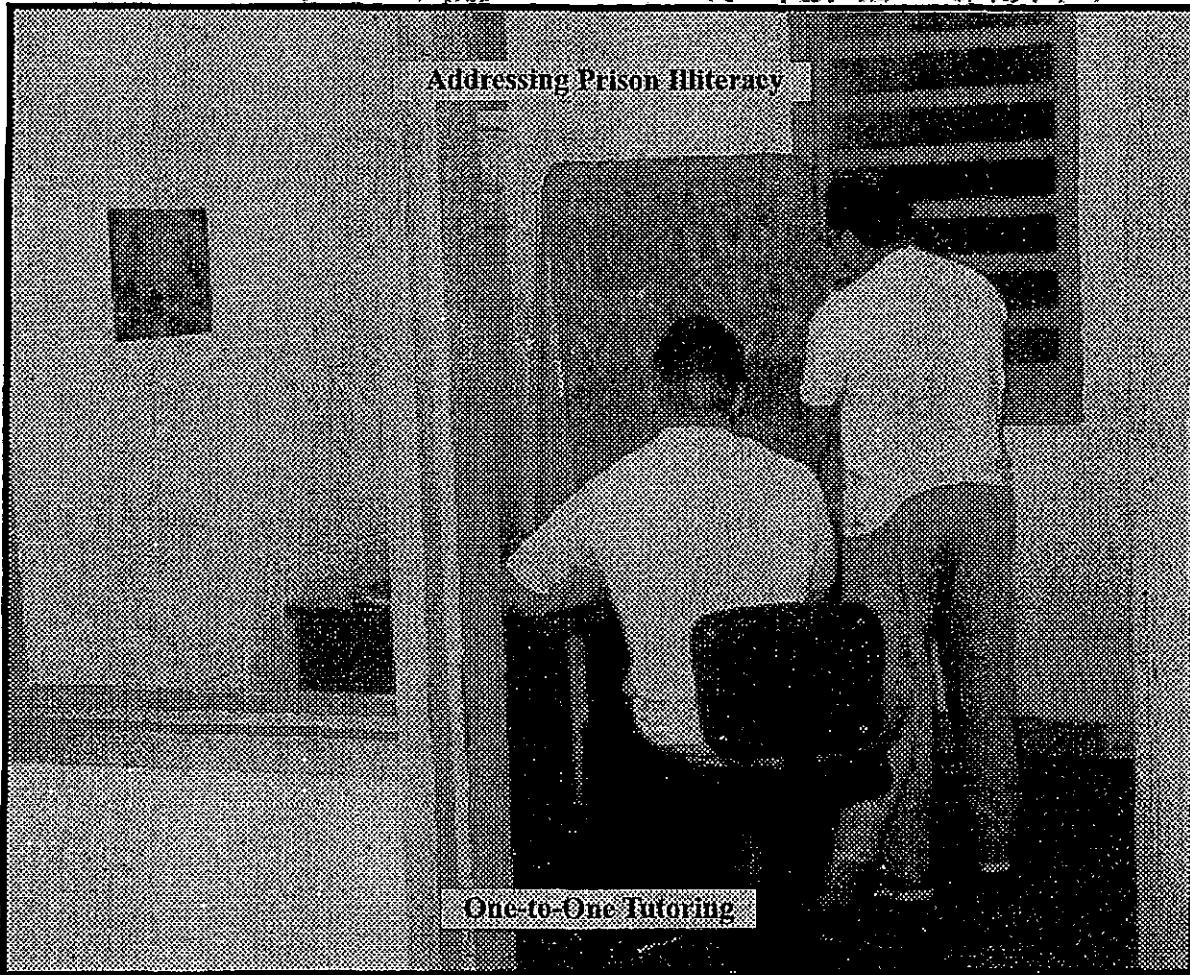


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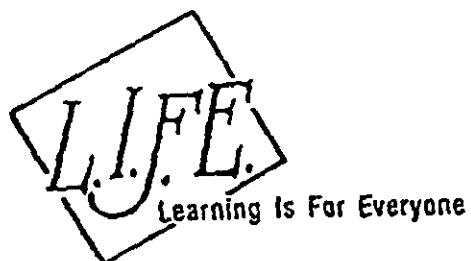
Addressing Prison Illiteracy

One-to-One Tutoring

# STARTING A PRISON LITERACY PROGRAM

A HOW-TO MANUAL





# **STARTING A PRISON LITERACY PROGRAM**

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**A HOW-TO MANUAL**

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New Jersey State Prison  
Trenton, New Jersey



FIRST ISSUE JUNE 2001

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First Printing June 2001 at New Jersey State Prison

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- 1) Copies of this Manual or parts thereof may be made for free distribution to or within any correctional facility which is interested in implementing a literacy program.
- 2) Copies of the forms in Appendices A and C may be made for use by facilities implementing a literacy program.

Additional copies of this Manual may be obtained free of charge by writing to the LIFE Program, New Jersey State Prison, 3rd and Federal Streets, P.O. Box 861, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0861, or phoning a request to the LIFE Program, c/o Supervisor of Education at N.J.S.P., Trenton, NJ (609) 292-9700 Ext. 4285 or Fax (609) 777-1885



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The LIFE Program thanks the following for their support and assistance:

The *Prison Literacy Project* at the State Correctional Institution at Graterford, Pennsylvania, for providing the model on which LIFE was based;

The *New Jersey Department of Corrections* and the *Office of the Commissioner* for allowing the Program to be established;

The *Administration of New Jersey State Prison* for recognizing the importance of, and need for a literacy program;

The *Education Department of New Jersey State Prison* for welcoming and facilitating the operation of the Program;

The *original members of LIFE* for their dedication and perseverance in giving flight to the Program;

*Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc.* (LVA), who have certified all of our tutors;

*Robert and Anne McCleery* for instructing all of our LVA tutor training classes;

Our *community volunteers* for donating their time and service, and sharing their wealth of knowledge and experience for the benefit of our students;

*Jonathan Gell*, our External Manager, for his consistent dedication as a tutor and tireless efforts representing the Program to the public;

The *Newgrange Educational Outreach Center* in Princeton, New Jersey, for conducting training workshops to help our tutors recognize dyslexia and other learning disabilities;

The *Center for Community Renewal* in Edison, New Jersey, for its support, technical advice, and *hands-on* assistance in the production of this Manual.

All of *our students*, past and present, for the courage displayed in acknowledging their need and the effort put forth in addressing that need;

All of *our managers and tutors*, past and present, for their unwavering commitment to the success of the LIFE Program; and

Last, but certainly not least, *Mr. William Burke*, Program Founder, who envisioned the LIFE Program and what it could accomplish.

