

MEDIA ADVISORY

(YOUR COMMUNITY) CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY

Contact: (your Public Information officer)

Phone:

A local/(group of local) (community/literacy/education) organization(s) will sponsor (name event or, if more than one, the biggest event) on (date) to celebrate International Literacy Day.

This event/(these events), planned by (name organizations), seeks/(seek) to focus attention on the fundamental role of literacy in all aspects of (community's/state's) well-being. It/(they) promotes/(promote) public awareness of the importance of basic literacy skills for all people, provides/(provide) information about local literacy programs for adults and families, and encourages/(encourage) potential students, tutors, and sponsors to participate in programs this fall.

(Insert quote from local literacy organizer stressing the importance of community-wide support for improving residents' literacy).

(The event/s) will take place at (time) at (location). (Provide further details on event/events). The public is invited to (observe/participate).

(If possible, add information about specific literacy achievements and needs in the community/state. To find statistics about literacy needs at the state level, contact your state director of Adult Basic Education or search on-line at <http://www.nifl.gov/reders/reder.htm>. This site allows you to search a database created with information from the National Adult Literacy Survey to find out the number of residents with low literacy skills in your city, county, state, and Congressional district.)

International Literacy Day, celebrated every September 8, was first sponsored by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1965. Today, communities and countries throughout the world observe International Literacy Day in a variety of ways.

The National Literacy Act defines literacy as "an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one's goals and develop one's knowledge and potential." The 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey found that between 20 and 22 million Americans could not accomplish basic reading and math tasks. Another 45 to 50 million adults could read and do math with more ease, but could still greatly benefit from more education. Yet in 1997, according to the US Department of Education, only slightly more than 4 million adults, or fewer than 10 percent of adults without a high school diploma or GED, were enrolled in federally-funded adult basic education, secondary education and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs.

For Fiscal Year 2001, the federal government has provided \$540 million to the states for literacy and adult education programs, which the Department of Education expects will leverage about one billion dollars in state and local spending.

(Consider getting quotes from other community leaders such as the mayor, business leaders, school administrators, or community development officials about the importance of adult learning to the overall quality of life for individuals, families, businesses in the community/state).

(Attach a list of local organizations that offer adult basic education and GED classes. Include address, phone number, contact person, class times and registration schedules.)