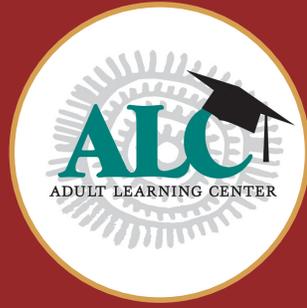
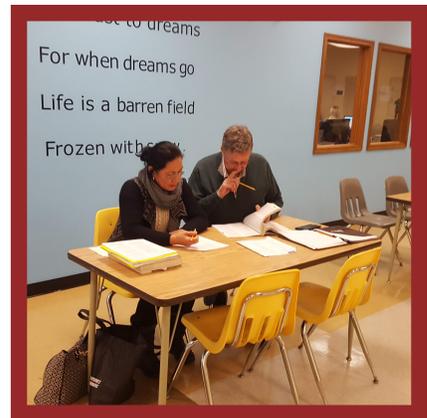
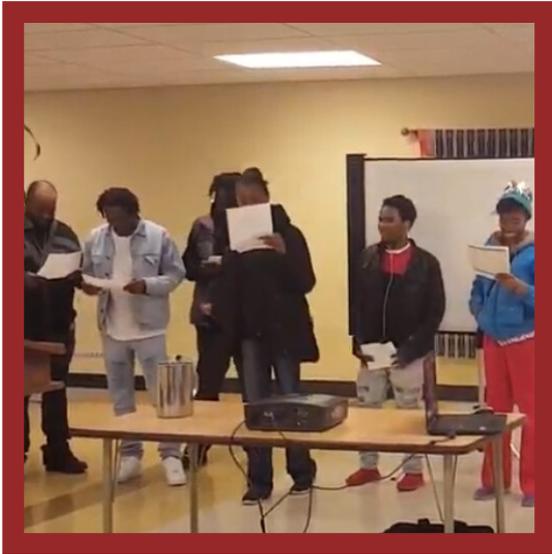


Spring 2020



ADULT LEARNING CENTER

Transforming lives through education since 1979



As we all know, Spring 2020 has been a semester like no other. We got in some great community and learning time together before moving to an online base. You might remember our fresh Black History Month program including an original skit and the core principles of Kwanzaa, to many new students passing at least one test, we certainly won't be forgetting Spring 2020 any time soon!

Clockwise from top: Skit participants at the Black History Month Program. Kenzetta working in the ALL Together Online Program. Lucila and Jerry working hard pre-Covid

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A LETTER FROM JON



Hello ALC Family,

These last two months have been challenging for all of us - staff, volunteers, and most of all students. ALC teachers and staff, volunteers, and students have each faced a new way of learning at the ALC this semester. Our teachers have been tasked with turning a face-to-face, traditional classroom program into an online “virtual learning” experience. Our volunteers have been isolated and cut off from the rewarding one-to-one tutoring the ALC has been known for for over 40 years. Our students have adapted to online learning while balancing family responsibilities, becoming “home-school” teachers for their own children, risking their health to maintain jobs in essential industries, and often dealing with financial and emotional stress caused by the isolation and uncertainty.

In spite of these challenges, I continue to be inspired by these same staff, volunteers, and students, and their commitment to transforming lives through education! Our teachers have risen to the challenge, and were able to keep the majority of our students engaged and motivated through the second half of this Spring semester. Twenty of our volunteers have taken up remote tutoring, either reading to our students over the phone, or training to become “online” tutors to support our remote learners. And our students have overcome numerous challenges and logged well over 1000 hours of remote work activities in the last 8 weeks. At a time when it would have been easy to give up, the ALC family has persevered and remained steadfastly focused on our mission. As we close out this Spring semester, and look forward to our Summer session and beyond, it is my pleasure to share with you the beginnings of our new initiative, “Adult Learning for Life (ALL) Together Online,” which you can read more about in this newsletter.

Finally, I want to thank all of you who have sent kind messages and financial support during this time. We know the work we do truly changes lives for the better, and we couldn’t do it without you. The Adult Learning Center needs your support now more than ever - between the technology demands this new reality places on us, and the general operation expenses we continue to face as a non-profit, donations of all sizes are essential to our continued fiscal well-being. Please contact Francis Vogel, the ALC’s Development Director, to discuss making a contribution to help keep us going strong, or make a donation online at ALCmke.org. Thank you in advance for your consideration!

