



SIENA LITERACY CENTER

16888 Trinity St., Detroit, MI 48219
www.sienaliteracy.org • 313-532-8404

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 29, 2023

Contact: Katie Anderson
313-532-8404 x503
kanderson@sienaliteracy.org

New Staff Position to Break Down Learning Barriers at Siena Literacy Center

Detroit, Mich. – Adult learners enrolling at Siena Literacy Center have big goals: to read their own mail, to read books to their grandchildren, to improve their job skills, to pass the GED, to attend college. But when students lack access to basic needs, focusing on academics can quickly feel like an insurmountable challenge. Unemployment, unstable housing, lack of transportation or unreliable childcare can all lead to students setting aside their own dreams for another day.

But thanks to a new grant from the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, Siena Literacy Center will now be able to hire a full-time staff person to help connect students to wraparound services and supports, allowing them to keep their focus on meeting the academic goals that will allow them to more readily fill out job applications, vote, practice self-advocacy, engage with their children’s education and improve their quality of life.

The new staff person, called the Community Resource Navigator, will be trained in enrolling participants with income benefits screening and sign-up, including SNAP, WIC and disability benefits. The navigator will also conduct basic mental health, financial wellness and workforce needs assessments and make quality referrals to trusted partners in and around Detroit. Providing these referrals can make the difference between a student completing the program and abandoning it.

“We are incredibly grateful to the Community Foundation for this generous grant that will launch our Community Resource Navigator program,” said Siena’s Executive Director Caitlyn Pisarski. “Adult learners bring their whole selves to the educational experience, and this new staff member will allow us to provide compassionate and responsive supportive services to alleviate suffering and open new opportunities for career growth, wealth-building and healing.”

Siena Literacy Center has been working with adult learners in northwest metropolitan Detroit since 1995, offering one-to-one tutoring to improve reading, math, English language, and digital literacy skills. Adult learners work on independent computer programs and are also matched with a personal tutor who meets with them once a week. More information for volunteers, donors or prospective students can be found at www.sienaliteracy.org.



SIENA LITERACY CENTER

16888 Trinity St., Detroit, MI 48219
www.sienaliteracy.org • 313-532-8404

The Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan is a full-service philanthropic organization leading the way to positive change in our region. As a permanent community endowment built by gifts from thousands of individuals and organizations, the Foundation supports a wide variety of activities benefiting education, arts and culture, health, human services, community development, and civic affairs. Since its inception, the Foundation has distributed more than \$1.4 billion through more than 85,000 grants to nonprofit organizations throughout Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Monroe, Washtenaw, St. Clair and Livingston counties. For more information, please visit www.cfsem.org.

###