



WINNEBAGO AREA
**LITERACY
COUNCIL**

April Newsletter

Dear Trusted Friends of WALC,

A season of change and celebration is upon us.

Earlier this week, I was informed by Dr. Paul Van Auken at UWO Whitburn Center that **WALC has won the inaugural WisACT Civic Visionary Award!**

This award honors a person or organization that overcomes challenges to pursue bold ideas, developing innovative solutions that uplift communities and strengthen civic trust and civic health in Wisconsin. We are also very grateful to State Rep Lori Palmeri for nominating us. And we are honored to be selected as the first recipient of this award and committed to continuing our efforts to promote and strengthen civic literacy initiatives in the Winnebago and Greater Fox Valley area.

More good news—A few weeks ago, our collaborators at Community First Credit Union informed us that **CFCU has won the Governors Tony Evers' 2025 Financial Literacy Legacy Award!**

Since November 2025, we have been in partnership with Community First Credit Union to deliver a three-part Financial Education Workshop series, serving Oshkosh's immigrant and refugee residents, who make up 90% of WALC's learners. To remove barriers that often limit financial inclusion, the partnership provided transportation, interpreters, and on-site childcare, ensuring equitable access for all participants. The workshops built practical financial skills—including responsible debit and credit use, saving strategies, and understanding typical household expenses—supporting historically unbanked and underbanked community members. We are thrilled to hear this news and grateful for the continued partnership with CFCU to eliminate barriers to financial literacy in our communities.

This is also a season in which many of our collaborative initiatives are coming to fruition.

- **Successful WIN (Winnebago Network for Language Access) Program in March**

Last month, we concluded our first-ever Teacher Professional Development Initiative. Supported by the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation's Community Impact Grant, the program brought together 22 teachers, literacy program coordinators, volunteer tutors, and language workers—not only from WALC, but also from the Oshkosh

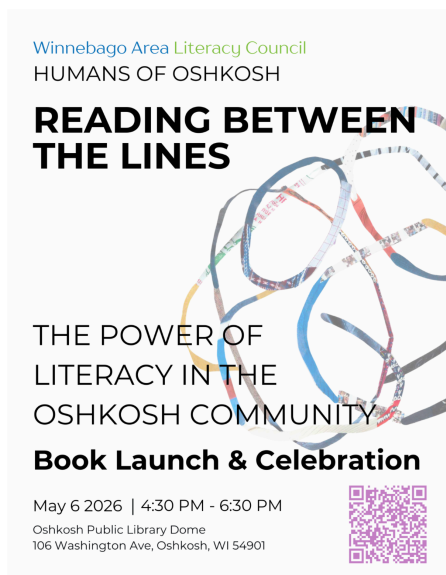


Area School District, Sheboygan Family Resources Center, and private schools across the Fox Valley. We look forward to continuing to co-create a space for learning and collaboration for educators and language workers in the future.

Please check out the booklet for reflections and highlights from the program.

[View the WIN Booklet](#)

- **Reading Between the Lines Book Launch**



We are proud to announce the launch of WALC's first published book, ***Reading Between the Lines: The Power of Literacy in the Oshkosh Community***, this May. The book is the result of a four-month collaboration with the Humans of Oshkosh Project at UWO and features powerful, real-life stories from WALC community members whose lives have been shaped by learning and literacy. Books will be available for purchase at the event.

We warmly invite you to join us for the book launch on Wednesday, May 6, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the Dome area of the Oshkosh Public Library.

- **Women & Children Program: Summer Garden Project**

Another exciting initiative coming to fruition is **GROW—Gardening for Resilience, Opportunity, and Wisdom**. This summer garden project is a partnership among WALC, St. Andrew Church, and the Oshkosh Seed Savers Collective. This creative literacy initiative is made possible by the Herb Kohl Philanthropies Homegrown Fund and the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families' Refugee School Impact Grant.

GROW is a unique experiential learning program centered on cultural exchange and shared knowledge. Many of our adult learners—especially women—bring extensive experience as gardeners and farmers, along with deep knowledge of working with the land. This program offers opportunities to practice English in a real-world setting while also sharing their expertise with the broader WALC community. We have also developed a STEM-based literacy curriculum for children ages 3 and up who will participate in the garden.



