

# LITERACY UNLIMITED ANNUAL REPORT



## GREETINGS FROM LITERACY UNLIMITED!

We have come to the end of a successful year, and it's time to celebrate! I am pleased to be part of this unique program hosted at the Framingham Public Library and the Morse Institute Library in Natick. With many conversation classes and tutors teaching English and Basic Literacy, we are bringing the opportunity to thrive to many adults in the MetroWest area.



*Karen Bourdreau, Michelle Cuata,  
and Marjorie Solomon*

In January 2023, I had the fortune to join the Literacy team as the program coordinator, and I couldn't be happier with the response I have gotten from the community. As a former student, I already knew the power of this program and the many lives it has impacted over the years. As a staff member, I know what it means to be the liaison between the willing to help and the willing to learn. I can assure you that we will work hard to continue supporting this community, and I am convinced that we will achieve many goals together.

This year, we have focused our efforts on rebuilding our wonderful community of Literacy Unlimited. During the second half of this fiscal year, we have hosted more social events, offered more professional development workshops, and welcomed many new volunteers to the team.

In 2023, we overcame challenging circumstances, such as being without a coordinator for six months, losing our administrative clerk in March, and sadly losing an outstanding advisory board member in February. Despite all the difficulties, our community has come together to mourn, work hard, celebrate, plan, learn, and visualize a promising future for Literacy Unlimited. I am incredibly proud of our exceptional students, volunteers, staff, advisory board, and foundation members who have persevered despite the challenging circumstances. Thank you for your outstanding commitment and for letting me experience seeing students and tutors achieving goals, groups having fun during a conversation class, and individuals referring others to our program to become volunteers or students.

Now, more than ever, I am convinced we will achieve lofty goals. Congratulations on a great fiscal year 2023!

**Michelle Cuata**

Program Coordinator

## BACK TO IN-PERSON SOCIAL EVENTS

After a few years without hosting in-person social events, we finally went back to our lively celebrations. We were impressed by the enthusiasm of students and volunteers to get together and have fun with other members of our community.

### ON MAY 18,

we threw a fabulous Volunteer Appreciation Party (with funding generously provided by the Massachusetts Service Alliance). Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to reconnect with each other in person. The party included lively games, music, dancing, and a delicious catered dinner. Students and tutors took turns at the microphone speaking about their experiences at Literacy Unlimited. Tutors who had been with Literacy Unlimited for 10 years or more were surprised with special certificates of recognition and gift bags. Conversation class leader Denise O'Hare said "It was great to see you all, and good to catch up with some people I haven't seen since before the pandemic"—a sentiment shared by many. All in all, it was a delightful and uplifting evening.



*Volunteer Appreciation Night*



*Tutor working with students*

## NEWS FROM NATICK

This year in Natick, we were able to offer several in service opportunities in collaboration with other Literacy Volunteers of Massachusetts and independent affiliates. We hope to continue to provide support and resource sharing events for all level of tutors and class leaders. Natick has provided seven weekly conversation groups totaling 1,336 participants. There are currently 18 active pairs of tutor/students, and 694 students from other towns have participated in Natick programs. We have been able to provide low level survival English classes for newcomers and hosted a drop in discussion group for recent Ukrainian refugees.

**I am happy to see the uptick in in-person attendance in all programs and a gradual but steady return of students and tutors using library resources and library space to help community members learn and practice English. The library has added signage in multiple languages and continues to commit to providing equal access through language and cultural outreach.**

**Laurie Christie,**  
Natick, Program Coordinator

## FROM THE ADVISORY BOARD

This past year brought a change in leadership to Literacy Unlimited. In July we said goodbye to Coordinator Elyse Brown, who steadfastly navigated us through Covid. Six months later, we welcomed Michelle Cuata to the helm, who right from the start had great ideas to make Literacy Unlimited more well-known in the community, starting with big plans to bring back in-person activities.

In addition to Michelle, the Advisory Board brought on four new members, who all said “Yes!” whenever assistance was needed. Part of the Board’s mission is to provide support to the coordinator and to help her carry out her vision. The Board did so in many ways, including helping with a calendar fundraiser, the May Baskets Raffle, and the well-attended Volunteer Appreciation Night.

