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PIKES PEAK LIBRARY DISTRICT 2015  
**Report to the Community**

### Spears Named New Executive Director

In December, the Board of Trustees announced the selection of John Spears as PPLD's next Executive Director. "Over the past five years, Pikes Peak Library District has earned the reputation as a true pioneer of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Library services," said Board President Ken Beach. "Our vision of elevating these services to the next level requires a 'unique' individual to lead the Library forward from this point. Understanding the importance of the decision, the Board has spent 15 months in the search process and we are pleased and excited that John Spears has accepted our offer to lead PPLD to that next level. John is a groundbreaking visionary and exceptional leader."

Spears was previously the Executive Director of Salt Lake City Public Library. He led a staff of 325 employees in a seven-facility city library with an operating budget of \$17.9 million.

### PPLD and Partners Bring Little Free Libraries to Manitou Springs

Two years ago, the little free library idea came to Manitou Springs from Steve Wood of the non-profit organization Concrete Couch. He approached the Friends of Manitou Springs Community Library to create a little free library. It was perfect timing, as PPLD was awarding micro grants for library programs. This funded the creation of 10 little free libraries placed around the center of Manitou Springs. There were construction sessions, an installation party, and a going-official party that involved members from throughout the community. Manitou Springs Library employee Chi Ito spearheaded the Library's efforts on the project and is pictured on the cover of this report.



### Tri-Building Project Capital Campaign Completed

A generous gift of \$250,000 from Lyda Hill brought our Tri-Building Project Capital Campaign to completion at the end of 2015. Funding for the Tri-Building Project has been achieved due to PPLD's fiscal management and successful fundraising. The Tri-Building Project was PPLD's most ambitious fundraising project to date, with 691 donors including individuals, organizations, Library staff, and in-kind gifts helping PPLD reach its \$3.9 million fundraising goal.

Funds from the project went toward the opening of Library 21c and extensive renovations to East and Penrose Libraries as PPLD continues expansion of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Library service to our patrons.



## Locations

Cheyenne Mountain Library  
1785 S. 8<sup>th</sup> St.  
(719) 633-6278

East Library  
5550 N. Union Blvd.  
(719) 531-6333

Fountain Library  
230 S. Main St.  
Fountain  
(719) 382-5347

High Prairie Library  
7035 Old Meridian Rd.  
Falcon  
(719) 260-3650

Library Express  
3337 Cinema Pt.

Library 21c  
1175 Chapel Hills Dr.  
(719) 884-9800

Manitou Springs Library  
701 Manitou Ave.  
Manitou Springs  
(719) 685-5206

Monument Library  
1706 Lake Woodmoor Dr.  
Monument  
(719) 488-2370

Old Colorado City Library  
2418 W. Pikes Peak Ave.  
(719) 634-1698

Palmer Lake Library  
66 Lower Glenway St.  
Palmer Lake  
(719) 481-2587

Penrose Library  
20 N. Cascade Ave.  
(719) 531-6333

Rockrimmon Library  
832 Village Center Dr.  
(719) 593-8000

Ruth Holley Library  
685 N. Murray Blvd.  
(719) 597-5377

Sand Creek Library  
1821 S. Academy Blvd.  
(719) 597-7070

Ute Pass Library  
8010 Severy Rd.  
Cascade  
(719) 684-9342

For more information  
about PPLD, visit  
[ppld.org](http://ppld.org) or call  
(719) 531-6333.

## Mobile Library Services

PPLD's mobile library fleet includes a 30-foot box truck and a 32-foot transit. In addition, we have a 26-foot Sprinter van purchased with the Colorado Trust's Healthy Aging Grant which serves assisted living facilities. The Mobile Library department also oversees three stand-alone book returns in the county located in Calhan, Ellicott, and Rush.

Our Mobile Libraries participate in community events throughout the year, including Summer Reading Parties, Fountain's Community in the Park, High Prairie's Harvest Festival, Manitou's Homecoming, the Senior Expo, and the Festival of Lights Parade. During Summer Reading, volunteers donate more than 100 hours per month at various stops to help staff with increased demand for services. Additionally, Mobile Library staff facilitates two assisted living book groups.





