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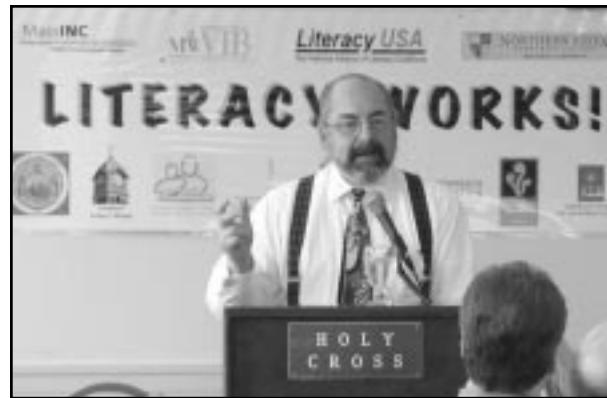
COMMONWEALTH CORPORATION

MAY 2004

Summit Addresses Literacy Challenges

In its first full year of implementation, **Literacy Works!** (LW) has achieved notable successes and faced important challenges. Building from this foundation, over 75 people came to the first LW Leadership Summit—"Let's Talk Literacy"—held at Holy Cross College on April 30, 2004. A combination of talks, panels, and workshops provided participants with information about LW in the pilot communities as well as ideas for innovative approaches to raising public awareness, supporting and expanding programs, and attracting local investments for literacy. As one participant remarked, "This was one of the most informative and inspiring gatherings about promoting literacy that I've ever attended."

LW is an initiative of CommCorp in partnership with the Massachusetts Institute for a New Commonwealth (MassINC) and with the cooperation of the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE). As a pilot project, LW is currently operating in Lawrence and Hampden County, with plans to expand to more communities in the future. A key innovation in LW is the deployment of literacy entrepreneurs, staff who can mobilize the private sector and local community leadership in support of literacy efforts. They also work with local providers and the local workforce investment board on programs and strategies to meet the community's literacy needs and expand resources for supporting literacy efforts.



Bob Bickerton, Associate Commissioner of the Center for Lifelong Learning and Teaching, Massachusetts Department of Education, addressing Let's Talk Literacy! participants.

At the Leadership Summit, participants first heard from **Ian Bowles**, President and CEO of MassINC, about the importance of literacy and the new basic skills to the economic health of the state and its communities and families. **Jonathan Raymond**, President and CEO of Commonwealth Corporation, introduced the LW initiative and chaired the meeting. Four perspectives on why literacy – and Literacy Works – matter were presented by **Anne Serino**, Administrator of Adult and Community Learning Services at the Massachusetts Dept. of Education, **Bob Schwarz**, the Executive VP of Peter Pan Bus Lines and chair of the Hampden County LW Committee, **Maria Capuano**, a business owner in Holyoke, a member of the Hampden County LW committee, and an alumnus of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs, and **Lonnie Kaufman**, from the Donahue Institute, the independent evaluators for LW.

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Literacy Works

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In the panel discussions that followed, **John Schneider**, Director of Programs and Operations for MassINC, served as a lively emcee, directing questions at panelists about the needs for literacy services in their communities and the progress and challenges of LW and other collaborative efforts.

Bob Bickerton, Associate Commissioner of the Center for Lifelong Learning and Teaching with Massachusetts DOE, outlined challenges and opportunities for literacy and ESOL in Massachusetts, highlighting the community planning process spearheaded by DOE and what it was revealing about the strengths and the needs of communities in terms of literacy and ESOL programs. Bob discussed many of the efforts underway to address these needs. Pointing to Literacy Works as one successful model for building community commitment and expanding resources for literacy, Bob stressed the impor-



At the LW Summit, a panel discusses why literacy and Literacy Works matter: (foreground) Ian A. Bowles, (panel, left to right) Anne Serino, Bob Schwarz, Maria Capuano, Jonathan Raymond, and Lonnie Kaufman

tance of continuing to build such collaborations and engaging all segments of the community in this work. Bob closed with an inspirational quote from the late Chancellor of the Board of Higher Education and former CommCorp board member, Stanley Z. Koplik, “Massachusetts: where everybody reads and everybody counts.”

Local Employer Makes Commitment to Literacy

At the Literacy Works Leadership Summit, Bob Schwarz, Executive Vice President of Peter Pan Bus Lines and Chair of the Hampden County Literacy Works Committee announced that his company will make major investments in literacy. Largely as a result of the company’s involvement in Literacy Works, the president of Peter Pan Bus, Inc., Peter L. Picknelly, Sr. decided to support two new literacy centers. The first—a bold new initiative in bringing literacy services to the people who need them—will be a 21,000 square-foot comprehensive family literacy center located in a new inter-modal transportation hub in Holyoke. The center will include adult literacy, family literacy, and day care services. Supported by Holyoke Mayor Michael Sullivan and

Congressman John Olver, this effort is in collaboration with the local ABE and family literacy providers, day-care operators, Holyoke Community College and the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. The second major commitment is a contribution of \$100,000 to the Springfield YMCA to create the Peter L. Picknelly, Sr. Literacy Center to strengthen literacy and English skills of children, youth, adults, and families. These commitments from Peter Pan Bus, Inc. reflect the company’s belief in the importance of businesses addressing and supporting the needs of residents in their communities. Increased literacy and ESOL services are a major part of vibrant economic development, workforce development, and community life.

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Mitt Romney, Governor; Kerry Healey, Lt. Governor; Jane C. Edmonds, Director, Mass. DWD; Jonathan Raymond, President, CommCorp