

LINKS TO LITERACY

SERVING ADULT BASIC LITERACY AND ESL STUDENTS IN CENTRE & CLEARFIELD COUNTIES

Work in Progress

Sometimes an unfinished story is the most satisfying. When Sunhee Yun began learning at Mid-State Literacy Council, she had many dreams and goals, as well as the drive to achieve them. Paired with her first tutor in the fall of 2016, she worked hard to stretch and reteach her tongue, lips and mouth to form the unfamiliar sounds of English, simultaneously building a sturdy framework of vocabulary to hold together the fragments of speech that she possessed. In their sessions, they patched together language, and her confidence grew. Soon she had a job, and one season transitioned to the next. The baton passed to a new tutor and she found herself conversing with greater ease. She began applying for different jobs to improve her work conditions. At first, the results were disheartening. Her buoying hope tumbled after interviews, one even by phone – the ultimate test in a new language – netted only rejection. But then came a breakthrough: an offer to work at a new restaurant – not only a cleaner, healthier environment, but more diverse and inclusive. Time to relax? Not a chance - Sunhee plunged ahead (continues on back).

Children's Bookdrive delivers it home

Parents ask us, how do I help my child become a better reader? Dr. Daniel Willingham wrote in *Raising Kids Who Read*, “Small children get their sense of themselves as readers from their understanding that reading is a family value and also from being read to and enjoying it.” For parents who lack literacy skills, instruction at Mid-State gives them the opportunity to read to their children for the first time. The children learn the value of reading and they think *our family reads* (continues on back).

A special thank you to Grace Lutheran Church, the State College AAUW, and Rapid Transit Sports for their contributions to this year's bookdrive.

upcoming EVENTS

MSLC Spikes Game

Sunday, August 25, 6:05pm

Medlar Field: Tickets available
at MSLC office—238-1809

New Volunteer Tutor Training

Tuesday - Friday

September 3—6

Volunteers attend two sessions

Alternative Tutor Training

For research by Nicolas Doyle, PhD
candidate in Applied Linguistics
Week of September 9th & 23rd
Volunteers attend three sessions

ESL Classes & Tutoring

Fall program

begins September 9
Beginner to Advanced levels

Community Resources Seminar

Paula Bigatel
Week of September 23rd

MSLC Book Fair

Saturday, November 23

9:00 am - 9:00 pm

Shop In Store event
Barnes & Noble, State College

21st Annual

**Ron and Mary Maxwell
Community Spelling Bee**

Wednesday, April 8

Food at 5:30pm

Event at 6:00 pm

Foxdale Village Auditorium

A Monumental Year

AMY WILSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
MID-STATE LITERACY COUNCIL



Better together, ambassadors for literacy and supporters funded the movement from survive to thrive. A depressed young man, who was unemployed and

isolated began to work with our coordinator and a volunteer tutor. Learning to read and improving his math skills led to employment, esteem, and friendships. He is thriving, because of you. Thank you for recognizing the life-saving impact of knowledge and skills.

Thanks to Centre Foundation and Centre County United Way Women's Leadership grants, we expanded health literacy instruction targeting women's health, men's health, and safety to support healthy families. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services stated in addition to basic literacy skills, health literacy requires knowledge of health topics. With new skills and information, parents are equipped to make good decisions.

The children's book drive provided 5,000 books for children lacking books at home. With new books, children are practicing their reading, enjoying exploring nature topics, and expressing excitement for learning.

Thank you to our 200 volunteers. Our trained volunteers are teaching reading, English, math, computer skills, and health literacy. Lack of education is an impediment to employment barricading families into poverty. With instruction, our students reach employment goals.

Centre Gives Raises \$20,629.67 Thanks to Literacy Supporters

Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts, for helping make this year's Centre Gives a success! Spearheaded by Centre Foundation, the online giving marathon spanned two continuous days. Your support helps provide tutor trainings for new volunteers, scholarships for low-income adults, and assessments to measure progress. We're amazed by your generosity! Be sure to join us in May 2020!

