



# Fostering Success Through Language & Literacy



# 2011 Annual Report



**Uniting Our Community with English for All**

## A Message from the Board President

The "makeover" has become a staple of cable TV shows, but the idea has merit for nonprofit agencies, too. As Lincoln Literacy advances into its fifth decade of serving the community, the Board felt it was time to freshen up the organization's logo and reintroduce ourselves to the community, not just for the sake of image-making, but because the work we do has evolved along with the community we serve since our founding in 1972. Today, we continue to tutor American adults whose native language is English and who need help with their reading, writing, and other basic literacy skills. And over the years, we have come to serve a large number of "New Americans" -- the refugees and immigrants who have made Lincoln their new home, having escaped war-torn places around the globe, or seeking the same opportunities that generations of New Americans have sought in this country. To assist them, we provide not only one-to-one tutoring, but also dozens of English literacy classes. We also work with hundreds of children of New American families to assure that they have a shot at success in school.



**David Bargaen**

Rembolt Ludtke LLP

On September 28th, we held a rededication ceremony to unveil our new, shorter name ("Council" is history), our new logo (on the cover of this report), and our new tagline: "Uniting Our Community with English for All." As I stepped to the podium that day, I put away my prepared notes, and instead recalled the journey of my grandfather, an immigrant from Germany, who at the age of 14 had come to America for a better life around the turn of the 20th century, and who worked hard not just at farming, but also at learning English to truly become part of his new homeland. It makes me proud to now serve as President of an organization that seeks to assist immigrants in similar situations who want to work hard to learn English and become productive members of our society. The mission of Lincoln Literacy is critical to building a stronger community, and we thank you for your continuing support of our work.



## 2011 Board of Directors

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**“Communication works for those who work at it.”**  
— John Powell



**The Mission of Lincoln Literacy is:**

***To Assist People of All Cultures  
And Strengthen Our Community  
By Teaching English Language  
And Literacy Skills***

**We fulfill our mission in myriad ways: Individual tutoring, evening classes, family literacy, conversation groups, weekend citizenship training — the list goes on and on. The results are nothing short of transformative for the entire community.**



**Intergenerational Success**

Children learn best when supported and inspired by parents and grandparents. Our United Way-backed family classes allow the generations to learn together.



**Greater Prosperity**

New Americans are vital to our local economy — as workers, business owners, and taxpayers. Our Workforce Readiness English classes and financial literacy workshops help them fulfill their potential and enrich our city.



**Stronger Public Schools**

Our family literacy classes for young children of immigrants and refugees help children learn the skills they need to succeed in school while their parents learn English and family reading skills.



**Better Public Health**

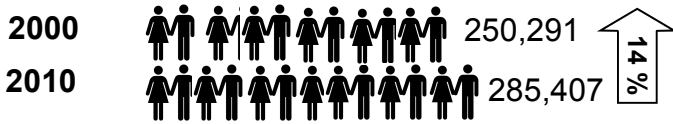
Our health literacy seminars help patients and healthcare providers achieve better outcomes for everyone.

**Intercultural Friendship**

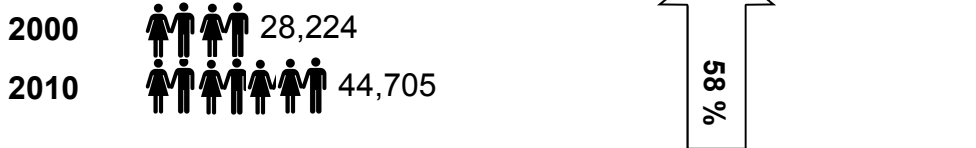
Lincoln is truly the middle of everywhere! Our tutors help build intercultural good will.

