

Literacy: Program needed

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baseball stories," she said. "I just like to read."

Young hopes to set an example for her 4-year-old daughter.

"I read kids' books to her, about Mickey Mouse and A-B-Cs," she said. "I want her to like to read."

While government funding decreases, Crawford County Read Program responsibilities and government-required paper-work are growing, Schmalzried said. Besides teaching adults to read, the agency helps adults learn basic subjects for high school equivalency diplomas; teaches math, language and critical reading skills needed to pass the test for licensed practical nurse training; and provides workplace training customized to employees plus industrial team building.

"We have 10 or 11 paid employees in Meadville and Titusville and I can't give one of them any more to do," Schmalzried said. "Everyone is very busy now."

Schmalzried worries that soon there won't be enough money to pay staff members and the program will have to rely more heavily on volunteers. There aren't enough volunteers now to tutor all of the people hoping to learn, she said.

Schmalzried will tell lawmakers that cutting funds for literacy training is shortsighted. Literate adults are more likely to earn enough money to raise families without public assistance, she said, and a literate workforce helps attract new industry and jobs.

WHAT'S NEXT?

What: Adult Literacy Legislative Luncheon

When: May 18, 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Where: Allegheny College Campus Center

For: Anyone interested in adult literacy

By: Crawford County Read Program and state Sen. Bob Robbins

Reservations: Call 337-7323

"One of the awesome things about teaching a person to read is watching them gain confidence and start blossoming—at home, in the community and on the job," Schmalzried said.

And that benefits employers, said Tracy Coon, human resources director for Tech Tool & Mold. The company encouraged Lucy Young to improve her reading.

"She's able to comprehend work instructions. She has improved the quality of her work. She communicates better and she stands up for herself when she needs to," Coon said. "We're very proud of her."

State Sen. Robert D. Robbins of Greenville, R-50th Dist., will co-sponsor next week's legislative luncheon. So far, only two other legislators — state Rep. John Evans of Washington Township, R-5th Dist., and state Rep. Brad Roac of West Mead Township, R-6th Dist. — have confirmed that they will attend.

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