



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: LEARNING TO VALUE HERSELF

Amanda Murphy, 45, has been coming to Seeds on and off since 2011. The hardest part of starting anything is that initial step.

LIFE HAPPENS

Amanda is originally from Cleveland, but when she was younger, her family moved around a lot. This made it especially harder for her in school.

"I left school in 11th grade. I also spent some time in a group home which made it very hard for me and my education," she explains. "I used to stay in West Virginia, and when I moved up here when I was 18, I was trying to transfer back into school. And it was harder than I thought. Life happened."

She learned about Seeds of Literacy after meeting someone who encouraged her to start. Going back to school after years of not finishing it is scary, vulnerable, and nerve-wracking. But Amanda was willing to try.

"I wanted to do better, show my four kids more opportunities. Since I never finished school, I always wanted to get my GED. With Seeds, I finally had an opportunity to go back. Being here gave me more opportunities than I thought."

Now she's more confident helping her kids with their schoolwork. "While they're at school, I come to school. That way at night I can do my homework, and they can do their homework, and if they needed help, I can do that."

Amanda and her kids inspire and motivate each other. Like most people, math was the hardest subject for her. To pass the GED, there are different levels of math skills a student must master: *Core*, which includes division, multiplication, addition, and subtraction, followed by *Essential*, percentages and decimals. And then it gets really hard: *Advanced*, with probability and pre-algebra. One of the final steps, which most people struggle with, is *Algebra*. That's where Amanda's hard work has paid off. She made it that far and isn't afraid of it.

THE VALUE OF LEARNING & COMMUNITY

Although she doesn't have a favorite subject, she does love learning, and expanding her mind is a new experience for her.

"Back in the day when we were younger, I don't think you learn as much as you do now," she says. "You learn everything, you learn new things every day, which is good here. I love it."

But it's not just educational subjects that Amanda is learning at Seeds, it's also communication. Having a supportive circle of staff, tutors, and students at Seeds gives Amanda confidence to strike up conversations.

"It helped me with other people. I had a stroke, and it kind of slurred my speech, but now, people notice a lot more about me. I'm learning about myself."

Now she's a Student Ambassador and her Seeds circle is expanding. She says the connections she's making are as rewarding as the education she's receiving.

"Everything has improved for me since I started to come to Seeds. It has impacted every part of my life. I want to do more because of Seeds."

Like so many Seeds students, Amanda says you're never too old, and it's never too late to restart your education. Her main advice: Don't listen to the noise.

"Don't let life get you down. Listen to yourself. Believe in yourself. If you don't believe in you, then what's the point? It's just as simple as that."

This spotlight adapted from a blog by Erika Scharf, Intern from Oberlin College

Read this article in its entirety and check out other profiles at WWW.SEEDSOFLITERACY.ORG/BLOG

Dear Friends,



BONNIE ENTLER,
PRESIDENT & CEO

Spring has been a season of incredible growth at Seeds of Literacy! While our volunteer tutor numbers are steadily increasing, student enrollment is growing exponentially. With students relying on one-on-one instruction, we're working hard to meet the demand. If you know someone interested in volunteering, send them our way!

Another great way to introduce potential tutors and donors to Seeds is through our special events. I'm thrilled to announce our spring fundraiser, **Legends of Literacy: Providing the Soundtrack for Success**, at the iconic Rock & Roll Hall of Fame & Museum. Guests will explore every floor while participating in our interactive Legends Scavenger Hunt.

I've also had the privilege of welcoming new supporters to Seeds, including Senators Kent Smith, Nickie Antonio, and Tom Patton, State Representatives Terrence Upchurch, Juanita Brent, Tristan Rader, Bride Rose Sweeney, and Congresswoman Shontel Brown. Their visits shine a spotlight on the critical importance of funding for adult education.

It truly takes a village, and our students are so grateful for your ongoing support.

Thank you for making a difference!

Bonnie



12/24 • Currents - Make a Difference in Someone's Life This New Year

07/24 • The Land - Empowering Cleveland: The Seeds of Literacy Story

07/24 • FreshWater Cleveland - Seeds Awarded \$25,000 Spectrum Digital Education Grant at 2024 Graduation

05/24 • Cleveland's WRUW-FM The Sweet Spot Bonnie Entler & Kara Krawiec

04/24 • St. Luke's Foundation Blog - Empowering Adults with the Right to Education & Opportunity

04/24 • Cleveland City Mayor Justin Bibb mentions Seeds Student during State of the City Address (starts at 33:25)

04/24 • Cleveland.com - Seeds of Literacy to require Ohio residency after pandemic successes strain tutor resources

01/24 • WOVU 95.9 FM Our Voices Today - Bonnie Entler & Student Ambassador Karen Brown

10/23 • Nonprofit HR 2023 Women to Watch - Bonnie Entler

7/23 • Ideastream Public Media Adult graduation ceremony celebrates NE Ohioans' progress towards dreams

HANNAH SANKAN (2023 graduate) traveled to Baltimore to accept the Award for Adult Learner Excellence at the 2024 ProLiteracy Conference. Hannah is currently enrolled in college, majoring in Human Services, while working as an STNA and Peer Recovery Supporter. She was nominated by Director of Student Success Kara Krawiec, who travelled to the conference with her.



2025 ServeOhio Volunteerism Award
DEAN KNAUSS

2024 Top 50 Women Leaders of Ohio,
Women We Admire
BONNIE ENTLER

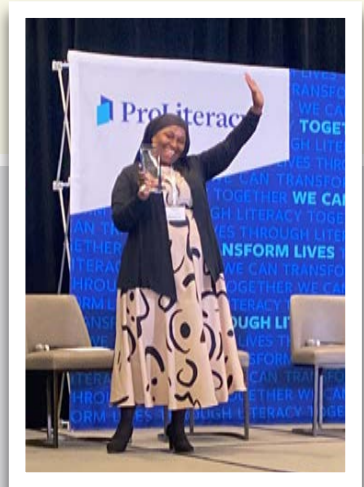
At the 2024 OAACE Conference,
Seeds of Literacy swept the awards,
winning in every category entered.