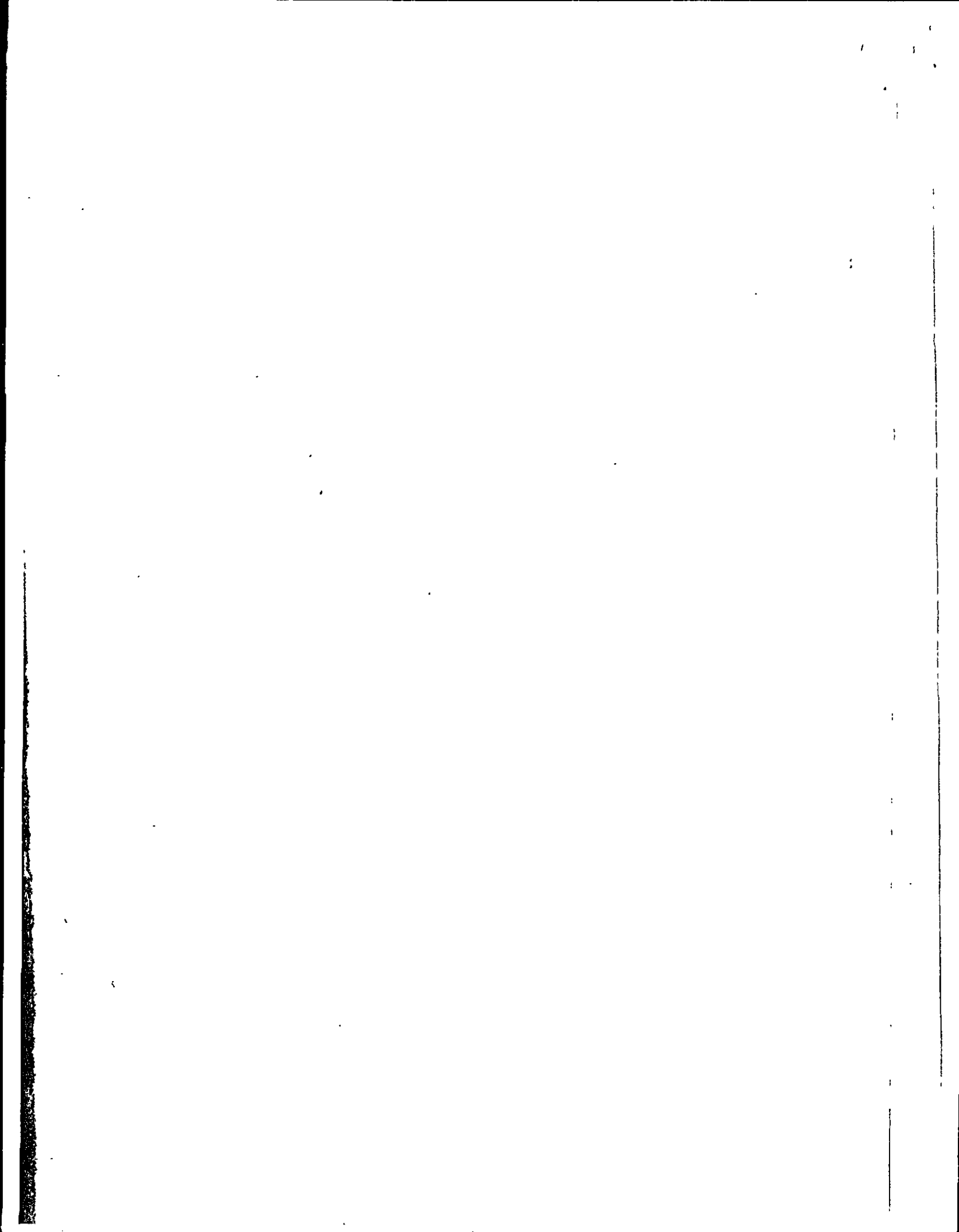
The LIFE Program Managers  
June 2001





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*IN MEMORY OF OUR FORMER MEMBERS  
WHO HAVE PASSED AWAY*

## INTRODUCTION

### **The Purpose of this Manual**

The purpose of this Manual is to serve as a guide for developing literacy programs within correctional facilities. This Manual is based on the successful Learning Is For Everyone (LIFE) Program, established at New Jersey State Prison in 1985. The LIFE Program has received recognition on the State level in the form of the Governor's Volunteer Award, and on the national level as President George Bush's 323rd "Thousand Points of Light". In addition, LIFE is currently the focus of a Home Box Office (HBO) documentary scheduled to air during the 2002 season. The goal of LIFE has been, and continues to be, to teach illiterate prisoners how to read and write. This is accomplished by providing students with one-to-one tutoring by specially trained prisoner and community volunteer tutors. This Manual provides specific information on program structure as well as other key components necessary for the establishment of a literacy program.

### **The Importance of a Literacy Program**

The importance of a literacy program within a correctional facility cannot be overstated. Illiteracy within the state and federal prison systems has been described as "staggering". It is recognized that poor reading skills have an immense impact upon the lives of prisoners. Many criminologists and correctional administrators have found that low educational levels correlate highly with criminality as well as with aggressive and violent behavior. Moreover, of all the variables linked to criminal behavior, failure in school is among the most significant.

### **The Target Population**

In recent years increased attention has been focused on prison literacy programs because of the large number of illiterate prisoners. It should be noted that literacy programs are not intended to replace prison education programs, but rather to supplement them. Prison literacy programs should be designed to attract those prisoners who are not enrolled in the prison's education program. Many illiterate individuals are reluctant to enter a classroom setting, either because of fear of repeating what they remember as past failures, or out of embarrassment that others will discover they cannot read. Such individuals respond well and progress rapidly in one-to-one tutoring programs where their confidentiality can be maintained, and constant encouragement can be given without fear of comparison to others.

## **Strategies for Success**

LIFE is largely operated by prisoners who have accepted ownership and responsibility for the Program. This has proven to be essential to the Program's success. Other elements for an effective literacy program include obtaining the support of the prison's Administration; developing a working relationship with the facility's Education Department; and ensuring that the program's membership consists of a cross-section of the prison population.

## **Secondary Benefits**

A literacy program can be a valuable asset to a correctional facility. Although a literacy program's primary focus is combating illiteracy, it also serves as a cost-effective prison program which involves a number of prisoners in a purposeful activity. There are prisoners in every facility who would be willing to become involved in such a meaningful project. A well-structured literacy program gives prisoners an opportunity to develop and use organizational and management skills. In addition, the camaraderie which develops among the members is another positive feature of such a program.

## **LIFE's Philosophy**

The philosophy of the LIFE Program has been "quality, not quantity". LIFE has not attempted to eliminate illiteracy within the facility; instead, it has attempted to provide as much quality assistance as possible to those seeking help. This realistic approach has allowed LIFE to work well within the limits of a correctional setting and provide a literacy program which meets the needs of its students.

Starting off slowly, organizing well, and continuing to grow and improve has been the path the LIFE Program has followed. It is our hope that this Manual will help other correctional facilities experience the many benefits a well-run program brings to the prisoners and staff.

## PLANNING THE LITERACY EFFORT

Once it was determined that a literacy program was desired, LIFE's Founder sought approval from the Prison's Administration to begin organizing the Program. The next step was to recruit core members from the prison population. It is important to note that each member's participation was entirely voluntary.