# Leadership

Within the pages of this report is a wealth of information on what PPLD accomplished during 2015. What is more important, though, are the countless stories behind each of these accomplishments and the impact that each of them had on the lives of those PPLD serves. As a public library, our true measure is not in how many items are loaned, how many people walk through our doors, or how large our program attendance is. Our impact should be measured on the difference that we make in the lives of our users and the community.

As we move into the future, the achievements of the past year will be built upon, and PPLD will continue to work with the communities it serves to create the

spaces, services, and collections that will allow people to reach their goals, whatever they may be. It is an exciting time for PPLD, and the changes that you have seen over the past few years are just the beginning. On behalf of the staff and the Board of Trustees, I want to thank you for the support you have shown PPLD in the past, and I promise that we will continue to provide the excellent level of service you have come to expect long into the future.



**John Spears**  
PPLD Executive Director

## Board of Trustees



*From left to right: Molly Gary; Keith Clayton, II; Ken Beach, President; Katherine Spicer; John Wilson, Secretary/Treasurer; Cathy Grossman, Vice President; Kathleen Owings*

Alan Schlosser-Couch was hired in 2015 as Associate Director of Public Services. He worked the previous nine years as a library administrator in Pennsylvania, California and, most recently, Tennessee.

The Library is governed by the Pikes Peak Library District Board of Trustees, consisting of seven members, who are appointed by a committee of members from the Colorado Springs City Council and the El Paso County Board of County Commissioners.

# 2015 Notable Presenters

## All Pikes Peak Reads

Hampton Sides – *In the Kingdom of Ice*  
 Clive Thompson – *Smarter than You Think*  
 Gene Luen Yang – *American Born Chinese*

## Mountain of Authors

Carrie Vaughn – *Low Midnight*

## Frank Waters Award

Michael McGarrity – *Backlands*

## Golden Quill Award

Mel McFarland – *Midland Route: A Colorado Midland Guide and Data Book*

## State Poet Laureate

Joseph Hutchison – *Bed of Coals*  
 (winner of Colorado Poetry Award)



Cheyenne Mountain Library had great turnout for the *Ivywild: The Treasured History of a Neighborhood* program on Saturday, January 23 (co-sponsored with the Ivywild Improvement Society).



Randall and Liz Price from the Rocky Mountain Restaurant Group present a check for \$3,136 to the PPLD Foundation at the East Library Check It Out Happy Hour event. The money went towards the Tri-Building Project Capital Campaign.

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Ann Alderman                             | Falcon Garden Club             |
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*The Pikes Peak Library District Foundation appreciates every gift. We have made every effort to accurately show all contributions.*

Questions or comments?  
 Email [foundation@ppld.org](mailto:foundation@ppld.org).

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**\$250,000**

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**\$100,000**

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A 1 Notary Training, Inc  
Alvarez Art School



# Children

PPLD knows how important early literacy is to families and the community, which makes Children's Services perhaps the most important aspect of the District.

One way the Library emphasizes early literacy is our annual Countdown to Kindergarten Carnivals, held at several locations each year. These events are designed to get families interacting with one another in ways that are both fun and effective in improving early literacy skills.

The rest of our children's programming in 2015 was also very popular. PPLD put on 5,797 free events at our libraries and at community partner locations with a total of 172,674 in attendance, up 10% from 2014.

## **SPELL (Supporting Parents in Early Literacy through Libraries)**

PPLD was awarded a grant through the State Library to reach parents of young children with early literacy information. PPLD worked with Parenting Matters of El Paso County, Pikes Peak United Way, and Princeton Academy. As a result, 97% of reached parents are more confident in helping their children be ready to read in kindergarten and 83% know what everyday activities to do with their child(ren) to help them be ready to learn to read in kindergarten.

**PPLD's Summer Reading Program** "Every Hero Has a Story!" had 20,564 participants, culminating in four regional parties with inflatables, bubbles, hula hoops, an obstacle course... and of course the ever-popular helicopter landing at George Fellows Park behind East Library.

**The Educational Resource Center (ERC)** opened at East Library to provide materials for families wanting to enrich their children's education. Math, science, social studies, and language arts kits, as well as art and music resources and computer software, are available for families with students of all ages to use.



**In 2015, PPLD circulated a total of 2,334,009 items from its children's collection.**

# Friends of the Pikes Peak Library District

The Friends of the Pikes Peak Library District was established on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Colorado Springs Public Library (March 11, 1955) and incorporated in 1969 as a nonprofit organization.

