

From: Kathryn Thompson [mailto:kthompson@tarrantlit.org]
Sent: Tuesday, April 05, 2016 9:39 AM
To: 'Bob Griffin'
Subject: RE: One More Update

Good morning, Bob –

Thanks for your patience. I am just feeling a bit overwhelmed with everything and I needed a little time to get it all together.

I can't remember if I told you that we have taken over the Agape Baptist Church ESL program, on top of everything else we do, it is all so good, but also just so much to do!!

We have served 14 students thus far in the reading program. Enrollment has been more of a challenge than we expected, to be honest. We get *many* calls from adults who ask for help, but these students are much more likely NOT to follow through than our GED students. I have learned so much about them over the past few months. For example, because of their low level reading skills, they are virtually all unemployed. This means that they are much more likely to be at the lowest levels of poverty *and* much less likely to drive, therefore transportation is so much more difficult for them.

For example, we have a gentleman who called last week and wanted to enroll in the program. Sarah completed the telephone intake and we agreed that I would do the first orientation with him this morning. He has some additional challenges – a criminal history and a severely disabled wife. He says he cannot read at all. This morning, when he was supposed to be here for his first day, he called to say his tire is flat. No spare tire. We are now waiting for him to find someone to bring him. We are hoping he will be here by 10 am. This is the kind of thing that happens almost every day with the students we have enrolled in this program.

We are very committed to the program – probably more so now than ever, after getting to know these students and learning more about their desire to learn and how hard they must work to actually get to class. Agape Baptist Church has just purchased a very large electronic sign that will soon be installed and we will use that to 'advertise' the classes and tutoring in hopes that more students in the neighborhood (for whom transportation would not be an issue) will learn of the program and enroll.

In answer to your question about other programs, it is my understanding that Forest Hill Public Library has a literacy class now, although I do not know many details (simply because I have not had time to research it) and Goodwill continues to have a class sponsored by Fort Worth ISD which will take low level readers. I know that Joan Grigsby has worked hard with those two teachers to equip them with resources to help their students and we refer students who live near there who cannot get to our site to go to Goodwill. As far as I know, that is all there is.

This is a problem that won't go away and a difficult problem to address. These students have so many challenges and so many barriers. However, when they *are* able to get to class and tutoring, I believe it is some of the most rewarding work being done in adult education.

We are truly grateful to Rotary for its commitment to these students and the overall issue of literacy. Although it may sound cliché, this work truly changes lives and changes generations.

Thank you for your support and hard work on our behalf, Bob.

Kathryn

From: Kathryn Thompson [mailto:kthompson@tarrantlit.org]
Sent: Tuesday, April 05, 2016 12:20 PM
To: 'Bob Griffin'
Subject: RE: One More Update

LEARN (Literacy Education and Reading Network) is the umbrella under which we place *all* basic reading and writing instruction for native English speakers (i.e. no ESL instruction).

In LEARN, we have two types of instruction – one to one tutoring and a reading/writing class. Students are free to participate in one or both.

Some students come to the class, which is held Monday through Thursday mornings from 8:30 to 11:30 am and taught by a reading teacher.

Her salary is paid by FWISD but we pick up all of the other costs (location, computers, software, snacks and beverages for the students, classroom supplies, etc.). However, some students cannot come to class and for them, we try to find individual tutors who can meet with them at another time. Ideally, we would love for students to be able to do both.

We have used most of the funds for books and classroom materials. I think we have about \$400 left and I am holding on to that to use to purchase books for new students who enroll later this year. We have enough of everything now.

Kathryn
Tarrant Literacy Coalition