

Making a Delicious Difference in Literacy in Manatee County

Manatee Literacy Council's 'Flavors of Literacy' event in November will feature delicious food while helping to bring English fluency to adults throughout the county

BRADENTON, FL – The Manatee Literacy Council is thrilled to announce the return of its popular – and delicious – fundraiser, Flavors of Literacy. The event features a variety of foods from around the world and beer pairings, showcasing different cultures and culinary traditions while raising money for adult literacy programs in Manatee County. There will also be live music and dancing/dance lessons.

Flavors of Literacy takes place on Saturday, November 8, 2025, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Manatee River Garden Club (3120 1st Ave W, Bradenton, FL 34205). So far, some of the “flavors” that will be featured include French, German, Thai, and Hispanic/Caribbean; numerous additional restaurants will be added in the weeks to come.

Literacy is the gatekeeper to education, financial stability, health, relationships, and empowerment. It is the foundation of self-sufficiency and success. But in Manatee County, 1 in 5 adults cannot read above a fifth-grade level. The State of Florida has the third-lowest adult literacy level in the country.

Low literacy means that everyday functions most of us take for granted are difficult and frustrating – or impossible. Basic tasks, such as filling out applications, writing checks, grocery shopping, reading to children, interpreting a bus schedule, or communicating with a child’s teacher, are difficult. For those with no English fluency, the problem is worse. Things like renting an apartment or going to the doctor become terrifying and overwhelming tasks. And the problem can become generational: children with low literate parents have a 72% chance of achieving vastly lower reading levels than their peers.

Manatee Literacy Council, which was founded in 1978, provides services confidentially and free of charge to adult residents regardless of race, creed, color, sex, national origin, or socioeconomic status. Programs include Confident Conversation Classes, personal tutoring, literacy classes, financial literacy classes, ESOL (English as a Second Language) classes, U.S. Citizenship test preparation, and more.

“Our work of empowering adults through literacy is more meaningful when you meet our incredible learners – many of them have overcome huge obstacles and are determined to achieve better lives,” McLean said. “Each year, we’ve seen how this event unites the community through a shared appreciation for diverse foods, live music, and dancing—all while supporting literacy for adult learners in Manatee County.”

McLean notes that numerous clients have gone on to secure better jobs and pass citizenship tests; even being able to read to children or grandchildren is a monumental and meaningful achievement.

Cost: \$30/advance, \$35/at the door; guests under the age of 21 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Every ticket sold supports literacy programs that help adults build essential reading, writing and language skills, opening doors to better job opportunities, greater independence, and a brighter future.

Community members are encouraged to register by visiting manatee-literacy.org/flavors-of-literacy-november-2025; email info@manatee-literacy.org or call 941-746-8197 for more information or to sponsor the event.

PHOTO ID: The Manatee Literacy Council's Flavors of Literacy fundraiser will feature delicious international food while supporting the cause of adult literacy in Manatee County
Provided photo/MLC

About Manatee Literacy Council

Manatee Literacy Council is a nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing the level of functional literacy of adults in Manatee County. Through classes and one-on-one tutoring, we support the skills of reading, writing, understanding, and speaking English. Serving the community since 1978, we believe that literacy is the foundation of self-sufficiency and success. Our mission is to empower Manatee residents to independence through literacy. Visit manatee-literacy.org for more information.