



# The Partners Press

TOMPKINS LEARNING PARTNERS

FALL 2023

## A Message from...

**Martille Norton, Adult Basic Education (ABE) Program Coordinator**

**HOWDY, PARTNERS!** Another year has flown by here at Tompkins Learning Partners! We stayed busy with tutor training, enrolling new students, and planning outreach events. You also may have seen us at the Democracy Fest event at Southside Community Center!

We appreciate our tutors, so we celebrated by having an ice cream social this summer. We spent time in the garden eating ice cream and enjoying each other's company. If we didn't have volunteers, we wouldn't be able to help as many people as we do.

One of our accomplishments this year was being awarded grant money from Ithaca Rotary Club to purchase an iPad and online GED Ready practice tests for our students who are preparing to take the GED. This will give them an opportunity to see how they would do when they take the actual test. This is a very helpful resource for our students and we were so grateful to receive this grant!

We look forward to a new fiscal year and the goals we can accomplish together. We hope to bring in more volunteer tutors as well as more students. As always, we appreciate your support!

**Helen Ranck, English as a Second Language (ESL) Program Coordinator**

Have you ever thought about what life would be like if you didn't have the reading, math, digital, or English language skills most adults need to navigate everyday life in the U.S.? How would you make a phone call, use a self-checkout station at the grocery store, create a health care portal, follow medication instructions correctly, talk to your neighbors, fill out a job application, or read emails from your children's teachers?

TLP students are motivated, smart, and resilient yet they may not have all of the language or literacy tools they need to maneuver easily through education, healthcare, or other systems or to meet important goals such as helping their children with homework, passing the GED, or passing the U.S. Citizenship test. Working together with their tutors, TLP students build and strengthen literacy and language competencies to meet personal objectives with increased confidence and independence. Here are just a few of our ESL students' most recent achievements:

- 5** students passed their citizenship tests
- 9** students got jobs for the first time or improved their employment situations
- 4** students earned employment related certificates
- 3** students passed the driver's permit test

Please join us in congratulating these students and their tutors, and thank you for supporting TLP. With your help, we can continue providing free literacy and language tutoring for adults in our community well into the future.

*Maybel and her tutor, John, prepare for her to take the GED test.*



## A MESSAGE FROM Dave Smith

**WE** have more students who need tutors than we have tutors. If you have ever thought about becoming a TLP volunteer tutor, the time to act is now. **WE NEED YOU!** Take a look at the TLP website (TLPpartners.org) and see what is involved in becoming a TLP tutor. You can also use the website to contact us about joining our tutor corps. We hope to hear from you!

*David H. Smith*

*We believe the ability to read and write is critical to personal freedom and the maintenance of a democratic society.*

## 2023 Fall Appeal!

**E**ach year TLP makes two donation requests to donors and potential donors, one in the summer and one in the fall. This summer's request brought in \$8,205. In addition to our newsletter, we have enclosed our fall appeal letter with the hope that we can reach our 2023 goal of \$20,000. (We were just short of that in 2022 with \$18,971 contributed.) Reaching our goal, or even surpassing it, is especially important so that we can balance our budget.

If you would like to give but did not receive a request, a simple way to do so is by PayPal/credit card through our website at [www.TLPpartners.org](http://www.TLPpartners.org). You can also donate through United Way—just indicate on the form that you would like to designate your donation to Tompkins Learning Partners!

A special thank you for your support this past summer and thank you in advance for your support this fall!

