July 2016
Howadia Hashim Laseke has been reaching her goals, one after the next. She began working with her first tutor at Fox Valley Literacy Council in 2012 to improve her English and practice for her U.S. Citizenship test. She became a U.S. Citizen in the same year. She continued to work with tutors and attended classes at Fox Valley Technical College to improve her English. It was difficult, as Howadia remembers, because often she had to choose between working to feed her children or taking classes to improve her English skills.

Still, over the next couple of years, Howadia excelled at both parenting and her studies. Her eldest child, Sarah, will begin the Laboratory Science Technician program at Fox Valley Technical College in the fall. Her son, Muhamad, hasn’t even begun his senior year of high school yet and has already been...
offered six scholarships for schools around the nation for both his academic and football abilities. Her youngest son, Abraham, is best known around his school for his kindness, which is easy to believe knowing his mother.

Now that her children are becoming more independent, Howidia has decided to focus on her studies. In the fall, her goals at Fox Valley Literacy shifted and she wanted to prepare for her accuplacer test. Soon after, she was able to begin the Culinary Arts program at FVTC. She not only began her first semester of college with an ambitious 17 credits, she also began it with a $1,000 scholarship for her program. When asked what her favorite part of the program was so far, she immediately replied, “Wearing the clothes of a chef.” She recalled taking English classes at FVTC and seeing people in the Culinary Arts program and wondering when she’d be able to wear the white jacket: “Now that I can wear it, I’m proud. It makes me feel professional.” Her passion for cooking is almost tangible, as she speaks about it as her gift. She tells me, “Everyone cooks to eat, but not everyone can cook.” Fox Valley Literacy Staff has eaten food she has prepared, so we know firsthand exactly what she means and she certainly does have a gift.

And we’re not the only lucky ones. For ten years Howadia has been offering her culinary skills to Harbor House as a volunteer. She teared up when she relayed the ways they have supported her back, like gifting her a knife she needed for her program. She is eager to begin her second semester this fall.

Her advice for young women trying to reach their goals: “Focus on your dream and never give up. Never give up. Especially for young women coming from a different country, a different language, a different culture, never give up, keep following your dream.”
Please join us in welcoming the new Adult Education Coordinator

We’re excited to have Lori Phillips as the new Adult Education Coordinator with the Fox Valley Literacy Council. Lori originally graduated from UW-Madison with a degree in Agricultural Journalism with an emphasis in Marketing Communications. But as long as she could remember, she wanted to be a teacher. She returned to school at Marian University where she obtained her teaching license to teach grades 1-8. Upon graduation, she moved to Las Vegas to continue her teaching endeavor. She spent 3 years teaching elementary education to English as a Second Language students. During this time she obtained her Masters in Education with an emphasis in English as a Second Language.

To be closer to family, she moved back to Wisconsin and began working in adult education. She has worked for the Department of Corrections teaching ESL to inmates at the Green Bay Correctional Institution for the past six years. Lori reflects that this has been one of the most fascinating career choices to date: “The students’ determination to learn to English is phenomenal. This career choice made me want to continue with Adult Education and is what brought me to the Fox Valley Literacy Council. I hope to continue the passion I have to increase literacy and the education of adults in the community.”

Lori currently resides in Green Bay and is married with a young daughter and stepson. They love to spend time swimming, fishing, and anything that gets them outside. With football season upon us, each Sunday you will find her and her family rooting on the Packers.

Fox Valley Literacy Council’s Annual Picnic
Saturday, September 17th
Fritsch Park in Menasha

Save the date!
Volunteer Spotlight: Marlis Tessendorf

Marlis began volunteering with Fox Valley Literacy Council in 2005 because she wanted to help and encourage others to improve their reading and writing skills. Her favorite thing about tutoring is having the opportunity to interact with students of all ages and backgrounds, as well as learning about other cultures. Marlis has helped many adult learners meet and exceed their goals since 2005. She is currently working with one of her students to obtain U.S. Citizenship. A native German speaker, Marlis is fluent in English and currently studying Spanish. Her other hobbies include listening to classical music, reading historical novels and Agatha Christie mysteries, traveling, cooking, quilting and being a docent at Hearthstone Historic House Museum.