



Benefit raises
\$7,500
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Dedications hon-
or staff members
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SIENA LITERACY CENTER NEWSLETTER

CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 4

Tutor workshop: Tutoring Issues Q&A, 3 pm (please RSVP)

NOVEMBER 7

Tutor workshop: Tutoring Issues Q&A, 5:30 pm (please RSVP)

NOVEMBER 25-26

Building closed—staff training

NOVEMBER 27-28

Building closed—Thanksgiving break

DECEMBER 3

Giving Tuesday

DECEMBER 23-JANUARY 6

Building closed—holiday break

JANUARY 20

Building closed—Martin Luther King Day

ONGOING

New student or tutor orientations (sign up online)

Students:

www.sienaliteracy.org/signup

Tutors:

www.sienaliteracy.org/tutor

Greetings, and happy fall!

The changing seasons and approaching holidays offer me a chance to reflect and express gratitude for all who join Siena Literacy Center’s mission to help adult learners meet the challenges of daily living.



The news today shows us a nation and world sometimes divided by conflict and war. A natural (and understandable) response might be withdrawal and avoidance. But as supporters of education, we take an alternative approach: one that seeks to understand difference, engage in meaningful discourse, and bridge divide. Learning (and listening) is an act we can all engage in as we work towards peace. Thank you for being here.

As a sponsored institution of the Adrian Dominican Sisters, we have had the privilege of working in the field of adult education in Northwest Detroit for nearly three decades. That’s right! We celebrate 30 years of service next fall, and you can read about the launch of our 30 Years of Learning campaign on [page 6](#). We are seeking generous donors who can commit to donating \$30 a month in celebration of this milestone. And we have put out a call for anyone with a connection to Siena – past or present – to share your stories on our virtual timeline. Will you join us?

There is much to update you on since our last newsletter went out: new programming at our satellite classroom and staff dedications ([page 3](#)); celebrations honoring volunteers and learners (page 4); and a peek into one of the many beautiful tutor pair relationships that are the heart of the work we do ([page 5](#)). I hope you enjoy their story as much as I did.

Have you been to main building on Christ the King campus, or are you curious about our new classroom space at St. Suzanne’s? Please don’t hesitate to reach out to me and request a tour. We would love to connect with you.

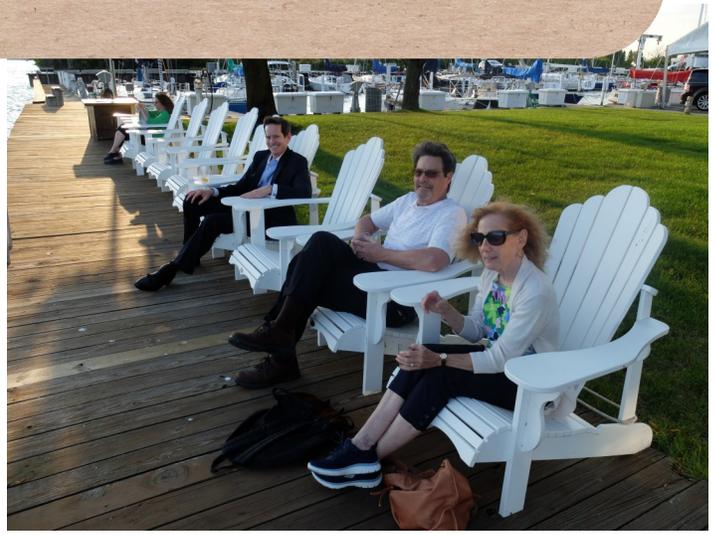
With gratitude,

Caitlyn Pisarski, Executive Director



Siena at Sunset on the Water: Celebration Raises \$7,500 for Adult Literacy

Thank you to all the friends who joined us for our [annual benefit evening](#) at the Bayview Yacht Club on Thursday, September 5. We enjoyed perfect weather on the water, delicious refreshments, and great company. Ticket sales, silent auction, and a 50/50 raffle brought in approximately \$7,500 to support Siena Literacy Center students. The benefit kicked off Siena Literacy Center's 30-year anniversary celebration—read more on [page 6](#).



New classroom space at St. Suzanne will hold Learn to Earn students, evening GED classes

In February, Siena Literacy Center partnered with St. Suzanne Cody Rouge Community Resource Center to open additional classroom space for English language learners. Now, that classroom space is finding additional purpose.

Learn to Earn: Siena Literacy Center is a proud partner of Detroit at Work's Learn to Earn program, which pays Detroiters to improve their educations. This space will now host instructor-led classes and open computer lab space for Learn to Earn students on Mondays and Thursdays.



GED classes: Responding to popular demand, Siena will soon begin offering evening GED classes at both beginning and advanced levels. Students will work on language arts, social studies, math, and science. Interested students can now sign up for orientation on our website, www.sienaliteracy.org.