Peace,
Jon Gilgenbach
Executive Director

ALC WALK FOR LIFELONG LEARNING EVENT

The ALC transforms lives through education by helping motivated adults to earn their GED. This journey is often long and hard, making the reward of graduation all the sweeter. The ALC's first-ever Walk for Lifelong Learning, planned for Spring 2021, celebrates this journey with:

- A golden opportunity for ALC students, volunteers, staff and community partners to join with family and friends in a planned walk around the Center's Halyard Park and Bronzeville neighborhoods. Teams may be any size: students and their families walk for free!
- A Resource Fair at the ALC, showcasing Center resources, and a preview of the Fall semester
- Complimentary food and beverages at the "finish line"

The Walk will start and finish at the Adult Learning Center on a Saturday morning. The date, time and registration details are pending, given the current pandemic. For information on sponsorship, contact the ALC's Francis X. Vogel at 414-263-5874, or at francis@alcme.org. Next Spring, let's walk it like we talk it!



Thank You
ALC VOLUNTEERS



Volunteers at our Spring Health Literacy Training

The Adult Learning Center is unique in that we offer students one-to-one tutoring support. We could not do this without the wonderful volunteers that commit their time and energy to learning and growing with our students. From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you, volunteers, for all you do to make the ALC the place that it is!

ALL Together Online

Bringing Online Learning to the ALC

The Adult Learning Center (ALC) is making a pandemic pivot to better serve the educational needs of motivated adults seeking to earn their GED, and improve their well-being. Before COVID-19, our time-tested model featured daily classroom instruction, small-group learning and one-to-one tutoring. With key partners including Milwaukee Area Technical College, the social services agency Maximus, and a dedicated cadre of volunteer tutors, ALC's wraparound approach ensures access to the comprehensive services our resolute adult students need to overcome obstacles to achieve their goals.

To keep our students, teachers and volunteers safe in the wake of COVID-19, the ALC suspended in-person instruction on March 16. Our teachers made a swift transition to support student learning through daily emails, phone visits, our Google Classroom message board and regular work. Our students have done their best to adapt to distance learning while balancing family responsibilities, "home schooling" their children (or grandchildren), and risking their health to maintain jobs in essential industries. Meanwhile, our organization's volunteer tutors – mostly retirees – remained in the wings, wanting to help, yet needing a safe and healthy avenue.



Faced with the coronavirus crisis, we developed a new program designed to complement our signature approach:

Adult Learning for Life (ALL) Together Online

This innovative adaptation of our teacher-led, one-to-one tutoring model brings teachers, students and tutors together again, using Chromebook laptops, to facilitate online learning. Twenty of our volunteers have taken up the challenge of remote tutoring, either reading to our students over the phone, or beginning training to become online tutors to support our students. And our students have overcome the challenges of this New Normal, logging countless hours of remote work activities since the pandemic began. Our aim is not just to employ a stopgap measure during this protracted public health crisis, but to add a powerful component to an already high-powered approach. Going forward, if students are hindered, for any reason, from attending class in person, ALL Together Online will allow them to remotely participate, and keep the momentum for their journey moving forward.

ALC students - particularly graduates - display grit and tenacity. ALL Together Online will be instrumental in assisting our motivated students to earn their GED, and open new doors of opportunity in these tenuous times.

ALC FAMILY SPOTLIGHT

SR. CALLISTA ROBINSON, OSF

The Adult Learning Center is blessed with two talented staff who welcome one and all to the Center. Evening students, tutors and service learners are greeted by Cathy Curties, while day folks are received by Sister Mary Callista Robinson, OSF (Order of St. Francis). A devout member of the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls, Minnesota, Sr. Callista is the ALC's longtime Assistant Administrator.



Sr. Callista featured here with ALC staff and partners, after receiving her Black Excellence award.

“Our students are so determined to earn their GED that they’ll pursue it no matter how difficult the road,” related Sr. Callista. “They may need to step back for a time, but they find their way back. They know the resources they need are here. And when they graduate, they tell their friends that we’ll continue to help them even after they’ve received their diploma.”

As the advisor to the Student Leadership Committee, Sr. Callista assists ALC students with overseeing the Thanksgiving and Black History programs each year. “This year, for example, I proposed several themes to the Committee for the Black History program,” Sister recalled. “The students chose education, and were off and running. They took ownership of the event.” Sr. Callista also answers the phone, processes the mail, helps schedule tests, and much more. Then she leaves for her other part-time position, as founding Coordinator of the Brother Booker Ashe Lay Ministry Program. In this capacity, Sister helps African-American Catholics to become leaders in their parishes or other diocesan positions. “Retirement is not part of our vocabulary,” Sr. Callista smiled, adding that older nuns in her order write to inmates, pray on behalf of others in need, or serve in other ways.

