



## Community Partner Award

**Ken Hulbert, Open Door Learning Center - Arlington Hills**

*Nominated by Mary Zamacona, Learning Center Supervisor*

Ken has been delivering food to Open Door Learning Center since 2013 and has participated in Learning Center events such as the Harvest party and Volunteer Appreciation Potluck. He volunteers year-round, visiting supermarkets around the metro and delivering thousands of pounds of fresh produce to learners at the site. The food deliveries help many of Open Door's learners supplement their limited income with healthy food; these kinds of services have been shown to reduce barriers to education for learners. Our learners come to us for education but have many needs beyond the classroom. By alleviating some of the worries, our learners have come to see school as a place that cares about their well-being.

### Community Partner Award Honorable Mention

**Anne Luke**, University of MN Extension – Nutrition, nominated by MORE School

## Outstanding Volunteer Award

**Cricket Barrera, Detroit Lakes Adult Basic Education**

*Nominated by Amy Fish (Program Coordinator), Barb Osvold (ABE Instructor)*

Cricket has been a volunteer with the Detroit Lakes Adult Basic Education for 8 years. She is a trained and licensed educator with a personal passion for English as a Second Language. Cricket works with multi-level groups from various backgrounds and cultures and is still able to develop and maintain relationships with students that promote persistence and achievement. Cricket has a warm personality and creates a welcoming atmosphere that sets everyone at ease. In Cricket's class, students know that they are valued as individuals and that she respects their contributions, knowledge, and experiences.



**Bob Young, 191 School for Adults, Burnsville-Eagan- Savage School District 191**

*Nominated by Susan Edmondson (Volunteer Coordinator/ABE Teacher), Kimberly Munson (ABE/GED Teacher), Tammi Bernard (Program Coordinator)*

Bob shared his ideas for addressing inequalities and other issues facing the school district with the superintendent in 2012, and then decided to get involved as a volunteer. Currently, Bob volunteers two nights a week in the GED class, helping students in all subject areas and one night a week helping specifically with math. When he's working individually with students, he is kind, patient, and encouraging. He will create his own lesson plans at home to challenge his students the following day of class. The students love Bob's charisma, humor and warmth.

**Bob Reid, Metro South Adult Basic Education in Bloomington**

*Nominated by Mary Jo Bayliss (Assistant Volunteer Coordinator)*

Bob has been involved in the program since November 2004, when he retired from a career in chemical engineering. Bob leads a much-needed math group and also tutors students individually. Bob's innovation and creativity are part of his instruction, and he brings real world experience and skill to his classroom. He is approachable and friendly, creating instant rapport with his students, while making a real effort to understand their challenges and encouraging them to overcome their barriers and reach their goals. With the tight budgets we all live with, Bob helps the program and its students bridge a gap that could not otherwise be filled and saves the program countless dollars.

**Valerie Meyer-DeJong, St. Paul Schools ABE (Hubbs Center)**

*Nominated by Mary Pat Davini (Teacher), Carlynn Miller-Gore*

Valerie has been volunteering at the Hubbs Center for 8 years, working alongside a teacher of adult immigrants in a low-level English literacy classroom. She also provides one-on-one help and assists with monthly assessments. Valerie develops personal relationships with her learners-- all of whom happily look forward to working with Valerie. Valerie and the teacher work as a team,



and she even substitutes when necessary. At one point, Valerie developed a very unique relationship with a special needs learner, and it was her actions that made it possible for the student to learn. Valerie's heartfelt dedication, dependability, and kind-hearted assistance are exemplary.

