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| http://extras.mnginteractive.com/live/std/icon-print.gif[Print](http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_29671669/evergreen-job-seekers-find-help-from-literacy-programs)   http://extras.mnginteractive.com/live/std/icon-email.gifEmail   http://extras.mnginteractive.com/live/std/normal.gifhttp://extras.mnginteractive.com/live/std/large.gifhttp://extras.mnginteractive.com/live/std/largest.gifFont Resize**Evergreen job seekers find help from literacy programs****Two area nonprofits focus on training that gets more clients to work****By Josie Klemaier*YourHub Reporter***Posted:   03/24/2016 12:01:00 AM MDT[**Add a Comment**](http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_29671669/evergreen-job-seekers-find-help-from-literacy-programs#disqus_thread) | Updated:   about 17 hours agoBeckie Mosch, center, teaches a computer literacy class at Evergreen Christian Outreach in Evergreen on March 15.Beckie Mosch, center, teaches a computer literacy class at Evergreen Christian Outreach in Evergreen on March 15. (*Seth McConnell, YourHub*)A growing literacy program in the Evergreen area is about much more than just reading. "There's such a huge stigma surrounding literacy, and of course it's when we're talking about jobs and housing that literacy is such an issue up here," said Jennie Page, the jobs program director [at Evergreen Christian Outreach, or Echo](http://www.denverpost.com/golden/ci_28660963/evergreen-businesses-struggle-find-workers-fill-jobs).Echo recently formed a partnership with Mountain Reads, a local nonprofit effort started [two years ago by the Evergreen Rotary](http://www.denverpost.com/golden/ci_27634631/evergreens-rotary-club-strong-player-community) to help adults in the community improve their reading and reading comprehension skills. Mountain Reads volunteers tutor their clients in reading comprehension, math skills and studying to earn their GED. Both nonprofits were seeing that their clients' struggles finding employment were linked to computer literacy, since many applications are done online and include a literacy component. Advertisement"Most of our adult learners, they want that computer experience first because they missed that piece in their education," said Diane Lange, a Mountain Reads board member. Last fall, Echo introduced a computer literacy program covering the very basics, like how a mouse works and an overview of the origins of the Internet, and advancing to programs like Microsoft Word. Becky Mosch, assistant director of Echo's job center, developed the class at the most basic level because, she said, that is where they saw a need not filled in similar classes elsewhere."Even the library classes or classes free at the Workforce Center in Golden are basic, but didn't target an audience at the level these participants are at," she said. "We found a need, a niche for absolute basics."The program has been very popular, especially with seniors and others who have missed out on the technology boom of the past 20 years, she said. There also are a number of people re-entering the workforce after leaving during the 2008 recession.The program has helped the nonprofit connect [adults who may need further literacy help](http://www.denverpost.com/ci_19697895) with Mountain Reads. Volunteers sit in on the classes to help students and identify who might benefit from literacy help."We're hoping with Mountain Reads with us in the classes, they can also be developing relationships with the clients so there's a seamless transition," Page said.These relationships can help build trust and break through the barrier that the stigma surrounding literacy creates. Cathy Baim, who works directly with new clients as Echo's director of client services, said that in going through initial paperwork for services, clients' educational history can reveal their literacy needs, but it is not as easy as simply referring them to those services."Sometimes folks are reluctant to talk about it," she said. "A lot of times, it takes more than one conversation."There are as many reasons for adult literacy challenges as there are people who face them, Baim said. The issues often stem from an educational system that pushed them through despite their challenges.Lange said Mountain Reads tutors adults who want to improve their job skills, or [hone their English in the case when it is not their first language](http://www.denverpost.com/denver/ci_29641905/english-learning-center-an-affordable-option-learn-language)."They are die-hard learners," she said. "They're tired of the obstacles, saying, 'I need to give this a chance.' "The Evergreen Rotary is joined in Mountain Reads by the Mountain Foothills and Conifer Roatary clubs and gets funding from the clubs and grants. The program was adapted from a similar one in Boulder, and Lange said the long-term goal is to grow to have satellite tutors throughout Jefferson County.Echo also is planning to expand its computer literacy program. The original laptops got so much use, the goal now is to upgrade to a room full of desktops. Baim said Echo will continue a close partnership with Mountain Reads because it fills an educational need that Echo otherwise could not offer."It's really important that we have someone to fall back on that has the educational support in place," she said. "We don't — they do."*Josie Klemaier: 303-954-2465, jklemaier@denverpost.com or @JosieKlemaier* |

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