



History of the Right to Literacy Campaign

www.righttoliteracy.org

On June 13, 2009, delegates at the National Community Literacy Convention in Buffalo, New York passed the Right to Literacy Declaration, supporting legislation and policy changes aimed at increasing literacy and numeracy levels across America.

Delegates concluded that to ensure prosperity for the nation and self-determination for the individual, changes at the national, regional and local level must take place. Literacy leaders, using the model of the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848, convened from across the nation. The need was clear and the solution attainable. Literacy is the number one tool to make individual change and impact economic prosperity. The resolutions support the five pillars of literacy:

1. *Building the Community*
2. *Strengthening the Family*
3. *Ensuring People's Self-Determination*
4. *Improving the Workforce*
5. *Transforming the Literacy System*

Convention participants signed the Right to Literacy Scroll and sent it out on a journey across the United States to communities large and small. Over 35,000 have signed including mayors, and community leaders, educators, employers, adult learners, funders and those who believe that literacy must be a national priority. Numerous partners supported the campaign along the way on this historic journey including students, parents, educators, faith communities, colleges & universities, business & labor leaders, government officials, philanthropists, community-based organizations.

Signers agreed to:

- Act on specific resolutions to inform system change.
- Support a Call to Action to build a nationwide collaboration to structure a comprehensive and effective system for lifelong learning.
- Commit to the vision of 100% literacy through 100% community engagement.

The oldest signer of the Right to Literacy Scroll is Ms. Dorothy Inghram, 104 years old, the first African American school administrator in San Bernardino, CA. The youngest? A three month old baby signed with a thumb print in Columbia, SC.

Campaign Vision

The vision that propels this Campaign is that all children and families will have literacy levels needed for success in life and that all communities will make literacy a high priority for economic prosperity and social equity.

The National Right to Literacy Campaign:

1. challenges community groups and individuals across the country to infuse literacy education into all aspects of their work and life, resulting in expanded opportunities for children and adults who currently lack skills and access to high quality education;
2. engages local, state and national policymakers in dialogue to ensure that quality education is a right of all learners, resulting in increased public commitment of quality resources, particularly for children and adults with low literacy skills.
3. promotes the Right to Literacy as renewed evidence of the United States' decades-long commitment to the UN Declaration of Human Rights, including the right to education. The Campaign supports UNESCO's Literacy Decade (2002-2012) and deepens our country's commitment to literacy as the foundation of democracy.

Presenting the Declaration in Washington, DC

On September 22nd, 2010 the scroll was delivered to legislative leaders, Congressmen Dan Maffei (D-NY), Phil Roe (R-TN) and John Lewis, (D-GA) on the steps of the Capitol. Assistant Secretary, Brenda Dann-Messier at the Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education was briefed on the status of the project. This event ended phase one of the campaign, the awareness raising component. Partners, including ProLiteracy and Literacy Powerline called upon Congress and the Obama Administration to support legislative and policy initiatives that promote basic literacy skills for all Americans to support good citizenship, economic recovery, healthy families and a globally competitive, skilled workforce.