# We journey on a river of change. Consider the landmarks:

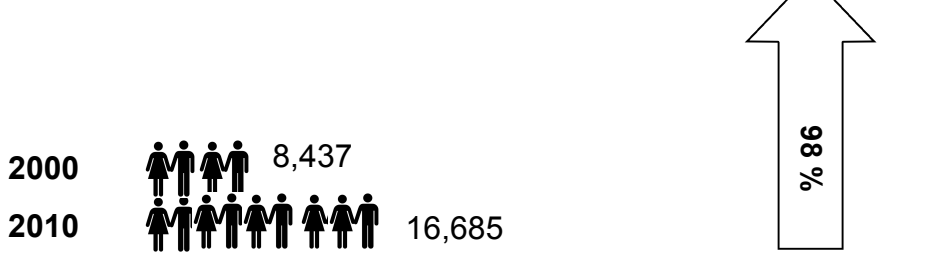
## Lancaster County, Overall Population Growth, 2000 - 2010



## Lancaster County, Immigrant & Minority Growth, 2000 - 2010

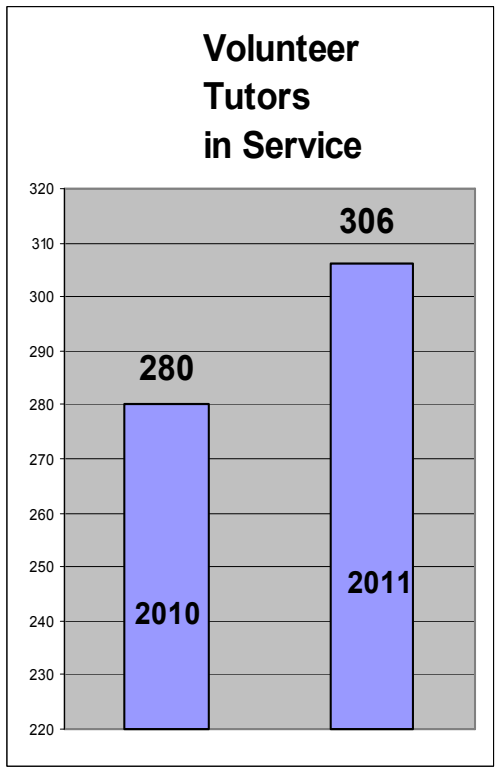
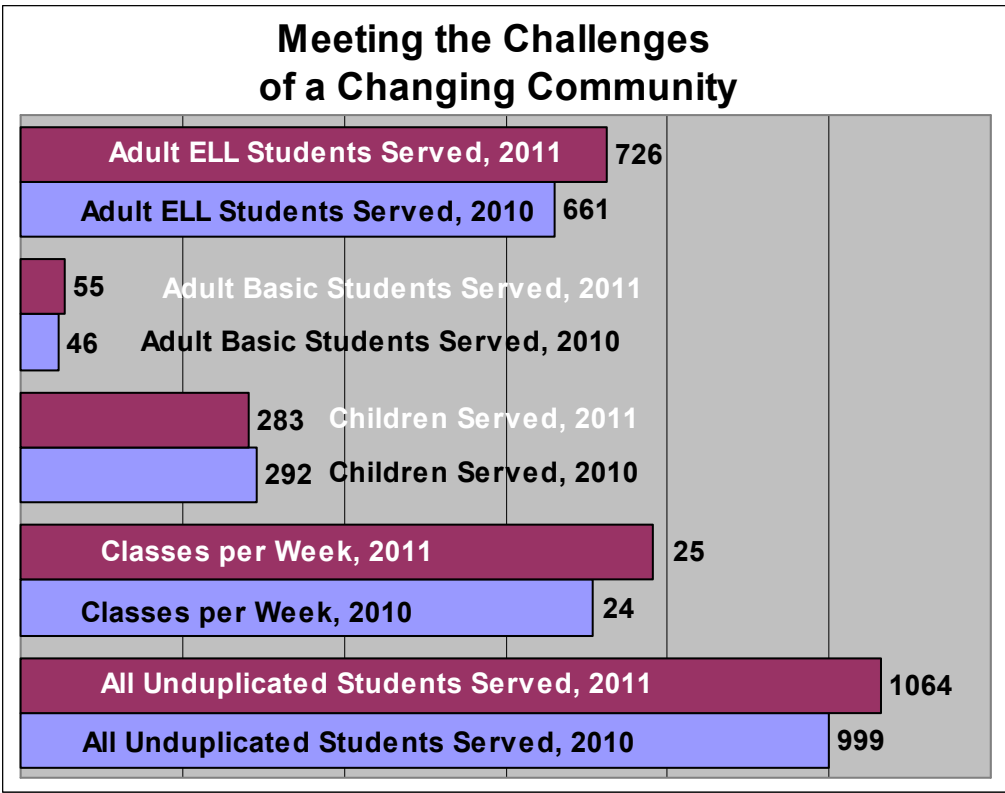


## Lancaster County, Hispanic Population Growth, 2000 - 2010



Former Iraqi Refugee Zeinab al-Baaj and her family were featured in a 2011 Parade Magazine story about how refugees like her have found peace in their new homes in Lincoln.