The first step LIFE took in enlisting core members was to send a memo to each prisoner paraprofessional working in the Prison's Education Department inviting them to attend an organizational meeting. *A paraprofessional is a prisoner assigned as a teacher's aide. If a prison does not have paraprofessionals, the organizers of the literacy program should approach other prisoner groups or volunteer organizations.* Several paraprofessionals attended and agreed to meet weekly to continue organizing the Program. Between each meeting, the paraprofessionals spread information to other prisoners which was an effective recruiting tool for additional members. During these meetings many topics were discussed which included program management, program agreements, tutor and student recruitment, funding sources, community volunteers, and publicity.

These meetings were an effective tool for brainstorming to resolve potential roadblocks, and keeping the core members abreast of the day-to-day developments. Due to the success of these meetings, it was decided that LIFE would hold mandatory monthly meetings to inform the members of program activities and address all problems.

Another important task accomplished during the planning stage was writing a proposal which described in detail the need for a literacy program, what would be accomplished, and how it would be done. Writing the proposal allowed members to plan the program step-by-step and address every issue. The proposal was forwarded to the Prison's Administrator for approval. Later, it was successfully used as the Program's first application for funding.

## MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

It was decided at the start that managerial positions be created to ensure a leadership structure to oversee the daily operation of the Program. Members who were interested were required to submit a letter, listing their qualifications and explaining why they wanted to become a manager. The membership reviewed each request and a decision on each position was reached by consensus.

LIFE's management structure consists of the following positions:

Position	Responsibilities
Program Manager	Oversees the daily operation of the program.
Assistant Program Manager	Assists the Program Manager in carrying out the operations of the program.
Secretary/Tutor	Keeps Program records. Takes roll and minutes at meetings. Handles communications among students, tutors, and managers.
Public Relations Manager/ Tutor	Brings the LIFE Program to the attention of the public and outside organizations through media contacts, correspondence, and distribution of Program brochures.
Community Outreach Manager/Tutor	Recruits students and tutors from the prison population.
Treasurer/Tutor	Maintains accounting of Program funds.
External Program Manager/Tutor (civilian)	Handles those duties which require direct access to the community at large. <i>It is recommended that this position be established and filled at the beginning of the program. An adult literacy program is probably the most likely source to recruit someone for this position.</i>
Assistant Secretary/Tutor (a non-managerial position)	Serves as an understudy to the Secretary and assists in all related duties.
Clerk/Tutor (a non-managerial position)	Maintains program files and records.

A more complete job description for each position can be found in *Appendix A*.

It should be noted that all managers are trained tutors; however, the Program Manager and Assistant Program Manager, due to their responsibilities, do not tutor. In addition, managers' meetings are held as necessary to discuss program business.

After the initial selection of managers, there will be the inevitable transfers or releases which lead to vacancies within the managerial ranks. In the event that the Program Manager must depart from the program, it is recommended that the Assistant Manager assume this position. However, the Secretary, Public Relations Manager, or Community Outreach Manager could, if necessary, assume the position of Program Manager. In the event that the Assistant Manager must depart, it is recommended that a replacement be chosen from within the management structure. This progression is essential to ensure the continuity of managing the program.

When a managerial position becomes vacant, with the exception of the Program Manager or Assistant Manager, the Managers should select from the entire membership the most qualified person to fill the vacant position. This decision is then presented to the membership at the next meeting for their approval.

It should be noted that the LIFE Program selects members, considered qualified for future managerial positions, to fill the Assistant Secretary and Clerk positions. This allows them time to learn the operation of the program.

LIFE has found its management structure, and accompanying procedures for filling vacancies, to be an effective method for managing the daily operation of the Program. By following these procedures, LIFE's management structure has maintained continuity through many years of operation.

## **RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

The development of a working relationship between the Education Department and the program's organizers is essential before presenting a proposal to the Administration for approval.

Persistence will be needed in order to reach agreement on the logistics necessary for operating the program, the most important of these being:

- 1) Space where tutoring sessions can be held;
- 2) The times these areas will be available for use by the program;
- 3) A staff member from the Education Department to serve as a liaison between the literacy program, the Administration, and the Education Department. The liaison is vital for handling issues which the program managers cannot handle on their own; and
- 4) An office or a room to serve as the program's office.



## **PROGRAM AGREEMENTS**

Program Agreements were established to govern the overall operation of the Program, and provide the criteria for becoming a member. In addition, the Agreements outline what is required of the membership. The Agreements consist of General, Tutor, and Student components, and can be found in *Appendix B*.

## **TUTOR RECRUITMENT AND REQUIREMENTS**

The recruiting of tutors is best accomplished by word of mouth and referrals by program members. This ensures that prospective tutors are interested in participating and willing to meet the requirements. Other recruitment methods include a member speaking at prisoner orientation sessions, placing posters in the housing areas, and referrals from the Education Department. It is important to recruit bilingual tutors since there may be students who read and write in their native language, but want to learn to read and write English.

The requirements which have been established for LIFE's tutors are as follows:

- 1) Attend initial screening session conducted by one or more managers and demonstrate a strong commitment to participate;
- 2) Proof of high school diploma or G.E.D.;
- 3) A satisfactory grade on the Reading and English sections of the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). This requirement applies only to prisoner tutors;
- 4) Attend at least two general meetings prior to membership;
- 5) Receive a two-thirds majority vote from managers and tutors at a monthly meeting;
- 6) Complete Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA) tutor training; and
- 7) Community volunteer tutors must attend the prison's volunteer orientation and meet any other requirements for clearance.

## **TUTOR TRAINING**

The first step is to make contact with a local literacy group. LIFE has chosen LVA to be its primary training agency; however, there are other literacy agencies that can provide certified tutor training. Although some costs may be incurred, an attempt should be made to obtain

training for free. Tutor training is required for managers, tutors, and community volunteers.

The outside literacy group may suggest making the prison program an affiliate of their program or group. However, consideration should be given to keeping the prison program as independent as possible from outside agencies, as well as from the Prison's Education Department. In this way the literacy program can make most of the day-to-day operation decisions such as tutor recruitment, student recruitment, tutor training, etc. By remaining independent, the prison program will be unique; members will feel a sense of ownership and make a greater commitment to its success.

An ongoing relationship should be formed with the local literacy group as yearly training sessions will be needed for new prisoner and community volunteers. These sessions may be scheduled more than once a year if the need arises. Arrangements should be made for tutor trainers to receive clearance and orientation to enter the prison as volunteers. In addition, space for training and any materials needed should be acquired in advance.

From time to time LIFE has added to the LVA training with instruction by volunteers from the literacy field, and a three-credit course on literacy training presented by a community college. These workshops have focused on recognizing and dealing with learning disabilities and have been helpful in enabling the tutors to become more effective in the fight against illiteracy. It is mandatory that all tutors and managers attend these workshops.

## **STUDENT RECRUITMENT**

When beginning the literacy program, it is very important to *hand-pick* students for the initial tutoring sessions for the program to get off to a good start. The selection process for the first students, as well as all subsequent students, should ensure that they will make the necessary commitment to learning, will have good attendance, a good attitude, and will not cause disciplinary problems. It is advisable that potential students be recommended by a program member who can vouch for their sincerity.

Recruitment can be achieved by having a program member make a presentation at each prison orientation, word of mouth, referrals from the Education Department, or designing posters for placement within key areas of the facility. Recruitment involves screening, interviewing, and testing.

