



Literacy Speaks at Literacy Volunteers Chippewa Valley Luncheon



Photo caption:

Literacy Speaks presenters are left to right MaryJo VanGompel, Executive Director of Literacy Volunteers Chippewa Valley, John Hildebrand, Nabil Elnashar, Thna Said, Mary Ciresi, Paul Kulig, Linda Bolgren, Joel Jevne and Dave Rasmussen. Missing from the photo is Nahla Sakar.

Do you remember what it was like before you could to read this article? It can be very frustrating to not know how to read a menu, figure out the correct tip for your server, or read a book to your child. These are some of the difficulties faced by adults here in the Chippewa Valley who have not learned how to read, write, or learn basic math skills. To better understand the importance of literacy, the second annual “Literacy Speaks” luncheon was held on Jan. 15, 2015 at Florian Gardens, Eau Claire.

At Literacy Speaks, inspirational presentations were given by volunteer tutors and students at Literacy Volunteers Chippewa Valley. Special guest author John Hildebrand was the keynote speaker. Hildebrand is the author of four nonfiction books and an English professor at UW-Eau Claire. In addition to being a published writer, Hildebrand is also an avid reader.

“None of us would be here today without a passionate relationship to reading that goes beyond just acquiring information,” Hildebrand said. “I think each of us, at some point in time, had a

moment of discovery when we realized that what we were reading in a book was somehow about us. The characters and event described in the book may have been “made up“, yet they said something pertinent about our own lives, our own circumstances.”

Literacy Volunteers’ student presenters gave their personal perspectives on what it means to have low literacy. “You do not know what it is like not being able to read. Because of (my tutor) and Literacy Volunteers, I have been able to start a new life. Now I have at least some of the tools to read and write. I no longer have to use only my memory to put something together,” one student said.

In addition to Literacy Speaks creating awareness about illiteracy in our community, it serves as a fund raiser to support literacy services in the Chippewa Valley (Chippewa, Dunn and Eau Claire counties). Over 100 invited community leaders attended the luncheon and the presentation. For more information, contact Executive Director MaryJo VanGompel at 715-834-0222.

About Literacy Volunteers Chippewa Valley

Literacy Volunteers Chippewa Valley is a community-based literacy program that offers adults the opportunity to gain the skills they need to make a better life for themselves and their families. They do this by taking the time to understand the unique needs of each learner and tailoring our services specifically to them. Founded in 1986, LVCV’s mission is to provide flexible literacy programs to help adults and their families reach their education, employment, and life goals. All programs utilize tutoring provided by trained and supported volunteer tutors. With offices in Chippewa, Dunn and Eau Claire counties, LVCV is classified as a tax exempt, 501(c) (3) non-profit organization.

For more information, please visit <http://www.lvcv.org> or contact Literacy Volunteers Chippewa Valley at [715-834-0222](tel:715-834-0222).

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