Lincoln Literacy's volunteer tutors and students work hard to embrace change and chart a course to a better future.



Uniting Our Community





## At 75, A Refugee Earns An Honor

**Joyce Hahn**

AmeriCorps Member and Lincoln Literacy Tutor

One of my most memorable AmeriCorps experiences thus far occurred on the day I had the pleasure of presenting a “Certificate of Completion” to one of our students. The recipient was an Afghan refugee who had been in our program for 12 years. What made this so special was the fact that she is 75 years old, and had never been to school until she came to America. Her tutor and I both visited her home to make the presentation. She was so grateful, and I was touched as I watched her *kiss* her “diploma.” She comes from a family of professionals – her deceased husband was a physician, and her children are all well educated with professions of their own. This certificate is very important to her because she now has proof that she also has completed an educational program. I was proud to have been a part of bringing a joy such as this into her life.

## Our Partners in ELLA

Lincoln Literacy knows that great things happen when great people and groups collaborate. Thanks to our partners in the English Language & Literacy Academy, we are able to offer classes across the city, six days a week. We’re proud and grateful to have counted the following as our ELLA partners in 2011:

- American Lutheran Church
- Asian Community and Cultural Center
- St. James United Methodist Church
- Cedars Youth Services
- Community Action Partnership
- El Centro de las Americas
- Everett Elementary School
- First Lutheran Church
- First Plymouth Church
- First Presbyterian Church
- Good Neighbor Community Center
- Goodwill Industries
- Hickman United Methodist Church
- Lincoln City Libraries
- Lincoln Dept. of Parks & Recreation
- Saint Paul United Methodist Church
- Southeast Community College
- Roper Elementary School
- UNL Dept. of Teacher Education
- West Lincoln Elementary School

## Two Languages Down, One to Go!

**Keegan Krause**

AmeriCorps Member and Lincoln Literacy Tutor



This new part of my life has been very eventful, interesting, and impactful to say the least. Each day, I meet a new person with a new story to tell, each with their

own journey, hardships, and successes. But perhaps the event that lingers longest is the story of a young woman who traveled to the United States from Sudan seven years ago alongside her husband. Within two years of arriving in the U.S., this woman gave birth to two healthy children. Now, she and her husband are not only learning a new language but teaching it to their children at the same time. On September 28th, 2011, this woman stood in front of a crowd 100 strong, using a language that was not merely her second but her third to describe her experience of being relocated to the U.S., and of learning English with a tutor from Lincoln Literacy. She spoke in an unflinching voice, strong and sturdy, standing next to her tutor. At the end of her speech, she announced that she and her husband had passed the citizenship exam not two days before, and thanked Lincoln Literacy and her tutor for the help they had provided.

# Lincoln Literacy's Diverse World of Service



## Workforce Readiness:

In the past year, Lincoln Literacy has worked with Community Action, Goodwill Industries, Southeast Community College and other partners to help refugees and others gain the knowhow, vocabulary, and confidence they need to find and hold jobs. Our Workforce Readiness English classes have proven both popular and successful. In 2011, 154 people got workforce readiness tutoring from us, either in classes or one-to-one matches with tutors, and, better yet, 67 of them secured employment.

## Family Literacy:

The children of our refugee and immigrant families are more than four times as likely to live in poverty as mainstream Nebraska kids. Furthermore, these children often enter school with little or no exposure to children's books in English. Consequently, their future in Lincoln is critically dependent on family literacy classes such as these, known as FLAIR. FLAIR classes prepare these children to succeed in school, provide their families with age-appropriate children's books, and help their parents become fluent in English. During 2011, Lincoln Literacy worked with 283 children in refugee and immigrant families. Of the 104 who were later assessed, all but one was on target to meeting the goals of the program.



## Citizenship:

Refugees never planned on leaving their home countries. War, violent persecution, and other ills forced them to flee. Having been accepted as refugees, they become eligible for U.S. citizenship after five years, during which time they must demonstrate good and lawful character. In addition, however, they must pass a test of proficiency in English, U.S. history, government, and civics. Eligible refugees and immigrants study for the exam in Lincoln Literacy's weekend Citizenship Class.

