

## **Literacy is a Root Cause of Unemployment, Poverty and Incarceration**

Studies have substantiated since the late 1960s that “literacy” is a documented root cause of unemployment, poverty and incarceration in Illinois. The last thing OBK wants to do is set up our clients to fail (help them get a job and then lose it because they cannot read adequately).

### **The Staggering Numbers:**

- **80% of inmates who leave prisons without learning how to read will return to prison.**
- **The IDOC has a current inmate population of some 30,000. Some 20,000 (70%) are reading impaired.**
- **Only 12% of inmates who learn to read while in prison do repeat offend.**
- **OBK can help 97% of our reading impaired clients learn to read. This advancement significantly increases the likelihood that our reading impaired clients will become gainfully employed, avoid poverty, and avoid recidivism.**

### **OBK Literacy Plan and Goals:**

- 1) Upon Intake, OBK Staff **SORT Literacy** tests all clients to ascertain if Literacy advancement is needed.
- 2) It is imperative that clients can read at a 5<sup>th</sup> Grade level or above. Testing takes 5-10 minutes, and if needed, a lesson instructor is found and appointment is scheduled.
- 3) We encourage client or general public volunteers to assist tutoring clients needing help.
- 4) Depending upon how many classes a client student has per week, on average we can increase a client student’s reading skills one grade per month if they have 2 classes per week.
- 5) Learning to read adequately is life-changing in itself for clients. (They had no idea what they were missing in life, and why they were failing...and they go forth with exceptional optimism).