

Student Spotlight: Tommy

Hi, my name is Thomas, but everybody calls me Tommy. I've just turned 38. I'm from Fort Wayne and was raised on the southeast side of town. My mother and father are still living, so it's a blessing to have both parents in my life still.

On my mother's side, it's six of us: three boys and three girls. On my dad's side, I have two sisters. I'm my dad's only son. I didn't

have any children because I've never been married, so I'm living the single life. Maybe one day God will bless me with a family of my own. My job right now is to complete the high school equivalency (HSE) program and look for work later.

I came to The Literacy Alliance because I wanted to give myself another chance to receive a high school equivalency (HSE) diploma. I think my past experiences with getting my diploma could've been better, but I didn't have the support I needed from friends and family when I needed them the most. In reality, I didn't need them. I needed the self-awareness that I could do it myself. I was down and out and lost my worth, so I had to pick myself up and try again.

Since I've been attending The Literacy Alliance, I've made a big jump. My goal is not yet completed, but I'm well on my way. I have completed everything with testing except for math, I'm proud of myself, and I thank GOD that he led me to this place.

I have all good things to say about the people and this place. My experience here has been wonderful. The teachers, staff, and tutors are all great; they'll help you if you don't understand something. Out of all the places I've been to in Fort Wayne, I wish I would have found out about this place a long time ago because it's great. I will refer anyone to The Literacy Alliance if they want to get their HSE.

I plan to do what I always wanted to do once I get my diploma. I'm thinking about taking a college course in business management to learn the ins and outs of running and owning my own business someday. I want to put my talents to use and create music; I'm going to be my own producer/songwriter.

"My advice to anyone who's reading my story is never give up and stay positive no matter the circumstances or the trials we may face in life. Believe in yourself, set goals, and take one step at a time, no matter how long it takes you. Just do it."

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My hopes and dreams are going to become my reality. I can see myself becoming a successful businessman, millionaire, and everything that comes with the territory.

To sum it all up, I would like to express my gratitude to The Literacy Alliance for the hard work, and I'm very thankful to be a part of this force that's helping people like us to become someone in this society, and I would love to give the love back. Thank you to The Literacy Alliance for all things and lives that this program has changed.

Update: Tommy passed the high school equivalency exam in late March 2021, earning his diploma.



Your gifts are helping more of our neighbors like Tommy. You can read more stories on our blog.

literacyalliance.org/blog



The Literacy Alliance
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Advancing Literacy

THE DIFFERENCE YOU ARE MAKING FOR OUR NEIGHBORS

SUMMER 2021



Donor Spotlight: Greg Solon

What is your affiliation with The Literacy Alliance, and how long?

I have volunteered on the resource development committee for roughly five years. I got involved in the organization when a friend who worked at TLA recommended that I talk to the board chair and learn more about the organization.

Why do you choose to support TLA financially?

In my ten years working in the financial industry, I have become acutely aware of the magnitude of economic disparities within the US. I personally believe that education and educational access are key ways of to help reverse trends of economic disparity and income inequality. I support the Literacy Alliance financially because I feel their HSE programs lead to meaningful multigenerational impacts on the families of those that they serve.

I have donated to TLA since I first started

volunteering my time in 2015. More recently, in 2017, I became a monthly donor. I appreciate the ease of use and the ability to support the organization through automatic contributions. I find that it has

relieved me of the stress of the usual year-end rush to send contributions. In addition, I know that it provides the Literacy Alliance with a little bit more consistency in their annual budget.

Visit literacyalliance.org/blog to read more of Greg's donor experience and to learn how you can make a monthly donation.



The Literacy Alliance

2021 HSE Graduate | Tommy

Mission

The Literacy Alliance strives to end illiteracy by teaching adults through learning centers, literacy programs and tutoring services that empower individuals to succeed at work, at home, and in the community.

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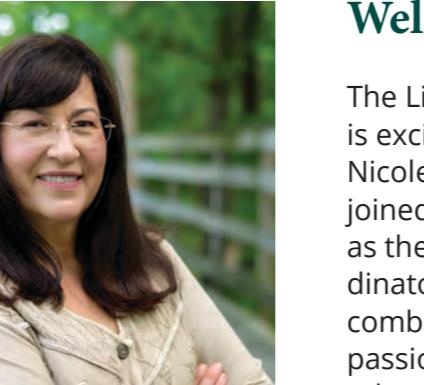
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TLA Is Hopping!