On a sadder note, in February, we lost one of our shining stars, tutor Doris Bickley. In addition to being a tutor, Doris was an Advisory Board member since its inception. She brought wisdom, a positive attitude, and fresh ideas to everything she worked on. We miss her and will do our best to honor her by continuing to help our community.

**Maria Barry,**  
Chair

## FROM THE FOUNDATION

To everyone’s delight, the spring of 2023 marked the triumphant return of the May Baskets Raffle fundraiser, (after three years on hold due to the pandemic). A big thank you to all of the enthusiastic participants in the raffle! You helped raise over \$6,400.

For the second year in a row, long-time tutor, Advisory Board member, and talented photographer Tim Hamilton assembled beautiful wall calendars for sale, filled with his gorgeous images of the Framingham area. This year, sales of the calendar generated over \$2,600.

Additionally, we received a substantial grant from Literacy Volunteers of Massachusetts, which has been essential to the ongoing health and enrichment of our organization. Much appreciation, as well, to the Foundation for MetroWest and Community Development Block Grant for their generous continuing support. We also wish to acknowledge HBO for their very helpful donation to our program. A special thanks to the Massachusetts Service Alliance for their grant, which funded the purchase of books, two new tutor trainings, two professional development workshops, and a wonderful and well-deserved Tutor Appreciation Party with speakers, games, music, and food. These were all significant contributions which amounted to a total of over \$77,700. Thank you!

Lastly, we are immensely grateful to our individual supporters who made personal donations from their own pockets throughout the year raising more than \$10,700. All of you have enabled Literacy Unlimited to move forward with financial strength, stability, and growth. Your contributions make a huge difference in our students’ lives, and we cannot thank you enough.

**Kathryn Roth,**

President, Literacy Unlimited of  
Framingham

## 2023 FISCAL YEAR

### JULY 2022

- Beginning of fiscal year 2023
- Elyse Brown, former LU coordinator, leaves her position

### AUGUST 2022

- LU Coordinator Position Reviewed

### SEPTEMBER 2022

- New Low-Beginner level class starts
- In-person tutor training starts
- Online tutor training starts

### OCTOBER 2022

- Full-time program coordinator position approved and posted

### NOVEMBER 2022

- Workshop on “Common ESL Grammar Issues for Adult Learners” by Keith Folse

### DECEMBER 2022

- Calendar sales begin
- Literacy Unlimited receives a grant from Foundation for MetroWest

### JANUARY 2023

- Michelle Cuata joins Literacy Unlimited as the new program coordinator
- Online reception hosted to welcome Michelle
- In-person tutor training starts
- Online tutor training starts
- Literacy Unlimited receives a grant from CDBG

### FEBRUARY 2023

- Literacy Unlimited becomes a Massachusetts Service Alliance grantee
- Foundation and Advisory Board members meet to begin planning the 11th annual May Baskets Raffle
- New beginner-level class starts

