

Never, Never, Never Give Up

By Julia Leo

Lois Arnold has faced many obstacles, but she would be the first to tell you that she is very blessed at this point in her life. She credits her family, her community, and her strong faith as the reasons that she has been able to persevere and get to where she is today.

After having her first child at the age of 15, Lois left school in the ninth grade due to the hostile behavior her teachers displayed towards her. Despite her strong desire to go back to school, something always seemed to get in the way. Lois was never able to find the time, or the right program. Now in her sixties, Lois' goal is still to earn her GED.

In the early 2000s, Lois began the path back to school by starting with a motivational workshop for women sponsored by Tri-C. Fueled by her excellent performance in the workshop, Lois began taking classes at Tri-C. She even made the Dean's List for several quarters. However, due to a miscommunication, Tri-C was unaware that Lois did not have her GED. Upon receiving the news that she could not receive a degree until she obtained her GED, Lois set out to achieve her goal.

It was at that point, around 2002, that Lois began working with Seeds of Literacy. Unfortunately, after working in the program for short while, Lois was forced to drop out due to illness. However, the final push that she needed to rededicate herself to her dream, and the reason she is back at Seeds of Literacy today, came from her grandchildren. She currently has a friendly bet going with her high

school-aged grandchildren that she will get her GED before they graduate from high school. The bet has motivated her grandchildren more than ever. Lois says that they never miss school anymore, and are more dedicated than ever. "But I'm still going to get my GED before them," she laughs.

When asked if she feels supported by the program, she responds enthusiastically: "Very. Very. Very. I tell people this is the place you want to be. There's no negativity here. None whatsoever." Lois proudly displays her scores from her last attempt at the GED around her home. She passed each section except for math – which she failed by only ten points. **While many students would be frustrated at failing by so close a margin, Lois credits the tutors for helping her stay the course.** "They are a big encouragement, and they tell you what you need to hear – not what you want to hear."

Now that Lois is so close to achieving her goal, she has begun to set new goals for herself. After going back to college, Lois wants to work with her community to open a clinic for young women who are the victims of abuse. Lois credits her new dreams to beginning the GED program at Seeds of Literacy. "If I would have never started on this journey, I would never know how smart I am, and how determined I am."

To learn more about Seeds of Literacy, contact Jo Steigerwald, Development Officer at 216-661-7950 or jsteigerwald@seedsofliteracy.org



Lois Arnold

"The tutors are a big encouragement, and they tell you what you need to hear – not what you want to hear."

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Bonnie Entler, Executive Director

Welcome to 2014!

After a year filled with preparation, we've ready for the new GED® exam. The work was incredible: creating a new curriculum, adding digital literacy and a computer lab, training staff and tutors, reaching students, and even moving classroom walls. We had such extraordinary support, not only from Seeds' staff, donors and volunteers, but also from new community partners. Cleveland City Council offered financial and communications support. Members of the media featured Seeds on the radio, TV, in print and online. Non-profit agencies all over the region spread the word to potential students. We are so grateful to the community for their help in preparing for this tremendous change. Thank you.

Because of this support, we saw a **455% increase** in the number of students registering for the old version of the GED. While not everyone passed all sections, we had an **outstanding number of graduates in 2013: 102!** Our efforts also brought us the **Anisfield-Wolf Memorial Award** for outstanding nonprofit service.

Back in the classroom, our computer lab is humming. We partnered with the Northstar Digital Literacy Project, a set of national standards developed by an association of Minnesota libraries to test

the digital literacy skills requested by employers. From this, we target the areas where students need the most help. As we roll-out our new digital literacy curriculum, we need volunteers with IT or computer experience willing to share their expertise.

2014 is a pilot year, as we put our new program into practice. The material is more complex—make sure to see the back page—and we predict students will be with us longer. We're investigating additional ways to measure success to keep our students motivated and engaged.

Be a part of this exciting time by volunteering or donating to Seeds. Both support the organization, and both are needed. And please know that you have an open invitation to visit Seeds at your convenience. We're open to students from 8:30 am to 8:00 pm, Monday-Thursday.

I'd love to see you soon,

Bonnie Entler

Volunteer Spotlight: Dorothy Neugebauer

By Julia Leo

Before coming to Seeds of Literacy, Dorothy Neugebauer was a former teacher who taught fifth and fourth grade, and did not have any previous experience teaching at the high school level. As such, she was hesitant to begin tutoring adults. However, once she started at Seeds of Literacy, Dorothy felt immediately at home. She can still remember the first student with whom she worked. He initially expressed doubt that he could compose an essay, but Dorothy worked through the steps with him, and he responded right away. "He took ownership of what he had said, and wanted to make it even better."

Dorothy loves working with the students on a one-on-one basis, and feels a fulfillment that she did not always get when she was teaching full time. "As a teacher, sometimes you can't get through to everybody," she laments, "but hearing their stories now is like getting a second chance to help them." A lot of her work revolves around "giving them the confidence to do their best," she says. "You show them, and then they go 'oh, that's easy.' I love to hear those words. Because that's what it's all about – making whatever they're working on easy for them to understand." One of Dorothy's first students just graduated. "I was just so proud of her," she says. "It's just awesome to see the different people who come in and are willing to take the plunge to do their GED."

Dorothy really connected with volunteering at Seeds of Literacy because she found the program to be professional, organized, "and they really care about the people." Through her tutoring efforts, Dorothy has found a sense of purpose. "When you see people being able to benefit and grow, and they are so appreciative, you know that gives you a feeling that 'this is why I do it.'" *If you are interested in sharing your talents, please contact Alexandria Marshall, Volunteer Coordinator, at 216.661.7950.*

What's New at Seeds of Literacy?