There is so much to celebrate at The Literacy Alliance right now and we are grateful for your ongoing support. You are the reason we can make a difference in the lives of our students; thank you!



There is big news afoot: The Literacy Alliance will be welcoming another literacy program, Project READS, to our fold effective September 1, 2021. TLA's board of directors has been working behind the scenes for many months with the Allen County Education Partnership's board of directors to make sure that Project READS has a sustainable home for the future. We look forward to their staff and volunteers being a part of our organization increasing our ability to eliminate illiteracy in our community. The next few months will be a transition phase for both organizations and we will keep you informed of new developments along the way.

Our spring fundraising event, "Salt & Pepper," in collaboration with Arena Dinner Theatre was a great success. With production expenses covered by STAR Financial and Parrish Leasing, each organization received almost \$2,100 and TLA welcomed 70 new donors. We hope to work with Arena again next year, so stay tuned for our next great theatrical adventure.

We've just received approval for another round of Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) credits for the coming year. If you've purchased NAP credits from TLA in the past or have indicated interest in doing so, be on the lookout for paperwork that is being mailed to you in late July. We welcome new NAP donors; if you are interested in this unique opportunity, please let me know and I'll be happy to send the details your way.

Be sure to save the date (Friday, September 24) for our fall fundraiser, Laughs for Literacy. We know everyone needs a good laugh and we promise to have many of them for you, courtesy of Second City, Chicago's famous improvisational comedy group. Details are in this newsletter and you can get tickets now for a great night of fun. We're also bringing back *Funniest in the Fort!*, so get ready to vote for the best jokes ever from some of Fort Wayne's most well-known quipsters.

Melinda

Melinda Haines | CEO
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Welcome Nicole Philippe

The Literacy Alliance is excited to announce Nicole Philippe has joined the TLA team as the volunteer coordinator. Nicole's skills, combined with her passion for helping others, made her the perfect candidate for the position. Nicole has a bachelor of arts in early childhood education from Western Governors University and many years of experience working with children and families as a caseworker and educator.



Save the Date



LAUGHS FOR LITERACY! FEATURING *The Second City*

We are excited to announce that Laughs for Literacy is taking place Friday, September 24, 2021. Join us this year at the beautiful Embassy Theater as we welcome Chicago's own Second City. Visit our website, literacyalliance.org/L4L to purchase your tickets today. Seating is limited!



Funniest in the Fort!
Laughs for Literacy: *Funniest in the Fort!* was met with such support last year that we've decided to keep the laughs coming. Beginning September

10, 2021, Laughs for Literacy: *Funniest in the Fort!* will go live, giving you the opportunity to vote for your favorite joke tellers. But first, we need joke tellers!

Do you want to help us by telling a joke on video and vying for the 2021 title of Funniest in the Fort? Just email TLA's director of communications, Matt Wire, for more information (matt.wire@fwliteracyalliance.org).

Did You Know

There is no cost to students for our classes? It is one of the many ways you are helping remove barriers for adult learners in Allen, Adams, and Wells counties. Please consider investing in the future of our communities by visiting our website, literacyalliance.org/donate, or by using the enclosed return envelope.

Habitat Libraries

Since 2007, The Literacy Alliance has provided a start-up family library to every new home built through Habitat for Humanity at the time of dedication of the home. Access to quality books in the home encourages families, both parents and children, to be readers. Parents serve as role models in developing the habit of reading at home with their children and also help foster a love of reading and learning in their children that reinforces learning at school.



Brandon Park from the James Foundation recently visited the TLA offices!

Each library consists of a new bookcase, new reference books, and a selection of gently-used pleasure reading selected to match the ages and interests of family members. Each start-up library costs roughly \$115, and is funded by supporters just like you! To contribute to this fund use the enclosed envelope and indicate your gift intentions, or visit literacyalliance.org/habitat to donate online.

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Social Media

Did you know you can follow The Literacy Alliance on social media? You can read more stories about our students, volunteers and staff.

[The Literacy Alliance of Fort Wayne](#)

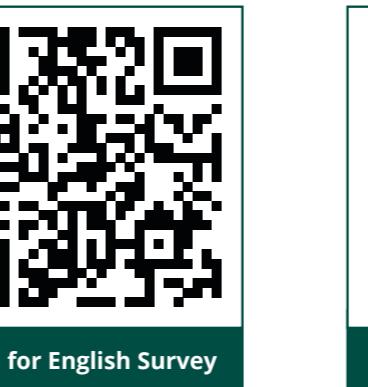
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