

Luncheon for Literacy raises \$12K for BC3 adult literacy program

Jan. 31, 2020



Table centerpieces celebrating, clockwise from top left, Amor Towles’ “A Gentleman from Moscow”; Lucy Maud Montgomery’s “Anne of Green Gables”; Truman Capote’s “Breakfast at Tiffany’s”; Kimberly M. Miller’s “Picking Daisy” and Louisa May Alcott’s “Little Women” are shown Sunday, Jan. 26, 2020, during the Luncheon for Literacy sponsored by the Rotary Club of Butler PM and held in Founders Hall on Butler County Community College’s main campus in Butler Township. The Luncheon for Literacy raises funds to benefit BC3’s adult literacy program.

(Butler, PA) Erin Linnon skirted a number of the 249 other guests inside Butler County Community College’s Founders Hall as she meandered through 36 decorated tables, halting at as many as she could to lift her brown-cased cellphone to near eye level and to take photographs of the Luncheon for Literacy centerpieces celebrating favored books or characters.

“The tables,” said Linnon, of Meridian, “are so creative. I don’t know how the people do this.”

The people who represented the largest crowd to attend a Rotary Club of Butler PM Luncheon for Literacy on Sunday adorned tables and helped to raise an estimated \$12,000 to benefit BC3’s adult literacy program, which has helped 454 students to earn high school equivalency diplomas since 2008.

All proceeds raised from the Luncheon for Literacy benefit BC3’s adult literacy program, which also provides free classes to students in English as a second language, essential skills, personal finance, computer literacy, career exploration and preparation, according to Barb Gade, director of BC3’s adult literacy program.

Luncheon for Literacy funds help to promote student success, and to cover the \$7 cost of each of four high school equivalency diploma practice exams – in language arts, mathematics, science and social studies – and the \$30 cost of official tests that, if passed, result in a diploma issued by the state Department of Education, Gade said.

The second consecutive and fourth Luncheon for Literacy since 2011 featured centerpieces celebrating books that ranged from Truman Capote’s “Breakfast at Tiffany’s,” with a stack of six gift boxes in light-green wrap and draping in white bows; to Louisa May Alcott’s “Little Women,” highlighted by brown, high-laced Civil War-replica boots; to Kelsey McKinnon’s “Modern Wedding,” with a towering floral arrangement atop a tripod.

The 2020 Luncheon for Literacy increased the Rotary Club of Butler PM’s contribution to BC3’s program to \$32,000.



Erin Linnon, of Meridian, is shown Sunday, Jan. 26, 2020, taking a photograph of a table centerpiece celebrating Maxwell King’s “The Good Neighbor” during the Luncheon for Literacy sponsored by the Rotary Club of Butler PM and held in Founders Hall on Butler County Community College’s main campus in Butler Township. The Luncheon for Literacy raises funds to benefit BC3’s adult literacy program.



A table centerpiece celebrating Maxwell King’s “The Good Neighbor” is shown Sunday, Jan. 26, 2020, during the Luncheon for Literacy sponsored by the Rotary Club of Butler PM and held in Founders Hall on Butler County Community College’s main campus in Butler Township. The Luncheon for Literacy raises funds to benefit BC3’s adult literacy program.

“It’s just amazing how the community supports this,” Gade said of the Luncheon for Literacy, which in 2020 drew roughly 88 more guests than it did in 2019. “It’s just amazing. It really is.”

Added Leslie Osche, a Butler County commissioner, Luncheon for Literacy committee member and president-elect of a Rotary Club of Butler PM to which she has belonged for 19 years: “It is an overwhelming success for what is a fantastic program. The literacy program is so important to this community because it helps those students get jobs and to become a contributing part of the community.”

The median average weekly salary in 2017 for those who have not achieved a high school diploma was \$520, according to the U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics. For those with a high school diploma but no college credits, \$712.

BC3’s 33-year-old adult literacy program July 24 graduated 60 students, the most since at least the 2007-2008 fiscal year.

“At graduation ceremonies, I always turn around and look at the audience,” Osche said. “What I see are the parents’ faces, the family’s faces. Sometimes it’s the wife, or the husband, or a child’s parent getting a high school equivalency diploma.

“When you see those faces, you know how much it matters and why it matters.”

Linnon stopped near a table centerpiece celebrating Maxwell King’s “The Good Neighbor: The Life and Work of Fred Rogers,” and pushed the white button marked photo on her cellphone.



Mandi Raybuck, of Cabot, left, who in 2017 received a high school equivalency diploma through Butler County Community College’s adult literacy program, and Heidi Priest, of Butler, are shown Sunday, Jan. 26, 2020, during the Luncheon for Literacy sponsored by the Rotary Club of Butler PM and held in Founders Hall on Butler County Community College’s main campus in Butler Township. The Luncheon for Literacy raises funds to benefit BC3’s adult literacy program. Priest was in costume and at a table celebrating Louisa May Alcott’s “Little Women.”



Denise Day, of Butler, wearing Mickey Mouse ears, is shown Sunday, Jan. 26, 2020, during the Luncheon for Literacy sponsored by the Rotary Club of Butler PM and held in Founders Hall on Butler County Community College’s main campus in Butler Township. The Luncheon for Literacy raises funds to benefit BC3’s adult literacy program.

Within the frame of her image, King Friday's blue-and-gray-block castle within the Land of Make Believe, a red plastic trolley, a miniature black piano and a pair of blue canvas sneakers, with white shoelaces and white soles.

"The Fred Rogers table stands out," Linnon said. "And 'Little Women.' And 'Harry Potter.' I'm almost through walking around all the tables and taking pictures. Almost."



Linda Franiewski, of West Sunbury, is shown Sunday, Jan. 26, 2020, in costume and at a table celebrating Truman Capote's "Breakfast at Tiffany's" during the Luncheon for Literacy sponsored by the Rotary Club of Butler PM at Butler County Community College.



A portion of a crowd of 250 is shown Sunday, Jan. 26, 2020, during the Luncheon for Literacy sponsored by the Rotary Club of Butler PM and held in Founders Hall on Butler County Community College's main campus in Butler Township. The Luncheon for Literacy raises funds to benefit BC3's adult literacy program.