

# R.E.A.D.

READING ENABLES ADULT DEVELOPMENT

Fall 2019 Newsletter

Our mission is to provide adults who live in or near Northwest Ottawa County the opportunity to improve or transform their lives by strengthening their reading and language skills.



## Board of Directors

Paul Martin, President  
Susan Strobel, Secretary  
Sheryl Zajechowski, Treasurer  
Nancy Fortuna  
Jennifer Jacobs  
Susan Lowe  
Michelle Moore  
Tracy Riley  
Aimee Wilson

## Staff

Hannah Everett  
Executive Director

Valerie Martin  
Volunteer Coordinator

Marisol Stork  
Pair Coordinator

## Contact Us:

PO Box 429  
Grand Haven, MI 49417  
(616) 843-1470  
[www.readottawa.org](http://www.readottawa.org)  
[readottawa@gmail.com](mailto:readottawa@gmail.com)

## The Path to Citizenship...And More!

In July of 2013, Adam and Awatif arrived in the United States knowing absolutely no English. The family was sponsored by All Shores Wesleyan Church in Spring Lake, but aside from that, they had no connections to the community. They both knew how to say "hello," but were unable to carry on a conversation.

For their children, learning English was easy, because they were growing up immersed in it. For Adam and Awatif, however, it was a challenge. They both enrolled in R.E.A.D. in October of 2013 and were paired with tutors right away.

For the past 6 years, they've worked diligently to learn English and obtain citizenship in the United States. Through multiple tutors, job changes, and family demands, they've continued to pursue their education and prepare for the citizenship test and interview.

They've both appreciated the flexibility their tutors have shown them and all of the resources that are available to them through R.E.A.D.'s program!



Adam and Awatif pictured with their four children and their tutors - Mary Marthey and Jeff Parriot.

Adam and Awatif can now confidently hold conversations in English, and in May of 2019 they both successfully became United States citizens!

Adam says **"I wanted a home. My home is America! I am happy here. I want to vote - for my family, children, and my children's children."**

Now that the family has citizenship, they have begun to pursue new goals! Adam wants to continue to improve his English skills to obtain a better job. Awatif wants to work, take care of her family, and eventually take the family back to Sudan to visit her mother and siblings.

...Story continued on back

...Continued from first page

With ongoing support from tutors, R.E.A.D. knows that Adam and Awatif will accomplish everything that they set their minds to!

R.E.A.D. is so grateful for the time that current tutors Jeff Parriot and Mary Marthey devoted to helping this family achieve their goals. We believe that in order for our students to realize success, we have to help them create a sense of community. To all our students, tutors, staff and volunteers – thank you for helping us build these relationships and realize the goals of our adult students!

Adam, Awatif and three of their children pictured with Mary Marthey and former tutor Steve Lowe in October of 2015.



**Are you interested in helping a family achieve their goals? Become a R.E.A.D. tutor today! Call (616)843-1470 or email [readottawa@gmail.com](mailto:readottawa@gmail.com) for more information.**

**R.E.A.D. is grateful for the**



**North Bank Communities Fund!**

In September, R.E.A.D. was awarded a \$3,000 grant through Grand Haven Community Foundation's North Bank Community Fund for the support and expansion of R.E.A.D.'s one-on-one tutoring program. The grant will provide support for the needs of the current students, and funding for resources to help recruit students in the North Bank community!

We cannot thank the Community Foundation enough for their continued support!

## Welcome to R.E.A.D.'s Newest Volunteer Tutors!



Front Row: Volunteer Instructor Carol Wilhelm, Ann Antaya, Connie Bronson, Executive Director Hannah Everett. Back Row: Julie Frazier, Deb MacLaren, Carroll Schottery, Dick Bullington, Marcia Tarcznski, and Marti Siemion.

Our September tutor training session was a success! R.E.A.D. had 8 individuals successfully complete the training. During two 3-hour sessions, the new tutors met our staff members and some community partners, learned about the matching and assessment process, and worked on completing lesson plans with our wonderful volunteer instructor, Carol Wilhelm! Now that they're trained, they're all excited to be paired with an adult learner. We are so thrilled to welcome them to the R.E.A.D. family! We would not be able to achieve our mission without the hard work of our tutors, and we are so grateful that they chose to donate their time to support adult literacy.