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# OUR STUDENTS

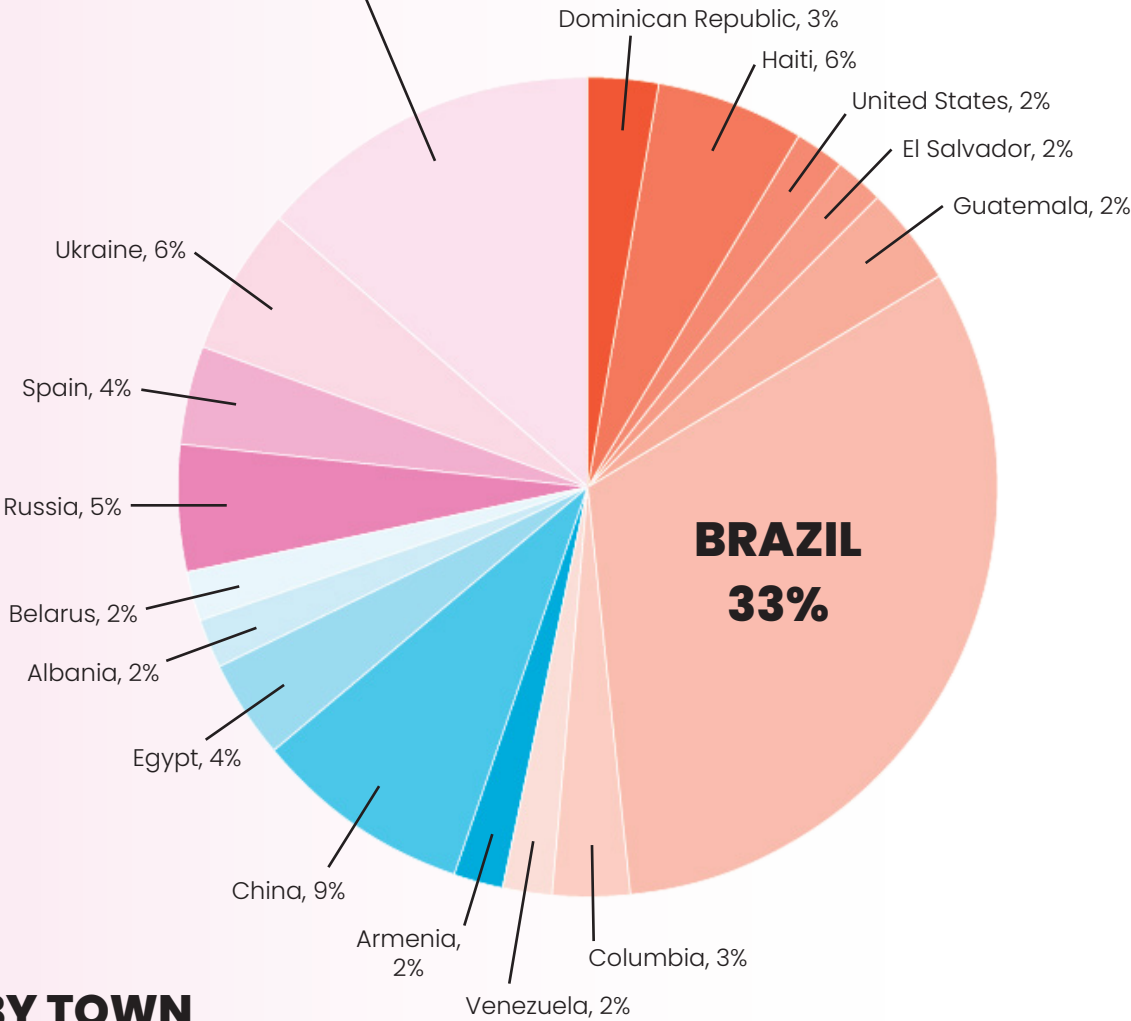
In 2023, we served 311 students between conversation classes and one-on-one tutoring. A total of 128 students are currently matched with a tutor, 80 attend conversation classes, and 103 have finished their work with our program.

Students come from 30 different countries, range in age from 20 to 88 years, and speak more than 15 languages! There are 47 students on the waiting list. The students on the waiting list are welcome to join our fabulous conversation classes while we work on their matches.

## STUDENTS BY COUNTRY

### OTHER COUNTRIES OF LESS THAN 1%

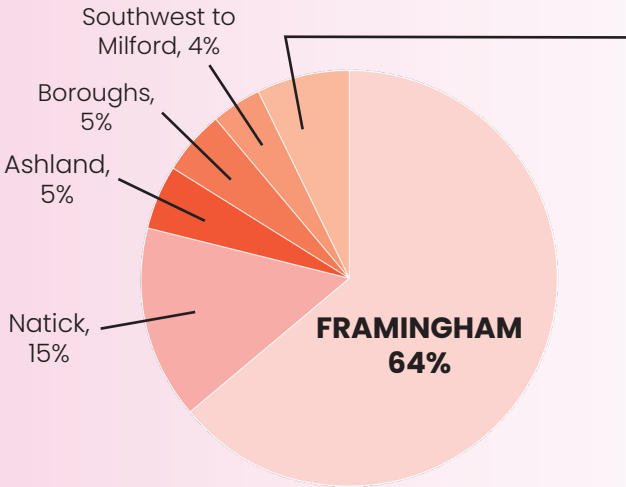
- Puerto Rico
- Canada
- Honduras
- Mexico
- Chile
- Ecuador
- Iran
- Kyrgyzstan
- Pakistan
- Nigeria
- Rwanda
- Togo
- Latvia
- Lithuania