Dedications honor long-time staff members

Siena Literacy Center has recently recognized two beloved staff members for their many years of service by dedicating two rooms in their honor.

Sr. Lenore Boivin, OP, worked at Siena Literacy Center for 17 years, assisting many of our tutors and students. She continued to volunteer as a tutor after her retirement until she stepped down this past year. The resource room where she had her desk was re-named the "Sr. Lenore Boivin Resource Room" at a ceremony in May.



Above: This placard now hangs in the computer lab at Siena.

Right: Sr. Janet Stankowski and Sr. Ellen Burkhardt represent the Dominican Sisters at Sr. Lenore's dedication ceremony.



Sr. Mary Anny Riley, IHM, has worked for decades in Siena's computer lab in a wide variety of roles, as both a staff person and volunteer. The computer lab was re-named the "Mary Anna Riley, IHM, Computer Lab" at a ceremony in July that was standing room only due to the attendance of all Sr. Mary Anna's friends and family.



In April, we celebrated our [Volunteer Awards Ceremony](#) at the North Rosedale Park Community House. Thanks to our honorees—Dani Teno, John Morris, Mary Francis, Melanie Stone, Lauren Majlinger, and John Kluka—and to everyone who came out to celebrate! We are so appreciative of all our volunteers.



In June we held our annual **Honor Society Induction & Awards Ceremony!** We inducted nine new members into our chapter of the National Adult Education Honor Society. We also recognized students who exhibited exemplary attendance, improvement, or commitment throughout the 2023-24 year.



Have you seen our **basement** lately? This summer, hard-working volunteers from Motown Mission helped clean out our space, which has now been professionally painted to make way for offices, conference space, and a staff break room.



In August, Siena worked with Christ the King Catholic Church and the U.S. Probation Office to host the annual **community resource fair** on our campus. The event featured more than 30 vendors, free food and raffles, employment opportunities, health screenings, and activities for kids.

Spotlight: ADAMA NDIAYE & ANGEL BENDER

Tutor Angel Bender and learner Adama Ndiaye started working together at the beginning of August. The two are off to a great start working on English language skills, as well as GED vocabulary and test-taking strategies.

What made you come to Siena Literacy Center?

Angel: I really wanted to get into a literacy program. I wasn't sure if it was for adults or children. I actually visited a child's after-school program, and I said, children are not for me. So I went into adult literacy. I have a strong belief that everybody should have access to education.

Adama: Since I've been here [in the U.S.], I was making a search about how to get a diploma in order to go to a university.... So first of all, I wanted to increase my English in order to communicate well with people, and try to get my GED in order to go to university.

What do you like best about working together?

Adama: What I like best is her ability to make me feel comfortable, like I can study at my own pace, and we're going step by step. She's not rushing me.

Angel: I enjoy helping someone reach their goals, really. Every week there's something that he's doing, that he's accomplished, to succeed, to reach his goals. And I'm just excited to be a part of that.

What have you enjoyed about your time here at Siena Literacy Center?

Angel: I've learned so much. I've met new people. Just meeting people and learning from them as individuals, through their experiences, it's amazing. It's why I do what I do.

Adama: First of all, when I came in this country, we was in some type of center, with a whole bunch of people from Haiti, from Africa.... My English was not so good, but it wasn't so bad, so I was translating.



And I found over there that communicating with people can help me increase my English.... So once I came to Siena, it made me communicate with a lot of persons here.... I appreciate the welcome, how they was treating me.... The hospitality, too, I enjoy. I was learning just by communicating with you.

What has been challenging, or different than how you expected it to be?

Adama: The weather. Because I come from Africa, so it's every time sunny over there.... There was that, and a lot of stress, because I'm still not able to work [while waiting on a legal work authorization].

Angel: Challenging for me is giving the best instruction to the student, to work at their pace, to state things in a way they will understand them, in a way that will stick. The workshops here, I guess that's something I didn't expect, how helpful the workshops are. I feel like a better tutor after each and every one.

This interview has been edited for length. Scan the QR code to read the full interview or visit

www.sienaliteracy.org/angelandadama.





Celebrating 30 Years of Learning

Education CHANGES LIVES and CREATES BELONGING. Founded in 1995, Siena is a sponsored program of the Adrian Dominican Sisters.

#30YearsofLearning



Add your memories to our virtual timeline or make a gift to help us continue serving adult learners for the next 30 years!

Scan the code above or visit: www.sienaliteracy.org/30years



With Gratitude to Our Generous Donors

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In Honor of

Sr. Lenore Boivin

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SIENA LITERACY CENTER

*We said farewell to our social work
interns at our volunteer
appreciation celebration in April.
Best of luck, Crystal and Marissa!*

Follow us: @sienaliteracy

