

Summer 2023

- 2 U.S. Citizens Honored
- 2 Alumni Club
- 3 Legacy Donors
- 4 MOS Certification

The SPARK

CELEBRATING SUCCESSES SPARKED BY YOU!



We welcomed 35 graduates to our May 11 ceremony, including Codi from our Beaver County site. His teacher, Susan Mansuetti says, “Codi was a great student. He made me a better math teacher because he always asked ‘Why?’ I had to be prepared to answer him each week!”

RECOGNIZING OUR GRADS

Our first in-person ceremony since 2019 honored students who earned a GED credential.

On Thursday, May 11, Literacy Pittsburgh hosted its first GED graduation since 2019! All 130+ graduates from the last several years were invited. We welcomed graduates and their families and friends to Foerster Student Services Auditorium at CCAC Allegheny Campus. Some grads passed as recently as the day before the event, including one who drove all the way to Slippery Rock University to take the last test section he needed to graduate!

Celeste Smith, Senior Program Officer for Arts and Culture at The Pittsburgh Foundation, gave a wonderful speech congratulating the graduates.

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SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS: BREEZY

Determined to make an impact on the world.

Breezy earned her GED credential just days before this year’s graduation ceremony. In fact, she was so eager to attend that she registered for the event just days before she completed her final GED exam!

Breezy’s teacher Terra Teets says, “When Breezy told me she passed her final test, I was not at all surprised, but joyful and elated nonetheless. I knew she had put in the work to make it happen. She is more than ready to move on to college and into her career.”

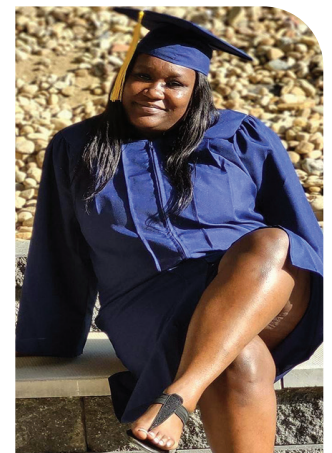
Despite juggling responsibilities as a

new mother and prioritizing providing for her little boy, Breezy attended class as much as she could, listened closely, and asked great questions. She also made it a point to warmly welcome new students, build friendships, and openly celebrate her classmates’ achievements.

“This accomplishment really means a lot to me. I thought I would never finish school,” Breezy explains.

Breezy plans on starting a college course that will jump-start a career in the medical field.

“Since I was a kid, I’ve



always wanted to be a doctor and help people,” Breezy says. “Even though I may not be a doctor, I will still find my way to impact the world.” •

GRADS

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Celeste focused her speech on the fact that not only did the grads complete the difficult task of earning their diploma, they did it during a tremendously challenging time in the world.

After the students walked across the stage and shook hands and hugged all the teachers and tutors who helped them, Dejah Monea

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sang a beautiful rendition of “Rise Up” by Andra Day.

Continuing a Literacy Pittsburgh tradition, we ended the ceremony with an open mic segment.

Parents, children, partners, and friends lined up to praise and congratulate their graduates. “Proud” was the word of the night!

We look forward to next year’s celebration on May 9, 2024. •



NEW CITIZENS CELEBRATED ON FLAG DAY

For the second year, members of the Kushkushkee Trail Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution hosted an event on Flag Day to celebrate our newest U.S. citizens. On June 14, the Chapter presented attendees with gift bags followed by a reception with refreshments.

This year, 34 students became United States citizens giving them the right to vote, travel freely, and become eligible for grants and scholarships. Most importantly, a U.S. citizen’s right to remain in the United States cannot be taken away.

SUPPLIES FOR STUDENTS

Literacy Pittsburgh maintains a Free Cabinet stocked with necessities for students such as diapers, toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, lotion, and feminine hygiene products. We invite you to help us stock the Free Cabinet with supplies. This can be a great way to use remaining dollars in your FSA or HSA accounts! **Visit our Amazon Wish List at this link: tinyurl.com/LPfreecabinet**

ALUMNI CLUB DEBUTS

Past students can enjoy networking, mentoring, special swag, and more.

We are excited to launch an Alumni Club to give past students the chance to stay connected and continue their educational journey.