**Jerry Hartlaub, Metro North - Columbia Heights/Fridley ABE**

*Nominated by Chelsey Tulgren (ABE Teacher)*

Jerry has been a consistent and dependable volunteer for about 2 and a half years. He plays many roles: To teachers he is a grandfather figure, mentor, and supporter. To students, he is someone who can listen and gently correct pronunciation along the way. All of the time he is a cheerleader, shaking hands, squeezing shoulders, fist bumping, and giving high fives. He connects to students' personal lives by insisting that his first interactions with each of them are not about the math they are working on but about their story. Jerry also works with newly arrived immigrants who have limited English skills, going over basic math vocabulary and drawing out pictures on the board. Weekly, students ask, "Will Jerry be here this week? What time is Jerry getting here? Can I be the first to work with Jerry?" When Jerry is out of town, we miss him. We can't think of a more deserving volunteer for this award.

**Anna Posivo, English Learning Center**

*Nominated by Kathleen Roche (PM Volunteer Coordinator)*

Anna arrived at the English Learning Center in 2009 after learning about it through the Minnesota Literacy Council. Anna teaches Beginning English one night a week which requires flexibility in communication, and this is an area where Anna is especially skilled. She will find multiple ways to explain the same concept several times. She includes visuals in every lesson and has come up with games to keep concepts interesting. Anna transcends language barriers with ease and has a patient, calm and welcoming presence. She balances being compassionate and gentle, while also holding students to high standards. She is known as the "ticket" teacher, a method she created to get students to try their best to only use English in class.



## **Nancy Rajanen, English Learning Center**

*Nominated by Kathleen Roche (PM Volunteer Coordinator)*

Nancy started tutoring at the English Learning Center in September 2012. When Nancy first started at the ELC, she had a demanding job as the Superintendent of Waconia Public Schools. Even with her busy schedule, she found that she was able to carve out time to volunteer. Her experience running a school district means she is familiar with all of the components required to keep a school open. Nancy's skill as a teacher at the ELC goes far beyond her near-perfect instructional methods. Nancy develops strong bonds with students, and they know that she genuinely believes in and cares for them. Her positivity puts new students at ease, and often fills the classroom with laughter.

## **Honorable Mention for the Outstanding Volunteer Award**

**Sandy Joiner**, Minneapolis ABE

**Dave Podvin**, English Learning Center

**Tom Renshaw**, Project for Pride in Living

**Rita Stough**, Minneapolis ABE

**Richard Weigel**, Minneapolis ABE

**Karen Ziegler**, Minneapolis ABE

## **Volunteer Service Awards**

### **1000 Hours**

**Connie Ahrens**, Metro North ABE

**Christy Dewitt**, Metro North ABE

**Barb Doherty**, Metro North ABE

**Ardyce Ehrlich**, St. Paul Schools ABE

**Laura Erickson**, Metro North ABE

**Glen Hanggi**, Metro North ABE

**Janet Hanggi**, Metro North ABE

**Tom Heidemann**, Metro North ABE

**Laura Louis**, Metro North ABE

**Katie McAvoy**, Metro North ABE

**Sandy Nelson**, Metro South ABE

**Gladys Pecore**, Metro North ABE

**Jo Prah**, Metro North ABE



## **1000 Hours, cont'd.**

**Dorothy Queen**, Metro South ABE  
**Karen Sackreiter**, Metro North ABE  
**Doris Schmaltz**, Metro North ABE  
**Amy Sitze**, Minneapolis Adult Education

## **2000 Hours**

**Cricket Barrera**, Detroit Lakes ABE  
**Terry Cummings**, St. Paul Schools ABE  
**Judith Free**, Metro North ABE  
**Sandra Juntilla**, Metro North ABE

## **3000 Hours**

**Ellen Hastings**, Metro South ABE

## **4000 Hours**

**Betty Faragher**, Metro North ABE

## **5000 Hours**

**Amy Hetland**, Metro North ABE  
**Carol Swanson**, Metro South ABE

## **6000 Hours**

**Keith Lindstam**, Metro South ABE  
**Robert Sorman**, Metro North ABE

## **8000 Hours**

**Curt Cameron**, St. Paul Schools ABE



# Outstanding Learner Award

## **Ralph Coleman, Open Door Learning Center – Northside**

*Nominated by Kat Aymeloglu, Learning Center Coordinator*

Ralph first enrolled in Open Door's evening GED program in May 2015 and is one of the most consistent and hardworking students there. He recognizes the importance of education in making a more positive life for himself and wants very deeply to continue to grow, improve and learn. Based on a casual encounter with him, one would never know the extent of the difficulties he has faced to make it where he is today. He always has a smile and a joke for everyone, and he is always genuinely interested to hear how others are doing and to share a story. In the year that he's been at the center, Ralph has become an indispensable part of the school's community.