## The Kirk Reimers Memorial Fund: Supporting Citizenship and More

When some people retire, they just hit the golf links and never look back. And when some people pass away, they soon fade from memory. Not Kirk Reimers (at right). Shortly after retiring from Cushman Motors in 1997, he became one of Lincoln Literacy's most enthusiastic volunteer tutors. He continued to help students from all over the world learn English and become U.S. citizens until his death in July 2011.

In the wake of his passing, family and friends created the Kirk Reimers Memorial Fund in his honor. Appropriately enough, the fund is currently sponsoring Lincoln Literacy's Citizenship Class. His widow, Charlene, and oldest son, Todd, (pictured above) visited the class in the fall of 2011, and continue to raise money for the fund. In addition to support for citizenship, the Reimers Fund helps purchase English language study materials and books for Lincoln Literacy students and tutors. Above right is Hiba Hemeida of Sudan, who passed her citizenship exam in 2011.







### **Computer Proficiency:**

To live, survive, and thrive in our technological society, the ability to use a keyboard, touchpad, and mouse are fundamental. These basic skills barely touch on the immense field of technology. Computer proficiency is imperative in order to search and apply for jobs, to retrieve vital information, and to be a part of the community. Lincoln Literacy and its partners, including El Centro de Las Americas, provide the essential knowledge and skills through computer classes designed for English language learners.

### **Health Literacy:**

Our complex healthcare system is changing continually. For newcomers to our country, it is vital to know how to access and navigate the healthcare system, as well as how to promote health and wellness at home. Lincoln Literacy is proud to provide health literacy workshops for New Americans. With help and support from the Nebraska Dept. of Health and Human Services, LL helped women from Guatemala, China, Mexico and other countries gain valuable knowledge about health and healthcare.



### **Adult Basic Literacy:**

Lincoln Literacy was founded to help adults in our community overcome the challenges of inadequate literacy. Today, we still take this calling seriously. Our volunteer tutors work one-to-one with Basic students (native English speakers) to help them discover their untapped potential as they gain new reading and writing skills, and many other necessary abilities needed for success. During 2011, the number of Basic students Lincoln Literacy served rose nearly 20 percent, to 55. Of those who were post-assessed, every single one showed improvement.

### **Conversation Groups:**

Oral communication is essential for English language learners, and for some it is even more challenging than learning to read or write in their new tongue. Lincoln Literacy's eight weekly, tutor-led Conversation Groups

offer students from around the world an opportunity to practice their English within a safe and comfortable environment.



# Lincoln Literacy Donors

Lincoln Literacy would like to acknowledge and thank those individuals, foundations, corporations and organizations who have helped support our agency. Their continued generosity ensures the success of our students through program support, books, transportation and volunteer tutor training.

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Nancy & Kevin Conway	James Hasselbalch	Lincoln Racquet Club	Kelly Powell
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Beth Cordell	Madeline Haydon	Allison Linkugel	Kirsten Powers
Karen Corral-Rivera	Pama Heikes	Anita Loek	Leonard Pratt
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## Volunteers: The Heroes Who Make It All Happen

Nothing worth writing about would take place at Lincoln Literacy were it not for the hundreds of good-hearted, dedicated, and remarkably effective volunteers who help more than a thousand people a year. They range from eager young people, such as UNL student Sydney Hansen (pictured above), who served as a Lincoln Literacy intern in the fall of 2011, to active retirees like Ed and Ruth Martens (below), who have been volunteer tutors at LL for more than a decade.



Thanks to the personal attention they give, our trained tutors are amazingly effective. One of Ed's former students, who arrived in America from Congo knowing barely a word of English, is now a doctoral student at UNL. In



2011, Lincoln Literacy was fortunate to have more than 300 such heroes. We also count ourselves lucky to have three fabulous AmeriCorps members who dedicate a year of service to our students and tutors.