The screening process begins with a review of a completed Student Application, which can be found in *Appendix C*. Only those potential students whom the program managers believe will follow all the rules, put forth a solid effort, and reflect well on the literacy program should be selected. At this point it is acceptable to refuse admission to any student who does not display a willingness to fully participate in the program. The literacy program should be concerned with quality rather than quantity.

After the screening process is completed, the potential student will be scheduled for an interview with a program manager. The interviewer should commend the student for taking a step toward literacy, answer any questions, take time to explain what is expected of him, and stress the confidentiality of the program. The interview is concluded by having the student sign the Student Agreement Contract, which can be found in *Appendix C*.

Finally, all students who are found to be eligible for admission must be tested prior to entering the program. Arrangements should be made with the Education Department to provide testing of all students. Students must test at the 4th grade level or below; in a case where they cannot be tested due to an extremely low reading level, the testing should be waived for admission. Students are also tested annually to maintain a record of their long-term progress and indicate areas where help may be needed.

Information obtained from the Student Application and the interview should be used to match students with tutors in such a way as to enhance the learning process. If a student requests to work with a particular tutor, or vice versa, or when a student and tutor are housed in the same area, this could be a match. A tutor working as a paraprofessional in the Education Department who has a student needing extra help could be a very good match. Additional common factors could be age, mutual interest in sports, hobbies, etc.

There may be instances where very few commonalities are available for a match. In these cases, the only common factor will be a tutor wanting to teach and a student wanting to learn. This is how most adult literacy programs match their students and tutors, and the results are usually positive.

It is important to bear in mind that since shame accompanies adult illiteracy, people engage in elaborate deceptions to conceal their disability; hence, the need for confidentiality. The LIFE Program's practice is to insure that a student's participation is not discussed with other students or

tutors, nor with anyone outside the Program. It has been our experience that many of the students take pride in their participation in the Program and, with time, confidentiality is no longer an issue for them.

## **TUTORING SESSIONS**

The most obvious place to conduct tutoring sessions is in the school area. Individual rooms or offices in the school area would be preferable since they offer a greater degree of privacy. They could include interview rooms, psychological counseling offices, or testing rooms. If these rooms are not available, or there are too few to accommodate the tutoring sessions, consideration should be given to using classrooms.

A determination must be made as to when the tutoring sessions will take place. Evening hours accommodate students and tutors who have day jobs within the facility, or are engaged in program activities during the day. In addition, space for tutoring sessions should be more readily available during evening hours. Efforts should be made to accommodate each student/tutor pair to ensure that the time and day is suitable for them. A written schedule of the tutoring sessions should be maintained and kept up to date at all times.

As a point of reference, LIFE's tutoring sessions are held evenings, Monday through Friday, in pairs meeting at least once a week for 1-1/2 to 2 hours.

## **RECORD KEEPING**

Consistently maintaining accurate and complete records of each tutor's activities and the student's progress is the foundation for a well-managed program. Records of each tutoring session should be maintained on file in the form of a weekly lesson plan and monthly progress report. In addition, tutors are required to submit a detailed report on their student at the end of each calendar year.

These reports should be developed for the purpose of documenting each student's progress. This is essential when a tutor is replaced by another, temporarily or permanently, and the new tutor relies on information recorded in the file to ascertain the student's progress and needs.

Good records will be helpful when soliciting grants and donations, and in meeting the requirements of various audits and surveys requested by the institution or outside agencies. Simply put, well-maintained records promote and vouch for the quality and consistency of a literacy program.

The LIFE Program keeps extensive records, the most important being:

1) Student Files

- a) Student Application
- b) Student Agreement Contract
- c) Test scores
- d) Lesson Plan (filled out weekly by tutor)
- e) Progress Report (filled out monthly by tutor)
- f) Annual Report
- g) Copies of all certificates the student receives

2) Tutor Files

- a) Tutor Application
- b) Proof of diploma or G.E.D.
- c) Test scores
- d) Tutor Agreement Contract
- e) LVA Tutor Training Certificate
- f) Copies of letters from the Program Manager
- g) Copies of all other certificates

3) Daily Attendance Record

4) Classroom Schedule of all student/tutor pairs

5) Records of all grants and donations solicited and received

6) Minutes of all General Meetings

7) All incoming and outgoing correspondence

A sample of all forms listed above can be found in *Appendix C*.

## COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

The introduction of community volunteers can be a valuable asset to a prison literacy program. They provide a connection between the literacy program and the community, forming a link with outside organizations which can provide support in the way of materials, additional volunteers, and funding. Community volunteers bring a variety of life experiences, education, and professional backgrounds to the program, enabling them to serve in a number of capacities such as tutor, external manager, trainer, or wherever a special need exists. Most important, when community and inmate volunteers work together and make a commitment to a good cause, it serves as a reminder that we are all *one community*.

Community volunteers bring many benefits, shared by both students and volunteers. A student feels grateful that someone from the community has taken the time to show that he or she cares. The volunteer feels a sense of achievement by sharing the gift of reading with a person doubly disadvantaged by being illiterate and in prison. Further, a volunteer may actually assist a student by introducing positive influences which could help facilitate the student's re-entry into society.

Volunteers can be helpful by promoting the program in their communities, on their jobs, and by attending functions on behalf of the program. The benefits of community volunteers are substantial, and it is recommended that they be recruited. This will be a challenging task.

The prison's volunteer coordinator should be informed that the literacy program is established and seeking community volunteers. Civic organizations, religious groups, and individuals wishing to volunteer should be made aware of the opportunities the program provides. Adult literacy programs and local libraries which have volunteers willing to join an established program should also be contacted.

Using the media can also be a good way of recruiting community volunteers. Coverage highlighting its efforts to fight illiteracy brings much needed attention to the program, and informs the community of the existence of a special volunteer opportunity.

Regardless of the methods used to recruit community volunteers, it should be remembered that there will always be special individuals who are seeking unique and challenging volunteer opportunities.

## FUNDING

All programs require operating funds. While the financial needs of a program may be modest, expenses will be incurred. Such expenses include the purchase of a word processor, office supplies, books, learning materials, and other items essential to the functioning of the program.

Although your program operates within a prison, it may not necessarily receive funding from the prison or the Department of Corrections. Therefore, several sources of funding should be explored. A state's Department of Education is probably the best place to start. If they do not have grants available they may be able to direct you to promising sources, especially at the federal level. If the literacy program is located within a state prison, the Department of Corrections' Federal Grants Manager should be approached. Either of these could be an important source of start-up funding.

Additional funding sources could also include foundations, private corporations, community organizations and philanthropies. A package of information on the literacy program should be prepared and submitted to each potential source. The package should include a personalized letter of introduction (not a form letter), program news articles, a program pamphlet, and any other materials which show the program in the best possible light.

The LIFE Program has been fortunate to receive funding throughout the years from two main sources. Initial funding came from the State's Department of Education when the Program sought out and applied for grants pertaining to literacy programs. The second source of funding has come from the Benevolence Committee of a local church. Members of that church have taken an interest in literacy and have ensured that LIFE is remembered whenever the church is donating to volunteer organizations.

