

# Literacy Advocate

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**"Volunteering can boost mental and physical health during COVID-19 pandemic."**

~American Journal of Preventive Medicine

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kalamazooliteracycouncil

## Adult Tutoring Program impacting literacy one life at a time

**T**he Adult Tutoring Program (ATP) of the Kalamazoo Literacy Council (KLC) is the longest standing program of our organization. It remains volunteer led as it has been since the KLC was founded in 1974. For more than a year, our tutors have not met in-person with the learners they are studying with due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this, 52 tutors have continued to meet with learners virtually to help them reach their goals. Tutor Training has continued thanks to the leadership of Tutor Trainers Paula Aldridge and Kym Hollars. In the past year, 33 new volunteers have been trained by this dedicated duo with support from Operations Manager Jessi Pavey and Executive Director Michael Evans. The ATP Team has developed a way for assessors to provide virtual assessments for new learners thanks to the innovation and commitment of KLC

Assessor Jean Runge. The Friendly Connector team that includes Sarah Bierema, Carol Pratt, and Jan Wolf continues to reach out to tutors



to help them connect with learners during these challenging times. The weekly Tutor Check Ups have helped prepare tutors to be more confident and capable of tutoring virtually. Volunteers such as Bonnie Bowden, Sharon Williams, and Kathy Hays are providing Writing Classes using the Trio Writing Series – a great new resource for KLC tutors. The ATP remains the heart and soul of the KLC, with 246 adult learners being supported by volunteers in the Virtual Learning Center.

Continued on Page 3

## Congratulations and welcome to our new volunteer tutors!



### JANUARY/MARCH 2021 CLASSES



## President's Message: Leading and serving with purpose

By Allisa Chamberlin



Allisa Chamberlin

Here at the KLC, our motto is “volunteer-led, staff supported.” That means we find those who have a passion and support their work in that capacity. Our mission is upheld by a highly trained network of volunteers who are essential to maintaining our vision of empowering adults to reach their full potential. Just as we are motivated by the goals of our learners, we are

encouraged to help volunteers serve to their greatest potential.

From the moment we launched the Virtual Learning Center in March 2020, our volunteers adapted smoothly as we all shifted to a 100% virtual format. They've been diligent in enhancing their digital skills by participating in monthly tutor forums and weekly tutor checkups, sharing various strategies, challenges, and successes with each other.

We recognize there are a number of tutors who've chosen to wait for in-person learning to resume once Covid-19 safety restrictions are lifted. The KLC, along with partners from Kalamazoo Public Schools and Goodwill Industries, established an In-Person Learning Task Force to make recommendations on how to safely return to traditional learning at CLCs and partner

sites. Our goal is to align with best practices from public health and research from regional, state, and national adult education partners. On-site preparations include enhanced personal protection gear, socially distanced stations, sanitized equipment, and much more. We are excited to welcome you back into service.

Speaking of which, I'd like to congratulate our new tutors who completed training in January and March. They are eager to begin their service journey with us and we're thrilled to have them as part of the KLC family.

Finally, we are excited to announce a new volunteer initiative, Peer Mentors with our ESL of Southwest Michigan program. These Level 3+ learners will be matched with Level 1 students who will benefit from coaching and support from an advanced learner. We are so impressed with their commitment and passion for helping we can't wait to see how the program develops. What a great example of volunteer spirit during a pandemic!

Sincerely,

*Allisa Chamberlin*   
2020—2021 Board President

Virtual Learning Center

**KLC**  Any Time  Any Where  Any Way

### INSTRUCTION MONDAY—FRIDAY

- **Virtual Classes**
- **One-on-One Tutoring**
- **Web-based Instruction**

Citizenship, Digital Skills, Discussion Group, ESL, JOBS, Health Literacy, Parent Literacy, Success Group, Tutoring, and TOEFL.

Visit [www.kalamazooliteracy.org](http://www.kalamazooliteracy.org) for a schedule.

#### Board of Directors 2020-2021

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#### Literacy Advocate

is published four times a year by the Kalamazoo Literacy Council — a nonprofit organization committed to quality literacy education that enhances the lives of adults through programs designed to increase reading, writing and spelling skills.