The Friends is a constant advocate for the Library. Today, with 900 members, the Friends sponsors and supports numerous programs and events to further the enjoyment of reading and love for books for all individuals.

The Friends of PPLD are best known for their volunteerism, their bookstores in each library (you never know what you will find in the ever-changing inventory of previously-read books and magazines) and, of course, the Friends Big Book Sales held three times each year.

One program the Friends of PPLD holds each year is the Betty Field Memorial Youth Writing Contest, which is open to all public, private and home school students in grades 6 through 12 in El Paso

County and areas served by PPLD. Winners were honored on April 2 at East Library. A list of winners can be found at [writingcontest612.info](http://writingcontest612.info).

The Friends also gathered some of the Pikes Peak region's outstanding Latinas at **Latina Voices**, the fifth annual presentation of talented women who have explored and helped define their culture. Presenters included musician/singer Michelle Abeyta, fine artist Terri Sanchez, military nurse Viviana Mestas, and the Ballet Folklorico de la Raza, a local dance group.

Western mystery writer Michael McGarity was the 2015 winner of the Frank Waters Award, presented for literary excellence annually by the Friends of PPLD. Local historian and author Mel McFarland was the 2015 winner of the Golden Quill award, given to a Pikes Peak region author for a body of work.



# Tributes Made in Love and Respect

The following were honored by their family and friends with a thoughtful gift to PPLD:

- |                            |                        |                                |
|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Gregory Alexander          | Carl Crane             | Kristi Oaks                    |
| Martin Aronovitz           | Mary Therese Froehle   | John Mathias Paul              |
| Mary Magdalene Baumgardner | Maureen Harrison       | Shannon L. Reece               |
| Barry Bernstein            | Larry Lashley          | Arthur "Bob" Roberts           |
| June Briggs                | Nelda Pauline McNamara | Sarah Shaeffer                 |
| Lillian Frances Chamney    | Ree Mobley             | Peggy Shivers                  |
| Edna McFarland Chleboun    | Diane Morriner         | Elizabeth (Bette) Grace Shraeb |
| Susan Connelly             | Robert G. Muir         | Patricia Stevens               |
|                            | Judith M. Noyes        | Charles L. Tutt                |



*As part of Penrose Library's renovation, there was a facelift and new design to the exterior front courtyard and Judy Noyes Memorial Children's Garden. This critical redesign improves safety and security for the downtown Colorado Springs location.*

# Finances

PPLD's Finance Office has been awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association for 24 consecutive years. PPLD currently maintains no outstanding bonds or certificates of participation. It has remained debt free for more than a decade.

*\*All 2015 figures presented are final and extracted from audited reports*

## 2015 Revenues

Property Tax .....	\$ 24,146,678
Specific Ownership Tax .....	\$2,765,049
Fines and Fees .....	\$529,897
Interest Income .....	\$23,420
Other Sources .....	\$1,956,929

## 2015 Expenses

Personnel .....	\$15,709,445
Library Materials .....	\$4,424,935
Contract Services .....	\$3,066,378
Capital .....	\$4,955,657
Other Expenses .....	\$1,973,323

PPLD surpassed one million digital circulations in 2015 through OverDrive, one of the digital distributors on PPLD's CyberShelf. This made PPLD the first library system in Colorado to reach this impressive milestone. The one millionth checkout was *Dune: House of Harkonnen* by Brian Herbert in eBook format, checked out by a patron registered at PPLD's Cheyenne Mountain Library.

## 2015 Metrics

Service Population.....	616,089
Library Visits .....	3.5 million
Circulation of Materials....	8 million
Reference Transactions....	532,000
Public Programs .....	13,072
Computer Sessions .....	1.1 million
Days Open.....	354
Employees.....	477
Volunteers.....	1,981
Meeting/Study.....	38,712
Room Reservations	

PPLD employees are not just very knowledgeable – many of them are experts in select subject areas – but they are also highly celebrated for their customer service skills. Based on direct feedback from library patrons, PPLD staff has an approval rating of 99.7 percent.

*If you want to know more about PPLD, visit us online at [ppld.org](http://ppld.org).*



# Special Events

In 2015, PPLD hosted free programming and events that ranged from musical performance to lectures, from community theatre to parades, parties, and seasonal celebrations.