LIFE has found that being a well-organized literacy program, in and of itself, can be helpful in obtaining funding from various organizations. While funding is important, we would emphasize that money alone is not what makes a program successful.

## PUBLICITY

Publicity brings your program to the attention of the public. It is essential when you are seeking support such as grants and donations. Word of mouth is a very effective method for generating publicity. The role of the community volunteers in this effort cannot be overstated; They will be responsible for telling friends, church groups, and other literacy organizations about the program.

A brochure or fact sheet describing the program, its operation, and goals is another method of generating publicity. The brochure or fact sheet should be distributed to various organizations, businesses, celebrities, government agencies, and other literacy programs. LIFE's brochure and fact sheet detailing our work and accomplishments can be found at *Appendix D*.

The media should also be contacted and made aware of the program's activities. Newspapers, radio, or television programs can be invaluable; a favorable mention by any of these sources will generate publicity. LIFE took the initiative to contact local newspaper columnists which resulted in articles being written about the Program. We were also featured in a literacy documentary produced by New Jersey Network (NJN) television, and we are currently the focus of a Home Box Office (HBO) documentary scheduled to air in March 2002.

## RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

The LIFE Program has initiated several ideas which have personalized the Program and increased camaraderie among our members. The more noteworthy are:

**Anniversary Celebration** - The Program holds an annual celebration for its members to honor their accomplishments. All tutors and students are presented certificates recognizing the work they have done. New tutors are presented their training certification by representatives from LVA. A guest speaker, usually from the literacy field, members of the Education Department, the Administration, and outside guests are invited to the ceremony. Refreshments are served after the awards are presented.

**Student Awards** - Each year four students are picked by the Program Manager to receive special awards for outstanding achievement. These awards, presented at the Anniversary Celebration, are usually items such as a book, pen, portfolio, etc.



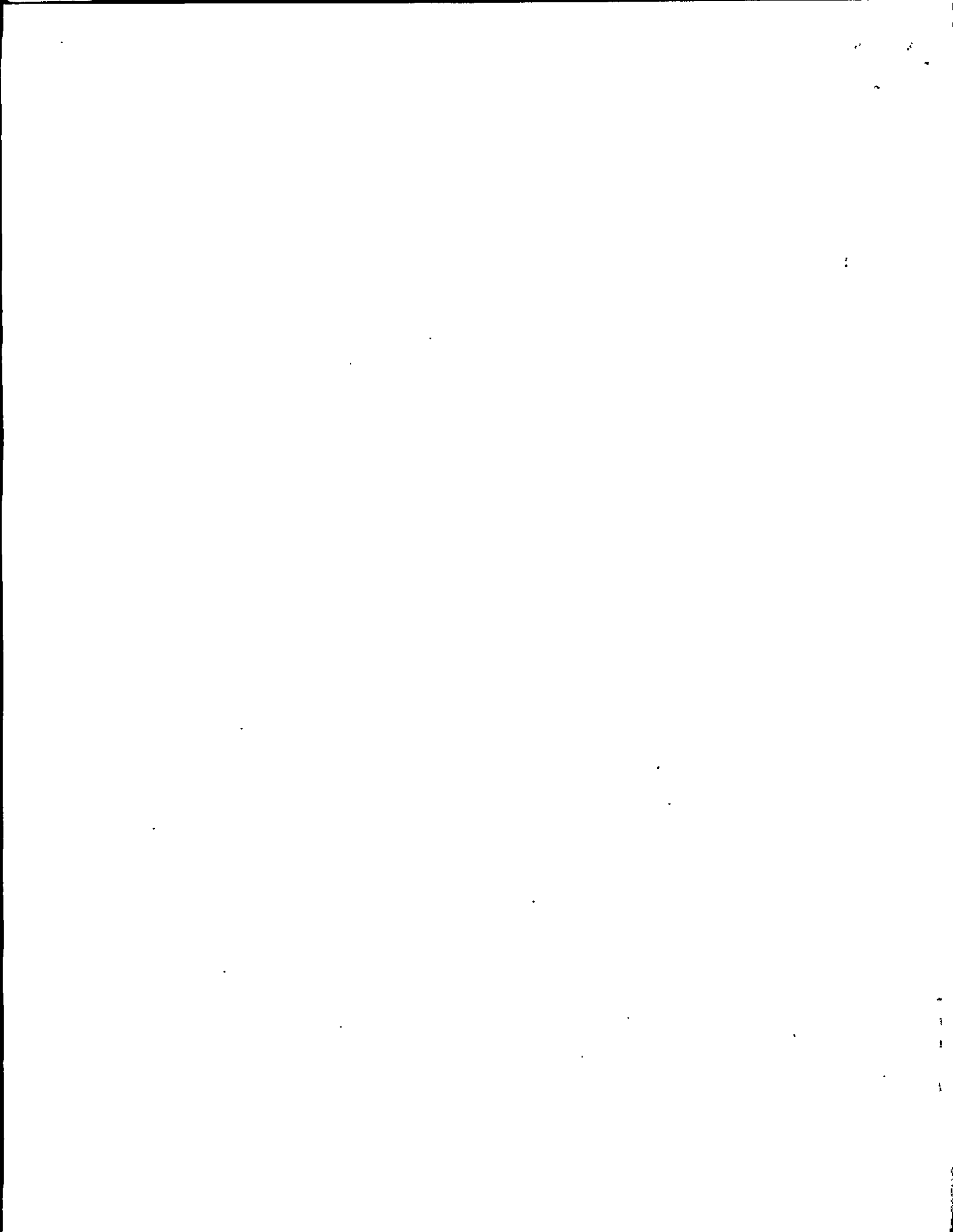
**Plaques** - At various anniversary celebrations LIFE awards plaques to its members and individuals from the community for outstanding contributions to the success of the Program. This is a way we show appreciation for their assistance to the LIFE Program.

**T-Shirts and Sweatshirts** - LIFE presents T-shirts and sweatshirts with our logo to all members and guest speakers. This is another way we show appreciation to our members and supporters.

**Photographs** - Photographs are taken during the Program's Anniversary Celebration. Members are photographed during the certificate presentation. These photographs are reproduced and each member is allowed to select copies as a memento.

**Logo** - Creating a logo is important because it gives a visual identity to a program. It symbolizes membership, gives a sense of belonging, and boosts morale. The LIFE logo appears on the front cover of this Manual.

Additional copies of this Manual may be obtained free of charge by writing to the LIFE Program, New Jersey State Prison, 3rd and Federal Streets, P.O. Box 861, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0861, or phoning a request to the LIFE Program, c/o Supervisor of Education at N.J.S.P., Trenton, NJ (609) 292-9700 Ext. 4285 or Fax (609) 777-1885



**APPENDIX A**

**JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

# **JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

## **PROGRAM MANAGER**

Oversees daily operation of Program and ensures that other managers carry out their assigned duties.

