyone welcome.

Participation increases as food is made available.

Provide opportunity to share/donate gifts. Ask! Listen!

Tap into assets in neighborhood associations.

Technology can help us.

Since the relationship is of key importance, we can start with the population/clients/employees we serve and look for ways to enlighten them on our services as well as find out what they are passionate about.

Think out of the box; allow people to volunteer to tutor during their workday.

### *Change the Way Services are Provided - Specific Ideas (24/158)*

Are there clubs and associations (formal or otherwise) for language communication?  
Can they be notified about what literacy services are available?

At work or at libraries, ask and sign up for -- What skills do you have that you can share with others? Can you devote one hour per week to help others?

Blog appointments for tutoring.

Community publishing -- online and hard copy. Those who can and can't read come together to do community publishing: book of stories, how-to pamphlets (e.g., how to make a mini piñata.).

Connect universities with younger or older mentor opportunities. USF is researching our Reading Bigs program -- seek to research validity of mentoring as a strategy.

Create shared projects.

Creating fun reading/literacy festivals.

Each one -- teach one.

Elders teach their heritage and kids teach elders.

Entice families with food. They will respond to people they know - churches reach people.

Form a mobilized group that goes to businesses and gives literacy training on-site.

Have the gathering for a specific skill set -- e.g., employment applications, instruction manuals, leases, etc.

Hold community association meetings around people's gifts and how they want to contribute. Have a gift weekend and bring assets to one area to mobilize.

List areas of literacy that are needed, then fit each person's gift with an area.

Make reading corners in cafes.

Neighborhood learning circle; conversation café.

Organize meetings, one-one-one, church visits to engage them in the search/identification of their gifts.

Poetry gathering where people express their own stories and share.

Programs with food, family, fun, free -- send bilingual flyers home with schoolchildren. Multigenerational programs that engage children while parents work on literacy skills.

Social gatherings with food that are sponsored by groups or individuals they trust.

Sponsor events which cement trust - offer refreshments. Where people gather.

Use libraries for meeting places.

Visit/outreach in local areas regularly; e.g., schools and churches.

Work with organizations/individuals that are already engaging families.

### *Identify Needs (8/158)*

Do those needing help know they need help?

During "assessment" allow for more information from individuals than just "Can you read?" Then the czar will have a real job matching.

How do we get people to recognize they have a need?

How/what to ask those with literacy needs.

If the immigration bill passes to admit people who have been here five years, they will be required to speak English! There will be a flood of people to be helped.

Need to identify students (adult).

This summit may help identify gifts and needs. Where are needs?

We need to have training at all levels to recognize illiteracy.

## *Increase Publicity (6/158)*

Awareness -- marketing.

Bring information to people -- what is available.

Make services known.

My volunteers do literacy -- but it needs the newspaper to specifically list the needs -- not just "help the poor."

Publicity of literacy events. Marketing our literacy programs to community businesses -- use media.

TV and radio media promotion.

## *Invite Literacy Students to Share their Gifts (19/158)*

Center it on the people and their literacy needs.

The children also have much to give and would gain self-esteem by sharing talents.

Embrace and hold clients to the "each one teach one" principle.

Engaging Spanish-speaking literacy students to teach English.

Get clients to commit to become tutors when able.

Give the opportunity to individuals. Ask what gifts individuals want to give.

How could we engage adults learning to read with children? They teach reading as they gain proficiency to give back.

Individuals needing the interventions bring with them their own strengths, languages, cultures and traditions.

Job coaches/Goodwill, etc., to tutor -- and Goodwill employees to "each one tutor one." College students tutor high school; high school students in middle school; middle school students tutor elementary students; elementary students tutor in preschools.

Language learning circles -- ESOL and English speakers; elders -- young adults -- youth; sharing traditions, language and citizenship information.

Literacy through people's own history.

Networking. Target population can provide babysitters.

Older children to help younger ones. High school kids might trade odd jobs for help with homework. Someone who wants to learn Spanish could teach English.

Pay it forward -- instead of just giving services to people -- we need to track and see what they can give in return -- to cultivate a neighborhood community connection. Enabling the target population to determine needs and to feel they can contribute and work together to solve issues.

Persons needing literacy tutoring could volunteer to help in agency's daycare program - - or help with a library's Spanish storytime program.

Provide opportunities for program recipients to contribute their talents/gifts.

Solicit assistance from previous ESL; students tutor others from their language group.

Successful programs begin at the bottom. All need to feel he/she has a gift.

Use people of own culture and language.

### *Involve Businesses (14/158)*

Allow employees to participate.

Ask businesses for release time for staff to leave for community service.

Borders has the ability to provide ESL and reading materials to levels 1, 2, and 3 at significant cost-saving levels.

Borders is a place-based asset in the form of a meeting place for one-one-one tutoring or small group gatherings.