**Dragon Theatre Productions**, under the Imagination Celebration programming umbrella, rehearsed and performed two plays at Library 21c: *Peter Pan* and *What Color Is That Dress?* Dragon Theatre presents classic stories and newly written productions while being inclusive of anyone and everyone that has ever wanted to trip the footlights. These community productions again proved to be audience favorites.

The 12<sup>th</sup> annual **Pikes Peak Regional History Symposium**, with a theme of "Military Matters: Defense, Development, and Dissent in the Pikes Peak Region," brought together presentations on a range of fascinating viewpoints from a subject well known in the region.

The view from the creative mind was the emphasis of many of PPLD's special events this year. Again in 2015, nearly 6,000 people attended the District's 2<sup>nd</sup> annual **Colorado Springs Mini Maker Faire**, exploring the works and dreams of 60 "makers" as they engaged the audience with interactive works and play. The same flavor of exploration was evident at the area's **What IF Festival of Innovation and Imagination** in downtown Colorado



Springs, an event co-sponsored by PPLD. The District was also the host to the first ever **TEDx Colorado Springs**, gathering a roster of thinkers and entrepreneurs that spoke of things that are and things that could be.



Keynote speaker Carrie Vaughn headlined the 9<sup>th</sup> annual **Mountain of Authors**, which showcased authors of the Pikes Peak region and also included two panel discussions of interest to aspiring writers.



The year drew to a close with PPLD participating at two iconic community events. The **Festival of Lights Parade** was an opportunity for the Library District to reflect on the holiday season with a decorated Mobile Library and loads of staff volunteers walking the parade route. PPLD's Children's department, in partnership with the Colorado Springs Children's Museum, kept the celebrations going right up to the year's last day, playing and interacting with thousands of the region's youngsters as they rang in 2016 at **Noon Year's Eve** at the Olympic Training Center. It was a perfect ending to a special year of events and collaborations.

(Clockwise from top left): Dragon Theatre Productions, TEDxColoradoSprings, Carrie Vaughn, Colorado Springs Mini Maker Faire



Ice House Entrepreneurship Program Facilitator Training



# Business and Career

PPLD offers resources for the development of skills needed to compete in an increasingly digital world. Instructors from partner organizations teach various technology-based classes, such as programming languages, gaming development, etc. This includes hands-on training and support for job seekers or those looking to develop their career skills.

In 2015, PPLD expanded its offering of business classes, adding programs such as Never Fear Networking Again, Cyber Security, and Facebook for Businesses. These new classes joined other ongoing classes like Minding your Business and Linking in to LinkedIn.

PPLD employs two full time business librarians who do outreach and network with various business groups in the community. They also regularly meet one-on-one with entrepreneurs about the many business resources PPLD has to offer.

PPLD's many meeting and study rooms are heavily used, often by small business owners using the spaces for meetings, hoteling, and access to our wireless network. Patrons also use these areas to leverage our projectors, smartboards, and teleconferencing solutions.

The Library's website, [ppld.org](http://ppld.org), also contains many job search and career tools, including resume and interview assistance. Our website also contains business databases that can help entrepreneurs or small business owners learn to write a business plan, as well as perform market, demographic, or industry research.



*High Prairie Library held their 5<sup>th</sup> annual Harvest Festival, a celebration of the season with booths, refreshments, animal displays, and more... a fall carnival for eastern El Paso County.*

# Music

PPLD hosted many free, live music performances throughout 2015, including the Manitou Springs Library Lawn Concert Series, the Monthly Musicales Concert Series and Shivers Concert Series.

A special collaboration with KCME-FM and the U.S. Air Force Academy Concert Band stirred hearts and minds in Library 21c's Atrium. Also playing in the Atrium was Chamber Orchestra of the Springs, with a fantastical children's concert, *Tyrannosaurus Sue*, complete with giant dinosaur balloon puppets.

The District also launched the Local Music Project at [ppld.org/LMP](http://ppld.org/LMP), which connects our community's talented musicians with listeners by providing a platform from which artists may be discovered and their music heard.



(Clockwise from top left):  
New Teen Center at Penrose Library, Gene Yang author of *American Born Chinese*, *Tech of Ages*, Maize Maze at What If Festival in downtown Colorado Springs, Marshmallow Wars, Table Top Gaming at Library 21c Teen Center





Candy Sushi

# Teens

PPLD's Teen Services had an exciting year of change and expansion of services, including the addition of a new teen center at Penrose Library in August.