## STUDENTS BY TOWN

### OTHER TOWNS

- Malden
- New Salem
- Norfolk
- Shrewsbury
- Somerville
- Wayland
- Wellesley



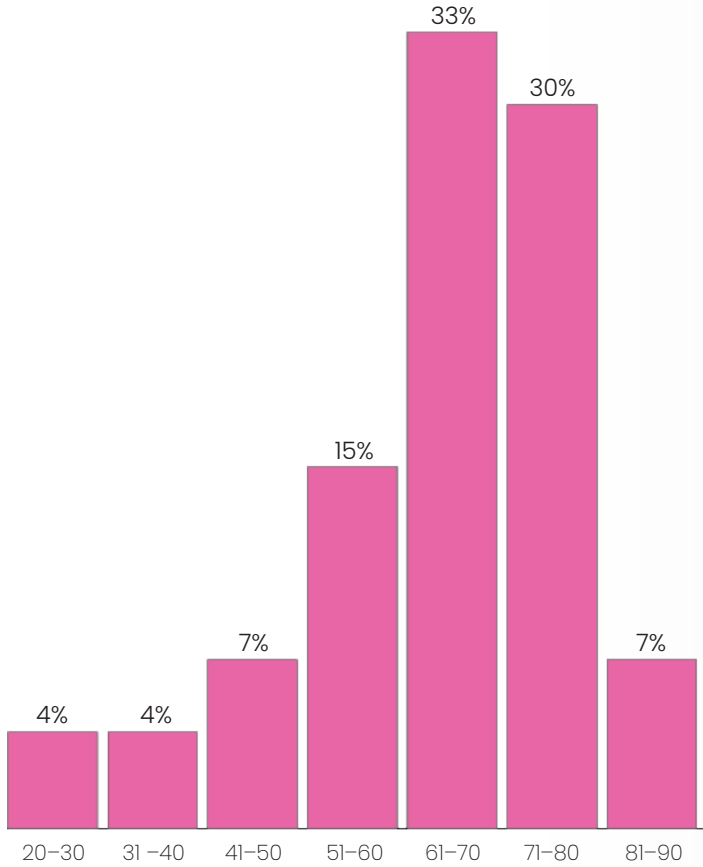
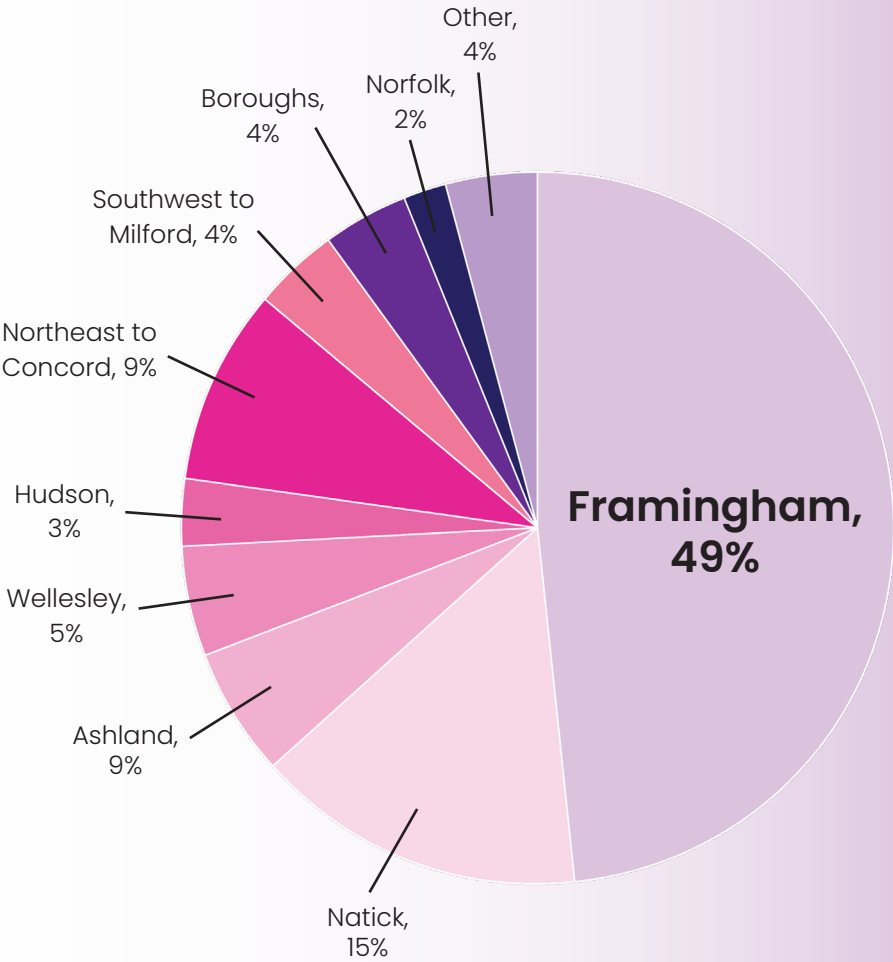
# OUR VOLUNTEERS

