



# National Coalition For Literacy

## Dollar General Presentation Series

*The Dollar General Literacy Foundation and the National Coalition for Literacy held a series of three meetings on adult literacy between October 2006 and May 2007. Meetings were held in Nashville, Phoenix, and Baltimore. Presenters and attendees represented adult education and literacy, labor and workforce development, private corporations, and community organizations.*

Consensus was that there is a large gap between the adult literacy needs of local communities and the amount of available federal funding. In order to compete in the global marketplace, the United States must address this gap.

Conclusions on **how** to address the gap:

### Partnerships are crucial

- Develop strong partnerships between adult literacy professionals and private corporations, to find common interests and goals
- Develop strong partnerships between adult literacy professionals and other advocacy groups such as AARP, for more powerful advocacy
- Develop strong partnerships between adult literacy professionals and service organizations and institutions, such as TESOL and the American Library Association, to promote integrated services

### Advocacy works

- Educate members of Congress and their staff by
    - Showing data and outcomes
    - Sharing personal stories of adult learners
    - Including information on best practices in the classroom
  - Utilize the “single point of contact” system to communicate with legislators
  - Involve adult learners in advocacy work
  - Show the links between literacy and other areas of interest, including issues around health, aging, K-12 education, welfare, and immigration
  - Show the links between literacy and business productivity
-

Successful collaborations, such as the ones listed below, are strong models of how state and local governments, private enterprise, and literacy groups can address the literacy crisis...

\* After having trouble finding enough workers with a high school diploma or GED, **Amazon** established a partnership with **Kentucky Adult Education** for the Go, Earn, Do-GED program, according to Janet Hoover, senior associate at Kentucky Adult Education. Amazon reimburses adult learners for up to \$40 in GED costs, gives them \$20 gift certificates to Amazon and offers them a more favorable hiring status. Since May 2005, the partnership has extended operations into 20 counties and paid for 1,200 GED tests.

\* The partnership between **KY Adult Education** and **McDonald's**, GED: Prove Yourself, featured motivational stories of adult learners on tray liners bag inserts in three central Kentucky locations for five weeks. Enrollment in adult education services increased 25 percent during that period. The program spread the word about adult education without costing McDonald's any more money than it would have normally spent to print tray liners and bag inserts.

\* **UPS and literacy organizations** in Kentucky have launched Metropolitan College, where the company pays tuition for future educational courses and eventually will reimburse the worker for books and even offer incentive pay. UPS, which had been losing an employee every eight weeks, now has a waiting list of prospective employees, and the average worker stays at the firm about two years.

\* A partnership between the **Johns Hopkins Health System** and the **Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC)** has support from the leaders of both institutions. In three years, the Hopkins/CCBC partnership disseminated data indicating 443 people participated in skills enhancement, with an 84 percent retention rate for Hopkins.

\* **Fort McDowell Casino** in Phoenix pays employees while they learn English and partners with Friendly House to provide the education services. Fifteen participating employees have learned English, and no employees were terminated due to lack of English-speaking skills.

\* **IOTA Engineering** officials decided to educate employees who could not speak English rather than let them go and hire new workers. Working with Pima Community College in Arizona, the organization already is seeing improvements among its employees.

\* **Dollar General** strongly advocates for adult literacy. The corporation has GED, AED, and ESL programs for its employees.