Specific responsibilities are:

Prepares agenda for monthly general meetings and all managers' meetings;

Chairs monthly general meetings and schedules managers' meetings;

Assists in recruitment of tutors and students;

Interviews and schedules testing of potential tutors and students;

Coordinates matching of tutor/student pairs and schedules their sessions;

Meets with Education Department Liaison to discuss any problems which may arise in scheduling, room availability, attendance, ordering supplies, etc.;

Ensures equipment and materials are available for the Program;

Coordinates yearly student evaluations;

Provides assistance to tutor/student pairs as needed;

Assists in obtaining Program funding;

Assists in developing media contacts;

Initiates all Program correspondence;

Coordinates scheduling of LVA Tutor Training Classes, workshops, and special events during the year such as the Piano Recital and Anniversary Celebration;

Represents the Program at institutional functions, and during conferences with Administrators and Supervisor of Education.

## **ASSISTANT PROGRAM MANAGER**

Assists Program Manager in carrying out all duties involved in the daily operation of the Program. Upon departure of Program Manager, Assistant Manager assumes position of Program Manager.

## **SECRETARY**

Notifies program members of scheduled meetings, and provides copies of each meeting's agenda.

Responsible for taking roll and minutes of all meetings, and distributing minutes to all members and alumni.

Responsible for all outgoing correspondence and letters.

Assists with interviewing prospective tutors.

Maintains rosters of students, tutors, managers, and alumni.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGER**

Responsible for recruiting volunteers by sending brochures, fact sheets, and other relevant information to community organizations and individuals.

Contacts organizations for workshops, donations, grants, etc.

Contacts organizations to request guest speakers for the Program's General Meetings and annual celebrations.

Assists with interviewing prospective tutors.

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH MANAGER**

Responsible for recruiting students and tutors from the prison population.

Assists the Public Relations Manager with contacting the outside community.

Assists with interviewing prospective tutors.

## **TREASURER**

Maintains account ledger of funds.

Presents financial report at each monthly meeting.

Coordinates the writing of grant proposals.

Assists with interviewing prospective tutors.

## **EXTERNAL PROGRAM MANAGER**

Represents the Program to community organizations.

Recruits Community Volunteers through written correspondence and personal contact.

Initiates contact with funding sources, and assists in writing grant proposals.

Works with the internal managers to coordinate Program activities.

Assists with interviewing prospective tutors.

## **ASSISTANT SECRETARY**

Assists Secretary in performance of all related duties. Learns operation of the Program in preparation for filling a future managerial vacancy.

## **CLERK**

Maintains files, records, reports, etc., and assists managers as needed.

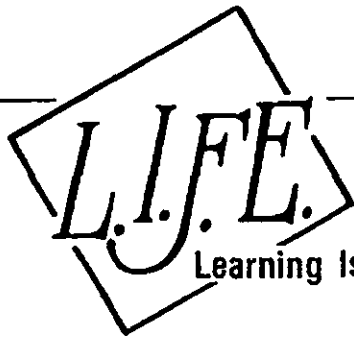
Responsible for issuing monthly supplies to tutors and students and informing Program Manager when additional supplies are needed.

Assists in preparing yearly certificates for tutors and students which are presented at anniversary celebrations.

Learns operation of the Program in preparation for filling a future managerial vacancy.

**APPENDIX B**

**PROGRAM AGREEMENTS**



## **LIFE PROGRAM AGREEMENTS**

### GENERAL

1. The name chosen for the literacy program is LIFE (Learning Is For Everyone). The Program began in July 1985.
2. The Program's Executive Board will be comprised of all the managers.
3. General meetings, to be attended by managers and tutors, will be held once a month. All members must attend the monthly meetings. Special meetings, also attended by managers and tutors, are held as necessary.
4. The Executive Board has decision/policy making authority. Decisions reached, or policy changes, should be reported to the staff liaison.
5. If any member of the LIFE Program has a concern or issue he feels should be raised, they can request the Program Manager put it on the agenda for discussion at the general meeting.
6. At least a majority of members must be present at a general meeting before a final vote can be taken on any issue.
7. Should it become necessary for the LIFE Program to terminate a manager or tutor for conduct unbecoming a member, it should be reported to the staff liaison.



## TUTOR

1. In order for a potential tutor to be accepted into the LIFE Program, the following criteria must be met:
  - a. Attend initial screening session by one or more managers and demonstrate a strong commitment to participate;
  - b. Proof of high school diploma or G.E.D.;
  - c. A satisfactory grade on the Reading and English sections of the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) - inmate tutors only;
  - d. Community volunteer tutors must attend the New Jersey State Prison's volunteer orientation and receive State Bureau of Investigation clearance;
  - e. Attend at least two general meetings prior to membership;
  - f. Complete Literacy Volunteers of America tutor training;
  - g. Receive a two-thirds majority vote from the managers and tutors at a monthly meeting.
2. All tutor candidates will be notified in writing as to whether or not they have been accepted into the LIFE Program.
3. Members will carry out their responsibilities in a respectful manner. Strict confidence will be observed between tutors and students. Should a problem arise between tutor and student, the tutor should report it to the Manager who will review the situation immediately. If deemed necessary, the matter will be reviewed by the Executive Board.
4. If any member is absent from a meeting or tutoring session, he must notify the Program's Manager or Secretary explaining his absence. Members will be required to have valid reasons for not attending. After missing three (3) meetings or tutoring sessions within a twelve month period, the member will meet with the Executive Board for a review of his status.
5. Student records and test results are confidential and will not be available to anyone other than the tutors, managers, and education staff, except for good reason and upon written request to the managers. Tutors and managers will not reveal the identity of any student to fellow tutors or others in or outside the Program, except by permission of the student.

## STUDENT

1. All students admitted to the LIFE Program must have a 4th grade reading level or below.
2. All incoming students will be required to attend an orientation session which will include the following:
  - a. Intake information collection;
  - b. Explanation of Program's procedures and requirements;
  - c. Establishment of individual goals for each student;
  - d. Determination of student's desire to participate in Program.
3. All student candidates must be tested to determine their reading level.
4. Students will be required to have valid reasons for missing scheduled tutoring sessions. After missing three (3) sessions, a student's status will be reviewed by the Executive Board.
5. Potential students recruited during the Prison's orientation period must wait at least sixty (60) days before entering the LIFE Program. This waiting time allows the potential students to become acclimated to the prison and aware of all available programs. As a result, potential students are better able to make decisions and commitments to the programs they opt to join.
6. One of the primary goals of the LIFE Program will be to assist and encourage participants to enroll in the prison's school. Furthermore, all participants not currently enrolled in school will be encouraged to join after completing six (6) months of tutoring in the LIFE Program.

With the passage of time, it may be necessary to periodically review these agreements, making changes as needed.

Revised 6/1/01

The above Program Agreements supersede all previous Agreements.

