

Adult Learners *Excel*
in new Professional
Development
Pilot Program



On December 18, members of the Education and Development teams came together to celebrate the graduation for the Microsoft Excel Work Readiness Pathway for English Language Learners, a pilot program at PPL. With a *record setting 100% graduation rate*, and all students earning an A grade, we are incredibly proud of everyone involved.

This course is an integral piece of our current workforce development efforts, and we had representatives from our partners at Centreville Bank and IGT attend to help us celebrate the work the students accomplished. Some students were asked to present their final projects, and we were able to see first-hand the newly developed skills in all things Excel and Powerpoint. Their enthusiasm was infectious, and served as the perfect end-of-year reminder of what we are all working to support.

“I really, really want to be here and learn more. I am a first generation college student, and this class actually gave me insight to what my parents’ experience as immigrants was like. It is important to provide more exposure for these opportunities because there are so many more people who would benefit.”

— Eric, program graduate

Lay Out Your Legacy

We are so grateful to share with you all the news of a recent bequest. For nearly 30 years, one particular donor made sporadic gifts to the Library in increments of \$5 - \$50, giving when and how they could. At the beginning of the holidays, it was revealed to us that this donor included us in their estate planning, to the tune of **over \$321,000!** This gift has come in a mix of cash, stocks, and assets, and is the quintessential example of how someone can build their legacy in a flexible fashion.

To learn more about our Lyra Brown Nickerson Society and how to make a planned gift, please reach out to Annie Foley at 401-455-8026 or afoley@provlb.org.

In the Stacks
UPCOMING EVENTS

*Something is brewing,
though not yet defined,
so keep eyes on your inbox,
if you’re so inclined.*

The Gala Gets Goin’

Planning for our 2024 Savor the Story Gala is officially underway, and we could not be more excited! There is much to share, but we can’t give away too much just yet! But know we have set the date and landed on a theme. Our host committee selection process is wrapping up, and we are delighted to dive into the design of this annual evening of intrigue. Please be ready to join us on the evening of **Friday, May 3**. But for now....the theme is a bit of a *secret*...

A True LEGO Reno

Saturday, January 27 | 11:00 am
Third Floor Lobby

Just in time to celebrate 2024 International LEGO Day (January 28), we invite you to join us on the third floor for a fun meet-up with Rhode Island LEGO artist, Andy Grover, as he visits PPL to spruce up the intricate LEGO rendering he created of PPL in celebration of the Library’s 2020 transformative building renovation. Come watch while he does some “maintenance” and have a chance to talk LEGOs with the artist/expert!

Langston Hughes Community Poetry
Reading at PPL

Sunday, February 4 | 1:00 pm

Join us in the Library’s Donald J. Farish Auditorium for the 29th annual Langston Hughes Community Poetry Reading. This is a *must-attend celebration* that kicks off RI Black History Month events. We expect hundreds to be in attendance as we honor the life and work of the late Langston Hughes, Harlem’s forever Poet Laureate.

CHOP Update

You’re likely *CHOP*-ing at the bit for details on our soon-to-be in-house café, and we want you to know the time is almost here. Genesis Center’s Culinary Hub of Providence (CHOP) is currently building out their core team and training staff. The entire PPL team has been asked to serve as official coffee taste-testers during the barista training process. We’ll be taking this job *very seriously* tasting as many free coffees as it takes to ensure the café is able to deliver the best cup in town! *Stay tuned . . .*



PPL ALUM SPOTLIGHT

Ingrid Mejia



“I would like to share my experience with the Excel training at Providence Public Library. I stand before you today, not just as an individual, but as a product of a community that values empowerment and growth. My journey through the Excel training at PPL has been nothing short of transformative, and I am eager to

express my gratitude to the RI Labor & Training Department, the dedicated instructors, and the remarkable individuals who made this experience possible.

I give a heartfelt thank you to the Labor & Training Department for recognizing the importance of equipping individuals with essential skills. Their commitment to cultivating education and professional development is the cornerstone of countless success stories, mine included. I want to extend my deepest appreciation to our program instructors, who selflessly dedicated their time and expertise to ensure that each of us not only learned, but thrived in the world of Excel. Their patience, guidance, and passion for teaching have left a mark on our journey toward success.

A special mention goes to Siyamala, Sen, and Betty, the driving forces behind the scenes. Their tireless efforts and dedication, even beyond regular business hours, have created an environment conducive to learning and growth. It is their commitment that has transformed the Excel training program into a beacon of opportunity for all who seek it.

The provision of computers and supplies was not just a logistical support, but a symbol of investment in our future. As we move forward, let us carry the torch of knowledge ignited. In closing, I want to express my gratitude for the holistic support provided by Providence Public Library, the Labor and Training Department, the instructors, who illuminate the paths of those who follow. Together, we can build a community with the necessary skills, preparing us for the challenges that lie ahead in the job market.”

Editor note: Ingrid shared her gratitude at the closing celebration for the 12-week Microsoft Excel Work Readiness Pathway for English Language Learners pilot program at PPL, funded by the RI Department of Labor & Training and RI Department of Education. The program is also part of the RI SNAP Employment & Training program, administered by the LISC RI, and received support from RI Reconnect, an initiative of the RI Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner.

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NEW CONSERVATORS

New year, new members! The warmest of winter welcomes to our most recent Conservators!

Erica Busillo Adams & Samuel Adams, Lorne Adrain, Dominique Alfandre & Thomas Palmer, Julie Gerstenblatt, Matthew Lawrence, Katharine Nicholson, Ted & Sally Shwartz, and Jason Tranchida

We’d love to have email addresses and birthdays for all our Conservators. Please contact Rae Hebron at rhebron@provlib.org to help us better stay in touch!

Did You Know . . .

PPL’s across-the-board usage has been skyrocketing! In each of the last two years, we have served more than 225,000 patrons through our broad range of programs, services, and events — representing a 13% increase over 2021 and an incredible 45% increase over our pre-pandemic level of roughly 155,000 visitors to our library.

STAFF PROFILE

Annie Foley: PPL’s new Philanthropic Engagement Manager

Some folks have already had a chance to meet her, but please join us in getting to know our new Philanthropic Engagement Manager, Annie Foley! Her professional experience was founded in the hospitality industry, beginning as a hostess-turned-waitress, eventually moving up ranks and serving as Cruise Director



for a luxury river cruise line. This background has allowed her to develop a unique perspective on relationship building and the importance of a dynamic connection with one’s community.

Annie has dedicated much of her free time over the years to volunteering with organizations supporting survivors of domestic violence, as well as advocating for the expansion of mental health resources on college campuses. The COVID-19 pandemic and its impact drove her to change course a bit as she re-determined her position in the world and made her way into philanthropic work as a full-time endeavor.

Outside of work, Annie has a wide range of personal interests. Often found reading, books have always been a comfort and source of inspiration to her, so finding herself working for the Library “feels like coming home.” Her top three favorite books (because how can a person be expected to choose only one??) are *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck (yes, honestly!), *Geek Love* by Katherine Dunn (PSA this is not about nerds falling in love...), and *The Little Prince* by Antoine Saint-Exupéry (need we say more?). Beyond books, Annie is a classically trained vocalist, and has spent time touring parts of Europe performing with a chamber choir. She spends much of her free time experimenting with cooking and baking new dishes, and challenging herself at the rock climbing gym.

Annie is thrilled to be a part of the team here at PPL and looks forward to all that is to come this year.