



Providing adults who live in or near Ottawa County with an opportunity to improve and transform their lives by strengthening their reading and language fluency.

October 2025 Newsletter

Change a Life! Give Today!



Celebrating the Life of one of
READ's first Literacy Champions

"I cannot think of a better advocate for READ Ottawa and its mission than Paul McNergney," says tutor Paul Martin. Paul McNergney was one of the founding members of READ Ottawa; He was a tutor and served on READ's board from 2009-2014. He was tireless in his efforts to promote literacy for all and was relentless in spreading the word about READ and its tutors. Paul networked with the Grand Haven Rotary to bring attention to the cause of increasing adult literacy in the community.

The READ Ottawa family has been blessed by Paul's efforts and extends sympathy to his family in his passing. "The world just lost an exceptional human being," states Sherry Mitchel, fellow member of READ's original board of directors.

READ Ottawa Learner Stories

Entrepreneurial Endeavors





READ Ottawa learner **Isela Alvarez** has made her artful charcuterie boards a successful business. She now is able to run Divine Charcuterie as her main source of income. In addition, Isela recently won a \$5,000 prize in a food competition that will help her build her website, among other things.

Isela is grateful to her tutor, **Betty Jo Enell**. "Betty Jo gives me advice on how to speak in public," reports Isela.

<https://www.facebook.com/isela.jellyqueen/videos/snack-cart-coming-soon/722365990109194/>





Raissa Porto says that her tutor, **Becky Ahearn** has been by her side since the beginning of her massage therapy journey. While she was born in Brazil, Raissa raised her family in Canada and has settled in West Michigan to start a new chapter.

Raissa is currently a student in Massage Therapy and her business exists under the name *Mel Healing Body and Soul Clinic LLC*. She is currently preforming massage therapy free of charge until February. Raissa is passionate about healing the body and about the emotional and mental well-being of her clients.

When reflection on her instructors and her READ Ottawa tutor Becky says, "God has miraculous ways of bringin people together and I could not have done any of this without their support."



Aytan Suleymanova has been creating delicious desserts and beautiful pastries for her business, The Eastern Pastry. She and her tutor, **Michelle McArthur**, worked on her website that offers her delights.

Find her here: <https://www.facebook.com/p/The-Eastern-Pastry-61560404304247/>



We are looking for **Literacy Champions** to support local adult learners and transform lives. **READ Ottawa** is the only nonprofit in Ottawa County offering free one on one literacy tutoring for adults.

Your \$100/month =

- Tutor Training & Education
- Workbooks & Learning Materials
- Learner Testing & Assessment
- Tutor/Learner Matching & Support

Event at The Bookman in Grand Haven October 6
Donations go to READ Ottawa

Right to Read Night
Celebrating Banned Books Week
6:30pm Monday, Oct. 6th

Join us for a powerful discussion of *Chains* by Laurie Halse Anderson. Read the book, bring your thoughts, and be a part of the conversation.

You're Invited

- Learn about censorship & book banning
- Discuss next actionable steps to protect our right to read
- Play banned book bingo
- Write a "Dear Banned Author" postcard
- Discuss a year-long banned book club

ALL AGES WELCOME!

Interested in becoming a tutor? RSVP through one of the following:
Filling out the form at <https://readottawa.org/volunteer>
Email Lynn Groothuis at lynn@readottawa.org
Call Lynn at 616-414-0295

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." Winston Churchill



Website: www.readottawa.org
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