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Oregon Literacy, Inc.

LitBits

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Tutor Resource of the Month

View the contents of
OLI's lending library
and resources:
[www.oregonliteracy.org/
resourcedatabase/](http://www.oregonliteracy.org/resourcedatabase/)



Quote Corner:

"Literacy is not merely a cognitive skill of reading, writing and arithmetic, for literacy helps in the acquisition of learning and life skills that, when strengthened by usage and application throughout people's lives, lead to forms of individual, community and societal development that are sustainable"

-Koichiro Matsuura,
UNESCO
Director General

Advocating for Literacy Around the Globe

September 8th marks International Literacy Day, a day to focus attention on literacy issues that exist worldwide and to mobilize efforts to promote literacy. This year's theme is *Literacy Sustains Development*.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has celebrated International Literacy Day since 1967 by awarding literacy prizes. National governments or international nongovernmental agencies nominate programs for the awards, and an international jury appointed by the Director General of UNESCO reviews the applications. This year UNESCO will award five prizes: the International Reading Association Literacy Award, two King Sejong Literacy prizes, and two UNESCO Confucius Prizes for literacy.



The National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) Pakistan is the recipient of the 2006 International Reading Association Literacy Prize of \$20,000. This award is sponsored by the International Reading Association and is meant to benefit literacy programs throughout the world. The NCHD plans to increase Pakistan's literacy rate from 53 percent to 86 percent by 2015 by strengthening the formal education system and supporting an adult literacy program.

Information on the other prizes has not yet been released.

On February 13th, 2003, UNESCO launched the United Nations Literacy Decade- Education for All (2003-2012), an initiative signed by all UN nations to work towards a goal of increasing literacy levels by 50 percent by the year 2012.

International Literacy Day is an occasion to show appreciation for teachers, tutors,
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Approximately 771,000,000 people aged 15 and above live without basic literacy skills.

Book Drive to benefit Oregon Literacy, Inc. services

Anyone with a reading habit knows that books tend to magically accumulate and OLI's new, statewide book drive can help you clean out your crowded reading nook while promoting literacy.

New or used, hardcover or paperback, OLI will accept all book donations. Nearly 4000 books have already been donated. To donate your books, you can drop them off at OLI's downtown office, located at 1001 S.W. Fifth Avenue, Suite 320 (in the Congress Center).

You can also drop off books at OLI's partner's warehouse in Banks, at 241 S. Main Street. If needed, OLI will try to make other arrangements.

Jon Toorock, Director of Community Development, is seeking more drop-off points. If your business or organization is willing to accommodate a book-collection container, contact Toorock at 503-244-3898 or jon@oregonliteracy.org.

Visit www.oregonliteracy.org/bookdrive.html for more information, including drop-off locations.

- The National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) estimates that 30 million adults in the U.S. — 14% of the country's adult population have only the most minimal ability to read and write in English.
- Almost all of the world's illiterate adults live in developing countries, especially South and West Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and the Arab states, where the illiteracy rates are about 40%.
- 35% of people with below basic literacy skills are employed full-time, while 64% of people with proficient literacy skills have full-time jobs.

International Literacy Day *continued from page one*

and volunteers whose efforts help people become literate. It is also an occasion to take action in your own community. There are several ways you can celebrate International Literacy Day in your hometown:

- Write a letter to the editor or an op/ed piece focusing on International Literacy Day and the importance of adult literacy and send it to local news outlets.
- Ask local bookstores about donating books for disadvantaged children.
- Write to your governor or mayor about getting literacy on The National Governor's Association and the U.S. Conference of Mayors agendas.

UNESCO defines literacy as the ability to use reading and writing to serve the various functions required in everyday living. It is estimated that there are approximately 862 million non-literate people in the world, two-thirds of whom are women. More than 100 million children lack access to education. These limitations are primarily due to poverty and exclusion.

The definition of literacy changes from place to place according to the level of development and technological advancement in that area. This does not mean that low-literate people do not exist in industrialized nations. For example, in the UK, 22% of adults have low-literacy skills. Instead, in industrialized nations with newer technologies, literacy takes on a new definition such as computer literacy.

Although these numbers are large, recent estimates show that literacy has improved from 70% in 1980 to 80% in 2000. These 10 percentage points represent hundreds of millions of people who have gained access to literacy over those 20 years. However, there are still many people to be reached in those parts of society where access to literacy is limited. A good way to help someone in need of literacy training in your community is to become a tutor through the public library, community college or other school, or an organization.

For more literacy facts and ideas on how to create awareness for International Literacy Day, visit www.proliteracy.org.