Reading Changes Lives

*Reading Changes Lives*, a United Church of Christ all-church initiative, is our denomination's response to the crippling literacy gap in the United States and around the world. Through this year-long effort individuals, congregations, and communities are taking action steps to address this persistent injustice.

We are reminded in 1 Corinthians 12, that we are all part of one body through Christ. When any member of our community suffers, we all suffer. Literacy statistics show that there are children, teenagers and adults who are suffering from illiteracy within our own communities.

If a child cannot read at a proficient level by the 4th grade, there is a 66% chance that he or she will end up in jail or on welfare. Approximately 85% of all juveniles who interface with the juvenile court system are functionally illiterate. In the U.S. 1 in 5 (20%) adults lack reading skills beyond a 4th grade level.
LITERACY INFO

There are more than 92,000 illiterate adults in Central Alabama.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Functionally Illiterate Adults</th>
<th>Functionally Illiterate Adults (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blount</td>
<td>5,811</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>64,901</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelby</td>
<td>6,215</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Clair</td>
<td>8,419</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walker</td>
<td>7,632</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>92,980</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• 75% of unemployed adults have reading or writing difficulties.
• 75% of all food stamp recipients perform in the two lowest levels of literacy.
• 24% of patients with low literacy skills do not know how to take medication four times a day.
• According to the AMA, individuals with low health literacy incur medical expenses up to four times greater than patients with adequate literacy skills.
• Children's literacy levels are strongly linked to the educational levels of their parents, especially the mother.
• Adults with lower literacy skills are less likely to read to their children. Children who have not already developed basic literacy practices when they enter school are three to four times more likely to drop out of school.
• Parents who improve their education, obtaining a GED or high school diploma, have children who show improvement in school and are more likely to stay in school.
• Low literacy skills have a direct impact on crime, recidivism, poverty, teenage pregnancy and substance abuse.
• 85% of all juvenile offenders have reading problems.
• 7 to 10 prisoners perform in the lowest two literacy levels.
• The greatest barrier to economic development and growth is the absence of a literate workforce.

• More than 60% of front line workers in goods-producing industries have difficulty applying information from text to a required task.
• The U.S. military spends (on average) $70 million annually for basic skills remediation for
Engage 3 Ways
Fact Sheet

Information
In the U.S. 1 in 5 adults (20%) lack reading skills beyond a fourth grade level. We are reminded in 1 Corinthians 12, that we are all part of one body through Christ. When any member of our community suffers, we all suffer.

We invite congregations to join us in our three-part service project, Engage 3 Ways, with local, national and global actions planned to raise literacy rates. Together we can support organizations that engage in the life changing work of teaching children and adults how to read.

Event
Local Supply Drive
The Supply Drive is a grassroots campaign that supports one of the largest providers of free reading programs in most communities, school systems. This event makes it easy to collect school supplies and donate to local school system in need.

Event
Stuff the Pack Event (National Special Service Project)
General Synod 30 participants will prepare backpacks with school supplies that will be distributed by our community partner, University Settlement, to children within the Cleveland Municipal School District. Dates and times are listed below.

- Friday, June 26, 2015 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm
- Saturday, June 27, 2015 1:30 pm – 3:30 pm
- Sunday, June 28, 2015 9:00 am – 11:00 am

Registrants are encouraged to bring a school supplies to General Synod 30. Items will be included in additional backpacks for University Settlement’s Back to School Resource Fair.

Recommended School Supply List
- Crayons - 24-packs
- Rulers - 12 inches
- Pencils - No. 2 in 10 packs.
- Glue Sticks/Paste - 2-pack
- Folders - 3 tab
- Notebook Paper - college and wide ruled
- Notebooks, Spiral - 150 sheets
- Pens - 10 packs in blue, black and red ink
- Eraser - 2 pack
- Scissors - blunt tip

Event
Tutor the Tutor Opportunities
This national community event invites all to spend an afternoon learning how to become an effective literacy tutor with Rob Shindler, author of Hot Dogs & Hamburgers: Unlocking Life's Potential by Inspiring Literacy at Any Age. This event will take place at General Synod 30. Date and time listed below.

- Sunday, June 28, 2015 12:30 pm – 2:00 pm

Event
School Supplies for Cairo
The UCC will raise funds online for a literacy program of our Global Ministries’ partner, the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS), for Cairo children in need. Students will receive a new backpack and supplies. Contributions of $5, $10 or $20 to end illiteracy in Cairo is a small step in ending illiteracy abroad. Visit the Reading Changes Lives website at ucc.org/literacy for more information.

ucc.org/literacy