DALLAS HAS A BIG WORD PROBLEM.
By 2030, Dallas County’s population will reach 3.5 million. An estimated one-third of that population will be illiterate.

What is the number of illiterate people that will reside in Dallas County by 2030?
LIFT’s mission is to Bend the Trend of escalating illiteracy. We understand the impact of one million illiterate residents, and we know that the year 2030 will be too late to intervene.

THE TIME IS NOW!
ILLITERACY IS OFTEN HIDDEN IN OUR COMMUNITY.
When I was 13, my mother left my younger siblings and me. She was all we had. We moved into my grandmother’s three-bedroom house shared by 19 family members. Two years later, my grandmother became ill and couldn’t work. I quit school to provide for my family by working odd jobs. Eventually, I ended up with a warehouse job that helped us manage. After working there for many years, I was laid off.

Suddenly, I was 19, without a job, without a high school diploma, with people to feed and clothe.
Most people in Dadrian’s life told him that completing his education was a waste of time. He knew he needed to make a change. After attending LIFT classes for 18 months, he earned his GED.

He now has a full-time job with a living wage and benefits, including educational reimbursement.

He plans to continue his education to advance his career. Just as he had done many times before, Dadrian helped his family by helping himself. He proved to himself and others what education can do, and he continues to be a role model for everyone in his life.

His fiancé enrolled as a LIFT student.
Almost 40% of Dallas County residents speak a language other than English at home. Along with the benefits of having 239 languages spoken here, the infusion of culture also brings lower rates of English language literacy. However, the longer people reside in the U.S. and the more education they receive, the higher their level of English language proficiency. As proficiency increases, new residents are more likely to be civically engaged and self-sufficient.1

Over 35% of adults in households who make less than $12,000 per year did not complete high school. A child’s ability to read increases if a parent is able to read with them. An average middle income family is able to spend 1,000 hours reading with a child before first grade compared to the fewer than 100 hours an average economically disadvantaged family is able to spend. The literacy gaps created before first grade are increasingly more difficult to close as the child transitions to high school.2

The high school drop out rate in Texas is alarming. In Dallas, more than 35% of the population does not have a high school diploma or GED, and half of those individuals read below a basic level.2

Learning differences are often undiagnosed and untreated. Studies show that 50% to 80% of students in adult literacy programs have reading-specific learning differences including dyslexia and dysgraphia. On basic tests, adults with these differences have lower than average scores on prose, document and qualitative literacy measures.2
and impacts the entire community in many ways.

**EARLY MORTALITY**

The leading predictor of early mortality is low health literacy. Individuals who are unable to read have a more difficult time adopting healthy behaviors, researching preventative care, or finding providers for care. These behaviors are exacerbated when the individual has a severe or chronic disease.²

**HEALTH CARE COSTS**

Individuals who are illiterate struggle with reading instructions for medical documentation. Misread prescription labels create additional U.S. healthcare costs of $230 billion annually.²

**UNEMPLOYMENT**

Job searching and the modern workplace demands basic literacy skills, including an increasingly specialized vocabulary. An estimated 23% of adults in the U.S. score in the lowest level on national literacy tests. By improving just one literacy level, adults approximately double their average number of weeks worked from 19 to 34 weeks annually.³

**CRIME RATES**

59% of federal prison inmates either did not complete high school or can be classified as low literate. There is a 70% chance these inmates will return to prison. That number drops dramatically to 16% when they are given literacy training.²

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Sources:
1. nces.ed.gov/ssbr/pages/adultliteracy.asp
2. www.literacytexas.org
3. National Institute for Literacy (NIFL), 1993
ILLITERACY AFFECTS THE ENTIRE FAMILY.
My husband and I chose to move our family away from Guadalajara, Mexico because of escalating violence and direct threats against our family. Once we arrived in Dallas, my husband started a small business but struggled to communicate well with his clients. I stayed at home to help our children adjust but

I found it extremely difficult to talk to my children’s teachers or help them with homework.

My husband and I wanted to read, write and speak English better.
GABRIELA & VICENTE
LIFT ESL Graduates
Gabriela and Vicente chose St. Francis Church of Frisco as an anchor for their family. As a LIFT partner site, St. Francis provided them with English as a Second Language classes.

The couple progressed from the basics to full conversations within four months.

With the support of LIFT, their church and their ESL volunteer teacher, Vicente was able to improve communication with his customers and develop a thriving business, and Gabriela is now able to advocate for their children.
Dallas’ population is expected to grow by over 1 million people in the next 20 years.

DALLAS COUNTY POPULATION PROJECTION

Immigration trends are one of the strongest predictors of illiteracy rates.¹

- 2010: 2.4MM
- 2015: 2.6MM
- 2020: 2.9MM
- 2025: 3.2MM
- 2030: 3.5MM

= Hispanic
= Non-Hispanic
The illiteracy rate is projected to grow faster than the population rate.

