

To all those blessed with the ability to read,

I am honored to be serving as the President of the Literacy Council of Highlands and as an author and columnist, I am grateful for the chance to assist in providing an opportunity to people of all ages to obtain the most important skill they can ever have—the ability to read. If you read any statistics at all you will be appalled at the rate of illiteracy in our country. A rate of 51% is unbelievable but to have just one person who cannot read a newspaper and understand its meaning is a tragedy. I am personally committed to literacy, which is why I serve on the board, sponsor the now annual writing contest and work to improve the lot of the few I can reach. I cannot image what it would like not to be able to read a great book such as *To Kill a Mockingbird*, or recite *To His Love*. There are many worthy causes to which you can give your time and money, and in most of those projects you can see the end result—you can pet the adopted animal, or see a painting on the museum wall. In the case of literacy, there is joy of seeing the wonder on a child's face when they finally get to read and understand a simple sentence, or the pride that an older person feels when he, after a lifetime of not reading, stands proudly and acknowledges to the world, and more importantly to himself, that he can read. As contributors, we don't always get to see the end result of our work in literacy, and our results cannot be seen on a wall by a visitor who walks by. Our reward is the pride in knowing that we have helped these precious few, whom we may never meet, that now have better lives because of what we have given. Like the story of the Starfish, I cannot help everyone, but I can help *this one*. I am proud to be a sponsor of Literacy and I offer you that same opportunity—please give.

Regards,

Matthew Eberz  
President of the Board  
Literacy Council of Highlands