In fiscal year 2023, we offered six tutor trainings and welcomed 53 new tutors to our wonderful community. Throughout the year, we had 172 volunteers between tutors and conversation class leaders; 142 volunteers are still active today, and 30 have moved on to other volunteer activities.

One-on-one tutors accumulated 7,281 hours of instruction while working with their students. Conversation class leaders accrued 6,261 hours of education through more than 13 classes offered at five different English levels. Our volunteers imparted a total of 13,542 hours of instruction!

Literacy Unlimited volunteers range in age from 20 to 90 years old and come from all walks of life. Our tutors and class leaders rock!

# VOLUNTEERS BY TOWN



# VOLUNTEERS BY AGE

# 2023 FISCAL YEAR CONTINUED

## MARCH 2023

- Tutors take workshop on “Developing Communicative Skills through Reading” by Marcel La Vergne
- Student registration opens
- Intern Gabriela Carrillo joins Literacy
- Liehua Shi leaves her position as Administrative Clerk

## APRIL 2023

- Workshop on “Lesson Planning Made Easy: The Backward Design Process” by Marcel La Vergne
- Workshop on “Engaging Students with Stories” by Taryn Ohrsto
- Two in-person tutor trainings begin
- Citizenship seminar begins
- May Baskets tickets sales begin
- Staff nominates Kodjo Akoussan as an outstanding student to win the Ruth E. Defler Memorial Scholarship
- Eight-week “Understanding Your Community” class begins

## MAY 2023

- Literacy Unlimited hosts a volunteer appreciation party
- Workshop on “Strategies for Teaching Grammar” by Keith Folse
- Online intermediate class goes back in-person on Tuesday afternoons at FPL
- Best Plus, TABE and MAPT testing begins
- Staff attends NETWORK
- Student Kodjo Akoussan receives the Ruth E. Defler Memorial Scholarship
- New beginner-level class opens on Tuesday afternoons
- New low-intermediate level class begins

## JUNE 2023

- May Baskets drawing
- Best Plus, TABE and MAPT testing concludes
- The Fairs ‘n Squares Square Dance Club teach intermediate-level students how to square dance



*Literacy Unlimited 2023 Calendar*



*May Baskets Raffle 2023*

# BUDGET 2023

## INCOME

Individual Donations	\$ 10,729.95
Corporate Donations	\$12,500.00
Government Grants	\$50,724.99
Private Grants	\$14,489.27
Calendars	\$2,608.00
May Baskets	\$6,463.00
Framingham Public Library Foundation	\$300.00
Interest	\$444.68
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$98,259.89</b>