## Our AmeriCorps Team

**Britt Varisco, Keegan Krause, and Joyce Hahn**





## Lincoln Literacy Staff



Clayton Naff  
Executive Director



Mahdi Al-Shiblawi  
Cultural Liaison



Sanela Ganic  
Business Manager



Ginny Gross  
Training Coordinator



Jane Hanson  
FLAIR Coordinator



Barnabas Kiir  
Van Driver



Maggie Mitteis  
ELL Coordinator



Esther Ortiz  
Basic Coordinator



Sandra Rojo  
Van Driver



Donna Stadig  
Office Administrator



Nick Svoboda  
ELL Coordinator

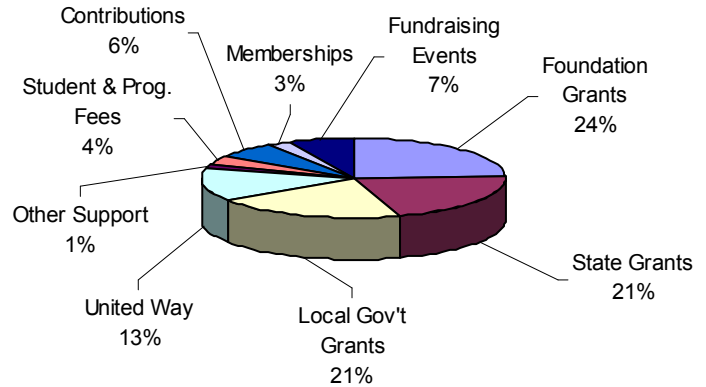


Victoria Welles  
ELL Coordinator

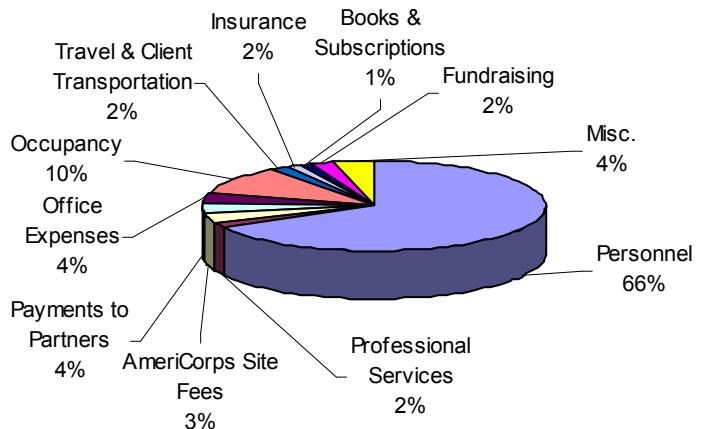
## 2011 Financial Report

Thanks to the generosity of donors and funding agencies, Lincoln Literacy was able to overcome a five-figure deficit in its budget and finish the year in the black. The return to financial health was also aided by staff, who sacrificed pay and worked under austerity conditions for much of the year. It is with real gratitude that we present this report.

### Income 2011



### Expenses 2011



#### 2011 INCOME

Foundation Grants	\$73,197
State Grants	63,203
Local Gov't Grants	62,264
United Way	39,921
Misc. Support	4,379
Student & Program Fees	12,171
Contributions	18,651
Memberships	7,968
Fundraising Events	<u>21,011</u>

#### 2011 EXPENSES

Personnel	\$201,206
Professional Services	6,180
AmeriCorps Site Fees	10,000
Payments to Partners	11,189
Office Expense	11,358
Occupancy	29,681
Travel & Client Transp.	5,579
Insurance	4,921
Books & Subscriptions	1,730
Fundraising Exp.	6,857
Misc.	<u>11,882</u>


**Total**

**\$302,765**

**Total**

**\$300,583**



**United Way**  We are proud to be a United Way agency.

**Office:**  
745 South 9th Street  
Lincoln, NE 68508

**Service Sites:**  
18 locations throughout  
Lincoln & Lancaster County

**Contact:**  
402.476.7323  
[info@lincolnliteracy.org](mailto:info@lincolnliteracy.org)  
[www.lincolnliteracy.org](http://www.lincolnliteracy.org)

# Lincoln Literacy: New Name, New Look, Same Tireless Dedication to the Mission



On Sept. 28, 2011, Lincoln Literacy held a Rededication Ceremony to mark its transition to a new name, logo, and tagline. Angel Velitchkov, aide to Congressman Jeff Fortenberry, spoke of his difficult early days as an immigrant schoolboy, far from his native Bulgaria. Other speakers included former tutor Judge Warren Urbom and his student Qui Ngyuen, LL cofounder Frances Taylor, and current tutor Barb Johnson Frank and her student, former refugee Hiba Hemeida.