We invite you to *grow* with us this summer— reach out to learn more on how to get involved with the garden.

- **Team Updates**

Last month, we said goodbye to our Volunteer Program Coordinator, **Karla Leon**, and our Event & Marketing Coordinator, **Mikenzhi Thao**. As they move on to the next chapters of their lives, we wish them all the best and look forward to seeing all they accomplish.

At the same time, we are pleased to welcome **Stephanie Losse** and **Sophia Schneider** to our GROW team this summer. A participant of our WIN program last month, Stephanie brings extensive experience in environmental education and will lead experiential learning activities with our young gardeners. Sophia, a UWO student majoring in Education, will serve as the Assistant Teacher and will support the GROW Summer Garden Project. We are excited to have them on board.

At the heart of all this work is the strength of community collaboration. These initiatives are only possible because of the partnerships, shared knowledge, and collective care each of you bring. When organizations, learners, volunteers, and neighbors come together, we create opportunities far greater than any one of us could achieve alone.

To sustain and build on this momentum, **our Spring Giving Campaign is ongoing through June 30** and plays a critical role in sustaining WALC's work in the year ahead. This campaign aims to raise **\$12,000** to help stabilize and strengthen our core programs—ensuring that we can continue offering high-quality literacy instruction amid the loss of federal funding —while also launching a **monthly giving program** to build a more consistent and sustainable base of support.

So far, we have raised \$1,075 toward our goal. While we still have a way to go, we are encouraged by the generosity we've already seen. If you have been considering making a gift, we invite you to join us in this effort. Your support at this moment makes a meaningful difference in what we are able to sustain and grow in the coming year.

Thank you for being an essential part of this community. We are grateful to continue growing, learning, and building alongside you.

With gratitude and in community,

Chu May Paing, PhD
Executive Director



Program Spotlight: Learning at the Museum!



This past month, two of our classes ventured out of their usual classroom and into the world of hands-on learning with visits to the Oshkosh Public Museum and the Paine Arts Center. These field trips were opportunities for learners to build vocabulary, practice reading in real-world settings, and connect with history, art, and each other.

At the time of our visits, both museums featured exhibits celebrating Mexican culture, giving some of our learners a chance to see their heritage reflected and celebrated in a public space here in Oshkosh.

[Continue Reading](#)

May Book Launch and Celebration!

Winnebago Area Literacy Council
HUMANS OF OSHKOSH

READING BETWEEN THE LINES

THE POWER OF
LITERACY IN THE
OSHKOSH COMMUNITY

Book Launch & Celebration

May 6 2026 | 4:30 PM - 6:30 PM
Oshkosh Public Library Dome
106 Washington Ave, Oshkosh, WI 54901



🌟 Book Launch Alert! 🌟

Join us May 6, 2026 from 4:30 - 6:30 PM at the Oshkosh Public Library Dome for a celebration of literacy!

In collaboration with Grace Lim (UWO professor and founder of Humans of Oshkosh) and her students, we're proud to share *Reading Between the Lines: The Power of Literacy in the Oshkosh Community*.

📖 Real people. Real stories. Real lives in Oshkosh. From challenges to successes, this book shares the voices that make our community unique.

🎉 Register and celebrate the power of literacy with us!

Register Now!

Immigration Learning Circles

May ILC

*The State of US Immigration:
Current Realities of the US
Immigration System and
Challenges Facing
Newcomers in our Community*
with Molly Smiltneek, JD

May 19 | 4:30 - 6 PM
111 N Main St, Suite 202
Oshkosh, WI 54901

Register Now!



Eliminate Barriers to Literacy



Support WALC in many ways

- Volunteer with us
- Donate needed items from our [Amazon Wishlist](#)
- Use [ShopRaise](#) in your everyday shopping
- Make a financial contribution to support our free literacy services

Donate Now!

Please remember the Winnebago Area Literacy Council in your will. Learn more about planned gifts on our website.

Connect with us and stay up to date on all things WALC



Winnebago Area Literacy Council | 106 Washington Ave | Oshkosh, WI 54901 US

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