What Our Students Say

*I can talk to my neighbors. I can go to the mall and buy something myself. **I can take the bus and go to school myself. I can talk to the doctor and make an appointment.** I like Mid-State...—Wenshan*

*Now, I can speak with my teachers [and] classmates... **I can read my email from my kids' teachers** by myself. —Cindy*

Classes are gathering place for learning and community

What do browsers, short stories, gerunds, syllables, and symptoms have in common? They are all part of classes at Mid-State, where the range of students, native languages, and life experiences are just as varied. Students learn about health, computers, citizenship, and all levels of English in order to gain independence and develop skills for their daily lives. What they learn today goes into practice tomorrow - to talk with their doctors, apply for jobs online, or write an email to their child's teacher. It's also a place to connect new residents to long-standing community members.

Literacy Makes a Difference

KAREN LOERCH, LITERACY COORDINATOR

Ben has not liked to read and he did not trust his teachers. His education experience left him with little hope or belief in himself. That is, until he met a tutor from Mid-State with a penchant for the less-than-eager student. In the last year, Ben has learned to trust. He has chosen books he thinks look like a fun romp in the playground. His tutor makes him laugh, and so do books now. His tutor writes, “The last assessment was a big deal to Ben. He and I are both pumped up because of your encouragement of his progress. He is lifted up to a higher level of self-achievement. When we have lesson time, he is more focused. When I ask him if he wants to read today, he yells YES! Yippee.” Overall, learning is a challenge for Ben, but with the dedication of his tutor, Ben is a trusting student.

Mary has shown true grit and determination to improve her reading skills above the 3rd grade level and has benefited from the guidance of her tutor, Anne. This April, she received a jury summons and turned to Anne for help. During their lesson time, Anne read the questions with Mary. They filled out the required form. “Another important situation in life affected by reading skills!” Anne wrote in an email to me. Mary returned to the library the next week where she and her tutor meet. She came in smiling with her news. “She brought a postcard with her last week to show me the county had granted her request to be excused from jury duty! She was relieved to hear that.” Reading does make a difference in Mary's day-to-day life.

Warin: A Promising Future

MEGHAN HARVEY, 2018-19 ENGLISH INTERN



Warin wants to learn English so she can help her two young daughters with their homework. Born in Thailand, Warin recently starting learning English after moving to the United States when she got married. Upon her move to the US with her husband, a native citizen, she struggled to find the help she needed. She reached out to a local church that provided English literacy assistance, but soon found herself overwhelmed by the material and disheartened. Then Warin found Mid-State, where she received the guidance she was searching for. At Mid-State, Warin was placed in a class that was just right. She was nervous on her first day, but the other students assured her there was nothing to be afraid of. She felt more and more confident, to the point where she could participate enthusiastically.

She also began meeting one-on-one with a tutor to help with her reading. She also learned about women's health, and studied US civics and history. Now she continues to forge ahead, setting her sights on obtaining a high school equivalency diploma.

Spelling Bee Marks Twenty Years

MEGHAN HARVEY, 2018-19 ENGLISH INTERN

The 20th Anniversary of the Ron and Mary Maxwell Community Spelling Bee was a special night that brought together a broad range of community members in celebration of literacy. This bee for grown-ups is a fun and competitive event, with teams of three working together to capture the winning word and raise funds in support of the programs and services at Mid-State that give new opportunity to those who live here.

Galen and Nancy Dreibelbis and Linda and Blake Gall filled the top tier of donors as the King and Queen Bee sponsors. The Centre Daily Times provided generous support at the Bee Keeper level, and Honey-Bee Sponsors included Rapid Transit Sports, PSECU, and KCF Technologies. In all, forty-seven businesses, organizations, and individuals demonstrated their commitment to literacy and our community.

Mary Dupuis is one of the many people who help to make the Spelling Bee such a successful event.

Mary strongly believes the community should support events like the Spelling Bee, and Mid-State in general. "We are performing a genuine service to the community," she says. "We have a large and growing community of immigrants from a variety of countries who arrive wanting to work but not having sufficient English to compete for jobs. They are here to make a life for themselves and their families. The ultimate reason for the community to support us, and the Bee, is to help these folks gain the skills necessary to become productive members of the community, as they want to be."



Thank you to our generous sponsors!

CENTRE DAILY TIMES

Bee Keeper Sponsor



Left: The team from Tire Town came Hawaiian-style; Top right: This year's winning team, the Stargazers - Ruslana Kuzina, Connie Schroeder, and Martha Hummell; Bottom right: Sally Shirk retires after many years leading the food procurement team.