## **Shukri Igal, English Learning Center**

*Nominated by Kathleen Roche, PM Volunteer Coordinator*

Shukri has been a dedicated student at the English Learning Center since November 2011, enrolling two months after her initial arrival to the U.S. Shukri's approach to learning sparks excitement among her cohorts and her teachers because she is motivated, enthusiastic, self-aware, and always eager to learn and improve. Shukri also started volunteering in ELC's morning program. Math is an area where Shukri excels, and she has shown a great aptitude for teaching. Shukri also contributes in innumerable ways to foster community at the ELC. She welcomes new students and volunteers and helps them feel comfortable.



# Lucille Fischer Outstanding Learner Award

## **Shon Jackson, Open Door Learning Center - Northside**

*Nominated by Kat Aymeloglu, Learning Center Coordinator*

Shon has been involved with Open Door Learning Center for over a year and a half and has quickly become one of the center's most consistent and dedicated students. Shon has been through considerable challenges in his life, but he has come through them with a strong drive and vision for what he wants to achieve in his future. He passed his final GED test a few months ago, and he has plans to start attending college in the fall. There are so many students trying to get their GEDs that often give up when life gets in the way, or become discouraged when they fail a test. Shon never wavered in his focus and determination, and he is an excellent role model for other GED students, encouraging them to keep trying until they succeed.

## **Marco Yunga, Metro North - Colombia Heights/Fridley ABE**

*Nominated by Chelsey Tulgren, ABE Teacher*

Marco came from a small, rural town in Ecuador 16 years ago and started at Metro North about 11 years ago. In his 11 years at the program, he grew into a leader and motivator, providing daily inspiration to his classmates and teachers. He fosters team spirit in classroom group work and activities, but also inspires those around him as living proof of what one can accomplish by never giving up. Marco is a hard worker, dedicated to earning his GED and learning as much as he can. In addition to working at Sawatdee Restaurant, Marco is a DJ and donates his skills and time for events and fundraisers in the Ecuadorian community.



## **About the Lucille Fischer Award**

Again this year, we are happy to be able to award two Outstanding Learner recipients with a \$250 Lucille Fischer Award. This award celebrates the memory and work of Lucille Fischer, who was a beloved Adult Basic Education (ABE) teacher and the first instructional supervisor for the St. Paul Public Schools ABE/GED program in 1970. Under Lucille (or Lucy's) leadership, St. Paul became the first program in Minnesota to hold a GED graduation ceremony with caps and gowns. Lucy was also a founding member of the former professional organization, the Minnesota Association for Continuing Adult Education (MACAE). We are grateful to the leadership team of this former professional organization for making these awards possible!

## **About the Minnesota Literacy Council**

The Minnesota Literacy Council shares the power of learning so all Minnesotans have the opportunity to be successful students, workers, family members and community citizens. Literacy-rich preschools and summer reading programs start Minnesota's youngest readers off on the right foot. Free English, GED preparation and job-readiness classes prepare adults for post-secondary education and careers. Support in program best practices, educational technology, volunteer training and national service hosting strengthens over 400 community-based literacy sites across Minnesota.

## **About the Loft Literary Center**

Incorporated in 1975, The Loft Literary Center is one of the nation's leading independent literary centers. The Loft supports the artistic development of writers, fosters a writing community, and builds an audience for literature. For more information about the Loft, please call 612-215-2575 or visit [www.loft.org](http://www.loft.org).