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We know there are some volunteers who are waiting for in-person tutoring to be able to safely resume. An In-Person Learning Task Force was formed in February 2021 to provide guidelines and recommendations for in-person tutoring and instruction. It is likely that some in-person learning will be available beginning in July 2021 at a limited number of locations in the community. We also expect our learners, volunteers, and instructors will take advantage of outdoor learning opportunities, especially with the Read and Seed Parent Literacy Program, Health Literacy, and other options to learn outside. Details for in-person and outdoor learning will be available in May 2021.

The KLC is grateful to the volunteers who lead and serve with purpose in the Adult Tutoring Program. Stay tuned for upcoming New Tutor Training, Tutor Forums, Check-Ups, and other opportunities to get connected by checking email from the KLC and by visiting our website at [www.kalamazooliteracy.org](http://www.kalamazooliteracy.org).

**Let's talk at Discussion Group!**

By Discussion Group Leader Pamela Aguilar



*Pamela Aguilar*

**D**iscussion Group is a gathering of ESL learners who are eager to practice conversational English and learn about American traditions and opportunities. They share common goals of not only improving their English, but also meeting new people, becoming more comfortable in speaking English and learning more about national as well as local culture.

In this weekly class, we get to know each other by exploring unique cultures, by way of food, holidays, and special traditions.

We kicked things off with a presentation of American holidays and traditions, which allowed learners to compare their celebrations and discuss the differences and similarities. This exercise also empowered the learners by encouraging them to voice their opinions and ideas, sharing what they knew. This lively discussion class has given them a chance to grow comfortably together with a new language with which they are all at a different level of experience. In future classes, we will continue to go deeper with holidays and expand on cultural differences, to continue empowering them through their own voices as they strengthen their English skills.

Discussion Group meets Mondays at 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. via WebEx.

Contact Pamela at [pamela.i.aguilar@wmich.edu](mailto:pamela.i.aguilar@wmich.edu) for details.

**Peer Mentors help others learn**

By ESL Adult Learning Services Navigator  
Jacqueline Denoyer



*Jackie Denoyer*

**T**he ESL of Southwest Michigan Peer Mentoring program is the newest addition to our volunteer service roles. The program is an opportunity for advanced learners who have been successful to share their experiences to help other learners who are at the beginning of their journey into English as a second language. Current and former Level 3 learners are matched with Level 1 ESL learners

for whom they provide coaching on success strategies for setting and meeting goals as well as practicing English. The Peer Mentoring program provides a natural succession for our ESL learners who have received services from our volunteers and want to give back.



*Julia Stebbins*

To date, we have had nine learners commit to the process of becoming Peer Mentors. Of these nine, six have completed two 90-minute training sessions. The first training session emphasized learner success and empowerment using goal setting techniques. In the second training, we examined what a mentoring session looks like and provided appropriate resources that can be used with ESL Level 1 learners. After training, each learner received a certificate of completion for becoming a Qualified Peer Mentor.

All of our Peer Mentors will participate in biweekly check in meetings to provide additional training and share challenges and successes. We are currently in the process of matching our Peer Mentors with learners and we look forward to hearing about their interactions.

The Peer Mentor program is the current impact project of our ESL Navigator Jacqueline Denoyer, and is supported by KLC intern Julia Stebbins, who also leads our Learner Empowerment Group.

Congratulations to our inaugural class of Peer Mentors!



**Staff Changes**

**New Navigators are helping learners to connect to services**

By Kito Jumanne-Marshall



Lauren Kiesling

The KLC is pleased to welcome Lauren Kiesling as our new Parent Literacy Navigator. Lauren has a wealth of knowledge and boundless energy for serving adult learners who are parents. She is committed to helping us to achieve our vision of a fully literate community by helping parents become more confident and capable first teachers of their children.

Lauren is responsible for coordinating Parent Literacy Together – a multi-generational learning program that helps parents become more engaged in their children’s learning. We are so excited to have her on our team!

Lauren grew up in Kalamazoo, but moved away in 2015 to attend Central Michigan University. Now she's back and ready to build and grow with us. When not with the KLC, she loves to hike, camp, and listen to podcasts. Lauren says she loves this community and is looking forward to working alongside everyone in the years to come!

Please contact her at [lkiesling@kalamazooliteracy.org](mailto:lkiesling@kalamazooliteracy.org) or at (269) 348-0480 for information about Parent Literacy Together or for other support for adult learners who are parents.

