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THE MAYOR'S COMMISSION ON LITERACY RECEIVES LINDBACK FOUNDATION GRANT

Philadelphia, PA (January 12, 2015) – The Mayor's Commission on Literacy received a \$2,500 grant from the Christian R. and Mary F. Lindback Foundation (Lindback Foundation) in support of the Commission's path-breaking [myPLACE™ Online](#) program. *myPLACE™ Online* offers the nation's first completely online, cohort-based classes in reading, writing and math for low-literate adults. *myPLACE™* learners improve their computer and work-readiness skills while learning basic education.

More than 1,000 adults have enrolled in the Commission's first online class since February, 2014. Participants love the convenience of online learning, recognize how quickly they can accelerate learning through this medium, and gain confidence in their ability to learn. The positive learning experience has been all that was needed for many learners who have, after as little as one online course, qualified for entrance to higher education, job training or employment. Their success demonstrates, for the first time anywhere, that online learning works for low-literate adults.

The Lindback Foundation grant will support facilitators for online classes, including classes for learners incarcerated in the Philadelphia Prison System, and for those returning to the community from prison. Facilitators are critical to the success of the learners. Online facilitators must possess the complex set of characteristics of any excellent instructor, and be adept at working in the online medium. In addition, it is essential that *myPLACE™ Online* facilitators are sensitive to the multitude of barriers that low-literate and low-income learners face and able to assist in overcoming them. According to Dr. Judith Rényi, executive director of The Commission, "it is truly an honor to have our wonderful online facilitators recognized by this most prestigious supporter of great teaching. The Lindback Foundation is renowned for recognizing teachers at both the K-12 and higher education levels, so it's especially significant that they have funded our online work for low-literate adults."

The Commission is currently working to establish a *myPLACE™ @ Philadelphia Prison System (PPS)*. Incarcerated individuals can begin their studying there, and when released will seamlessly continue their education by re-enrolling in community-based classes, including the online classes listed in the Commission's *myPLACE™ online course catalogue*. *myPLACE™ Online* is designed to be easily scalable and The Commission hopes to expand the system further to meet the high demand for adult education in Philadelphia and beyond.

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 appointed a new 16-member Commission in 2010. Leslie Stiles is the Chair, and Loraine Ballard Morrill is the Vice-Chair. The Mayor 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. For more information about The Commission and its programs, visit philaliteracy.org.

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