In 2015, the Library District offered over 1,150 programs for teens, with a total of nearly 25,000 participants. The Summer Reading Program "Heroes: Unmask!" had over 5,000 participants.

Regular programming included knitting clubs, writing groups, teens on laptop times, anime groups, gaming days, movie nights, craft programs and teen advisory council meetings. One of the more successful new programs is AfterMath, an after-school math tutoring program. Many special events were also held throughout the year.

Escape Velocity, a local comic book store, donated comics for Free Comic Book Day in May and also donated raised funds to the PPLD Foundation in support of Teen Services programming.

The District-wide Teen Art Contest continues to be successful. The theme for the eighth year of the contest was "Out of This World." Many creative and artistic pieces were entered into the contest and displayed at Penrose, East, and Library 21c during the month of April.

Cheyenne Mountain Library staff member Danielle Smith started a book club at Cheyenne Mountain High School that has been a huge success and a great way for the library to become even more relevant to teens.

Teen Services staff went out to schools in the Pikes Peak region and booktalked to 4,300 students and teachers over the course of 120 sessions. They also gave library resource classes to nearly 900 students and teachers.

Teen Volunteers contributed over 16,476 hours to the Summer Reading Programs, Teen Advisory councils and doing other volunteer activities across the District. That's a 119% increase from 2013!

If all of this isn't proof enough that the Library is a great place for teens, *The Colorado Springs Gazette's* Best of the Springs named PPLD "Voter's Choice for Teen Hangout."



# C<sup>3</sup> creative computer commons

The Creative Computer Commons (C<sup>3</sup>) at Library 21c is a unique combination of spaces and resources dedicated to building skills, developing content, and encouraging enterprise. C<sup>3</sup> has a Business and Entrepreneurial Center, Center for Public Media, Makerspaces, gaming labs, art galleries, and a large, multi-purpose venue. It is populated by the latest technologies, exceptional professional staff, and cutting edge materials.

Over 3,000 people attended C<sup>3</sup> programming in 2015, with favorite programs including Quilting Basics, Crochet Basics, Intro and Intermediate 3D Modeling with 123D Design, Intro to GIMP (free photo editing software), Intro to Stencil (free video game creation software), Hands on 3D Printing, and Simple Circuits.

The makerspaces in C<sup>3</sup> contain many machines and tools, including sewing machines, 3D printers, a laser cutter, and a CNC machine. A makerspace with similar equipment opened at East Library in 2015, and another will be coming to Sand Creek Library in the coming year.



Here are some highlights from over 800 projects that took place in the C<sup>3</sup> makerspaces in 2015.

### 3D Scanning and Printing

- A patron with a broken faucet part scanned and printed a duplicate copy. The faucet was 18 years old and no longer available on the market.
- A local engineer has intermittent jaw pain and is working with his dentist to create a mold of his jaw and teeth. He plans to re-create the lower half of his skull so that he can apply his engineering knowledge to find out more about the friction and motion effects of his mandibular joints. We helped by 3D scanning a plaster cast of his teeth so that he can assemble a CAD model of his jaw.
- Two teens were working on inventing a phone case that would convert body heat to energy to be able to charge a cell phone. They came in to 3D print a prototype for the case.

### Laser Cutter

- A patron created a scroll box using the laser. The details on each side of the box are amazingly beautiful.



- We helped restore an old puzzle that a patron used to work on with her grandmother. Several pieces had been lost, so she scanned the puzzle to create SVG files of the missing pieces. She cut them out of wood and painted them to match the rest of the puzzle.

### CNC Machine

- Plaques for many events were made, including a test piece for the Royal Manticoran Navy Fan Association in Colorado Springs.
- Brass gears for a pocket watch/GPS device that is a hybrid of a mechanical clock and Arduino system were created.
- Prototype parts were made for a type of perpetual motion machine derived from a "bessler wheel," a kind of flywheel.



# Center for Public Media



Programs produced by the public through the center will be selected for broadcast, streaming, and dissemination through PPLD TV, PPLD.TV, Rocky Mountain PBS, and other local media outlets.