Education is a constant thread in her life. “As the oldest of four, I used to play school with my three younger brothers, where I would pretend to be a nun and teacher,” Sr. Callista recalled of her early years growing up on Chicago’s south side. “Later, I attended Loretto Academy, an integrated high school for girls, where my friends were also interested in pursuing the religious life. Since we were African-American, though, not every order would accept us. One that did, the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls, Minnesota, is still my home.”

Sr. Callista’s long and varied career, informed by her Education degree from Edgewood College in Madison, led her eventually to Harambee Community School in Milwaukee, where she taught and later served as Principal. Sister was also Principal of St. Leo’s in Milwaukee. In 1968, Sister helped found the National Black Sisters’ Conference, which supports Black nuns in their formation, and Black Catholic women in general. “Forming the Conference helped us to realize that we weren’t alone,” noted Sr. Callista.

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An active member of St. Martin de Porres Parish in Milwaukee, Sr. Callista has received multiple awards in honor of her accomplishments over the decades. Last October, in the year of her Diamond Jubilee celebrating 60 years of sisterhood and service with the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls, the Archdiocese of Milwaukee named her a 2019 Vatican II Award Recipient for her Service to the Church. This past February, Sr. Callista was also recognized in the Religion category for the 35th Annual Black Excellence Awards.

Unlike most us, though, Sister does not “humblebrag” about her awards on social media, or any platform at all. Rather, she goes about her daily life in service to others. Pastimes? Well, Sr. Callista likes to read books about African-Americans “and how we’ve overcome despite racism,” citing the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., Coretta Scott King and Frederick Douglas. While it’s uplifting to look to historical icons, a certain everyday heroine lives – and works – among us. To that we say: amen.



CONGRATULATIONS DERRICK EDWARDS!



Derrick, our 1st Spring 2020 grad is pictured here with fellow learners Kelly and Jannie

Long before testing centers were closed, the ALC was able to celebrate our first Spring 2020 graduate: Derrick Edwards! Derrick, an evening student in Ms. Roxie's class completed his final test in January 2020. When asked about Derrick, Ms. Roxie said: "Derrick Edwards, or “Barry White,” as he was called by some of his classmates, was a pretty reserved student. He was quiet. He was diligent. Derrick came to class after a full day’s work as a roofer. In our Basic Communication class, I recognized that Derrick was quickly comprehending the concepts; yet, he still needed a little convincing to take his first practice test. However, after earning passing

scores on both practice and actual GED tests, Derick put himself on a fast track to completion, scheduling and passing tests in rapid succession. Derrick is also a role model who I know has inspired one of his classmates to follow in his “fast track” footsteps. Congratulations, Derrick, on your determination and dedication to getting your GED!" While our spring graduation was sidelined due to COVID-19, our celebration of Derrick's accomplishment was not. We hope to have Derrick join us for our December 2020 graduation.

Thank You

Thank you to all of our generous donors and supporters for continuing to support our mission of transforming lives through education!

If you'd like to make a donation to the Adult Learning Center, please contact Francis X. Vogel at Francis@alcmke.org or go online to alcmke.org.

Masks and Hand Sanitizer Donation



Thank you to our friends at Lakefront Brewery and MaskUpMKE for their donations that help keep our students safe this summer!

Do you shop on
Amazon.com?

You can support the ALC with your purchases through Amazon Smile!

If you identify the Adult Learning Center as your charity of choice, the Amazon Foundation will donate .5% of the purchase price to our organization. To use Amazon Smile, just log in by going to "AmazonSmile.com" and choosing "The Adult Learning Center" in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



Summer Hours

The ALC will be staffed this summer Monday through Thursday, from 9am until 2pm. Feel free to reach out to us with questions, comments, or concerns and we'll be happy to help you.



ALC Calendar

June 1, 2020-July 19, 2020
August 1, 2020
August 31, 2020
December 16, 2020
December 18, 2020
Spring 2021

Summer Session
Fall TABE Testing Begins
First Day of Fall Semester
Last Day of Fall Semester
December 2020 Graduation
Walk for Lifelong Learning

All dates subject to change with updated CDC, federal, and local guidelines regarding health and safety. We appreciate your understanding and flexibility.