



# PRESS RELEASE

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## APL Earns National Recognition for Advancing Adult Education

**Gonzales, LA** – A new national study is shining a spotlight on Ascension Parish Library, recognizing it as a model for how libraries help adults gain the tools to succeed in work and in life. The findings, published in a white paper by the Public Library Association, explore how libraries are expanding access to education and opportunities for adult learners.

Earlier this year, 352 public libraries participated in the Public Library Association’s *Survey on Adult Learning in Public Libraries*. The survey found that while libraries are trusted community resources and well-positioned to reach non-traditional learners, many face challenges that limit their ability to meet the growing demand for their services. The article features APL, alongside the San Francisco Public Library in California, as case studies showing how partnerships and innovative programming can transform lives through lifelong learning.

“Many of the programs we offer for adults start with the goal of helping people take the next step,” said Carrie Goodall, APL’s assistant library director. “Learning is lifelong, and the library is here to make sure everyone has the chance to keep growing, no matter where they are in life.”

At APL, learning takes many forms:

- **Excel Adult High School** allows adults 21 and older to earn an accredited diploma. Since launching in January 2024, 16 graduates have gone on to pursue higher education or secure stable employment, and demand for the program continues to grow.
- **ELL and Citizenship Classes** help learners build English language, digital, and civic skills.
- **Workforce Development and Digital Literacy** offer employment fairs with classes on resume writing, small business programs, and access to online professional development tools such as Gale Courses and LinkedIn Learning.
- **Wellness and Creative Programs** include yoga, Tai Chi, and art classes, along with hands-on experiences in the **Makerspace** – featuring sewing machines, recording studios, 3D printers, and soon woodworking equipment and a teaching kitchen.

The article also highlights how partnerships allow the library to stretch its resources to reach more of the community. For example, collaborations with the Ascension Parish Sheriff’s Office at the Wag Center in Donaldsonville provide programming and a satellite library for those with limited transportation. Through the library’s Partners Advancing Literacy (PAL) initiative,



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companies and organizations can show their commitment to the community by sponsoring library programs, resources, and capital projects. Several businesses (United Community Bank, Nutrien, Methanex, Air Products Foundation, and Notary Depot LLC) have provided funds for scholarships for Excel Adult High.

It concludes with *“APL’s programs have generated broad and meaningful outcomes that demonstrate the library’s role as a cornerstone for lifelong learning and community resilience.... Taken together, these outcomes highlight the transformative impact of Ascension Parish Library’s work.”*

“This recognition is really about our community,” said APL’s Director, John Stelly. “Every class, workshop, and partnership is possible because our residents believe in the power of learning and connection. We’re proud to be part of a national movement showing what libraries can do to change lives.”

Click the link to read the [Expanding Possibilities: Public Libraries and Adult Learning White Paper](#).

## About APL

Ascension Parish Library (APL) is an award-winning library system committed to providing opportunities for lifelong learning to all ages. APL delivers needed resources through traditional library services, digital materials, and innovative programs. Ascension Parish Library encourages residents to read, learn, and create by visiting their local library. To learn more, visit <https://www.myAPL.org/>.

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