

LITERACY MATTERS

DECEMBER 2015

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



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THE NEED TO READ

(submitted by Alison Orme)

On November 1st, Newsday featured Literacy Nassau in a four-page spread that detailed our programs entitled, "The Need to Read." If you've been around our organization for any amount of time, you know that while we all love to read, our mission extends well beyond helping adults with reading. While many programs help the native English speaker and provide opportunities for them to "read to learn", we also provide services to the non-native speaker who wants to learn to speak, read or write English.

Early in the summer, we launched our Small Group Instruction for Beginners (SGIB) in order to meet the requirements of funding changes that mandated that 50% of our student population had to be a true beginner (levels 0-2). This also speaks to our mission of serving those who are hardest to teach. Since then, twenty SGIB classes led by volunteer tutors have been put in place. These classes take place primarily in our main hubs- Freeport, Westbury, Uniondale, Farmingdale, Hicksville and New Hyde Park- where student need is the highest.

The program has been a success and has

helped us to provide services to students in these hubs who would not have had the opportunity to start English classes as quickly as they did. However, these classes are only six weeks in duration and upon completion of the class, the student often has to wait to be assigned to a one-on-one tutor to further their studies. Additionally, we have students living outside of the hubs who do not have the opportunity to attend an SGIB class and who have also been waiting for an individual tutor.

Will you take on the challenge of an additional student? This could be an opportunity to multiply your impact and expand your teaching skills, while you help meet the literacy needs of our community.

Adult literacy remains at the forefront of today's issues and Literacy Nassau is proud to be a part of providing services that meet the needs of many in our community. We are so thankful to each of you, our volunteers, for all

of your hard work and dedication, and we hope that you will share in our excitement over this amazing article in Newsday. If you have not seen it yet, please contact me at (516) 867-3580, extension 21 and I will be sure to mail a copy to you.



The cover of our most recent Newsday article!

THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

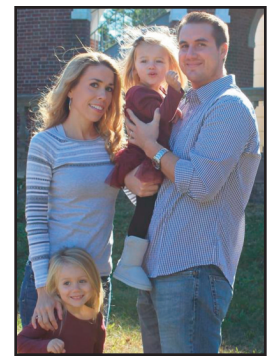
Hi Everyone,

This is the season of abundance, and to be honest, it's a bit much for me. The commercials for holiday gift-giving start in October now, and by December 26th the thought of giving is tossed aside as we look to our New Year's resolutions. Wouldn't it be nice to make giving a part of something we think about every day, at all times throughout the year?

Because we have young children, my husband and I try intentionally to keep our children away from the commercialization of the holidays and instead focus on the wonder of the season. The beauty of the twinkling lights on so many houses, the quiet of a cold night, and the warmth you feel when you make something and offer it to someone you love as a token of affection are all little affirmations of what this season should really be about. We are all in such a rush all the time that we forget to appreciate the moment we're in.

This holiday season, take a good look at your student. Notice her face light up as she correctly pronounces that new vocabulary word. Watch as he carefully writes the answers to that worksheet you assigned. Revel in the smiles of gratitude or the trinket of appreciation you're given. You are changing a life. What an incredible gift.

☺ Karen



My family and I wish each and every one of you a warm, blessed holiday season filled with laughter, love, and the kinds of gifts that really matter.

TUTOR SPOTLIGHT: EILEEN WATTS

(submitted by Alison Orme)

Eileen and I spoke during the warm, Indian summer days in early October. Remember those? She has been a tutor with Literacy Nassau since 2012 working with multiple English language learners and is now leading a Small Group Instruction class for Beginners (SGIB) in Westbury. Eileen is a retired legal secretary with a multitude of hobbies- yoga, line dancing, biking, golf, reading and photography. She spent her early childhood in Venezuela and is the mother of seven sons.

What was it like growing up in Venezuela?

I lived in Venezuela between the ages of two and nine. My father's work brought us there. When I was old enough, I attended a local elementary school where only Spanish was spoken. As my understanding of the Spanish language increased, I actually acted as an interpreter for my mother. Like many people living in a foreign country, my mom stuck with her own culture – she stayed within the American community in Venezuela and most of her friends were American. She was an intelligent woman; she was just never totally comfortable in speaking the local language.

How did this experience help to prepare you to tutor English?