**Student Services Coordinator**



Taylor Sayers

Taylor Sayers is a 2020 graduate from Western Michigan University with a Bachelors in Social Work. She began with the Kalamazoo Literacy Council in March 2020, just as the pandemic took everything virtual. In her role, she launched the first ever Parent Literacy Together program at KLC with the help of partners from Dorothy McGinnis Reading Clinic and

Goodwill of Southwestern Michigan. Upon her graduation in June 2020, she was directly hired in to the role of Parent Literacy Navigator. She transitioned to the role of Student Services Coordinator in March 2021 where she supports adult learners, assists in the reporting of performance data, and assists the KLC Navigation Team in the facilitation of academic and support services.

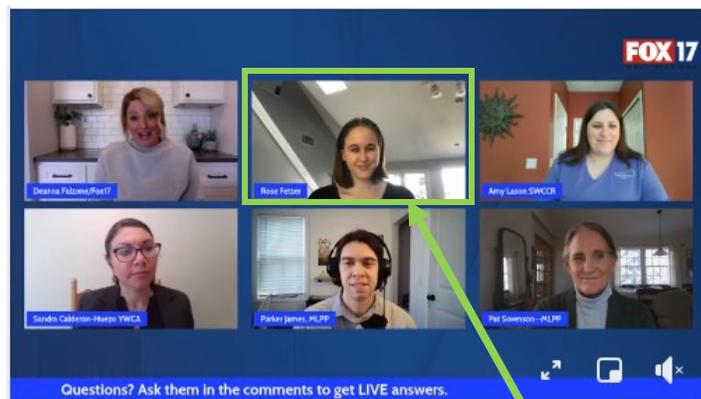


Rose Fetzer

Rose Fetzer joined the KLC as an Adult Learning Services Navigator in October 2020. In her role she empowers learners to continue their education towards a GED, Digital Literacy, JOBS skills, and more through virtual learning. Rose has a BA in Human Resources and uses this background to make connections between learners and employers. She has a passion for community service and helping where there is

a need. She is excited to be a part of this great team and promote literacy in Kalamazoo!

Please contact her at [rfetzer@kalamazooliteracy.org](mailto:rfetzer@kalamazooliteracy.org) or at (269) 849-9396 for information.



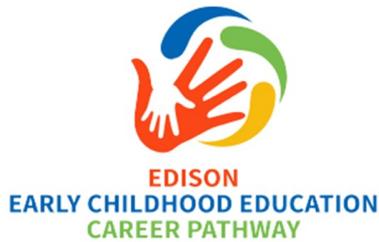
KLC Adult Learning Services Navigator **Rose Fetzer** participated on a panel in March on Fox 17 about early childhood education and to promote the Early Childhood Education Career Pathway Program. She is a great advocate and representative of the KLC!

**THE KLC NAVIGATION TEAM CAN HELP**

- Child Care
- Education
- Employment
- Financial
- Health
- Housing
- Transportation

**CALL: JESSI at (269) 350-4691 for information.**

## Career Pathway Program creates path to jobs in Early Childhood Education



People who want a career in early childhood education now have a clear path to a good paying job thanks to an innovative program based in the Edison neighborhood. The Edison Early Childhood Education (ECE) Career Pathway provides a sustainable career pathway that increases the availability of qualified Early Learning Professionals (ELPs) in Kalamazoo. The program expands access to childcare and early learning options for residents that lead to strong and resilient families through multi-generational learning approaches. The program is ideal for those who love to provide high quality child care and education.

The ECE Career Pathway is a partnership between Kalamazoo Literacy Council, YWCA Kalamazoo, Southwest Child Care Resources, Goodwill Industries of Southwestern Michigan, The Kalamazoo Promise, Western Michigan University, Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Kalamazoo County Great Start Collaborative, Van Buren ISD, KC Ready 4s, Michigan Works! Southwest, El Concilio, KRESA, and Change Agent Consulting, LLC.

“There is a demand for more childcare providers in Kalamazoo County and in the city of Kalamazoo,” said Rose Fetzer, KLC’s Adult Learning Services Navigator, “In the Edison neighborhood, we saw individuals who wanted to move into the ELP career path, so through this program we are providing learning opportunities.”

The full-time, paid, eight-month apprenticeship, will result in a Childcare Development Associate (CDA) and employment as an ELP at the new Edison Children’s Center. The Children’s Center will begin enrolling children in September 2021. Participants should have their high school diploma or GED or be on a path to complete one within eight months. The KLC helps prepare candidates for the career pathway through adult basic education classes, resume and interview coaching, English language classes, and more.