Membership is free and all the opportunities are purely voluntary—students can participate as much or as little as they like. Benefits include

Literacy Pittsburgh swag, social events, mentoring opportunities, casual conversation groups, advanced career services help, volunteer opportunities, networking, and more!

Individuals who earned their GED credential or became U.S. citizens recently received an invitation to join the Alumni Club. This initiative will be expanded to other former students in the near future.

We can’t wait to learn about our alums’ latest accomplishments! •



PATHWAYS TO A BRIGHTER FUTURE

New initiative honors legacy donors who invest in our vision.



Pittsburgh region and nationally.

With her background in finance, Louise understands how crucial financial stability is to Literacy Pittsburgh's ability to grow and evolve and provide the vital programming our community needs.

"I have been truly blessed in my life and I am fortunate to be able to give back." Louise shared. "With this legacy gift, I can continue to make financial contributions and ensure that Literacy Pittsburgh is able to do what they do best—give people what they need to build a better life. I don't know what the future will bring, but I do want to help support solutions for the future."

Pathways to the Future was created as a way to recognize and honor Literacy Pittsburgh's legacy donors like Louise. The name reflects our vision of a more inclusive and productive community driven by access to education. With their generous financial support, these donors are building a brighter future for us all. •

When Louise Herrle retired from her job in finance, she needed to do some important financial and estate planning. It was then that she decided to include a gift to Literacy Pittsburgh in her will.

Louise has had a long association with Literacy Pittsburgh. She started as a volunteer tutor, was asked to join the board, and eventually served as Board President. Over her years of involvement, she has watched Literacy Pittsburgh grow to become a leader in the field of adult literacy both in the



PATHWAYS
TO THE FUTURE

Literacy Pittsburgh

Scan the QR Code or visit literacypittsburgh.org/smart-giving to learn more about how you can become a legacy donor to Literacy Pittsburgh.

If you've already included Literacy Pittsburgh in your future plans or if you'd like to talk to us personally about smart ways to give, contact Tim Richart, Director of Development, at 412-393-7633 or trichart@literacypittsburgh.org.



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MICROSOFT EXCEL CERTIFICATION PREP NOW OFFERED

Gaining skills in Microsoft Office can increase confidence and hireability.

Literacy Pittsburgh recently began offering Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) Certification Preparation classes in Microsoft Excel. We launched two cohorts in April, one in downtown Pittsburgh with 15 participants at our Downtown Learning Center and one in Beaver County with seven participants at the Monaca Public

duration of the course if they do not have their own.

According to Certiport®, 99% of all certification participants substantially increased their Microsoft Office “know-how” by becoming MOS certified, 89% of supervisors say that MOS certified employees are more proficient users of Microsoft Office

requested more advanced classes. As workforce development professionals, we know that gaining skills in Microsoft Office can increase confidence and hireability in many industries.

The digital skills team prepared for this new class offering by going through the certification process themselves. Instructors

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Library. The classes meet twice per week for 15 weeks. Students receive a digital textbook, access to an e-lab, and a voucher to take the exam after completing the coursework.

The curriculum, developed by Labyrinth Learning, is aligned to prepare students for the certification exam. The classes are very practical, with many opportunities for hands-on practice. Additionally, students may borrow a device for the

programs, and 88% of participants reported that MOS certification makes them more effective (Pearson Education Inc.).

Our digital skills program has already been offering basic classes in Microsoft programs, including MS Word, MS Excel, and MS PowerPoint using the Northstar curriculum. These classes are a fantastic starting point for people without experience using these programs. After completing these, many participants have

are all experienced in using the curriculum, accessing the e-lab, and taking the test.

In the near future, we will be offering MOS Word Certification Prep and, early next year, MOS PowerPoint Certification Prep.

You can view our current class schedule at literacypittsburgh.org/computer-skills. Digital skills classes are free and open to the general public. •

LITERACY PITTSBURGH

OUR MISSION

Better lives through learning.

OUR VISION

A more inclusive and productive community driven by access to education.

OUR VALUES

- We believe that all people deserve the opportunity to learn in a place where their strengths are celebrated.
- We respect all people and their ability to shape their own lives.
- We have a duty to earn the trust of everyone we work with.
- Our collective well-being depends on welcoming diverse cultures and perspectives.
- As a leader, we embrace the responsibility to innovate, model best practices, and grow.



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A copy of the official registration and financial information for Literacy Pittsburgh may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling toll free, within PA, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