Living in another country helped me relate to my students. Language acquisition is a complex process and each student's aptitude and motivation is different. After living in Venezuela for 7 years and primarily speaking Spanish, it took me nearly a year to assimilate back to the U.S.

I understand that you have seven sons. That certainly explains your very straightforward, matter of fact communication style. Are there seven brides for the seven brothers?

There are only 4 brides so far. One of my sons had a girlfriend who used American Sign Language which I learned in order to communicate with her. There were only 2 people who could sign with her in the family, and it was beautiful to see. It helped me understand the difficulty that so many have in communicating.

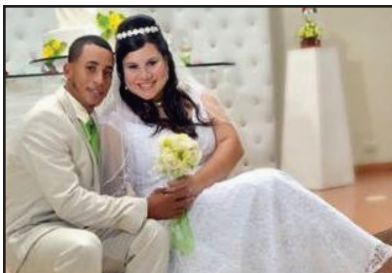
Barbara Fody (one of our Literacy Specialists) did the math. Did you know that there is a 1.03% probability of having seven sons? She also tells me that you have two granddaughters.

I had no idea it was that difficult! Yes, I do have 2 granddaughters, Katherine and Anna, named after my grandmother and my mother. I also have 5 wonderful grandsons whom I adore, and a grown step-granddaughter. Being so used to boys, I don't always "get the girls", but I enjoy them immensely.

FROM CINDY TREMINIO TO CINDY CABRERA

(submitted by Cindy Cabrera)

The sudden change to my last name may be a surprise to most of you. My name change symbolizes the dream that I've been waiting for for over a year. In 2012, I went to the Dominican Republic for my college internship. I immersed myself into the culture, assisted in different outreach projects, started an ESL cafe, but little did I know I was going to meet my future husband. When I returned to the States to finish my studies, Jairo and I started a long distance relationship. A year and half later, Jairo invited me to come down for a visit, and he asked me to marry him. We were married on September 18, 2014 in the Dominican Republic. We waited over a year to be



Pictured above, Jairo and the "new" Cindy Cabrera on their wedding day.

together and he was finally approved to enter the U.S. a month ago. He is finally on U.S. soil and now we are starting our new life together as man and wife.

Do You Have a Friend Who Might be Interested in Becoming a Volunteer Adult Literacy Tutor?

The team at Literacy Nassau wants to thank you for your hard work and dedication to our mission of improving adult literacy in Nassau County. As a current tutor, when you refer a friend who completes one of our Tutor Training Workshops, you will receive a \$10 gift card of your choice.

Contact Alison Orme at (516) 867-3580 x21 for details.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Happy birthday to all of our tutors born in December! They are:

- Anita Achkhanian
- Nickie Bernhardt
- Marie Catalano-Gruen
- Fran Dowling
- Arline Ellison
- Lauri Englert-Sacco
- Judy and Leonard Feldman
- Helene Fleisig
- Lawrence Fong
- Patricia Goldberg
- Kathleen Gyves
- Georgene Harrison
- Georgine Hartenfels
- Maryann Harvey
- Nancy Keegan
- Susan Levy
- Kristine Lewenthal
- Kristen Noelle Luft
- Janice Mazzari
- Susan Molinelli
- Salvatore Morici
- Kathie Novak
- Robert Palleschi
- Saumil Patel
- Amanda Persico
- Sue Rachell
- Victor Shulimson
- Barbara Spun
- Bruce Stanton
- Diana Tobias
- Lisa Valencia
- Suzanne Weinick



Enjoy your special day!!
Warmest regards,
Your friends at
Literacy Nassau

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations and welcome to our newest tutors:

Brian Coard
Natalie Colaneri
Nadine Connors
Kathy Driscoll
Mercedes Gaillard
Vivian Gonzalez
Florence Harf
Melissa Hillie
Deborah Honen
Lisa Kornberg
Karen Landy
Carl Martin
Harri Meyers
Andrea Rivera
Asema Sahebzada
Mary Smith
Marie St. Louis

Super special
congratulations to
the winner of our
holiday raffle:
308231! Call Alison
at x.21 for your
prize!

And a special congratulations to our newest United States Citizens!

Mercedes Olivo
Angela Liaranzo
Juana Santos

WHERE IS YOUR LITERACY SPECIALIST?

