



**June 12, 2013**

### **Literacy Council at MSCC Names New Board President**

David Barch, Director of One Stop Operations for the Eastern Arkansas Workforce Center, has been elected president of the Literacy Council of Crittenden County which is based at Mid-South Community College.

Barch, who has served as a Literacy Council director for the past five years, succeeds David Moose, who also worked with the Council for five years. Moose stepped down because he and his wife, Judy, are pursuing personal changes and new opportunities in Louisville, Ky.

Other new officers elected to the board include Margaret Harrell, vice president; Holmes Hammett, treasurer; and Lori Malone, secretary.

“While Reverend and Mrs. Moose have been invaluable to our Council, we are excited to move forward as a Council in our effort to continue making a major impact on Crittenden County,” said Literacy Coordinator Jacki Murase of MSCC.



The Literacy Council is a non-profit educational program designed to serve the growing number of “functionally illiterate” residents of Crittenden County. It is estimated that approximately 32% of adults in the county have reading and writing skills insufficient for practical needs. Poor literacy skills are often associated with unemployment, crime, poverty, and welfare dependence.

The fight against illiteracy cannot be won without the support of the community and, most of all, the gift of time from the volunteer tutors. At present the Council has about 25 students and 11 tutors. In a county with more than 50,000 residents, Murase said she believes the Council has not even scratched the surface of the local need.

The Council has two standing needs. One is that potential students need to know about the program. Not having the ability to read and/or write at a higher level, many students fail to realize there is a program available to help them improve their education, and thus, their lifestyle. “Students most often come to the Council for help based on word of mouth from employers, friends, churches, etc.,” Murase explained.

The second need is that of volunteer tutors. Most tutoring is done on an individual basis, with tutors and students meeting a minimum of two hours a week, or more depending on availability.

Most tutors have no teaching experience, but they do possess a genuine passion to help make a difference in the community. “And that passion to make a difference is what drives their success as a tutor,” Murase pointed out.

The Literacy Office is located on the Mid-South Community College campus, 2000 West Broadway, West Memphis, in the building that houses the Arkansas Workforce Center. It is open Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Anyone interested in learning more about services available or volunteer opportunities should contact the Literacy Council of Crittenden County at (870) 733-6834.