■ In Memory

Ike Ganyard, long-time Seeds tutor, passed away September 6, 2013. Ike could relate to anyone, and had a gentle way of helping students understand. Students often asked for him by name. He will be missed, and we send our sympathy to his family.

■ Decade of Devotion

Seeds recognizes these tutors with gratitude. They have shared their skills with our students for 10 years or more:

Jane Bohné – 14
Brian Burtch – 10
Kent Frisby – 10
Dean Knauss – 11
Julie Larsen – 16
Bob Manley – 14
Katy McNamee – 10
Joanne McNamee – 10
Art Zammikiel – 12

■ Making Radio Waves

In December, **Amy Hansen from NPR's State Impact Ohio** visited Seeds for a closer look at the 2014 GED and our students. Two stories took an in-depth look at the new test and what it entails for students: <http://stateimpact.npr.org/ohio/2013/12/19/three-big-changes-coming-to-the-ged/>.

■ Benefit Brunch Success

Sowing Seeds of Hope, our **13th annual benefit brunch** held October 6, 2013, raised over \$35,000 from friends and attendees. Special thanks to our event sponsors: Mighty Oak: George & Pat Miller; Bob & Renita Morris. Young Oak: Benesch Law; City Bank Antiques; City Bank Investment Co.; Frantz Ward, LLP; Lindy Grasser; Bill & Joyce Litzler; Nordson Corporation; RPM International, Inc.; Shur-Tech Brands, LLC; Waldheger Coyne, LPA. Seedling: Climate-Tech, Inc.; Paul Etzler; Thomas Reuter & Amy Greene; The Sherwin-Williams Company; Tucker Ellis, LLP; Mark Yanochko. Scholarship Gift: Anonymous; Climate-Tech, Inc.;

Mark & Mary Jane Jackson; Dustin & Meggan Rawlin; Rotary Club of Strongsville. Acorn: John & Jessica Hagerty; Frank Unger; Karen Van Hala.

■ In the Spotlight

Recently, Seeds received local, state, and national recognition. We won the **Anisfield-Wolf Memorial Award** and its **prize of \$20,000**, given to a nonprofit exemplifying outstanding service. Seeds was invited to be a part of Governor Kasich's Bright Ideas Ohio website, showcasing nonprofit best practices. Finally, one of our 2012 graduates, **Maria Rodriguez**, was awarded the Dollar General Student of the Year Award, a national award. Ms. Rodriguez received the award in Washington DC, where she and Bonnie Entler then met with members of Congress about the importance of adult literacy.



Bonnie Entler, Senator Sherrod Brown, Maria Rodriguez

In with the New

By Dan McLaughlin

On January 2, 2014 the latest version of the GED exam rolled out. The new test is the most extensive overhaul of the GED since it began almost 70 years ago. The exam switched to a 100% computer-based delivery, and is based on the Common Core State Standards – the same challenging standards that K-12 schools are switching to. Instead of looking at these changes as a hardship, Seeds of Literacy's staff and volunteers took these huge shifts as an opportunity to redesign and improve the Seeds classroom and curriculum.

Across all core subjects (Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies), Seeds students now work on materials aligned to the new test. We added dozens of additional reading sections to our Language Arts curriculum. To meet the increased writing standards of the test, students focus on writing much earlier. Students at the beginning levels work on forming good, complete sentences, while the highest-level students focus on concise, evidence-based GED-style essays. Seeds' math curriculum now incorporates more complex problems and real-world applications of math. New math skills – including solving quadratic equations, polynomials and functions – were added to the curriculum. Students are also beginning to learn how to use the newer, more advanced scientific calculators required on the GED exam.

New Science and Social Studies materials were added that align with the detailed content and critical thinking skills required on the new GED exam. Students need to have specific knowledge of subjects like American history and how the US government operates, while critically analyzing historical documents like Supreme Court documents or famous American speeches. In Science, test-takers will be asked to design and explain the results of scientific experiments. Finally, we knocked down walls to make space for a modern computer lab. Along with all of the core academic skills, students at Seeds now can add basic computer skills (like using the mouse and keyboard, or finding information online) to their studies. They even have the opportunity to earn up to five certificates that students seeking employment can show employers their mastery of certain computer skills.

Now that the new test is finally out, Seeds staff has an opportunity to truly evaluate all of these major changes. As 2014 continues, we will see what works and what can be improved, so our tutors and students will reach their educational goals.



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Our Mission

To provide personal education
that empowers adults to succeed
in their communities

Designer: Toni J. Chanakas

Rack your Brain

Give your brain a work out with two questions from the 2014 GED item sampler, a selection of questions that represent the types of questions on the new GED test.

SCIENCE

A farmer purchased 30 acres of farmland. The farmer calculated that the average topsoil thickness on the farmland is about 20 centimeters. The farmer wants to maintain the thickness of the soil on this farmland by reducing erosion. The farmer plans to test the effectiveness of two different farming methods for reducing soil erosion.

Method 1: No-till (planting crops without plowing the soil)

Method 2: Winter cover crop (growing plants during the winter that are plowed into the soil in the spring)

The farmer hypothesizes that using either method will reduce erosion compared to using traditional farming methods (plowing and no cover crop).

Design a controlled experiment that the farmer can use to test this hypothesis. Include descriptions of data collection and how the farmer will determine whether his hypothesis is correct. This task may require approximately 10 minutes to complete.

MATH

Cilia are very thin, hair-like projections from cells. They are 2.0×10^{-4} millimeters wide. What is the maximum number of cilia that would fit side by side—without overlapping—across a microscope slide that is 25 millimeters wide? Write the answer in scientific notation.

- a. 8.0×10^{-6}
- b. 1.25×10^{-3}
- c. 8.0×10^2
- d. 1.25×10^5

Answer: d