**“OVER 40 MILLION ADULTS** in the U.S. cannot read above a 3rd grade level, and nearly 63 million cannot do 4th grade math.” –National Coalition for Literacy

## 2023 TLP Board of Directors

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## TLP Staff

David H. Smith,  
*Executive Director*  
Martille Norton, *ABE*  
*Coordinator*  
Helen Ranck, *ESL*  
*Coordinator*  
Sharon McGee,  
*Administrative*  
*Assistant*  
Sheila A. Dean,  
*Program Assistant*  
Lori Abbott, *Adult*  
*Literacy Instructor*  
Susan Sandritter, *Adult*  
*Literacy Instructor*  
Sarah Bonawitz, *Adult*  
*Literacy Instructor*

## Volunteer Librarians

June Locke  
Nancy Skipper  
Rachel Testman

## TLP's Mission

Our mission is to help adults who live or work in Tompkins County meet their personal literacy goals, free of charge, by improving their ability to read, write, speak English, and use math and computers. Students achieve these goals by working together with professionally trained and supported volunteer tutors.

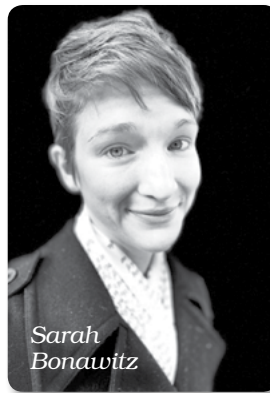
## Tompkins Learning Partners

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literacy@TLPartners.org



United Way  
of Tompkins County  
Funded Partner

## Meet Staff Member Sarah



Sarah Bonawitz (she/Sher/hers) started working with TLP in February as a part-time literacy instructor, but has been volunteering with TLP since 2015!

She has deep care and respect for TLP and its students, and is excited to be a part of the team in this new way. Sarah is a student herself, and is currently studying part-time in the Master of Social Work Program at the University of Buffalo. When not working or completing homework, Sarah enjoys reading, hot cups of tea, and spending time in nature with her partner and their two dogs, Atom and Buggy.

## 2023 Grants

Tompkins Learning Partners appreciates the support we receive from community partners. Grants ensure that we have the resources and staff needed to continue providing quality literacy and language instruction for adults in our community.

During 2023, we received grants from Friends of the Tompkins County Public Library; Legacy Foundation of Tompkins County; NYS Education Department; NYS Office for New Americans (ONA); NYSEG; Rotary Club of Ithaca Fund and Vector Magnetics via The Community Foundation of Tompkins County. These grants help supplement the funds we receive from Tompkins County, the City of Ithaca, the NY State Education Department, and the United Way of Tompkins County.

Thank you to all our partners for supporting our mission—to help adults who live or work in Tompkins County meet their personal goals, free of charge, by improving their reading, writing, math, computer, and English language skills.



Student Olena M. (left) and her co-artist (right)

### Olena writes:

*"The mural depicts the state symbols of Ukraine: a blue-yellow flag, a wreath of multi-colored flowers, ears of corn and a sunflower. In the middle of the sunflower is the national coat of arms. I am very happy to be able to show the beauty of my country in this mural in the center of Ithaca."*

## Crossword 2023

*Dear Friends...*

*What a joy to reinstate our annual tradition.*

Three years of "Virtual Crossword" definitely had our local players chomping at the bit on Saturday, Sept. 23rd for our first "In-Person" Finger Lakes Crossword Competition since 2019. The enthusiasm and friendly community spirit at Boynton Middle School far exceeded our expectations. As if the pandemic never happened, friends, family, and neighbors got together to enjoy Adam Perl's brilliantly cryptic puzzles while at the same time contributing to Tompkins Learning Partners' mission of improving Adult Literacy.

Thank you Underwriters, Donors, community volunteers, TLP staff, and thank you to all the players who generously contributed to the welfare of our fellow community members.

### Gary Weissbrot

*Chairperson, Finger Lakes Crossword Competition and Proud TLP Board Member*

*TLP respects the privacy of our students. We never use students' full names or photos without their permission.*

## Books for our Library

The Little Free Library outside our office on Buffalo Street is very popular—and our supply of books goes quickly! If you have any books you would like to donate (no text books or religious tracts, please), you can bring them in to the office during business hours, or you can leave them on the covered porch to the right of our front door any day and time. Thank you!

