



New literacy centers in Philadelphia combine online and face-to-face learning

By: Cherri Gregg | February 21, 2014

The Mayor's Commission for Literacy celebrated a huge milestone yesterday, opening three adult education centers in Philadelphia. The centers are the first of their kind in the nation.

The new *myPLACE* campuses will allow adult learners a chance at free, interactive education and career services via the cloud.

"We're estimating almost one-in-two people are functioning below basic levels," says Judith Renyi, executive director of the Mayor's Commission on Literacy. She says the new centers change the game on literacy, allowing an unlimited number of low-literacy adults to come out of the shadows and take assessment tests so they can get their GED or gain secondary level skills online from home beginning in March or in person at *myPLACE*.

"Before we would send people out on a wild goose chase for classes because there was so little funding available," says Renyi. "The number of seats at its best never was enough for the demand."

According to the U.S. Department of Education, the money that is available to serve adult learners can only serve two million people nationally. There are another three million people who need the services. *myPLACE* gives more adult learners access to much needed skills.

"For a long period of time I was scared to apply for jobs because I didn't have the education background," says Brian Davis, 53. He used the program to get his GED and is now working to become a behavioral health tech.



Mayor Nutter helps cut the ribbon on a new *myPLACE* learning center (Credit: Cherri Gregg).



The *myPLACE* center at Congreso de Latinos.
(Credit: Cherri Gregg)

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“Getting my GED allowed me to establish my self esteem,” he says.

“Skilling-up Philadelphians who lack basic reading, math and comprehension skills means these individuals will have access to higher paying jobs and will be less dependent on state entitlements,” says Renyi.

“What you hear from so many people is that they felt that they were imprisoned,” she says. “Once they went through the program they were free to take care of themselves, free to be a part of our knowledge-based economy.”

myPLACE is the first adult online learning centers in the country and will serve as a pilot program that the U.S. Department of Education hopes to replicate in other cities.

“We have had 200 people register in just two weeks with no publicity,” says Reyni, “and this has the potential to grow to a very large scale.”

Currently there are three locations:

myPLACE @ Community Learning Center
229 N 63rd Street, Philadelphia, PA 19139
215-910-2667

myPLACE @ Congreso de Latinos
2800 N. American Street, Philadelphia, PA 19133
215-763-8870

myPLACE @ District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund
100 S. Broad Street, 10th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 10110
215-568-2234

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