To learn more about this exciting and innovative workforce collaboration, please visit [www.kalamazooliteracy.org](http://www.kalamazooliteracy.org).

## TRIO Writing Series: A great new resource for tutors and instructors

The Kalamazoo Literacy Council (KLC) has a new writing resource for tutors and instructors with learners who want to improve their skills.

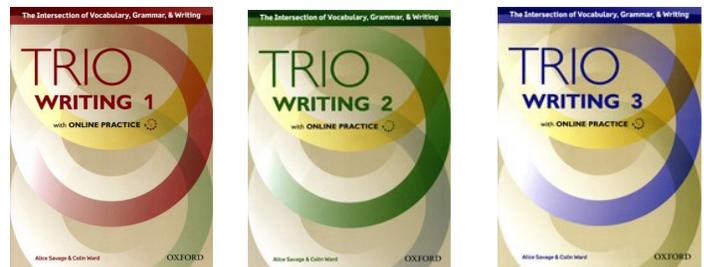
*Trio Writing* is a three-book series that weaves together contextualized vocabulary words, grammar skills, and writing strategies to provide students with the tools they need for successful academic writing at the earliest stages of language acquisition.

Each book includes an online code with access to a variety of graded activities reported back to the instructor as well as vocabulary and grammar charts to further accuracy and fluency.

The KLC currently uses *Trio Writing* for its Level 1 and Level 2 Writing Classes that are taught in the Virtual Learning Center.

The language levels for the series range from Low Beginning to High Intermediate. This is a great resource for learners who want to learn how to prepare for writing requirements for the GED, entrance into community college, or professional writing.

Tutors may request these books from the KLC office. For more information contact Rose Fetzer at [rfetzer@kalamazooliteracy.org](mailto:rfetzer@kalamazooliteracy.org) or at (269) 849-9396.



- Each lesson in *Trio Writing* incorporates vocabulary, grammar, and writing instruction.
- Theme-based chapters set a context for learning.
- Step-by-step writing helps students turn ideas into successful writing.
- Vocabulary is introduced as a set of contextualized phrases built from the Oxford 2000 list of keywords.
- Grammar is presented with sentence-building practice while Grammar Notes support grammar instruction.
- The writing lesson builds on the vocabulary and grammar lesson bringing the language and theme together in a six-step scaffolded writing task.

420 E. Alcott Street, Suite 400  
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# kalamazooliteracycouncil

EMPOWERING ADULTS TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

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## MISSION:

The Kalamazoo Literacy Council is committed to enhancing the lives of adults by improving their reading, writing and spelling skills.

*Serving  
Kalamazoo County  
since 1974.*

# EVERYONE NEEDS TO READ



## CALENDAR

### Board Meetings

Apr. 13, May 11, & June 8 11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m.

### Adult Literacy Collaborative Meetings

Apr. 26, May 24, & June 28 12:00 p.m. — 1:30 p.m.

### Navigation Work Group

Apr. 15, May 20, & June 17 10:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m.

### Tutor Forums and Workshops

**New Tutor Orientation** May 6 7:00 — 8:30 p.m.

**Tutor Training** May 10, 13, 17, & 20 6:00 — 7:30 p.m.

**ESL Tutor Workshop** Apr. 17 10 a.m. — 12 p.m.

### ESL Tutor Forum

Apr. 27, May 25, & June 22 4:00 p.m.— 5:30 p.m.

### Health Literacy Forum

Apr. 21, May 19, & June 16 4:00 p.m.— 5:30 p.m.

### Parent Literacy Forum

Apr. 23, May 28, & June 25 1:30 p.m.— 3:00 p.m.

### Workforce Literacy Forum

Apr. 9, May 14, & June 11 2:00 p.m.— 3:00 p.m..

**All meetings are virtual.**

Visit [www.kalamazooliteracy.org](http://www.kalamazooliteracy.org) for details.

## KLC 2021 ANNUAL MEETING

# Resilience IN ADULT LEARNING



**MAY 27**  
**5:00 p.m.—7:00 p.m.**



RSVP to [kjumanne-marshall@kalamazooliteracy.org](mailto:kjumanne-marshall@kalamazooliteracy.org)