

San Diego Public Library's Award-Winning Literacy Services

The San Diego Public Library's adult literacy services have received national recognition for their effectiveness. The American Library Association named it the nation's top literacy program and the U.S. Department of Education recognized it as a model program. Library literacy programs provide life-changing training to low-literate students from a broad range of backgrounds and learning levels. The program has helped more than 22,000 San Diego adults learn to read and write.

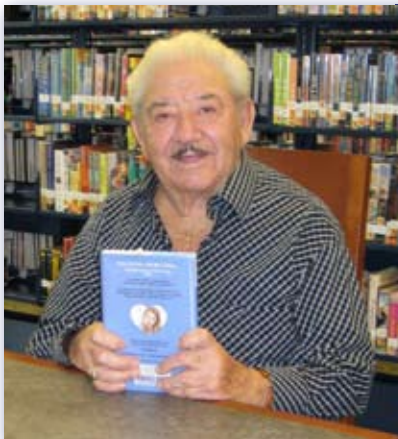
An estimated 450,000 San Diego adults cannot read and write well enough to meet everyday needs and pursue employment goals. These functionally illiterate adults compensate by developing listening and memorization techniques and relying on a network of trusted helpers.



"The most important thing to me is I can now read and understand my three kids' homework," said READ graduate Maria Gonzalez. She credits the program with helping her earn her GED, find a job, enroll in college and prepare her children for success in school.

READ/San Diego is a free adult literacy instruction service provided by the San Diego Public Library. The program is staffed by literacy professionals and coordinates the efforts of volunteer reading tutors. READ/San Diego cooperates with local adult schools, community colleges and other literacy education providers in making and receiving student referrals.

Tutors receive comprehensive training, including intensive instruction in learning disabilities. Tutors meet with their assigned students twice a week for a total of three hours, usually at a library branch. An in-house Computer Reading Lab provides learners support with comprehensive reading software. Students also improve language skills, spelling, math, typing and GED and job presentation skills in the Reading Lab.



"You are never too old to learn and you've got to make an effort to learn because it will change your life," said READ graduate Bob Perez who got his first library card at age 84. "You couldn't ask for anything better than READ/San Diego and the staff and resources at the San Diego Public Library."

READ/San Diego is currently housed at the Valencia Park/Malcolm X Branch Library. The program will enjoy expanded space and improved access when it moves to the New Central Library in the summer of 2013.

Families for Literacy introduces low-literate parents and caregivers with young children to the services of the public library and teaches them how to be their child's first and foremost teacher. Participants learn how to read to their children. The program also provides free children's books so at-home libraries can be created. The innovative program includes parenting skills training on topics such as nutrition and the affects of TV use on a child's brain development. Classes are offered at the City Heights/Weingart, Logan Heights, Serra Mesa/Kearny Mesa and Valencia Park/Malcolm X Branch Libraries. Each year, Families for Literacy works with 100 families to help ensure children enter school ready to learn.