Businesses have direct knowledge of literacy needs of entry-level staff.

Educate employers on how to identify literacy issues and what resources are available.

Employee benefits.

Employees -- classes.

Involve businesses downtown and in shopping centers; advertise reading in public.

Make assisting/volunteering part of the culture of the organization.

Offer Spanish classes by Spanish as a first language employees.

Organizations offer financial resources and buildings for individuals to help other individuals (meeting places). Require reciprocity from recipients (give back gifts).

Provide English classes for employees.

Businesses willing to provide/encourage opportunities for employees to be tutored.

## *Involve the Community (11/158)*

Area is in expansion = developers are creating man-made communities, which could have physical and intellectual focus (fitness facilities as well as tutoring/literacy centers).

Change the city ways to ABCD.

Communication in neighborhoods (overcoming communication barriers).

Community awareness of reading issues.

Going into neighborhoods -- knocking on doors; Reading-on-Wheels; getting neighborhood associations on board involving other neighbors and finding common ground. Neighborhood ambassadors.

Groups -- retirees, clubs, youth, parents to engage (gated communities?).

Increase community awareness of literacy issues and what it means.

More communication between all members of community.

Start with community want-to, understanding why.

Using existing structures -- churches, jails, health clinics and bring literacy to folks so folks can provide necessary support services -- feeding, child care, etc.

Work with other organizations to make connections.

## *Involve Families (11/158)*

Can kids who've learned English teach parents? (15 mins./day) Ready? Need materials.

Children learning to read and teaching parents to read.

Encourage adults to read to youngsters books, magazines, poetry, their own writing.

Engaging parents in pre-literacy work with their own children and others.

Family reading nights.

Family reading parties -- Governor's literacy initiative.

In the Head Start model, parents are engaged as a parent committee and their input helps to shape the program.

Motivation of literacy for parents and children.

Parents to speak and write their own story to children.

Sponsor Family Reading Nights.

## *Involve Nonprofit Agencies (11/158)*

The assets of county/city administration coupled with the multitude of assets at the working level need to be coordinated -- we need glue.

Dealing with families in a library situation, it is important to find out from them (especially people new to this country) where they would fit in. Include and develop programs of their culture.

Girls, Inc. -- expand family literacy services:

- Train other organizations.

- Reach out to recruit more participants.

- Create "speakers' bureau."

- Hold Family Reading Parties.

Libraries -- place triangles as the neighborhood gathering and communication structure for individuals.

Library should forgive fines for poor people (my organization). Fines cut off their access to books.

Library "story time" for preschoolers on a daily basis.

Mentoring reading programs with Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Nonprofits have staff whose job it is to address literacy needs.

Our library will sponsor a literacy program called "Good Friends."

Public television.

Use Access 19 (TV).

## *Involve Volunteers (22/158)*

Actively recruit volunteers to work with children to train them.

Ask seniors to read to children or mentor them.

Community has resources like senior/junior volunteers.

For individuals to identify one area that they are passionate about and figure out a way to be involved in that area.

Grandparents/seniors to tutor in neighborhoods, schools, churches, community center.

I have a gift; I would like to find out how and who to present it to in the best way.

Link up adults with children in meaningful ways in literacy and reading activities.

Lots of volunteers have skills to give: library, literacy volunteers, YMCA, churches, Girls, Inc., Big Brothers Big Sisters; organizations offer extraordinary assets.

One part of the population -- retired -- have unused time and talent.

Partner seniors with not only students, but their families.

People can make things with their hands -- sew, craft, draw, build, engineer. We can give them the opportunity to teach others; how to read and write the instructions so they can pass on their knowledge and experience.

People who care about literacy share their education and life skills with those in need.

Retired teachers or anyone who is interested could tutor students in neighborhoods.

Retirees who might do one-on-one tutoring.

Retirement meetings re: find strengths and gifts to share.

Tap into seniors' expertise.

Think of the number of "gifted" retired people in the community.

Volunteer tutors trained in ESL and basic resources materials for tutoring.

Volunteers who are willing to give time. Identify groups that can/will participate.

Volunteers in schools to assist kids having trouble speaking and reading English.

We need to become "ambassadors" and engage regularly in conversations that help people realize that they have assets that could help address community needs -- and help them make the connection.

Willingness to be trained as proficient volunteers.

## *REPORT OUT Session Responses, Question #2*

### What Shifted for You Today?

Clients can teach staff another language

Gift of ABCD -- will use back at office with programs

Liberating talents through gifts

Literacy is a tool -- not a need

Need to connect more with libraries

Neighborhood association potential

Opportunity to network

Possibilities of networking

Room eager to help and need to listen

There are "simple" ways to change

What every person can offer

## *Individual Responses, Question #2*

### What Shifted for You Today?

Individual Responses (Total of 88) Fell into the Following Categories:

*Awareness of ABCD Philosophy (33/88)*

*Desire to Take Action (12/88)*

*Greater Awareness of Scope of Literacy Issues (5/88)*

*Have Concerns about Going Forward (7/88)*

*Heard New Ideas for Enhancing Literacy Education (4/88)*

*See Need for More Publicity (3/88)*

*See Need for Whole Community Involvement/Collaboration (9/88)*

*Variety & Breadth of Community Organizations Involved in Literacy (15/88)*

## *Awareness of ABCD Philosophy (33/88)*

ABCD - Community-Based Assets.

