

# Reader



## We're Moving!

This fall GPLC's main office will move to downtown Pittsburgh after nearly thirty years in East Liberty. The new office will be located at 411 Seventh Avenue, in the building that houses Duquesne Light's corporate headquarters.

In 2005 GPLC opened its Downtown Center, a learning center that serves hundreds of adult students each week. This center, also located at 411 Seventh Avenue, has become the hub of all activities for the organization and the place that visitors seek out in order to get an overview of the organization. GPLC's board of directors decided that it would be efficient to have the main office and the learning center in the same location.

GPLC will occupy a total of 13,000 square feet on the fifth floor of the office building. Having a downtown headquarters will give us easy access to the business community and to prospective employers who may hire our students. GPLC will also be located at the hub of the public transportation system, which is used by many students.

The new location will allow GPLC to expand its services and reach more students than ever before. We look forward to welcoming students, volunteers, and friends to our new office.

*Starting approximately October 1*

### **NEW ADDRESS:**

*GPLC, 411 Seventh Avenue, Suite 550 • Pittsburgh, PA 15219*

**NEW PHONE: 412.393.7600**



## Focus on the Future

At the beginning of 2011 the GPLC board of directors launched Focus on the Future, a \$400,000 capital drive to fund renovations and improvements at the new main office. We are pleased to report that donors have responded very generously, and we have raised 84% of the goal.

It is gratifying to see that many donors feel so strongly about GPLC and the successes of our students that they are making commitments to the capital project while they also maintain or increase their annual giving for operations. These contributors have kept GPLC strong during tough economic times.

While past capital campaigns at GPLC were largely supported by foundations, this project is receiving much of its support from individual contributors. We are deeply grateful for the support that is making our new office and teaching space possible. To find out how you can participate in Focus on the Future, go to [www.gplc.org/expansion.cfm](http://www.gplc.org/expansion.cfm).



Open up a life.

# GPLC in Central Asia

By Ashley Murray

This fall two staff members, MaryRose Walko and Becky Cook, will travel to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to promote community service and to evaluate developing efforts there.

Their trip is a continuation of a program that began in Pittsburgh this past autumn where Ms. Walko and Ms. Cook spoke to a 22-member delegation from those countries along with co-workers from GPLC. Ms. Walko and a group of AmeriCorps members led a discussion on community service, while Ms. Cook spoke about recruiting and retaining volunteers.

Mobilizing Community: Community-based Volunteerism is the name of the project, and it is funded by the U.S. State Department and directed locally by the international humanitarian arm of Magee Women's Hospital of Pittsburgh.



Becky Cook and MaryRose Walko

Pittsburgh will be covered, and then the delegates will talk to us about their community action plans.”

Then Walko, Cook, and the other representatives will travel to the delegates' individual towns to conduct on-site reviews of their community-based projects.



“They [the delegates] asked specific questions of us, how we felt about our work, what has succeeded and what has failed,” said Becky Cook.

Upon arriving in the two countries, Ms. Walko and Ms. Cook will meet with delegates in the capital cities first.

“We’ll do a workshop there [in the capital cities] that’s a continuation of the program in Pittsburgh,” Nicole Travis of Magee Womencare International & Community Outreach Initiatives said. “Any new topics surrounding volunteerism that weren’t answered here in



## Big Fat Greek Party

Literacy Council supporter Chris Passodelis (left) and GPLC board member George Manos prepare the grill at the Big Fat Greek Party. The party (complete with homemade baklava) for 40 people is one of the most popular auction items from GPLC's annual Trivia Bowl. Jerry and Cindy Richey of Mount Lebanon have won the party for the last two years. This year the guest list doubled to 80 guests; GPLC staff and other board members chipped in to help. The next Trivia Bowl will be held March 18 at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral Hall in Oakland.

## New Classes About Jobs

GPLC has begun a new series of classes designed to provide students with an advantage when entering today's workplace. Students and tutors are invited to attend and each one to bring a friend. The first session, which covered "Acing the Interview" and "Hidden Rules of the Workplace," was held in August. The next session will be in November and will address "Your Paycheck: What's in it for you?" and "Dressing for the Workplace," with GPLC staff showing the do's and don't's of proper workplace attire.

Staff members Becky Carpenter and Becky Cook initiated the series for GPLC students who are entering the workforce or who have been out of the workforce for a while. The series reinforces GPLC's commitment to helping students in their transition to employment.



## UPS Sponsors 24th Leaders for Literacy Luncheon

Don't forget to attend the 24th Annual Leaders for Literacy Luncheon, November 3 at the Fairmont Pittsburgh Hotel. This year's event is chaired by Richard G. Camejo, Jr. of United Parcel Service (UPS) and features Liz Murray, author of *My Journey from Homeless to Harvard*.

