



Alvin Sr. with his tutors, Peg and Chuck

Photo by Murawski Photography

A LEGACY OF Literacy

Alvin Sr. was born in 1957 in Florida, where he grew up on a family farm. Alvin's parents sent him to school every day, but he remembers it being an underprivileged, segregated school where "students were not required to learn, we just had to show up." Alvin struggled with reading and did not receive the support he needed to learn. After high school, Alvin became a truck driver. Then history repeated itself.

Like his father, Alvin Jr. struggled to read. Alvin's father couldn't support him in school, and his mother, who was working and attending nursing school, was rarely home. Alvin Jr. was in second grade when his mother and teachers decided he belonged in 'slow learning classes'. "I graduated with nothing. I got a special diploma. It's just a diploma saying I attended every day."

Alvin went to work as a driver, and his work ethic enabled him to have a successful career. "Even if you can't read, you can work," says Alvin, "but for me, there was something still missing." Alvin's primary motivation to learn to read was to gain more independence. "That's what brought me to Literacy for Life."

Alvin's tutors at Literacy for Life—first Judith, and now Pam—provided him with the systematic, phonics-based instruction he needed, and he feels as though reading

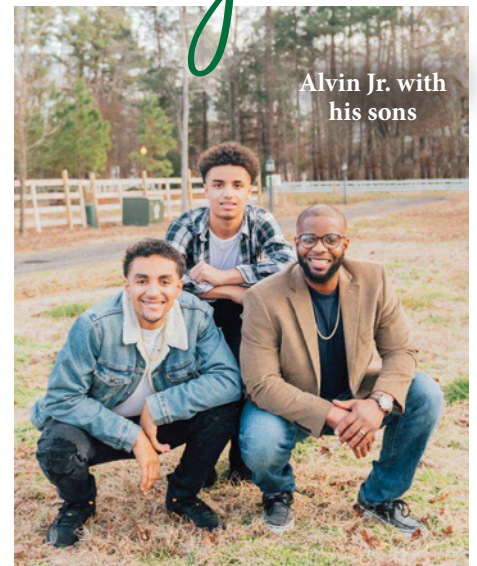
has been unlocked. "I can break down my words a little bit better," he says. "I feel just a little bit more independent. It's not just that I can read words, it's opening up learning."

Literacy is not just a personal goal for Alvin; it is a legacy for his children.

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Through his determination and personal example, Alvin has broken the cycle for his own sons. Alvin III shares, "I knew from a very young age that reading was very important to my dad, so I made sure I learned it—and that made him happy." Alvin III graduated from high school and is currently enrolled in college. His younger brother, Carter, is on track to graduate high school this year.

Meanwhile, Alvin Sr's story has a happy ending as well. He relocated to Williamsburg from Florida to be near his son and grandsons. Alvin Jr. told his father about Literacy for Life and encouraged



Alvin Jr. with his sons

him to attend. When he enrolled, Alvin Sr. told staff that his primary motivation was to participate more fully at church. Alvin Sr. raves about his experience. "I love Literacy for Life!" he says. "And I love my teachers because they care about me." Alvin Sr. visited his former church in Florida, where his friends and pastor were accustomed to reading for him. "I could do a little reading by myself," Alvin says proudly. "Everybody was shocked."



LITERACY FOR LIFE

OUR MISSION: Literacy for Life empowers adults by building foundational skills for success in life and work.

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Enthusiastic learners at a recent health literacy (HEAL) class



703 learners served

through one-to-one tutoring, in-person and online classes, and off-site programs



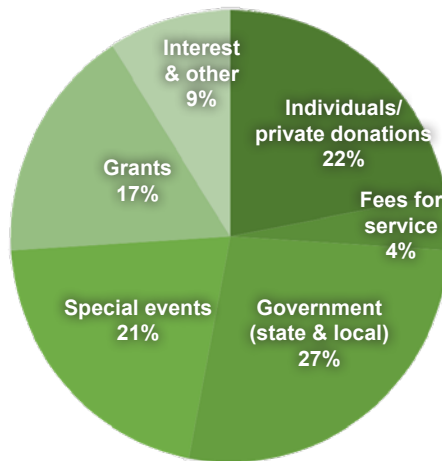
YOUR IMPACT LAST YEAR

Because of you, we're empowering more adults through education

"Literacy skills activate human potential ... These literacies include civic, digital, financial, health, information, and oral literacy, among others ... Foundational adult literacy skills are clearly linked to sustained income growth, better healthcare access, improved job prospects ... and stronger language and literacy skills among children."

(Cacicio, Cote, and Bigger, June 2023)

INCOME



"Tutoring has been so uplifting," Mary raves. "It's so rewarding to work directly with someone who really wants and appreciates the help—especially someone so driven"

Tutoring pairs like Miriam (left) and Mary are the heart of the program!

8 became U.S. citizens after studying American civics and history with their tutors

\$1,260 cost to serve one learner per year

219 VOLUNTEERS changed lives by tutoring, teaching classes, serving as board & council members, and assisting the staff



Learners are from 65 different countries and speak 42 different languages



22,958 hours of instruction

1,197 personal goals met such as enrolling in community college, earning a certification for work, reading a book to a child, opening a savings account, and obtaining a GED



EXPANDING OUR REACH

→ *to meet the need*

1975

The Adult Skills Program is launched. William and Mary education students, faculty, and spouses provide tutoring for staff who struggle to read.

1977

Federal funding ceases, but program director Rita Welsh sustains the program by continuing in her role without pay.

1978-1982

The Adult Skills Program secures 501(c)3 status and receives United Way funding. The program begins serving adult learners from the wider Williamsburg community. Rita Welsh passes away after a brief illness. The program is renamed the Rita Welsh Adult Skills Program.

1992

The program begins actively recruiting volunteer tutors from the Greater Williamsburg community.

2010-2023

The program moves into its current location in the School of Education and changes its name to Literacy for Life. A period of aggressive growth and diversification follows. New programs are developed to meet critical community needs: The HEAL Program (health literacy), EmployEd (career success), On the Money (financial literacy), online English as a Second Language classes, and TechConnect (digital literacy).

September 2023

Literacy for Life expands to reach and impact the lives of learners in Newport News and Hampton as the only Community Based Literacy Organization (CLBO) serving adults on the Peninsula.

HOW TO HELP MORE LEARNERS:

1. Spread the Word

If you know of someone who needs help with their literacy skills, tell them about Literacy for Life. Share the "tear off" below and help them set an appointment to start improving their future.

2. Volunteer

If you have time to help someone improve their literacy skills, please call us. Our need for tutors is great, as we always have eager students who want to remove the barriers in their lives through education.



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LITERACY FOR LIFE

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