As a convener, I am thinking more about how to share that role with someone else who wants to offer their gift -- and then how I can help make it happen.

Appreciation of importance of seeing and mobilizing gifts of Hispanic community.

Definitely the idea of looking at literacy as my job and not looking at the individual that I am helping. Rather to change and find out what this person can do for me and my job and realize that this will definitely be a morale-builder for the individuals.

The focus being on individuals vs. agencies and programs. Asset-based concept with a relationship-building component.

Good delineation of ABCD. Especially seeking help from the "help-less."

Greater focus on individuals needing services, ways of engaging them in the process.

Greater sensitivity to assets the illiterate population has to offer.

I came to the summit thinking that perhaps nothing would come out of it. Now I am hopeful that something will.

I can now think more in terms of how to reach and create a trusting connection with individuals in need of reading assistance, and how to do this, rather than in terms of creating a formal class and then simply advertising in a few standard resources.

I heard more concrete "how to" suggestions and for me the important message is "collaboration (sharing of gifts) and communication."

I like and will embrace the ABCD method of getting something accomplished. I have always tried to do that, but it's nice to see it has a name and is put into practice.

I like the idea of letting the people who benefit from a "gift" be able to give back a gift of their own.

I love the "gift exchange" concept. I'm glad I came!

I relaxed and dropped into my heart. I was worried last time that the conversation would remain in the custody of the professionals. Now I am persuaded that the doors are open to everyone. The ABCD talk perked me up.

I want to think more about ABCD. How can I make an effort to have others feel important and share their gifts as they accept our gift of literacy?

I will continue to view the glass half full. It was great to be a part of this brainstorming summit. I think we will be able to solve this problem one person at a time.

The idea of sharing gifts has gotten me thinking of different ways of making connections within the community. I think that connections can be made stronger and more enduring when all participants can share their gifts for a common goal.

The importance of utilizing the gifts of everyone involved with literacy efforts -- not just the teachers and organizations, but also the recipients.

I've heard the asset-based community stuff before with John McKnight. Was good to hear it again.

Learned about the ABCD approach to thinking in successful communities.

Moved me to be more focused on uncovering the gifts of people in the Newtown and surrounding communities.

The need to connect and exchange gifts became a powerful idea for me. There are many literacy gifts to share.

The realization that each person involved must take as well as receive in order for both sides to feel enriched. I am willing to try and ask for something each time I try to give something.

Saw that those being helped must also give, even in only in a small way.

A shift away from approaching a literacy campaign from the perspective of what people can't do -- read -- to what they can do -- as a way to engage folks.

To make sure we "ask" others to join the effort with the gifts they have to offer. Think out of the box and find new ways to interact. To "listen" for clues others give.

To see just how important is the subject of literacy. Need to address and continue to plug away at it. Gifts -- give them and receive them.

We need to look at communities for their needs, wants and strengths and create specific programs to fit their situation. We must be inclusive, not directive, and must let all persons involved in both sides of the "relationship" feel valued and respected.

Went from an "I" to a "we" point of view.

What shifted for me today was the realization that only one of my tutors (for the YMCA READS Program at Venice) is a family member of the students tutored. There are many parents, grandparents and older siblings that perhaps would be interested in becoming tutors themselves.

Gifts -- give them and receive them gracefully -- and this empowers everyone.

The willingness of people/organizations to adopt the ABCD principle was good to see. There are plenty of people/organizations willing to help; need help in figuring out how.

## *Desire to Take Action (12/88)*

Connect with library as a natural literacy partner.

The feasibility of successfully implementing literacy programs that work!

The focus needs to be at the individual level as opposed to the czar. Do we need a modern-day Hull House?

Got specific input of things I can do. Got two new partners and one person I want to ask for help.

I began to think about who I know that is involved with literacy issues and remembered my old friend who is now an ESL teacher at SCTI. I now can hardly wait to speak with her about this literacy summit.

I came to acquire information -- I'm leaving with the desire to help.

I did not think about literacy prior to this event. What gifts can I bring to this need?

Increased interest in improving literacy in the community.

Let's have a community meeting about literacy needs in their neighborhoods. Take it to the streets where the need is strongest.

Look at greater community and connect with child.

My idea to implement a literacy program through my library has solidified!

What our children and families have to offer our agency.