In 2015, the CPM offered 126 classes to 1,200 patrons in video production, audio production, and photography. Almost 200 patrons checked out audio and video equipment for their own use, and the video/audio studio was reserved 150 times.



The Center for Public Media (CPM) at Library 21c provides a collection of resources dedicated to the public production of multimedia, the development of multimedia skills, and public exhibition and performance. These aspects of Library 21c are comprised of a video production center and studio, an audio booth, audio and video editing stations, classroom facilities, a portable video story booth, traditional and multimedia exhibit space, and a large performance venue with professional sound, lighting, and presentation capabilities.

PPLD has operated a Video Production Center for more than twenty years, producing award winning programs for broadcast, archival, and community involvement purposes. The audio/video studio and editing bays at Library 21c allow PPLD to expand the scope of producing, directing, and editing digital video to encompass the general public. Use of the center's state of the art equipment and software is facilitated by staff and accompanied by hands-on training and virtual tutorials.

Two years ago we had an idea for a TV show, and with broadcast quality equipment available to us from the Center for Public Media, we set out to film our TV series **Hittin' the Road**. The show made its debut on PPLD TV not long afterwards.

Today, **Hittin' the Road** is completing its second season on Rocky Mountain PBS and beginning work on its third season. And we are happy to report our show is still being shown on PPLD TV. We enjoy our relationship with CPM and feel we would never have been able to get to where we are without the amazing people and the resources available to us at CPM.

**Donna Vessey**  
Adventurista, **Hittin' the Road**



Bookbinding



Kim Hetherington

# Maker/Artist in Residence

Shadow Puppets



Patti Smithsonian

Acrylic for Beginners



Erin Gillespie

The makerspaces of PPLD are generating creativity, innovation, and learning. To foster such endeavors, PPLD created a Maker/Artist in Residence program. A call for makers and artists generated submissions from a wide variety of creative types.

Those selected each spent six-week, paid tenures as PPLD's Maker/Artist in Residence, during which time they taught classes in their specialized fields throughout the Library District.

They also hosted studio hours when patrons could watch them work and talk to them about their craft.

Art Journaling



Kristina Winnett

Collage on Canvas



RoxAnne Krute

Fractals Folding



Michelle Lim

Paper making



Daria Wilbur

Origami



Sarah Withee

## Adult Literacy and ESL

PPLD's Adult Literacy and ESL (English as a Second Language) program offers free tutoring and English language learning for adults. Using trained volunteers, the program provides a friendly and helpful environment for people who are just learning English, as well as native English speakers who need to improve their reading, writing,

and comprehension skills. Participants can choose from a variety of programs in which they can practice reading and speaking with a group, or get individual guidance from a tutor, and more.

We served over 500 individuals last year through individual tutoring, seven ESL classes, five General Education Development (GED) classes, and one Adult Basic Education class. Also, Speak

English classes were held at multiple libraries.

A naturalization ceremony was held in July at Library 21c. Individuals from 22 countries became naturalized citizens; 41 immigrants represented the following countries: Brazil, Canada, People's Republic of China, Cuba, Egypt, El Salvador, Germany, Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Lebanon, Mexico, Nepal, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Romania, South Korea, Sweden, Turkey and Vietnam.



## Stone Soup

Every spring, PPLD publishes *Stone Soup*, comprised of entries written by the participants in the Adult Literacy & ESL program. Here are excerpts from the 19<sup>th</sup> edition. You can pick up a copy of *Stone Soup* at any PPLD location.

### How Have the ESL Classes Helped You?

by Vladimir Butorin  
ESL classes give me great pleasure. I began to better understand their American friends and relatives. Lessons in grammar made my writing more accurate and interesting. Communication with the teacher helps me to overcome the psychological barrier in conversation with people on the street and at home. The listening lessons helped me to better understand American English on television, on radio, in the movies. ESL classes helped me to find new friends among the students.

### My GED Story!

by Marina D.  
I am Marina. At the age of 26 I'm still coming to the GED class because I started my life the other way around. I was in high school, but I got married. Then I had my two kids and it was impossible to finish high school because I had to take care of my children. But after a few years my kids grew up and I decided to return to finish and complete my GED because I would like to get a better job or maybe go to college, and also because I want to be prepared and help my kids when they need help with their homework and be an example for them and have them feel proud of me.