

Literacy Matters is a recurring publication of Literacy Nassau, Inc.



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OPPORTUNITY CENTER

(submitted by Digna Johnson)

What I love about the Literacy Nassau Opportunity Center (LN-OC) is just that – the opportunities! At Literacy Nassau, purposeful learning is encouraged and supported. We offer quality education to our students. Basic English skills are taught in the classrooms, and the application of these skills can be used in the outside world. The name “Opportunity Center” speaks for itself as it identifies the many opportunities in the community for our students that they do not know about.

It is not easy moving to a new place with limited knowledge of the English language, not knowing any one, and being unfamiliar with where places are within the community. Many of our students say, “I don’t know where I can take my children on the weekends.” Part of our work is to help students connect learning in the classroom and being able to use what they learned in their community.

Each month, we offer workshops and field trips. Students select the workshops and field trips that are convenient with their schedules. Workshops provide information on the citizenship process, entrepreneurship, worker’s rights, SNAP, healthcare, DACA and resume building. Each of these workshops is provided completely free of charge.

Field trips give students rich cultural exposure to different places in New York City or here on Long Island. And best yet, they get to bring their families with them! So far this

THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

I recently started my kids in a new Mommy-and-Me program. I was a late-comer to the classes, so I felt like the new kid in school for the first few days. Having two toddlers, I find myself always chasing them around, my eyes always dashing from one to the other to make sure no one gets hurt. I tend to feel like all the other moms have it together and I am just a mess. At this week’s class, during outside play, the teacher saw me racing around after my youngest, Julianne, to make sure she wouldn’t hurt herself. The teacher gently guided me to the side and said, “She’s stronger than you think. Let her explore and discover the world around her. It’s not the end of the world if she trips and falls.” Her advice struck me. This is the same advice we give our tutors during the Open Door writing process, when tutors struggle with the idea that we don’t correct grammar in the submissions. Errors are part of the learning process, and they have value. Likewise, how will Julianne learn to walk on her own if I am always clearing the path so she doesn’t fall?

☺ Karen

year, we have gone to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Tanger Outlets and the Long Island Children’s Museum. We are happy to introduce our students to the New York we all know and love.

Our students are so grateful to be part of our program. Many of my students say to me, “This is so great that we have a chance to become more than what we were before. Thank you very much!” They try to show their appreciation by giving back in their own special ways. Many send me thank you notes, e-mails or call to say, “Thank you for this opportunity, I’ve gotten a better job.” Or, “I passed my citizenship interview.” I am sure that each of you has experienced how rewarding it is when a student hits a goal.

As tutors, please know that while these field trips and workshops are for ONA students, you can share this information with your students too. If you want your student to attend any of these opportunities, please let us know. If you are a tutor and you are working with an ONA student, ask them to talk about the trips or workshops they have already attended.

The LN-OC is here to give students all the opportunities necessary to grow, learn, live and work productively in their respective communities. I am happy and proud to be a part of this awesome vision for new Americans. My thanks to all of the tutors who work one-on-one with their students to prepare them for and help them thrive in our classrooms.



Join us on May 14th at UUCSR for Recognition Night, where we will celebrate our students, errors and all.

U, NSCRABBLE CHALLENGE 2015!

Oh what a night! Late December, back in '63... 🎵 Well actually, it was Monday, March 30th and what a special night it was for our annual (un)SCRABBLE fundraiser! Nearly 200 competitors turned up at the Chateau Briand in Carle Place for an evening of (un)SCRABBLE fun, amazing raffle prizes and delicious food. Our honoree this year was our community partner, the law firm of Certilman Balin Adler and Hyman LLP, and the award was accepted by David Herold. The emcee for the evening was Mark Yusko, radio host and charity golf and special events coordinator. See below for pictures from this exciting event!



Select students and tutors were invited to sit at two tables, donated by our friends John and Janet Kornreich!



Associates from Certilman Balin were proud to support the cause, both as the honoree and as players!



Dave Herold accepted the honor on behalf of Certilman Balin, presented by LN Vice President Stephen Bendernagel.



Judges took photos of the Scrabble boards, which were printed out and scored while players ate dinner/dessert.



Bingo Bonus Round sponsors Berkman Henoch Peterson Peddy and Fenchel PC competed for their second year!



MSC's (un)Spellers (pictured above with Karen) won 1st place for the evening! Congratulations!

W, ORKING WITH ESL BEGINNERS: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

(submitted by Barbara Fody)

A hypothetical conversation with a tutor might go like this -

Barbara: "Hi, I have identified a student for you to work with."

Tutor: "Wonderful! Tell me about the student."

Barbara: "The student is a young woman from Nepal who completed high school but knows only a limited amount of English."

Tutor: "Oh dear, a beginner. I don't think I could do that. How would I contact her? Where do I start? I'm just not comfortable."

There is a common misconception that working with a beginning student is more difficult than with an intermediate or advanced learner. The truth is that once the personal connection is made, one level

is not necessarily more challenging than another. Please keep these guidelines in mind when considering whether to work with a beginner:

- Adults need survival English: practical usage of language to navigate through daily life. "Does the bus stop here?" or "How much is this?"
- Teach English language that is direct and straightforward: "May I borrow your pen?" not "Would it be possible for me to borrow your pen?" or "Do you mind if I borrow your pen?"
- Speak slowly and clearly, enunciating each sound without exaggeration: Fast-paced speech packed with nuanced language is interpreted as "noise," devoid of meaning.
- Be animated and creative: use sound effects, copious amounts of visuals, gestures and facial expressions.