**APPENDIX C**

**STUDENT APPLICATION**

**STUDENT AGREEMENT CONTRACT**

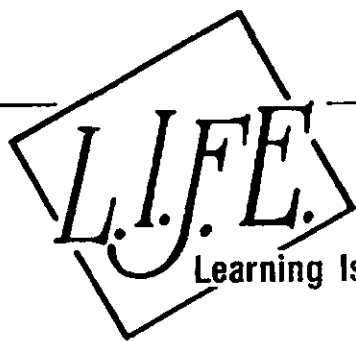
**WEEKLY LESSON PLAN**

**MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**TUTOR APPLICATION**

**TUTOR AGREEMENT CONTRACT**



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## STUDENT APPLICATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State # \_\_\_\_\_ SBI # \_\_\_\_\_

Work Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_ Wing: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you currently enrolled in any school Program? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Last grade completed: \_\_\_\_\_

What language(s) do you speak? \_\_\_\_\_

read? \_\_\_\_\_ write? \_\_\_\_\_

Age: (circle one) under 25; 26-35; 36-45; 46-55; 56-65; 65+

Amount of time served at N.J.S.P.: \_\_\_\_\_ Time left: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about the LIFE Program? \_\_\_\_\_

What are your interests? (sports, hobbies, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

What goals would you like to achieve through your participation in the LIFE Program? \_\_\_\_\_

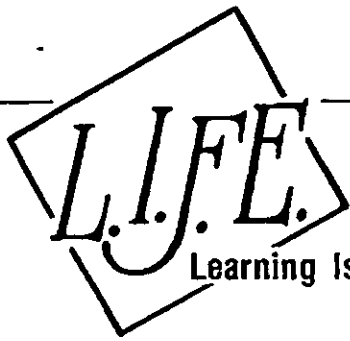
If you are accepted in the LIFE Program, do you agree to abide by all the rules and regulations of the Program? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Have you ever had head injuries? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Are you on medication? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ If yes, what medication? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been made aware of the eye exam requirement? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature or Mark



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## STUDENT AGREEMENT CONTRACT

I, (Student) \_\_\_\_\_, agree to meet with my tutor once a week for six months, from (Date) \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

I agree to make every effort to attend each tutoring session or, if I cannot attend a particular session, to make every effort to notify a manager in advance.

I understand that enrollment in this program is very limited and that, if I fail to attend three (3) tutoring sessions without good reason, I will be dropped from the LIFE Program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature or Mark

\_\_\_\_\_  
Manager's Signature

## WEEKLY LESSON PLANS

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Tutor \_\_\_\_\_

Long Term Goals \_\_\_\_\_

Target Date to Reach Goals \_\_\_\_\_

DATE	GOAL OF SESSION	ACTIVITIES PLANNED INCLUDE ALL MATERIALS USED	LENGTH OF SESSION	STUDENTS PROGRESS AND ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY TUTOR



## MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT

STUDENT \_\_\_\_\_ NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

TUTOR \_\_\_\_\_ NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

1. Total number of tutoring sessions and hours for the month of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_

Sessions: \_\_\_\_\_ Hours: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Has student made a sincere effort to attend all tutoring sessions? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

3. Has student demonstrated a sincere interest in being tutored? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

4. In your opinion, has your student made progress during the month this report is due?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ Elaborate: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Suggestions as to how we can better serve the needs of our students? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

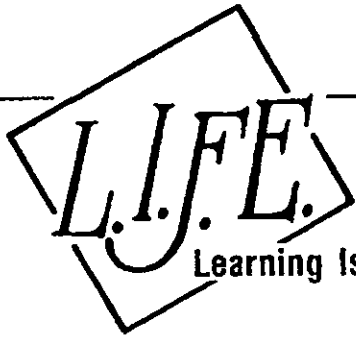
\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

THIS REPORT IS DUE AT THE END OF THE MONTH



## ANNUAL REPORT

STUDENT \_\_\_\_\_ NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

TUTOR \_\_\_\_\_ NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

1. Time in the Program: \_\_\_\_\_

2. What my student and I are working on: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Progress made: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Student's hobbies or interests: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Materials utilized: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

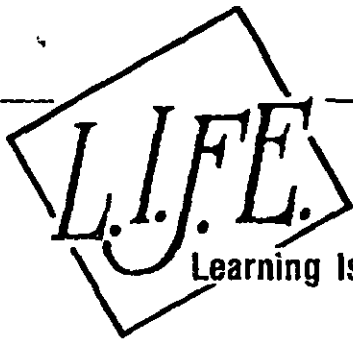
6. Personal insights or suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature





## TUTOR APPLICATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State # \_\_\_\_\_ SBI # \_\_\_\_\_

Work Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_ Wing: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a High School Diploma or G.E.D.? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

College attended (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Course of study? \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Credits? \_\_\_\_\_

Degree(s) attained, if any? \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about the LIFE Program? \_\_\_\_\_

Time served at N.J.S.P.: \_\_\_\_\_ Time remaining: \_\_\_\_\_

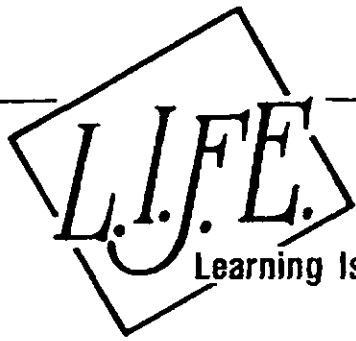
Age (circle one): Under 25; 26-35; 36-45; 46-55; 56-65; 65+

Languages other than English that you speak? \_\_\_\_\_

read? \_\_\_\_\_ write? \_\_\_\_\_

Special skills, interests or hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature



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## TUTOR AGREEMENT CONTRACT

1. I agree to volunteer my services to LIFE as a tutor and I have completed the tutor training program.
2. I agree to abide by the rules set forth for the LIFE Program as a volunteer tutor.
3. I agree to attend monthly meetings and weekly tutoring sessions and I understand that three unexcused absences may result in loss of membership.
4. I agree to carry out my responsibilities in a respectful and courteous manner.
5. I agree to keep all students' names and LIFE Program test scores confidential.
6. I agree to promptly notify the Program Manager, Secretary, or any other Manager **in writing** if for any reason I am absent from a meeting or a tutoring session, and that three absences within a twelve-month period could result in my being scheduled to meet with the Executive Board for a review of my status.
7. I agree to meet with the LIFE Managers to discuss my absences and future status should the need arise. I realize that failure to attend said meeting **will** result in my termination from the LIFE Program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tutor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Manager's Signature

# LEARNING IS FOR EVERYONE

Almost two decades ago our founder, Mr. William Burke, was inspired to make a change. His vision and dedication led to the birth of the L.I.F.E. Program. Learning Is For Everyone is an adult literacy program; the first prison literacy program in New Jersey to bring together the diverse talents of prisoners, community volunteers, literacy training experts, and educators to achieve the goal of helping illiterate prisoners become literate.

The need for such a program was undeniable. Studies by the Federal Government have estimated that 40% or more of all prisoners in the United States are illiterate or functionally illiterate, having basic reading & writing skills below the fourth grade level. Other studies show a direct link between illiteracy and crime, unemployment, and poverty. While the prison's Education Department met the needs of some, L.I.F.E. was specifically designed for those prisoners who for one reason or another could not succeed in the usual classroom setting. We feature confidential one-to-one tutoring by trained prisoners and community volunteers.



William Burke,  
Program Founder

All of our tutors are trained and certified by Mr. & Mrs. Robert and Anne McCleery, tutor trainers from Literacy Volunteers of America - New Jersey. In addition to this training, our tutors receive ongoing supervision and specialized training in other teaching techniques. Instruction is also provided on how to recognize dyslexia and other learning disabilities.