2024 OAACE Instructor of the Year
TODD SEABROOK

2024 OAACE Support Staff of the Year
ALEX IPPOLITO

2024 OAACE Student Scholarship Winners
KRISTIANN JAMES
JEFFREY TURNER

HASSAANAH ABDUL-WADOOD



New Tech More Inclusive, Improves Accessibility



Seeds added *ReciteMe* assistive technology to our website, allowing visitors to customize their digital experience with a variety of accessibility and language support tools.

This feature is vital for over 25% of the population who face challenges navigating websites due to disabilities, visual impairments, or language barriers.

"Accessibility is extremely important to us. In our classrooms, we focus on removing barriers

and tailoring the experience to each individual. This tool extends that commitment to our website, emphasized Bonnie Entler.

She added, "Inclusion has always been one of our core values, and we're proud to offer *ReciteMe's* innovative assistive technology to better serve our community."

The launch of this feature coincided with National Literacy Month last September. To try it out, visit the website and click the [Accessibility Tools](#) link in the header. ◀

VISITORS CAN:

- Use screen-reading tools like a ruler, screen mask, and distraction-free mode.
- Access reading aids such as a built-in dictionary and thesaurus.
- Personalize fonts for size, type, and color.
- Translate content live into 100+ languages, with 65 text-to-speech options available.



Hot Dogs at Happy Hour

This fall, tutors gathered at Cleveland's iconic Happy Dog for a Happy Hour event. Held around Thanksgiving, it was the perfect opportunity for staff to show our tutors how much we appreciate them and to socialize in a relaxed setting. When the official event ended, many stayed to compete in Happy Dog's weekly trivia.



Trivia Triumphs Again with Friends & Fundraising

On November 14, 2024, Seeds of Literacy's second in-person Trivia Time fundraiser brought the house down at Market Garden Brewery, smashing attendance and fundraising goals.

"We sold out! It was standing room only," said Kim Fetty, new Director of Development. "It was my first Seeds event, and it exceeded every expectation. The energy was incredible, and guests had a fantastic time!"

THE WINNERS

- Round 1: Literary Beasts claimed the \$200 prize.
- Round 2: Dinos Love Literacy, captained by a former Seeds employee now with the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, snagged \$300.
- Round 3: The Tudors edged out the competition, earning the largest prize of \$500.

In a heartwarming gesture, all winning teams generously donated their prizes back to Seeds.

THE SPONSORS

The event, sponsored in part by FirstEnergy and Carnegie Management & Development Corporation, raised nearly \$64,000 to support Seeds of Literacy's life-changing programs.

Thank you to ALL of our Sponsors and attendees for making this an event to remember.

For more photos and details:

WWW.SEEDSOFLITERACY.ORG/BLOG



Progressive Pilots Seeds of Literacy's New Day of Service Program

Becoming a volunteer tutor at Seeds of Literacy is a transformative journey. It begins with a comprehensive training session and an observation experience to prepare tutors for success. Recognizing the challenges some volunteers face in committing to this process, especially within corporate time allowances, we reimagined the volunteer experience.

Introducing our new Day of Service program: a dynamic blend of education and impact, designed for professionals who want to make a difference in a single day.

In December, we welcomed the Commercial Lines Field Marketing team from Progressive as our inaugural participants. This program offered more than a volunteer opportunity—it delivered a deep dive into the mission of adult education, highlighting its critical role in fostering healthier, more vibrant communities.

Armed with a new understanding, the team transitioned to hands-on service.

FEEDING MINDS AND BODIES

For our students, many living at or below the federal poverty line, food insecurity is very

real issue. Recognizing that nourishing minds starts with nourishing bodies, the Progressive team brought an array of sandwiches and fruits to share. Over lunch, volunteers sat alongside students, engaging in heartfelt conversations about their journeys and the impact of Seeds.

"I learned so much about the need in our area," shared Claire, a Progressive team member. "I'm inspired to stay involved and will certainly spread the message about the need for tutors." ◀



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SEEDSOFLITERACY.ORG



OUR MISSION

To provide free personalized education that empowers adults to thrive in our community.

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THURSDAY 05.08.25

LEGENDS OF LITERACY

PROVIDING THE SOUNDTRACK FOR SUCCESS

A SPECIAL EVENT SUPPORTING ADULT EDUCATION AT SEEDS OF LITERACY

QUESTIONS? 216.661.7950
 DONATIONS@SEEDSOFLITERACY.ORG

DOORS OPEN 5:30PM. PROGRAM BEGINS 6PM.
 TICKETS \$125 • SCAN OR BUY ONLINE AT
SEEDSOFLITERACY.ORG/LEGENDS2025

Join us at Cleveland's iconic Rock Hall for a high-energy night that combines the power of music with the mission of literacy. No fundraiser is complete without a **wine pull, raffle baskets**, and the true highlight of the night, our **Legends of Literacy Scavenger Hunt**. Fuel up with heavy hors d'oeuvres and cocktails as you hunt for clues throughout all floors of the Hall and enjoy the rhythm of the evening. By joining us, you'll help Seeds of Literacy take on Cleveland's fight against illiteracy, empowering lives and transforming our community.

ROCK & ROLL HALL OF FAME & MUSEUM 1100 E. 9TH STREET CLEVELAND, OH 44114

