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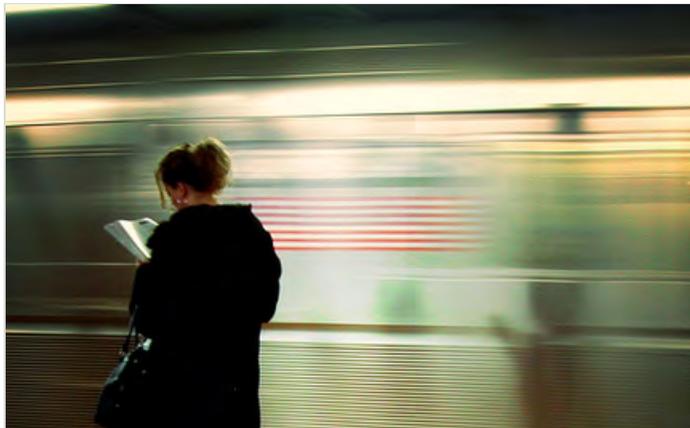


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Addressing Adult Illiteracy in New Mexico

by [Anna Klenke](#) | January 20, 2012 | 2:00 pm

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Literacy is a topic often broached in the context of [education](#) for children— but a [2003 study](#) commissioned by the US government demonstrated that 21 to 23 percent of adult Americans are functionally [illiterate](#). In [New Mexico](#), adult illiteracy is a serious problem, with about 46 percent of adult native English speakers “reading at a sixth-grade level or below,” [according to](#) [deseretnews.com](#). Chuck Franco, husband of Governor Susana Martinez, intends to do something to help New Mexicans struggling with literacy issues.

“My interest in adult literacy came to me when I was in law enforcement,” Franco [said](#). He related that one common factor he noticed among the troubled youth that he worked with was that many of them had parents at home who could not read. Franco realized that adult illiteracy is a very serious issue, not just for the adults struggling to get by, but for their children who are adversely affected by their parents’ limitations.

Literacy is hugely important in just about every factor of modern life, including economic advancement. Franco hopes that literacy programs will help provide a more competitive workforce in New Mexico for companies who may hope to come to the state.

“If we wait for another generation to slip through the cracks, we are going to be in bad shape,” he said.

Franco’s influence has already brought a \$20,000 grant to the [New Mexico Coalition for Literacy](#). He hopes to receive more than \$300,000 more from the state government to develop and promote literacy programs for native English speakers, who are the hardest population to reach. English language learners are ready to ask for help, but native speakers are often ashamed to admit that they cannot read.

I think adult illiteracy is one of the most overlooked social issues in the United States. In addition to focusing on reading education for children and young adults, we need to put more emphasis on helping adults who have reading difficulties. Destigmatizing illiteracy is the first step to take, and Franco's promotion for literacy programs will surely help people in New Mexico become aware of and comfortable with the opportunities to improve their reading skills.

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Eternal G.

Good, reading empowers!

6:40pm PST on Feb 9, 2012

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Vicky P.

thanks

9:25am PST on Jan 22, 2012

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Peter M.

thanks

3:58am PST on Jan 22, 2012

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New G.

Thank you.

11:28pm PST on Jan 21, 2012

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Jane B.

We need to attack stupidity in the Republican party. These clowns are embarrassing us around the world. They all dropped out of science class and they're obsessed with fairy tale gods and world domination. Something's gone terribly wrong with our educational system.

5:38pm PST on Jan 21, 2012

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Kaitlin C.

When I was a senior in high school I volunteered for a year as a teacher's assistant in an English as a Second Language class for parent's of elementary age school children. It was a humbling experience. Since my Spanish was better than the beginning level instructor's, I effectively taught 2 dozen adults, from my own age to 3 times my age, both the English and the Spanish alphabet. The number one reason why any of these people were in the class was because they wanted to be able to help their children with their homework. What a beautiful and selfless goal to endure 3 nights of 3 hour English classes a week.

3:52pm PST on Jan 21, 2012

Much more emphasis should be put on adult literacy, whether the person has been here for their whole lives or just recently immigrated. Maybe setting up literary clubs for students and their parents to participate in together. The books picked could be more geared towards the student's reading level, and that way the parent and child can learn the reading together. Bilingual literary clubs could help to teach parents and their children English/Spanish as well as to read. This would not only help with the literacy problem, but also teach native Spanish speakers more English, and English speakers more Spanish, hopefully enmeshing the two sometimes hostile groups.

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George B.

Education as a whole is probably the most American aspect of our life. It is the reason we are where we are now. Dumbing down society is in progress as we speak. Reading, Writing and Arithmetic taught to the tune of a hickory stick, is an old saying that we have lost sight of. Forget the hickory stick, it only taught discipline, that we do not have today. But the rest is very necessary to just survive. I see college athletes that cannot phrase a proper sentence, much less speak it. Reading to very young children is important, but a lot of parents cannot read them self. I am lacking in a lot of subjects but try to do my best. Because I recognize this I am constantly learning. The illiteracy problem is only going to get worse because of texting. Proper spelling will be a thing of the past. God Help Us.

2:43pm PST on Jan 21, 2012

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Ian F.

This is hopeful.
The more your kid reads, the better chances he/she will have.

1:37pm PST on Jan 21, 2012

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[Cynthia S.](#) Cynthia Samuels, currently Managing Editor of Care2, Causes, has been working with blogs and... [more ▶](#)



Joe



Socialbrite



Kath R.

Adult illiteracy is everywhere....some places are better at hiding it.

send a

1:17pm PST on Jan 21, 2012



Duane B.

This is an important issue, and everyone that wants to read should be given instruction in reading. Doing so only makes our society better.

send a

12:35pm PST on Jan 21, 2012

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