

Literacy matters to...

"Geometry," he says. "And algebra."

John Sanyamahwe's eyes light up when we ask him to share the math concept he most enjoys teaching.

"Also fractions, ratios and percentages and how they're linked."

It's not surprising that John, a math volunteer in our GED classes, can't name just one thing. He's been a numbers guy all his life. John studied accounting and economics in his native Zimbabwe and the United Kingdom, and he worked as a banker in both Zimbabwe and South Africa.

But his inspiration to volunteer at our Open Door Learning Center goes beyond his love of math. John came to the U.S. as a refugee in 2007 when he was forced to leave Zimbabwe amid political turmoil. However, due to an issue with his paperwork, he was detained at the border. When a pro bono immigration lawyer came to his aid, it opened his eyes to the power of volunteerism.



"If you are in the position

to help people, you have to do it."

Volunteering in the field of adult literacy weds John's passion for math with his desire to give back. He's seen adults who never had the opportunity to get a formal education get excited about their first class. And he's seen adults with negative school experiences in their youth who are just as eager to learn.

"There's a lot of value in what you [at the Minnesota Literacy Council] do," John says.

"People find their breakthroughs here."

John will join the Minnesota Literacy Council's board of directors in January. Because his foreign degrees weren't recognized here, a GED from the Minnesota Literacy Council helped him land a job with Wells Fargo. As he gains career experience in the U.S., he hopes to move into the international banking sector.

Seeking literary jurors and mentors

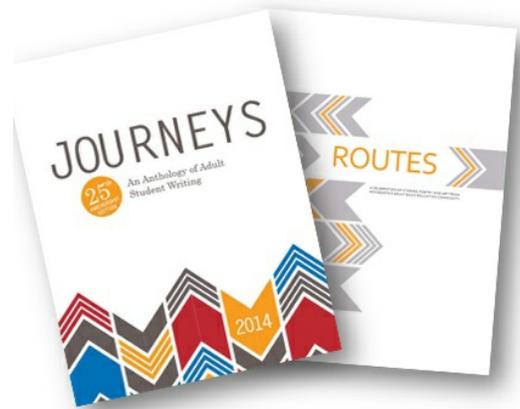
{Apply today! Applications due in early January.}

VOLUNTEER AS A

JUROR:

Jurors will review entries and choose pieces for our literary anthology, *Journeys*. It involves an 8-hour commitment (all done remotely via email and our website) between January 26

and February 4. Up to 50 jurors will be selected. [Visit our jury page](#) to learn more and apply by January 9.



VOLUNTEER AS A MENTOR:

Mentors will work with one or two authors over four months starting in February (up to a 30-hour commitment). About 10 mentors will be selected. Learn more about [being a mentor](#) and submit your [application](#) by January 16.

The Minnesota Literacy Council publishes *Journeys: An Anthology of Adult Student Writing* every spring. *Journeys* provides a voice for hundreds of writers from Adult Basic Education classes across the state.

3 Cheers for 3 Achievements!

{Our work is possible thanks to your generous support for literacy.}



Strong volunteers, strong programs

Every fall, we host a [Volunteer Management Conference](#) to share best practices on using -



Leading the way for distance learning

The literacy council provides admin, training and support to literacy programs across the



Books and hats and mittens, oh my!

In this season of giving, we're thankful for two community partnerships: Ross

- and keeping -- volunteers in literacy programs. This year, we were proud to reach beyond the Twin Cities: 27% of attendees were from programs in greater Minnesota.

state for [distance learning](#) tools like [Accuplacer](#) and Skills Tutor. At our own centers this fall, students have racked up more than 1,600 hours in distance learning.

Sportswear donated more than 2,000 hats to our students and the [Maple Grove](#) and [Calhoun](#) locations of Barnes & Noble are holding holiday book drives (you can participate until Jan. 1!).

Hope to see you!

{Mark your calendar for upcoming events}

BOOK CLUB:

Keeping Hope Alive

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27 6:30-7:30 p.m.

At our main office:

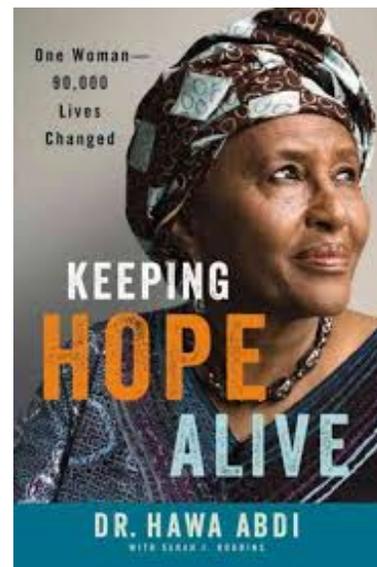
700 Raymond Ave., Suite 180 in St. Paul

[\(map\)](#)

Four times a year we bring volunteers, staff and other literacy enthusiasts together for a book club. Next month's pick is

Keeping Hope Alive. It's a memoir by Dr.

Hawa Abdi, who has been referred to as the Mother Theresa of Somalia because she kept 90,000 of her fellow citizens safe, health and educated for more than 20 years.



Join us:

- Learn more [about the book](#)
- [Sign up](#) for the January 27 discussion

On our wish list

{You can make us stronger by giving goods, funds or services.}



Give the gift of stock

Donating appreciated stock to the Minnesota Literacy Council is an easy and smart way to invest in our programs and services, while also obtaining potential tax benefits that exceed a gift of cash.

For more information, call or email Susan at 651-251-9111 or sgodon@mnliteracy.org.

**THANK YOU FOR
SUPPORTING
LITERACY!**

Stay Connected



651-645-2277 :: 700 Raymond Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55114