Honoring the Maxwells

MEGHAN HARVEY, 2018-19 ENGLISH INTERN

If a community has been the home of such generous, personable, and kindhearted people as Ron and Mary Maxwell, then it should reserve a time to celebrate them. The 20th Anniversary of the Ron and Mary Maxwell Community Spelling Bee was this opportunity to honor two people who contributed so much to those who live here.

Ron and Mary's passion to teach and help others brought them to State College in 1963, where both taught at Penn State University and also gave back to the community around them. Mary taught in the College of Human Development and was part of a committee of parents who organized the first Children's Day at the Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts. Ron was an English professor and started Penn State's peer tutoring program. They got involved with Mid-State in the early 1980s, where they volunteered as tutors. For many years, Ron worked with the same man, who vastly improved his literacy skills; in the process, they also formed a friendship. Ed Maxwell, son of Ron and Mary, and his wife Julie described Ron as a man who could relate to people. "He knew how to connect with people of all kinds," Ed said.

The Maxwells were compassionate people who understood and recognized Mid-State's mission. Ron, owner of Maxwell Trucking & Excavating, had many employees who strained to read and write, causing him to see the struggles of not having literacy skills. Ed emphasized the love and respect Ron's employees had for him. Both Ron and Mary were always looking for opportunities to contribute to those and the community around them. Growing up, they weren't monetarily wealthy.



"Wealth to them was family and community," Ed said. During their college years, Ron and Mary worked together as camp counselors, and when they had children of their own they became involved with programs such as Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts. Ed said his parents "always went above and beyond for their children." They were the parents who always stayed after events to help clean up, and Ron would hire neighborhood kids to mow the grass in hopes of teaching them how to work. Mary adored children and taught for twenty-three years at The Cooperative Playschool. "They were teachers at heart," Ed said. "They just had a knack for teaching."

Ron came up with the idea of hosting a spelling bee sponsored by local businesses. Maxwell Trucking and people they did business with provided the bulk of sponsorship during the event's early years. "The first years were a struggle," Ron said, "but then it blossomed." Maxwell Trucking continues to sponsor the Bee and has had a team the past twenty years.

Ron and Mary Maxwell were truly "people all about other people," Ed described. They impacted the lives of all those around them, bringing kindness and devotion everywhere they went.

our MISSION

The Mid-State Literacy Council is a non-profit group providing adult education instruction in Centre and Clearfield Counties. The Council offers basic literacy, English as a Second Language, and health literacy services to adults in need of the essential skills needed to navigate their daily lives.

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online GIVING

mid-stateliteracycouncil.org

our financial supporters:



Centre County
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Children's Bookdrive

AMY WILSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mary Dupius, retired Penn State Education faculty, recommends, "Be sure to allow your children to read what interests them. This may be (usually is) not what they're reading in school. If they like sports, then get them sports books or magazines: find a book about their favorite sport or team or their favorite ball player. If your child likes horses, do the same thing. If you can't find one, ask your librarian or a teacher.

The children's book drive provides about 5,000 books throughout the community, available at food pantries and shelters. Additionally, children in six elementary schools receive new books for summer reading. Without the children's book drive many children would not have any books to read. Because of your generosity, children can practice reading, build skills, and increase knowledge.

This year's book fair at Barnes and Noble State College is **Saturday, November 23, 9am-9pm**. Please join us and support the children's book drive. Many thanks to Barnes and Noble State College for naming Mid-State Literacy Council the recipient of the 2019 Holiday Book Drive.

Work in Progress: The Next Chapter

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

In subsequent months, she continued to squeeze in tutoring sessions and study between work, taking care of her family, and running her own online clothing design business. At work, she successfully passed the assistant cook's test and took on a higher position. Always looking ahead, she considered a manager level role as the follow-up act; with this in mind, she and her most recent tutors began honing her verbal skills to direct and lead other employees and handle customer concerns. But a different opportunity emerged – a position with the school district – and her solid work experience and well-developed English won her the job. It's a good place to be, but never, in Sunhee's life, an excuse to let up the sails and sit back. Now a true graduate of Mid-State, she is planning to study at the college level, first for a certificate in teaching English as a second language, then on to community college to pursue the study of accounting. It's the next step, but certainly not the last...