



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:

Deana Gamble, Director of Marketing & Communications
GambleD@freelibrary.org | 215-686-5254 (office) | 609-214-1862 (cell)

Mayor Michael A. Nutter and the Mayor's Commission on Literacy celebrate the grand opening of three new *myPLACE* campuses

Community and educational leaders attended ceremonial ribbon-cutting at Congreso de Latinos Unidos

PHILADELPHIA, PA - Adult educators, community leaders, elected officials and adult learners joined **Mayor Michael A. Nutter** and **The Mayor's Commission on Literacy** at the grand opening celebration of three new ***myPLACE* campuses** on Thursday, February 20, 2014.

myPLACE, which stands for **Philadelphia Literacy and Adult Career Education**, is the city's new one-stop for adult education and career preparation. *myPLACE* campuses meet the needs of Philadelphia's job seekers by providing convenient access to basic literacy, English as a Second language, GED® preparation services, digital skills, and work-readiness training.

Each campus is established at a high-performing literacy agency: *myPLACE* @ Community Learning Center, 229 North 63rd Street; *myPLACE* @ Congreso de Latinos Unidos, 2800 North American Street; and *myPLACE* @ District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund, 100 South Broad Street.



From left to right, **Akeesha Washington**, Director of Student Services, Community Learning Center; **Cynthia Figueroa**, President & CEO, Congreso de Latinos Unidos; **Brian Davis**, adult learner with District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund; **Dr. Judith Rényi**, Executive Director, Mayor's Commission on Literacy; **Mayor Michael A. Nutter**, **Leslie Stiles**, Interim Chair, Mayor's Commission on Literacy; and **Stephanie Webb**, *myPLACE* Site Manager, District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund, cut a ceremonial ribbon on Thursday, Feb. 20th at the grand opening celebration of three new *myPLACE* campuses.



myPLACE marks the start of a new approach to adult education in the City of Philadelphia. Along with fifteen partners, The Commission has created the city's first formal adult education system for high quality and efficient learner intake, standardized assessment, and enrollment.

"If we want a safer city, we need a more literate population. If we want to lower crime, unemployment, and poverty; if we want more jobs in the City of Philadelphia, then we have to drive the message to go to a *myPLACE* campus, go to one of our KEYSPOts, stay in school, and go back to school," **Nutter** said.

Leslie Stiles, Interim Chair, **Mayor's Commission on Literacy**, accepts a City Council Citation from **Iris Lozada** on behalf of **Councilwoman Maria D. Quiñones-Sanchez** on February 20, 2014 at the grand opening celebration of *myPLACE* Campuses.

education via the *myPLACE* campuses will be immediately enrolled in an online course with no waiting list called *The*

Introduction to Adult Learning and Careers.

In addition to *myPLACE* campuses, The Commission offers **myPLACE Online**, the nation's first online, cohort-based basic education courses for low-literate adults. Six-week courses will run year-round, with as many sections as needed to enroll all eligible learners, making adult education accessible anytime, anywhere and on any device. These workforce-contextualized and accelerated courses will prepare learners who test at intermediate levels (4th - 8th grade reading, writing, and math). The courses will help transition learners to the adult secondary level and best position them to study for the GED® and prepare for a job.

Christopher Coro, Ph.D., Deputy Director, Adult Education and Literacy for the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, lauded *myPLACE* and *myPLACE Online* as "innovative and forward-thinking."

"This effort represents everything that we would like to see happening across the country," Coro said. His department is currently developing a "national call to action plan" to upskill the American workforce. According to Coro, 36 million adults in the U.S. need basic skills enhancement, yet the current federal system serves only 2 million adults per annum.



Mayor Michael A. Nutter makes remarks at a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Feb. 20, 2014 celebrating the grand opening of the **Mayor's Commission on Literacy's** three *myPLACE* Campuses.



On Thursday, Feb. 20, 2014, members of the **Mayor's Commission on Literacy** **Lorraine Ballard Morrill, Irene Hannan, Leslie Stiles, Dr. Judith Rényi** and **Mayor Michael Nutter** attended the grand opening celebration of The Commission's new *myPLACE* campuses.

"Real solutions lie in joint efforts across the systems from federal, state, regional, and community, and particularly in initiatives like we're here to celebrate today. We can't wait to learn from the work that The Mayor's Commission on Literacy is doing in Philadelphia," Coro added.

The program is designed to be replicable on a national level to help local governments combat the crisis of low literacy among adults. Philadelphia is an ideal proving ground to see how scalable *myPLACE* can be. With a 27 percent poverty rate, nearly twice the national average, half of Philadelphia's adult population lacks the education needed for family-sustaining employment.

"This initiative will play a key role in helping our city lead the nation in using technology to achieve greater adult workforce development," said **Mayor Nutter**. "We know that these efforts will contribute to a better-educated workforce and stronger local economy, and will support our vision to make Philadelphia one of the more literate cities in the country."

To enroll in a class, adults can visit any of the *myPLACE* campuses or call the Mayor's Commission on Literacy at (215) 686-5250.

ABOUT THE MAYOR'S COMMISSION ON LITERACY - The Mayor's Commission on Literacy has worked to equip all adults in Philadelphia with the education they need for work, family, and civic engagement since 1983. Mayor Michael A. Nutter has charged The Commission to work on behalf of over 80 literacy and workforce development programs to help the estimated 550,000 adults in the city functioning below basic adult education levels qualify for family-sustaining jobs and post-secondary training and education. The Commission partners with local adult literacy agencies to recruit and train volunteers, and offers support and professional development services to adult literacy educators, tutors, and professionals. For more information about The Commission and its programs, visit philaliteracy.org.