Robert and Anne McCleery  
L.V.A. Tutor Trainers

Day-to-day management and operation of the program is achieved by utilizing the skills of prisoners and community volunteers. Tutors serving as managers staff the Program's office; set up the interviewing and testing of potential students and tutors; handle the pairing of students and tutors; maintain records of each student's progress; and budget the Program's finances for the purchase of textbooks, writing materials, and office supplies.

Since its inception in 1985, L.I.F.E. has quelled the voices of its detractors by successfully and consistently enabling illiterate prisoners to become literate.

The dedication of all of our members has not gone without recognition. Locally, L.I.F.E. was featured in a New Jersey Network Television documentary on literacy, written about in newspaper articles, and our founder received the Governor's Volunteer Award (which salutes elite volunteers throughout the State of New Jersey). Nationally, L.I.F.E. was named the 323rd Daily Point of Light by President George Bush, and is the focus of an upcoming Home Box Office (H.B.O.) documentary.

On an in-house level L.I.F.E. salutes the achievements and efforts of our students, tutors, and community volunteers, by hosting a yearly Anniversary Celebration. Certificates are presented to students and tutors and awards are given to acknowledge the top students, as well as the special efforts of our community volunteers. We also host an Annual Piano Recital which allows our students, tutors, community volunteers and supporters to gather in a more relaxed atmosphere.

While we are proud of our achievements, our commitment to excellence has not wavered. As we near the completion of our second decade of service, we are more determined than ever to meet the needs of illiterate prisoners. Realistically, we understand that our Program would not be as successful without the financial and hands-on support of the outside community. It is our fervent hope that this support continues, and we welcome those special individuals from the community seeking a challenging and diverse volunteer opportunity.



L.I.F.E. Program Managers, 2001

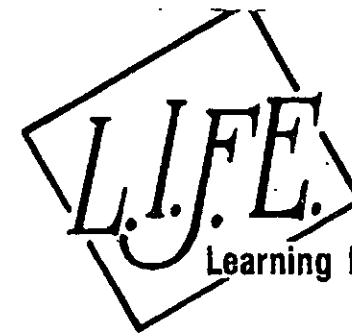
## Your Participation Can Make A Difference

Our Community Volunteers must:

- Have the patience and enthusiasm to help someone to learn
- Be sensitive to the differing needs and backgrounds of others
- Be committed to making a difference
- Have a H.S. Diploma or G.E.D.
- Pass the prison's security clearance
- Complete the prison's orientation process

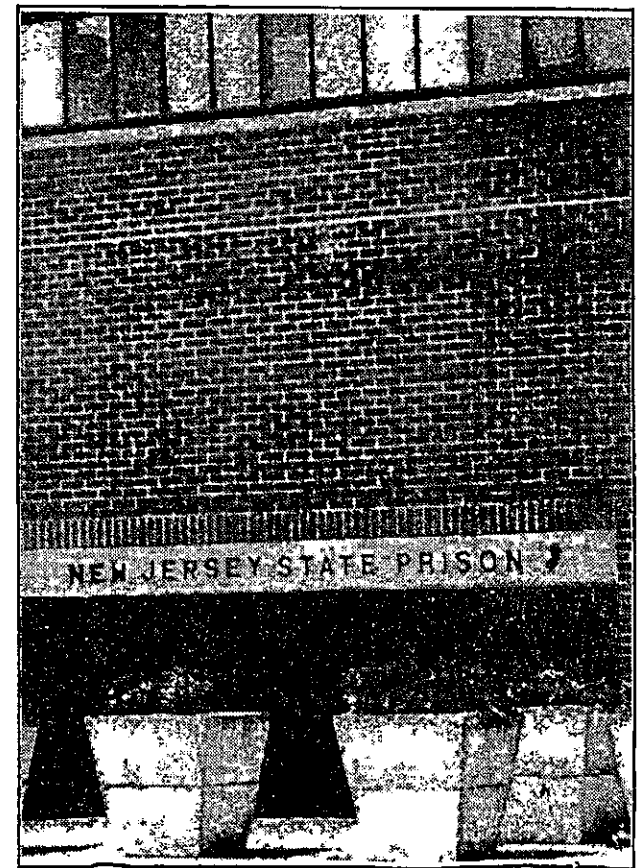
For additional  
information  
write or call:

L.I.F.E. Program Liaison  
Education Department  
New Jersey State Prison  
P.O. Box 861  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625  
Phone (609) 292-9700 Ext. 4285  
Fax (609) 777-1885

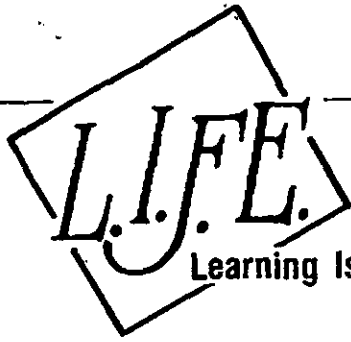


*An Adult Literacy  
Program*

*Established 1985*



Due to our reputation for excellence, and the respect and admiration that reputation has garnered, we were asked to provide the formula for our success. These requests led us to the publication of "Starting A Prison Literacy Program: A How-To Manual." A Copy of this publication can be obtained, free of charge, by writing, calling, or faxing a request to us.



Learning Is For Everyone

## LIFE PROGRAM FACTS

- Program was established in 1985.
- Purpose of the Program is to teach illiterate prisoners how to read and write utilizing one-to-one tutoring.
- First program of its kind in New Jersey prison system to use community and prisoner volunteers to tutor students and manage program.
- All Program tutors are trained and L.V.A. certified by two very special volunteers from Literacy Volunteers of America, Mr. & Mrs. Robert and Anne McCleery.
- In addition to LVA training, ongoing workshops are presented by adult literacy specialists on various teaching techniques, including recognizing dyslexia and other learning disabilities.
- In spite of maintaining a maximum of 32 student/tutor pairs, the Program continues to have a waiting list of students and tutors.
- The Program operates Monday thru Friday evenings in the Prison's school area. Each student/tutor pair is assigned to a specific evening and meets on that evening each week. General meetings are held on the fourth Friday of every month with all tutors in attendance to discuss the business of the Program.
- On July 6, 1990, LIFE's founder, Mr. William Burke, received the Governor's Volunteer Award. The State of New Jersey recognizes elite volunteers with this award.



- 
- On December 11, 1990, LIFE was named by President George Bush as the 323rd "Daily Point of Light". The President's "Thousand Points of Light" program promoted volunteerism by recognizing role models throughout the country.
  - In March 1998, Mrs. Lucinda Florio (former First Lady of New Jersey), an adult literacy volunteer, was the keynote speaker at LIFE's Twelfth Anniversary Celebration.
  - LIFE has prepared a "How-To Manual" to serve as a guide for other prisons interested in starting a literacy program.
  - LIFE is currently the focus of a Home Box Office (HBO) documentary scheduled to air during the 2002 season.
  - By receiving donations, the LIFE Program has been able to successfully continue its mission.