Sources:
1. nces.ed.gov/ssbr/pages/adultliteracy.asp
2. quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48/48113.html
IT’S TIME TO BEND THE TREND.

Significant action now will lower the illiteracy rate exponentially. LIFT’s evidence-based programs and successful collaborations will reach more learners in more parts of our community and BEND THE TREND of escalating illiteracy through the following strategies.
DELIVER LITERACY CLASSES TO MORE PEOPLE

through strategic partnerships with area nonprofit agencies. LIFT engages other nonprofit organizations that see a need in their population for literacy services. By 2018 LIFT will serve more than 7,000 adults at 21 sites across the Dallas metroplex annually.

INVEST IN THE DALLAS WORKFORCE

through expanded corporate satellite sites. LIFT works with forward thinking businesses to invest in their employees by delivering on-site literacy instruction. In the next five years LIFT will impact over 20 employers by providing literacy training to at least 11,000 employees.

STRATEGICALLY GROW LITERACY PROGRAMS

in areas with greater levels of poverty. Looking to impact the communities experiencing higher levels of illiteracy, LIFT will expand to the highest need communities in Dallas. This will give LIFT the opportunity to reach thousands of people where they live, work, and worship.
LIFT offers vertically integrated curricula from basic phonics through GED preparation. LIFT’s ESL model begins with basic English and progresses through advanced literacy and conversation. All programs focus on improving workplace literacy and increasing employability.
WHO ARE OUR STUDENTS?

Our students are motivated, goal-oriented individuals with a sense of urgency to change their lives. LIFT students come from diverse backgrounds. In addition to English, they may speak one of 37 languages and claim one of 57 nationalities. The LIFT learner graduates equipped to make a difference in the lives of their families and their community.

HOW DO STUDENTS FIND LIFT?

LIFT learners find our programs through community resources including churches, schools, and other non profit organizations. Many learners are engaged by friends and family members who may have been previous LIFT learners.

HOW DO THEY FEEL WHEN THEY COME TO LIFT?

Many learners begin our programs with a sense of fear. They express their vulnerability by admitting to having a learning difference that they have been living with for many years. However, LIFT learners soon realize they are surrounded by like-minded people on the same journey to literacy. They are no longer alone. They are no longer in hiding.

WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL LEARNER?

Successful LIFT learners are confident, goal-oriented and become independent advocates for lifelong learning. LIFT helps learners to become less dependent on social services and gives them opportunities to find living wage employment. Our learners also experience an improved quality of life for themselves and their families.
37
is the average age of an adult learner at LIFT

98%
of LIFT students live below the poverty line

60%
of LIFT students are women
We couldn’t do what we do without the help of our wonderful volunteers.

Doug Butler is a successful trial lawyer. His two years as a LIFT volunteer teacher inspired him to produce a documentary about adult illiteracy.

“By volunteering at LIFT, I have had the privilege of watching people’s lives change as they learn to read. It raised their shoulders, their heads and their eyes. You can’t help but cheer for them.”

LIFT attracts passionate, dedicated volunteers from various backgrounds including highly skilled professionals, community workers, retired teachers, and homemakers. We ask for a minimum commitment of two hours per week for three months. However, some volunteers have been teaching at LIFT for many years. Volunteers can also mentor, tutor, or facilitate the computer lab.
1961, in response to their concern over the illiteracy rate among adults in the Dallas area, the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), Greater Dallas Section, founded LIFT. The goal was to create and support an organization that would offer free and easily accessible classes so that functionally illiterate adults could learn to read and write English. Since 1961, over 45,000 low-literate adults have learned to read at LIFT.

TODAY, we continue to grow that number, enhance lives and strengthen communities by teaching adults to read. LIFT serves over 5,000 learners with the help of over 330 volunteers.
LIFT launches GED Direct, a first of its kind distance learning program that makes GED preparation available to adult learners anytime, anywhere. The original network of users involves 10 sites in three counties.

LIFT is the 12th highest investment in the UWMD service area for Community Impact Grants.

LIFT annually serves at least 25,000 low-literate adults through 40 community partnerships.

LIFT relocates to Opportunity Center, a collective-impact campus. This campus is the first of its kind in the Southwest, bringing together LIFT, CitySquare and Workforce Solutions of Greater Dallas providing wrap-around social services to create permanent routes out of poverty.
THE TIME IS NOW.

Help LIFT expand our capacity to enhance lives and strengthen communities by teaching more adults to read.

Our model relies on very limited resources but allows us to serve thousands of adults annually through the dedication of hundreds of volunteer teachers and a strategic network of collaborations and partner sites. Join our Bend the Trend Campaign to increase adult literacy.
Empowering adults to make powerful choices.

www.lift-texas.org