



Impact Story Samples

Fiori

Fiori is a 43 year-old Eritrean woman who joined the library's adult literacy program, the Learning Place, in 2015. Fiori couldn't go to school as a child, but since she was a refugee in different countries, she can speak five languages. At her intake interview she said, "I want to learn how to write a little and be able to pay bills without my neighbor's help." Shortly after getting custody of her new grandbaby, Fiori decided, "I'm going to help my grandbaby succeed in school and get a good education. I want her to be able to do anything she wants in life." She meets a one-to-one tutor, and participates in Family Literacy Services with Lucy, who is now four years old.

Fiori describes the Learning Place as friendly. She says, "Every time I walk in the office, everybody's happy to see me and asks how I'm doing, how my family is doing. They ask me if I'm learning what I want to learn in the program. When I can't come to the library, everybody misses me. And I miss them."

Fiori also has a nice relationship with the Children's librarian, Anne, whom she met through The Learning Place. Fiori says, "Lucy and I have so much fun when we go to the library for storytimes. Last week, Anne gave us a handout of rhyming songs and games and we learned them in the group. Now I know that singing and playing with Lucy can help her become a good reader. This makes me happy because we're always singing, playing and telling stories at home. Lucy loves the books that we pick out from the Learning Place. We sit on the couch when I'm tired after work and I'll read to Lucy, or she'll pretend to read to me."

Patti

Patti is a 40 year-old latinx woman who participates in the literacy program's Family Discovery Program with her 8th-grader, Jack. Patti came to the library after literacy staff presented a parent workshop at Jack's school. As a single mom with two jobs, Patti doesn't have time to enroll in the adult literacy program. She's eligible though, and hopes she'll have time to get a tutor when Jack starts high school. For now, she and Jack participate in special Family Discovery events.

One workshop series was School Advocacy. "Jack would bring home tons of homework that seemed too hard. I felt terrible that I didn't understand it myself. It was a nightmare for both of us," Patti says. "I thought the program would teach me how to do math with Jack. Instead, I learned how to advocate for him at school." Every week, Jack got help with homework while Patti participated in the advocacy group. She says, "I met other parents in similar situations. We learned from each other, asking questions, sharing experiences, becoming our own resource network. We read about home and school communication and learned advocacy skills together."

One advocacy tip, finding an ally, was hard to do. After many unsuccessful calls, emails and visits to Jack's school, Patti finally hit the jackpot in Ms. Philips, a school counselor. Ms. Philips organized a meeting for Patti with Jack's teachers. Patti says, "Now, they help Jack stay on track during class. He gets more done. Homework's still challenging, but he brings home a lot less of it. Jack's teachers know me. I can call them."

She says, "I learned who does what in a school. I practiced what to say and how to say it. I now expect to be taken seriously, and I always try again. Family Discovery has helped me help Jack succeed in middle school."



Carl

Carl is a 58 year-old African American man. Carl is divorced with a daughter in college. He lives next door to his mother and oldest sister and helps them with shopping and medical appointments. Carl works as a school janitor and joined the literacy program two years ago because, "I needed to learn how to fill out a new report form at work and spell the words right." With an aging parent, Carl says, "Now, I want to know more about my mom's medicines and how to help her stay healthy." He has a tutor and also participates in the family learning program.

Carl belongs to the family learning program's Bold Folks Group for seniors and seniors' caregivers. He says, "The people in this group lift me up. I feel safe and respected. I always learn something new here." Recently, a social worker from the local community clinic visited the Bold Folks to talk about brain health. Carl says, "I took home tips for seniors about staying engaged and active that I could talk over with my mom. Now, my mom comes to the community garden with me. She gets more exercise, meets people, and learns new skills. And we eat better!"

Carl, his mother and sister also participated in a family learning series to create a family history. They shared stories about growing up. A program volunteer helped people with lower skills get their stories on the page. Carl says, "I learned things I didn't know about my mother's background. It was amazing hearing my sister's point of view of growing up in the same house I did." He says, "My daughter loves our family book, and I'm proud to be a published author. We added family pictures to it and gave copies to relatives."