



# LITERACY MATTERS

MAY 2016

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



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## TIME TO CELEBRATE! RECOGNITION NIGHT IS MAY 19TH!

*(submitted by Karen Micciche)*

This year's Recognition Night, which will be held on Thursday, May 19th from 7-9pm, promises to be the event of the season for Literacy Nassau students, tutors, and community partners. We are thrilled to honor John and Janet Kornreich for their unwavering support of Literacy Nassau, and we are equally excited to recognize the hard-working students who are graduating! Our new programmatic structure affords our English Language Learners the growth opportunities to move seamlessly through our programs, from one-on-one tutoring to Small Group Instruction to large-group Office for New Americans classes. Once they complete their 12-week ONA classes, students are equipped to go on to bigger programs, such as Nassau BOCES or Nassau Community College, to further their study of English. Literacy Nassau's Class of 2016 is a small but proud group of 13 graduates, and we are so excited to celebrate each and every one of them.

Recognition Night also gives us the chance to pay tribute to the varied accomplishments of all of our students. From U.S. Citizenship to joining a book club, every student in our program has taken on a new challenge this year, and we respect and honor their courage

and commitment during this very special evening. We salute the volunteers whose gift of time has changed the lives of over 700 students this past year, and we highlight our very special anniversary tutors with the Kornreich Anniversary awards.

The evening also gives our learners the chance to showcase their writing by releasing our student anthology, *Open Door*, at Recognition Night. Our author's table will enable student authors to autograph their stories, poems, and articles for tutors, fellow students and guests. The pride our students feel will be palpable as the book, much like our program, gets bigger and bigger every year.

Rounding out the event, we expect to have a nice buffet of sandwich wraps and salads, followed by coffee and cake for everyone. We will raffle off gift baskets to benefit Literacy Nassau as well.

For our tutors, the true spectacle of the evening will be when John and Janet Kornreich speak. Mr. Kornreich called me the other day and said, "Karen - tell all your tutors that this is an event they will not want to miss, because we are planning on honoring *them*." I don't know what they have in store, but I strongly suggest you join us to find out!

I hope to see you on May 19th at UUCSR in Manhasset! (Invitation to follow by mail.)

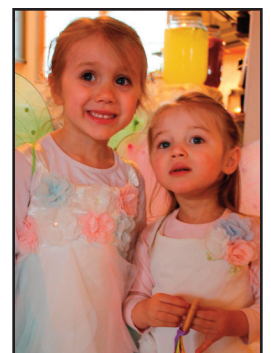
## THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

This week my daughter, Haley, turns 4 years old. Over the weekend, Chris and I hosted a garden-themed birthday party for her. I came up with activities for Haley and her 4 young guests, including rock painting and seed planting. I envisioned a lovely little party with our family and friends where the kids could play, plant, and paint in our backyard and everyone could enjoy good food and good company. Mother Nature had other plans, though. The forecast was rainy and 43 degrees.

Determined to not let the weather destroy Haley's party, I bought a canopy tent with wind- and water-proof sidewalls, and spent hours painstakingly revamping the plans so that none of the activities would be lost. When Haley saw the finished product, she was in awe of how our house (and deck) had been transformed into a magical, garden-like space, safe from the rain and the wind. Her wide eyes, big hug, and sincere, "Thank you, Mommy!" made all of the hard work worth it.

Recognition Night is like that. If you've never been, you should join us. The sparkle in the eye of your student as he/she is celebrated will make all those hours of hard work you've put in worth the effort.



My two girls, Haley and Julianne, were awestruck by the transformation in our house as we prepared for Haley's birthday party.

*☺ Karen*





## **SPEAKING OPPORTUNITIES**

*(submitted by Digna Johnson)*

I often hear students say, "I want to speak better English, but I don't have opportunities to practice, so that's why I don't speak it well."

As I think back to my mother and father, I remember that my father spoke English well, and my mother did not. My father worked as a Merchant Marine, and because of his job, he traveled around the world. He shared with me how he had the opportunity to meet and also communicate with people from all over the world. My mother worked as a home maker. My father had more opportunities to practice speaking English and other languages than my mother did.

When it comes to our students, we have to provide opportunities for them to practice their speaking skills. In my classrooms, I have more than nine students per semester so I take advantage of grouping. For smaller groups or one-to-one grouping, you can provide speaking opportunities for your students. One way is to greet them and ask basic questions: "How was your day? Talk about your

weekend; what did you do?" In larger groups you can lesson plan and set up questions to help them to share out loud more. This also builds fluency. The most important thing to remember is that your students need to speak English as much as possible. The more they practice, the better they will speak. The better they speak, the more confidence they will gain. This cycle will continue to build fluency.

Model a lot. Review questions and answers first making the questions relatable, using topics such as home, work, and school. Pay attention to how you speak in your lessons, when both focusing on instruction and interacting with your students, because they do pay attention. This can help increase their language ability. Speak slowly and clearly so the student understands. Choose words that are easier for the student to grasp. Use visuals whenever possible so that the student can also read the directions at the same time. Offer repetition and review until your students have mastered what it is you are focused on learning or teaching. Develop strong,

open, and caring relationships toward your students as this will allow them to be more open and creative. In turn, they will strive to be the best students possible.