## *Greater Awareness of Scope of Literacy Issues (5/88)*

How complex the issue of literacy is and that solutions will need to come in many different forms and from many different people.

I'm still new at this "literacy thing." So for me, it's more about learning what is out there, who's involved, and finding ways to creatively and effectively address my mission (adult literacy) through collaborations and use of non-organizational assets.

Increased awareness of difficulty to solve problem -- more likely to be able to improve, but not solve.

Literacy need is much broader than I had experienced. It will be a formidable task to pull together the multitude of assets in the county.

Nothing really shifted for me today. Confirmation of the importance of this issue.

## *Have Concerns about Going Forward (7/88)*

I still believe this is a vitally important issue, but I am more skeptical about its resolution. There seems to be an economic piece that will be very difficult to overcome.

Discouraged by lack of participation of Hispanics in the discussion.

First time here -- I am confused because the ultimate, long-term goal of the summit was not stated. I'm confused about where this is all leading. All good information -- but what/how are we going to proceed?

I truly wonder if anything will come of these meetings. Will there be improved sharing amongst organizations of step-to-step programming and services? Will we address the real sources of illiteracy -- families, their education levels, their language? Will we look to the communities these families live in to take on the task of working within their communities? Will we provide them with the support, instruction, and the means to raise up their own? Or will this be just another communal feel-good with no results?

It raised more questions than answers. I'd like another summit. The goal of this imaginary summit would be to involve the community we are trying to help -- those living in poverty.

Lack of representation by people in groups who have benefited by a literacy program.

Worry about some negativity I felt from people who have been tutoring (volunteers and professionals) their own way for 20-30 years and don't seem open to change.

## *Heard New Ideas for Enhancing Literacy Education (4/88)*

Became aware that there are simple steps that can be implemented immediately -- public reading corners, each one teach one concept.

The conversation café was a cool idea.

More great ideas -- more folks to contact in the community -- a renewed vision for multigenerational multi-layered literacy efforts.

That there may be help for kids like my grandson to learn how to read better by listening to other readers than our small family. This would seem to be effective at various public places.

### *See Need for More Publicity (3/88)*

An awareness of the great need for PR about what already exists -- if we could get some journalist to do an in-depth study and publish it in the paper; so many people who come down have time and talents could read it and go from there.

The awareness factor is critical for a successful literacy campaign. Better marketing of what is available out there for literacy. We just need to tie it together.

I think that Mary Beth's comments regarding business people asking for help with employees should have more publicity.

### *See Need for Whole Community Involvement/Collaboration (9/88)*

Impressed by the need for more efficient use of all the disparate organizations (talent represented today). Need to think about feasibility of guidelines for groups -- how to better organize and function.

Is there any coordination of this region's literacy organizations that maximizes each organization's strengths and supports each organization's weaknesses? Is the duplication of effort being prevented?

My focus shifted towards literacy being a problem, not only in my organization, but a problem in our community as a whole. Today's summit made me realize that the issues with literacy extend beyond our schools.

Need a coordinator to pull everything together.

Need for coordination of services.

The need for meaningful dialogue across groups to collectively arrive at goals and ways and means to address those goals.

Networking is very important. There are resources already available. We need to empower the individual.

Resources and need to connect with each other better.

That literacy is something that benefits whole communities; therefore it needs community involvement from businesses, nonprofits, volunteers, churches, schools to address. (Must have a media TV partner!)

## *Variety and Breadth of Organizations Involved in Literacy (15/88)*

Awareness of interest in networking, combining assets, and willingness to share, to intermingle.

Greater appreciation for number of individuals committed to improving literacy.

How the participation at grassroots level is the foundation. How many resources are available in this community.

I continue to be impressed with the scope of caring in our community.

I realized that there are many organizations in this county and that they should be supported more! Thanks.

I want to learn more about the Literacy Coalition -- how many people call them to volunteer? How many do they help?

Impressed by the varied turnout. Impressed by the real concern. Feel that more is really possible. Great networking opportunity.

Increased awareness of current community services.

It's wonderful to have the opportunity to make personal contact with the people in the community I can work with in the future.

Not previously aware of all literacy groups working in Sarasota. Hopefully common goals will be coordinated to advance and improve literacy in the area.

Panoramic versus myopic vision. (Previously I thought of just our efforts; didn't look around and consider a connected effort.)

Realize that there is a wealth of assets in this room willing to work together to create a more literate community. We need to ask people to share their gifts.

That so many people have come together, ready, set and willing to address this issue with viable-workable solutions. It's a matter of implementation now.

Thrilled to know so many people and organizations are working on the problem. I think with coordination we could raise Sarasota's literacy rate to 100%. If Cuba can do it, can we do less? I like the idea of "trading" assets: English for Spanish lessons, etc.

Vast number of resources available. Deep commitment to literacy for all ages in this community.

❖ END ❖