Ms. Murray's story of hard luck to Harvard exemplifies the Luncheon theme, *Creating Opportunity from Adversity*. The child of drug-addicted parents who routinely ate from dumpsters and sought refuge at all-night subway stations to survive, she was homeless at age 15—and fending for her life. Determined not to be defined by her circumstances, she earned her high school diploma in just two years and won a scholarship to Harvard University. As documented in her book and an Emmy-nominated TV movie, she turned her bleak circumstances into a future of limitless possibility.



*Richard G. Camejo, Jr. – President, Mid Atlantic District, United Parcel Service*



*Liz Murray – Harvard graduate, author of My Journey from Homeless to Harvard*

## GPLC Honored For National Impact



Since 2006 GPLC has served as national headquarters for Literacy\*AmeriCorps, a project that places national service participants in seven cities throughout the U.S. Now we are receiving a national award for this project.

In recognition of our "extraordinary contributions to improving literacy in the United States," GPLC will receive the Literacy Leadership Award from the National Coalition for Literacy. GPLC executive director Don Block and Elizabeth Rivera, national AmeriCorps coordinator, will accept the honor at a Washington, D.C. reception.

Under the auspices of GPLC, Literacy\*AmeriCorps members serve students and families in Dayton, Seattle, New Orleans, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Phoenix, and Pittsburgh. Over 75 agencies use AmeriCorps members to teach reading, writing and math skills, computer classes, ESL, GED and workforce training to their cities' neediest. The project reaches 15,000 students.

GPLC earned the AmeriCorps leadership position based on its 29-year record of strong fiscal management and program development that puts students first.

Don Block, GPLC executive director, reflected on the honor: "Literacy\*AmeriCorps lets us develop strong partnerships that serve more students and that strengthen the community of adult education service providers in this country."



Jinhee Jeon



Lamont Phillips

## Student Essay Winners Announced

GPLC announced the winners of its Second Annual Student Essay Contest at the Celebration of Volunteers and Students. The winners were Jinhee Jeon, an English as a second language student, and Lamont Phillips. Each received a cash prize.

Ms. Jeon's essay addressed the difficulties of mastering English. Here is an excerpt: "I understand that English may be a roadblock to achieving my future goal in America. However, I understand that I have to overcome these difficulties. I will get over this difficult period and realize my dream. It will also make my dream come true in the U.S. by contributing to this country as an accountant."

Mr. Phillips' essay covered advice he received from the book *Don't Sweat The Small Stuff*. "The book is about self-awareness that we sometimes overlook or take for granted as adults. It covers things like doing something nice for someone else and not telling anybody about it, becoming more patient, letting others have the glory, and many more valuable pieces of information. By incorporating the author's advice in my life, it has helped me to become more in tune with my inner self mentally, physically and spiritually."

We are proud of the progress these students have made in essay writing through their classes at GPLC.

## State Funding Announced

GPLC is fortunate to receive government funding to cover some of our services in adult education and family literacy. Recently the state announced grants for the 2011-12 year, and we received renewed funding, despite the very difficult times for state government. There was a seven percent reduction in our grant.

Many adult literacy programs were not so fortunate. About one half of the agencies that operated under government funding last year received no support. The number of agencies in Allegheny County that receive funds for literacy was reduced from nine to four, with GPLC being one of the four. As you can see, GPLC is one of the highly rated programs in the state and is viewed as a valuable resource.

Students who have been displaced by the closing of programs are now turning to GPLC for help. This is a time when we are trying to respond to the heavy demand for services, and we request the community's help. We deeply appreciate the volunteer time and private financial support that keep our programs running.

Don't  
forget...

## Designate GPLC in your workplace campaign

GPLC's United Way code is 252

Our Combined Federal Campaign number is 57474



**Tuesday, October 4, 2011**

**12 a.m.–11:59 p.m.**

*Make a gift to GPLC on The Pittsburgh Foundation's Day of Giving and it will be matched by local foundations.*

**Pittsburghgives.org**

By teaching this  
parent to read  
and prepare  
for her GED,



we've helped her child  
do better in school.



Open up a life.

Our adult literacy and GED programs make a difference in the workplace, in our communities, and in our schools. **Help us do more by volunteering or contributing.**



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New Board Members

The GPLC board of directors has welcomed the following new members within the past year.

- Sadie Kroeck - vice president of customer relations at Peoples Gas Company Izach Porter - vice president and area sales manager for First Niagara Bank Jennifer Rogers Molinaro - consultant in executive assessment at Development Dimensions International Steven Sokoloski - regional account representative for Comcast Kathleen Sullivan - director of human resources and operations at Thorp Reed & Armstrong

We are grateful to these members who generously give their time to support and strengthen our programs.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council is to ensure that adults and families acquire reading, writing, math, English language, computer skills and workforce skills so they may reach their fullest potential in life and participate productively in their community.

Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council provides the following services

- Reading, Writing and Math Instruction GED Preparation English as a Second Language Workplace Skills Development Family Literacy Workforce Preparation for Welfare Recipients Computer-Assisted Instruction Health Literacy