(submitted by Ocaria DiMango)

With the season of post testing approaching us, we thought it would be helpful to share with you what the Literacy Specialist's schedule can look like in the coming months. We also wanted to describe the role of a Literacy Specialist and what it entails so our tutors can feel more involved and informed.

Post-test season begins in January. The NYS Education Department expects benchmarks to be met in order to receive our funding. Some of the benchmarks are post-test rate and educational gain so it's important for us to maintain contact with our pairs or groups about attendance. This helps the Literacy Specialists know when it's best to test your student.

In addition to post-testing, the Literacy Specialists also continue training volunteers through Tutor Training Workshops and In-Service Trainings throughout the season. Additionally, Literacy Specialists go off-site to libraries to host registrations for new students. Some of them are teachers for our large ESL classes, while others provide limited legal assistance and complete citizenship applications for clients, thanks to our Board of Immigration Appeals accreditation.

And last, but certainly not least, our Literacy Specialists manage their assigned case load of students, troubleshooting student or tutor issues, providing resources to pairs as needed, and reporting data for our state reports. All of these things can keep any of them out of the office for a few days at a time. So when a tutor calls the office, they may not be available to talk right away. But one thing is great, the power of e-mail! Not only is it a record of your update, but it's also something that thanks to smartphones, they can check on the road while testing, or flag it so they can reply at their earliest convenience. We understand that e-mail may not be accessible to all of our volunteers, but you can now understand why it may take your Literacy Specialist an extra day to get back to you!

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: JULIE S.

I come from Trinidad, a very small country. I was married and my husband brought me here. I am divorced now and I had my two children very young, when I was fifteen and eighteen. I was not able to go to school. I had a hard life without my mother and father. Now I want to do better and I finally have the courage.

I heard about Literacy Nassau from a friend. I called and they told me to come in. I felt good, scared and embarrassed. Everything in one. There was something in me that said this is something I have to do. When I went they gave me a test. I didn't think I did well at all. I was so ashamed. Three weeks after they told me they found me somebody to tutor me to learn to read. I was very grateful and thankful for the opportunity they gave me.

I made a promise to myself that I will get my GED and better my education so I can have a better life. I want to make my kids very proud of me and most of all myself. If anyone is going through the same thing they should call Literacy Nassau. They will give you a chance to fulfill your dreams.

Thanks to literacy Nassau. Special thanks to Barbara for making me feel so comfortable. And thanks for my awesome tutor Susan Kimmel. I could not have asked for a better teacher. Keep up the good work. Thank you.

Is your learner ready to apply for citizenship?

Have they been a permanent resident for at least 5 years AND do they have basic English conversation skills?

If so, please have them call Umama Pasha at 516-867-3580, ext. 15 to sign up for a *Citizenship Drive* appointment or to determine whether they qualify for our *Citizenship Workshop*.

A *Citizenship Drive* is for individuals interested in applying for citizenship or who have a question for an immigration attorney.

A *Citizenship Workshop* is an 8-10 week class that prepares individuals with interview skills and history questions.



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Tutor Networking Events! 😊

At our **First Annual Tutor Conference** in October, we received overwhelming feedback for more networking opportunities among tutors.

We are excited to share that we will be organizing Panera Meetups in the following towns: **New Hyde Park, Merrick and Hicksville**. There will be no planned instruction; it's simply an opportunity to meet with other tutors in your area.

If you are interested in learning more, please contact Candice Cantore at 867.3580 x25.

COZY UP WITH A GOOD BOOK

(submitted by Candice Cantore)

As the weather gets colder and snow starts to fall, we often find ourselves snuggled on the couch, maybe by a fire, reading a good book. Being a tutor yourself, you know the power you hold of being able to give this moment to someone else by volunteering with Literacy Nassau. What better time than now to tell your friends about how they too can make someone's winter season all that much cozier?

This holiday season, share your tutoring story with friends to help them understand what it's like to make a difference in the life of someone who can't read, write or speak English and ask them if they'd be interested in learning more about our program. If their answer is yes, ask them to call me - Candice Cantore - at Literacy Nassau (x25) and to mention your name. Once they complete the Tutor Training Workshop and are matched with a student, we'll send you a \$10 Amazon gift card as a thank you from us. It's a great way to get a head start on your winter reading and buy your next great book.

Stay warm, and happy reading!

