

Dear Friend of Literacy Volunteers,

If parents can't read, it is likely that their children won't read well. And when they grow up, their children won't read well, either. Your gift can help us break the cycle of illiteracy.

Shayanna Hill, 11, is one of our success stories. Shayanna, a sixth-grader, used to get into trouble in school.

"Some of the subjects included reading, which she didn't like to do," explained Shayanna's grandmother, Cecilia Thompson. "She was kind of frustrated because she didn't know some of the words. She would say, 'I don't know how to read; I can't read.'" Although

she receives extra help in school, it wasn't enough to bring her up to grade level.

Two years ago Shayanna began receiving after-school tutoring through the Supplemental Educational Services (SES) program of Literacy Volunteers of Buffalo and Erie County.

Literacy Volunteers offers family literacy programming and special events to help encourage a love of reading and literacy.

Her reading has made steady improvement, and it is changing not only her life, but the lives of those around her. She's helping her father to improve his reading. He never read well, even though he received his GED.

Shayanna pays attention in class now. In Sunday school, she likes to stand up and read.

In the SES program, students are tutored in a small group by a certified teacher and, whenever possible, with extra help from a trained youth tutor. They encourage families to be reading partners, helping the children practice reading throughout the day. For example, Shayanna's grandmother will tell her to look for a particular street so she learns to read street signs.

With help from Literacy Volunteers, Shayanna is moving toward her

(over)



Yes, I want to help change lives word by word!



teaching materials



three work books



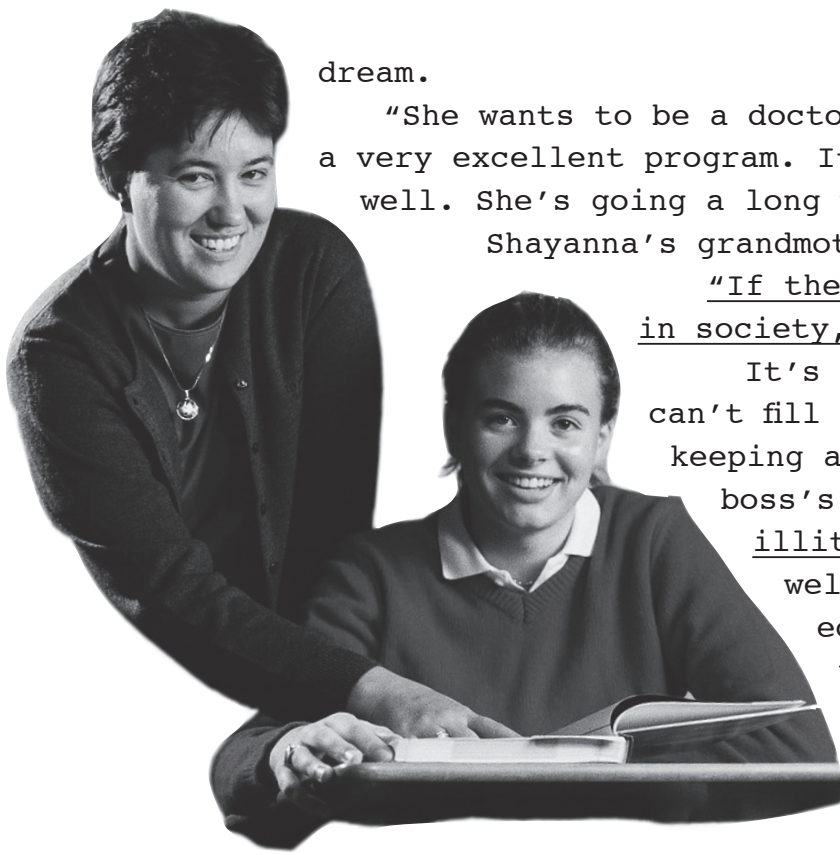
tutoring site operates for one week



or

Please charge my credit card:





dream.

"She wants to be a doctor," her grandmother said. "This is a very excellent program. It has helped my granddaughter very well. She's going a long way with this program."

Shayanna's grandmother knows how important reading is.

"If they can't read, they can't really live in society," she said.

It's difficult to get a good job if you can't fill out a job application. It's tough keeping a job if you can't read e-mail, your boss's note or driving directions. Many illiterate people live in poverty, and welfare recipients with the lowest educational skills stay on welfare the longest.

The statistics get even more grim: 85 percent of juvenile offenders have reading problems and 60 percent of prison inmates are illiterate.

Shayanna's grandmother who is so proud of her granddaughter's success has encouraged other families to sign up their children in the program, but there's a waiting list with over 100 children on it. While those children need the help just as badly as Shayanna did, they don't go to one of the schools designated for the federal program.

It's difficult to get a good job if you can't fill out a job application. It's tough keeping a job if you can't read e-mail, your boss's note or driving directions.

With more funding, we could hire more certified teachers, train more volunteers, and open the program to children who are languishing on the waiting list. Please use the enclosed envelope today to change lives and help break the cycle of illiteracy.

Sincerely,

Tracy Diina

Tracy Diina
Executive Director

PS: A gift of \$60 would allow us to purchase three workbooks, helping more children master the skill of reading. It can mean the difference between fulfilling a dream or becoming a grim statistic.

One in five residents of Erie County is functionally illiterate—They cannot read above a fifth-grade level.

That's shocking, but Literacy Volunteers has many strategies to break the cycle of illiteracy.

- Supplemental Educational Services (SES) Program for children and other after-school tutoring programs
- Peer-to-peer tutoring, where trained teenagers tutor youth in the community
- Youth mentoring, which provides reading and social skills development for children in grades 4 through 8
- Neighborhood Literacy Drop-In Centers
- One-to-one free tutoring in basic reading or English as a second language for adults
- Mommy & Me English as a Second Language storytime
- The Goodwill Family Enrichment Center and the Reading Right Now literacy program, which help children and adults break the cycle of illiteracy

For privacy reasons, photographs are not of actual program participants.

