The 2020 fiscal year was the most challenging in the Collierville Literacy Council’s 35-year history. In 2019, the Board uncovered financial mismanagement by an employee and worked diligently to address the issues, both through the justice system and by installing new safeguards and procedures. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic was forcing the CLC to shift from in-person to virtual services.

The CLC’s strength is our personalized, individualized learning. For our students, many of whom struggle with technology or had little access to computers, this pivot was too difficult to continue learning. We saw our student body decrease from 141 to 65.

From October - December 2020, the Board of Directors looked at community needs and how we could sustainably move forward. In January 2021, I began working with our Board of Directors for a revamped mission and vision based on a wholistic view of literacy - children, their caregivers, and adults - with a refocused mission and vision.

On May 23, we reopened to the public with reading intervention for 2nd-8th graders and an immersive English program for non-native speakers, with fees on a sliding scale. This summer was a positive beginning, and we are optimistic about growth.

Challenges lay ahead as we rebuild. Our court case is as yet unresolved. However, we are focused on moving forward with stricter financial controls and a model of professional literacy support for our community.

Penny M. Aronson

PENNY ARONSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SERVING THE COMMUNITY SAFELY
Pivoting to online, and closed due to the pandemic

Until May 23, 2020, the CLC was closed for in-person learning due to COVID. Thanks to a grant provided by New Reader’s Press and a donation by Board President Carrie Moore, who purchased Zoom, we served 43 English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) through conversation only, and 22 adult learners continued test prep for the high school equivalency diploma, HISET. We also worked with two partner agencies - YouthBuild and Compass Intervention - for assessments.

While students have smartphones, 86% of students used computers or desktops. Digital literacy, COVID fatigue, and caring for children impacted student learning. We continued to support adult students by referring them to other agencies for rent payments, sharing information about COVID testing, translating information about COVID vaccines in multiple languages, and supporting students with individual questions.

From March 2020 - May 2021, we supported 87 students, with 65 actively working with us virtually, and 22 assessed through partner agencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESOL</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test Prep</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner Agency Support</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REOPENING TO THE COMMUNITY

Infrastructure upgrades/repair
From January - May, we prepared office infrastructure. The Town of Collierville repaired the roof. With the help of Leadership Collierville and volunteers, we repainted the office. We worked to update IT and upgrade the phone system to allow for texting and mobile calling. We revamped our vision and vision statements. These efforts prepared us to reopen our offices to serve our students and our community.

Summer programming
Summer programming included an 8-week summer intensive English program for 15 beginner and intermediate students. Our 12-session one-on-one intensive Reading Intervention program supported eight 2nd-8th graders who were at least two levels behind in their reading.

Teaching model changes
We've moved to a model where volunteers are required to commit for a period of time, attend extensive online and in-person training, and our ESOL classes are taught by professional teachers. This will help us get accurate, timely data about student improvement.

From $26 a year to sliding scale based on income, for all students
One of our keystones is that we don’t turn anyone away from services. However, we couldn’t sustainably reopen with our previous model, where students paid $26 per year. We began with a sliding scale of services based on income. At the top of the scale, student pay half of what private tutors or schools would charge. This new model builds our organization’s fiscal stability and supports the services we provide.

OUR VISION: FOSTERING LIFELONG LITERACY THROUGHOUT THE MID-SOUTH.
OUR MISSION: EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS AND ENRICHING COMMUNITIES THROUGH LITERACY.
**RACE:** Our grantors request data related to race, which is self-reported by our students.

**POVERTY LEVEL:** Our grantors request income levels of our students, which is self-reported and based on the Federal Poverty Scale. With our sliding scale, students will now report this data at the beginning of each semester, and we determine a payment based on the sliding scale.

**ZIP CODES:** Our students came from 14 Zip codes this past year, including those who joined Zoom from other parts of the country. This graph reflects our ESOL students before May, summer ESOL students, and Reading Intervention students.

**NATIONALITY:** Our students self-report what they consider their home countries. Languages most prevalent: 1. Arabic, 2. Spanish, 3/4: Mandarin/Portuguese.
FUNDING THE CLC

For the past 35 years, the Collierville Literacy Council has been completely funded by private donations, grants and a large yearly grant from United Way.

Beginning in 2020, CLC was no longer eligible to receive United Way grants because of the financial mismanagement of 2019. Funding over the past year was challenging because of virtual learning.

Our total income for 2020 - 2021 was $97,645.80. Fundraising through events and small individual monthly donations has historically been the best way for the CLC to raise funds. We had a deficit of $15,444.07 for the year.

In 2021 our fundraising plan is to focus on support from businesses, increased student revenue from our sliding scale and fundraising through corporate sponsorships and events, while a smaller portion of our revenue will be from grants.
Our Reading Intervention program supports middle schoolers like Emily, with intensive one-on-one instruction.

A NEW YEAR WITH A BRIGHT OUTLOOK

Reopening our doors to the community with our current programming reiterates the reason why we keep our doors open when students provide their feedback during post-assessments and weekly check-ins.

Kelly says of her son Wilson that after 12 sessions, he no longer avoids reading and happily checks books out of the library.

Melissa's son Andy gained three levels in reading after 12 sessions. At the beginning of summer, Andy hid in the bathroom to avoid reading. Now, he helps other students with their homework.

ESOL Summer Intensive Student Kisbel said:
I was very satisfied with the methodology. I felt confident without fear of pronouncing the visual elements. They allowed me to memorize vocabulary, vocation, charisma, and empathy to help motivate me to continue learning. In the future I would like to contribute to their beautiful work."

Our students and community are the reason we are here.