## EXPENSES

Salaries	\$64,447.74
Bank Fees	\$33.62
Fundraising Expenses	\$2,125.08
Professional Development for Tutors	\$300.00
Network - Professional Development for Staff	\$925.00
Equipment & Supplies (Ink, whiteboard)	\$785.29
Books	\$2,023.12
Subscriptions	\$515.50
Trainings	\$6,300.00
Accounting and Government Fees	\$696.30
Events-Volunteer Appreciation Night	\$1,489.58
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$79,641.23</b>
Excess Revenue over Expenses	\$18,618.66
In-kind donations from Framingham Public Library (space, phones, internet, cleaning)	\$40,000.00
In-kind donations in the form of volunteer hours	\$430,652.45
<b>TOTAL IN-KIND DONATIONS</b>	<b>\$470,652.45</b>



*Tutors at Volunteer Appreciation Night*



*Michelle Cuata recruiting volunteers at the library*

## STAFF

- Karen Boudreau, Office Manager
- Marjorie Solomon, Clerical Assistant
- Michelle Cuata, Program Coordinator

## CONVERSATION CLASS LEADERS

- Bonnie Mitchell
- Denise O'Hare
- Sue Kelly
- Elaine Strongwater
- Laurie Christie
- Rebecca Bernzweig
- Les Bryan
- Brian Judge
- Dan Schullman
- Jim Meadors
- Aaron Raymond
- Kathy Sastavikas
- Peg Withol
- Tim Hamilton
- Peter Bearor
- Denise Corless

## ADVISORY BOARD

- Maria Barry, Chair
- Lisa Gelin, Vice Chair
- Tina Fan-Seto, Secretary
- Denise Corless
- Olga Epifanova
- Barbara Gainsboro
- Timothy Hamilton
- Kathy Roth
- Rebecca Bernzweig
- Judy Mills
- Bonnie Mitchell
- Milena Rivas

## FRAMINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY

- Lena Kilburn, Director
- Dawn A. Dellasanta, Assistant Director

## TRAINERS

- Anne O'Connell
- Denise Corless
- Laurie Christie
- Tina Golden

## LITERACY UNLIMITED OF FRAMINGHAM FOUNDATION

- Kathryn Roth, President
- Michelle Cuata, Treasurer and Coordinator of Literacy Unlimited
- Lena Kilburn, Director of Framingham Public Library
- Bonnie Mitchell, Clerk
- Anne O'Connell, Director
- Barbara Gainsboro, Director

## CORPORATE SPONSORS

- North Center Productions, Inc.
- N+1 Cyclery
- The Home Depot
- Trader Joe's
- Dulce D'Leche
- DCU
- Framingham Station Brazilian Steakhouse
- Los Cabos Mexican Cantina, Ashland
- UNO Pizzeria & Grill
- Sam Sushi
- Pho Dakao
- Christa McAuliffe Branch Staff
- Volunteers of the Friends of the Framingham Library
- Framingham Public Library Foundation
- Main Library Reference Desk

**Special thanks to our photographer, Carrie-Lyn Woodsum.**

**Many thanks to our individual and corporate sponsors for their contributions to the May Baskets Raffle!**

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Your donation makes a life-changing difference for our students. Because of your generosity, Literacy Unlimited continues to support 130 tutor-student pairs and to host 17 conversation classes each week! Your donation helps pay for:

- \* Stipends for our tutor trainers
- \* Educational materials for our tutors and students
- \* Tuition for NETWORK, a professional development conference for staff and volunteers
- \* Essential, online ESL subscriptions

## DONATE TODAY

Here are two easy ways to make a tax-deductible donation to Literacy Unlimited.

Make a monthly or one-time donation via PayPal. Simply go online to [framinghamlibrary.org/literacy/appeal/](https://framinghamlibrary.org/literacy/appeal/) or scan the QR code below with your phone to donate. Credit and debit cards are accepted.

Write a check payable to Literacy Unlimited of Framingham Foundation, Inc. and mail it to: Literacy Unlimited, 49 Lexington St., Framingham, MA 01702.

