

Celebrate the chance to fulfill your vision

Matt Wire

We just celebrated the Fourth of July. We think about freedom. We think about the people who fought for it. But freedom is more than a moment in history. It is a promise we get to keep alive every single day.

Freedom is the right to change your life. It is the chance to start over, no matter how far behind you feel. In this country, your past does not have to decide your future. That is a kind of independence worth celebrating, too.

I know this because I lived it.

I dropped out of high school. For years, I carried that with me like a weight. I told myself the door had closed.

But at 37, I decided to walk through it anyway. I went back to school. I kept going. Today I hold two master's degrees.

I am not sharing this to brag. I am sharing it because I want you to know the truth: It is never too late. The person who feels stuck today can become the person who moves forward tomorrow. That freedom belongs to all of us.

Adult education changes lives, and it changes whole communities. When one adult earns a diploma, the effects spread out like ripples.

Their kids see what is possible. Their families gain stability. Employers find workers ready to grow. Neighborhoods grow stronger.

One person choosing to learn can lift many others along the way.

That is why programs close to home matter so much. Right here, The Literacy Alliance offers a free high school equivalency program. It helps adults earn the diploma they missed the first time around. No shame. No judgment. Just a real path forward, offered at no cost.

For many people, it is the first open door they have seen in years.

Think about what that means. A single parent working two jobs can finish what they started. A veteran can turn the page to a new chapter. A neighbor who felt forgotten can prove they were never finished.

These are the quiet acts of independence happening in our community every day.

Freedom is not just about the flags we wave on July 4. It is about the choices we get to make in the days that follow. It is the mother who signs up for a class. It is the worker who studies after a long shift. It is anyone who looks at their life and says, "I can do better, and I will."

So, let us celebrate more than our history. Let us celebrate the chance we all have to move forward. That freedom is real. It is here. And it is waiting for anyone brave enough to reach for it.

If you or someone you love is ready for a fresh start, do not wait. Sign up today at literacyalliance.org. Our free high school equivalency program (Project Graduate) is ready when you are.

The door is open. All you have to do is walk through it.

Matt Wire is chief marketing and communications officer with The Literacy Alliance in Fort Wayne.