- Minimize the student's cognitive burden: Beginning students cannot multi-task with their current level of language proficiency. If a student is copying words from a picture dictionary she will not be able to copy and listen to, never mind comprehend, what you are saying at the same time.

- Review, review, review: At the beginning of the session, the middle of the session, the end of the session, the next week, and the week after that . . .

Hopefully, this short overview will encourage tutors to contemplate working with a beginning level student. You will learn more about our upcoming initiatives centering on the limited language proficient learner. There is only good associated with beginning English language learners, never bad or ugly.

C₃ CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to our newly trained tutors:

March 16 - SGI
Leslie Leiber
Philip Scotto

Congratulations to our newest U.S. Citizens:

Sachiko Ishimoto
Shasa-Le Chisholm
Marisol Reyes
Leydi Giraldo

W₄ WELCOME RENAE!

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest staff member, Renae Katz. Renae has joined the team as our bookkeeper, and she hit the ground running as a judge during our annual (un)Scrabble event! A native of Long Island, Renae comes to us with a wealth of experience in bookkeeping and business finance in small to medium-sized organizations. She graduated from Stony Brook University with a Bachelor's Degree in History. Her favorite pastimes include enjoying a good book on the beach or going to a classic rock concert. We are so excited to have her join our team, and look forward to working with her for many years to come! Welcome Renae!

Pictured: Renae Katz poses alongside the Literacy Nassau staff at (un)Scrabble 2015! Welcome to our team Renae!



ARE YOU A CERTIFIED TEACHER?

As a learner-centered organization, we at Literacy Nassau are proud of the difference that each tutor is making in the life of their student. Whether it is teaching them survival English, helping them to learn to read or even improving their literacy, we are excited to come to work, knowing that you are out there doing good in your community and having a positive impact on an individual's life.

Would you like to extend your impact?

Please consider becoming a tutor in our Small Group Instruction program. Classes meet two times a week for twelve weeks, and all it takes is a short In-Service Training to get started.

Contact: Ocaria Silva at (516) 867.3580 x12 or osilva@literacynassau.org for details.

T₁ TUTOR SPOTLIGHT: SID BURGREN

(submitted by Sid Burgreen)

Three years ago, I gave myself a retirement gift of volunteering for Literacy Nassau. After the one-day workshop, I dedicated my time to honing skills on pronouns, prepositions, "i" before "e" except after "c", and more. My journey turned out quite differently.

My first student was P., recently arrived from Peru who was between beginner and intermediate. The lessons given to me at the workshop were helpful, but I had a quandary. Most materials for this level had content geared to children, and I had to search for appropriate readings. Over time, I began to write my own essays geared to adult interest.

Understanding culture came slowly. After we had spent nearly two years together, he finally admitted that he didn't understand much of what I was saying for the first few months. In P.'s culture, a teacher is revered, and never to be questioned. This was the first bite of many from humble pie.

BLL students need a different approach. I found G. and D. hiding large amounts of shame, even requiring that we meet far from their neighborhoods to avoid possibly being seen. Educated (poorly) in America, they needed more TLC than BLL. I spent substantial time in conversation, seeking their specific needs, and gearing my lessons more to finishing a project than I did with ESL, which was a broader approach across the language arts.

G. wanted to start an online business, so my teaching tool was eBay. D. had ideas of beginning a moving business, so I rummaged through magazine photos of interiors so he could name every type of interior furniture or fixture.

While speaking is important, listening pays more dividends. D. saw his daughter once a week, and she knew nothing of his language deficiencies. It took four months before he revealed that, and we spent the next several weeks having him competently reading a picture book to his little girl.

When he related the tale of his bedtime story, I had to restrain myself from dancing on the table. With all of my students, the spiritual rewards far exceeded the academic ones. I look at each session as adding to my spiritual 401K's. I knew that in addition to doing well, I was also doing good. The rewards to these students, their families, friends, and employers pay dividends that enrich me more than I could have imagined at my initial workshop.

The small group setting necessitated a slight change of course. Over time, I learned to shy away somewhat from a student-centered approach. It's always paramount to find and address needs, but these students were at a higher level and responded best to teacher-delivered lessons. They leaned more toward learning the correctness of English and less in the direction of imagination and speculation. With that in mind, it was imperative to respect their intelligence and breadth of experience through the content of lessons.

I do my best to connect with the minds and hearts of my students. I always thank them for allowing me in their lives and for teaching me about culture and hope. Nothing is too serious for too long and we average a belly laugh per session. And, don't ever forget to smile, because a "Smile is how the soul says hello."**

**Quotation from Jared Kintz



Sid Burgreen smiles for the camera at Recognition Night 2014.



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Scrabble Spelling

Find 4 scrabble tiles to spell out a word. Write the word.
 Next, write how many points each letter is worth.
 Then, add your points. Which word is worth the most?

L	I	K	E	_____				
___	+	___	+	___	+	___	=	___

P	L	A	Y	_____				
___	+	___	+	___	+	___	=	___

□	□	□	□	_____				
___	+	___	+	___	+	___	=	___

□	□	□	□	_____				
___	+	___	+	___	+	___	=	___

□	□	□	□	_____				
___	+	___	+	___	+	___	=	___

□	□	□	□	_____				
___	+	___	+	___	+	___	=	___

Celebrate with us at Recognition Night 2015!!

Thursday, May 14, 2015

7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Refreshments, Authors' Table, Raffles, and more!



Honoring our special friends John and Janet Kornreich for their commitment to literacy and education for all.

Please RSVP to your Literacy Specialist so we'll know to expect you and/or your student(s)!