Allow time. Learning a language is developmental. There are endless factors in acquiring a language, so it is important that you put this in perspective. When you talk to your student, allow "wait time" for the response. Silence on the part of the tutor can be golden. When they struggle with certain skills or concepts, help them over the hurdle. Everyone learns in different ways, and once you embrace this idea, you and your student will be more apt to enjoy the learning process together. It only takes opportunity. Remember to get students talking - it's all about the opportunities.

So, how do I get my student to speak more? Provide high interest, engaging topics, focus on each student's individual needs, give them time to prepare responses, and model for them. This will help to build confidence in their language skills as well as fluency.

### **(un)SCRABBLE Challenge 2016!**

On March 31st, over 200 competitors came out to the Chateau Briand for an evening of (un)SCRABBLE fun, amazing raffle prizes and delicious food. Game play was intense with judging led by three time National Scrabble Champion, Joe Edley. This year's honoree was Bob Genalo, President of our Board of Directors.



Getting ready for game play... (un)SCRABBLE judges selfie.



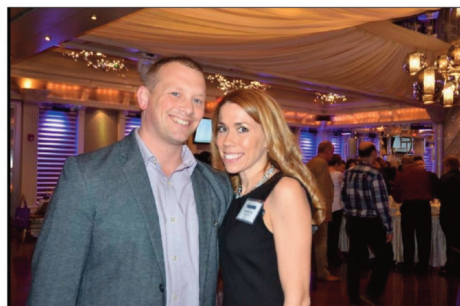
(un)SCRABBLE 2016 honoree, Bob Genalo.



MSC Industrial Direct was present in force with 46 players!



Team Harris' Harem reclaimed their title of 1st place from years past.



Emcee Brian McMillan of Centerpoint Church with Karen Micciche.



Tutor Team, Full House, did us proud by winning 2nd place. Way to go tutors!



## SIX MONTHS OF SERVICE: HALFWAY THERE

(submitted by Candice Cantore)

I've never been much of a believer in the expression, "Time flies when you're having fun" until a couple of days ago, when I realized I was 6 months into my year of service here at Literacy Nassau. In my 6 months I have learned and experienced so much. I started my year off helping out with our annual "Day of Bridge" event. That was the first event I observed and it was so cool to see one of many events that we have throughout the year come to fruition. After the Bridge event, I assisted with preparing for our Annual Tutor Conference. That event really gave me some insight into just how dedicated and enthusiastic our tutors are, and how much they enjoy learning and networking.

As my year progressed, I was offered different opportunities to be involved with almost all of our programs. I was able to take a Tutor Training workshop, observe different classes, and even teach my very own class! I started teaching my SGI group in March, and I've loved every second of it. I only have 4 students, but their enthusiasm and great attitudes are enough for 20 students. It's been incredible to help them improve their

command of the English language, while helping me grow as a teacher and person.

I also recently attended a BEST Plus training, where I was taught to administer post- and pre-tests to our students. I will begin observing registrations, and eventually will be testing students myself. Just recently, I helped out with our (un)Scrabble event as a judge (see photos in this issue). From the awesome raffle prizes to the intense game playing, it was a night to remember. I am so grateful to be serving in such a wonderful community with such an outstanding organization. I cannot wait to see what the next six months at Literacy Nassau have in store for me!



The Literacy Nassau staff team poses at (un)Scrabble - Candice is pictured on the right.

## POST-TEST SEASON ENDS 6/30!

Remember that the NYS Education Department expects us to meet benchmarks in order to continue to receive funding. Benchmarks include post-test rate and educational gain so we must maintain contact with our pairs or groups about attendance year round. Our actual post-test season runs from 1/1 - 6/30.

### What does this mean for our tutors?

- *Please be sure to talk to your student(s) about post-testing.* Let them know we will call them to make a testing appointment. All students must be post-tested by June 30th, so if we haven't already called them, we will be calling soon.
- *Please report all tutoring hours to your Literacy Specialist on a monthly basis.* You can submit hours via email, by calling them in or directly on our website at [www.LiteracyNassau.org/Hours](http://www.LiteracyNassau.org/Hours).
- *Please be patient.* Since our team spends much of this season in the field post-testing, the best method of contact is e-mail. If you don't hear right back from your Literacy Specialist, please be aware that we have over 700 students who must be post-tested this season. Note that test results will not be available right away, but our team will get those results to you as soon as they can.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Happy birthday to all of our tutors born in May!

Joseph Amaral	Donna Bennett
Dee Berger	Kathy Berry
Lynne Borah	Carl Borruso
Linda Caginalp	Mary Conroy
Marilyn Davis	Marjorie Farrell
Anjana Dhansinghani	Johnny Gilchrist
Laura Glenz	Sandra Herman
Maryanne Gogolinski	Sara Izquierdo
Sherry Jagels	Mindy Kaiser
Barbara Kaplan	Michael Kauffman
Lilith Kopman	Ruth Lowenberg
Herman Maron	Angela Martino
Joan McCarthy	Evelyn Monaco
Gerry Mullins	Anne Murphy
Sandy Palma	June Prisant
Alisa Promakul	
Barbara Randall	
Kathy Scheiner	
Mahendra Shah	
Harriet Studness	
Joseph Wint	
Katherine Wolff	
Gina Wood Hart	
Michelle Yadoo	



## THE LIBRARY IS OPEN!

Did you know that Literacy Nassau has a tutor resource library in our Freeport Office? Our library has great resources on building vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. It is open to tutors weekdays, between 9am-4:30 pm.

Please call us at 516.867.3580 x21 to make an appointment. Books can be taken out but must be returned in a timely manner to Herb, our reference librarian.

