

Adult Literacy Program Moves Forward Ongoing, Countywide

In September 2008, Citrus County Administrator Anthony Schembri had a vision of all Citrus County adults being able to read successfully. The Citrus County Board of County Commissioners proclaimed September as Florida Adult and Family Literacy Month at their September 23 board meeting. This vision and proclamation marked the beginning of the Citrus County Library System's Adult Literacy program.

The first volunteer tutor training for the Adult Literacy program, which occurred on November 19 and 20 at the Homosassa Public Library, was well-received. Twenty seven people were trained by a Proliteracy certified trainer using the LitStart method. These trained tutors were then matched up to waiting learners to begin the initial pilot program.



County Administrator Anthony Schembri directs Focus on Adult Literacy.

Currently, there are 25 adult learners paired with volunteer tutors who are meeting one-on-one in libraries around the county on a regular basis. Many of the adult learners have specific goals to achieve, such as: being able to read a street sign, a recipe, a newspaper headline, or a book to a child. Some adult learners in the library's Adult Literacy program aspire to pass tests that will help them get new and promising careers in areas such as cosmetology, nursing, and the culinary arts.

Due to a growing number of adult learners waiting for tutors, a second volunteer tutor training will take place in April at the Homosassa Public Library. The class will provide training for up to 25 volunteers that expressed an interest in tutoring and are on a waiting list. Another session will be scheduled for additional volunteers in the fall. The training sessions will be a combined Basic Literacy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) tutor workshop presented by a Proliteracy certified trainer. Library Director Flossie Benton Rogers and Homosassa Branch Manager Susan Mutschler are coordinating the event. The Citrus County Shared Services Alliance continues to disseminate information to their membership and assist in the recruitment of tutors and adult learners.

As the program moves forward, plans are in motion to expand the initial agenda to include more participants and have library staff certified as Proliteracy tutors, with the goal of sustainability for this valuable program.