



LITERACY MATTERS

SEPTEMBER 2018

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



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BUILDING PROGRESS

(submitted by Karen Micciche)

Walls are up, plumbing is installed, and electrical has been completely re-routed throughout our new building, located at 1 Ivy Lane in Wantagh. We are nearing completion on construction of the new space, thanks to the generosity of donors and volunteers who have made this journey possible!

MSC Industrial Supply Co. has been a long-time partner of Literacy Nassau's, and were happy to come to our aid for a volunteer work day on August 17th. A crew of 8 people brought tools, skills, and ideas to the table as we spent the day refinishing the old chalkboards that line many of the walls in our new location. They worked alongside our two interns and a few staff members until every chalkboard had a

fresh, new look.

We were also fortunate to host a special visitor that day: Mr. Mukund Padmanabhan from the Guru Krupa Foundation. Many of you know that GKF is the sole sponsor of our internship program, which offers many of our advanced level ONA students or recent grads the opportunity to engage in a meaningful work experience in America. GKF is hugely invested in bettering the lives of immigrants and the underprivileged in our communities, so Mr. Padmanabhan was eager to have a look at the progress we have made.

We have several more volunteer work days planned. Are you handy with a paint-brush? Do you enjoy working with wood? To volunteer, e-mail Karen Micciche at kmicciche@literacynassau.org.



Volunteers from MSC pose in front of one of the newly refinished chalkboards with Board President, Stephen Bendernagel.



We were delighted to have a visit from Mr. Mukund Padmanabhan, who chatted with our interns and checked on our progress.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

This year, my daughter Haley will be starting the first grade. I have been dreading this time, because this is when she will begin the formal process of learning to read. For the past six years, I have watched her draw letters and numbers backwards and struggle to hold a pencil properly. More recently, she has developed a yearning to read books. She sees a book with a cover that looks appealing and she desperately wants to dive in and read it.

I have been training for this moment for the past two years through my OG work, but still I am scared for her. Even with my advanced knowledge of the subject and my capacity to teach her myself, I am anxious. If I feel this way, I can only imagine how thousands of other parents on Long Island must feel as their dyslexic children face the back-to-school season.

The time is ripe for our tutoring center to open. Every day, we get closer. I hope we are ready soon, because time is the most precious gift we can give to kids who struggle.

Karen 😊



Haley is a beautiful, artsy, compassionate, funny, kind child, who deserves the chance to learn how to read like her peers.



UTILIZING THE NEWSPAPER AS AN ESL RESOURCE

(submitted by Kate Quijano)

The summer theme for the ONA advanced ESL classes is "Media." Students were asked to subscribe to the L.I. Herald as part of their summer curriculum. They have been reading the paper weekly and using it for in-class assignments.

Students have also been using the paper as a resource for a research project. They found articles discussing problems in their neighborhood, and then they found organizations that are trying to address these problems. Students are now working on being journalists themselves. They are researching more about their chosen organization using newspapers, the internet, and social media. Next, each student will contact their chosen organization and request an interview. Finally, they will prepare a presentation to teach the rest of the class about the problem and what is being done to correct it.

Some problems they are researching are: water pollution, the link between cancer and drinking water on Long Island, deer overpopulation, traffic/transportation, poverty/feeding the hungry, recycling, substance abuse, and health care.

They are utilizing reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills throughout this assignment. Students are learning how to research, take notes, paraphrase, and cite their sources - important skills for those who wish to go on to college courses after graduating from Literacy Nassau.

In order to learn more about the newspaper publishing process, students went on a field trip to visit the headquarters of the L.I. Herald. They met the publisher, reporters and other essential staff members, and learned about the process of researching, writing, and printing. They got to see the equipment used to print the newspaper. They were able to ask questions about how reporters find and broadcast news. Students will put these skills to use as they do their own research.

Newspapers can also be utilized for beginning and intermediate level students! They are a great way to learn about current events and to practice conversation skills. Students can discuss facts vs. opinions and make connections to what they have read. They can also search the newspaper for examples of vocabulary learned in class. Newspapers can be used for individual study, pair work, or larger group activities.

Listed below are some suggested activities for using the newspaper taken from www.educationworld.com:

1. Remove the headline from the article. Have students work to match the headline to the correct article like a puzzle. Discuss how they knew which pieces matched and the key vocabulary that helped them.
2. Cut the comics up picture by picture and mix them up. Have students put the pictures in sequence and practice using sequence vocabulary as they sort them.
3. Create a box for each section of the paper. Have students cut out articles and sort them into the correct box. Then go through each box and use adjectives to describe the type of writing in each box.
4. Read reviews in the newspaper. Write your own review of a movie, restaurant, or other location you have been to. Discuss the difference between fact and opinion.
5. Have each student choose an article. Find the location the article discusses on a map. Compare how far away each story is from your location. Discuss if similar issues are taking place in all of the chosen locations.
6. Create a list of words or abbreviations for students to find in the newspaper. Students will form teams and conduct a scavenger hunt to find each of the listed words. The team that finds all of the words first wins. You could also add finding the definition to earn bonus points.



ONA students at L.I. Herald presentation.



Students touring the newspaper's printing press.

Join us in using the L.I. Herald with your Beginner or Intermediate ESL classes.

You can subscribe online at www.LIHerald.com/subscribe or call 516-569-4000 x7.

Use the promo code **LITNASS** at checkout and a portion of the subscription fee will be donated to Literacy Nassau!



Kate Quijano/Literacy Nassau (far right) and students with Michael Romero and Stuart Richner, Publisher/L.I.Herald (l-r).

TWO PAIRS OF SHORS

(submitted by Kim Nau)

Not all disabilities are obvious. Dyslexia, in fact, is a hidden disability because there are no visible, outward signs. I am sure you have heard the phrase, "Don't judge a person until you walk a mile in their shoes." I looked down at the shoes that my 12-year old student with dyslexia was wearing. I realized that my 12-year old daughter has a pair just like them. Their sneakers look the same. It could just as easily be my daughter who has dyslexia. When I first met my student, Allison, this summer, she was unhappy - frustrated with the school system that had failed her, angry that she would have to spend this summer with a reading tutor instead of swimming at the beach with her friends.



I realized that it would be next to impossible for successful instruction to take place if I could not break down those walls that she had spent years building around her. So, instead of jumping right in with my first Orton-Gillingham lesson, I decided to do a craft project with her and we designed a pair of flip flops. We talked together as we tied pink ribbons on the white flip flops. It was very rewarding to finally see her smile and walk out wearing her new flip flops.



At that moment, I thought that although I will never be able to walk in her shoes and understand the feelings that go along with not being able to read, I could show her compassion and patience. I know that one day she will be able to read thanks to Literacy Nassau.



Warm wishes to the following tutors born in September!

Maria Acosta – Sam Antar – Lillian Baum – Michelle Berman – Lisa Chieco – Janice Collins – Carol Cook – Peggy Dublin – Rhea Epstein – Leslie Feinberg – Kelly Filippone – Nancy Friedman – Laura Garcia – Freya Grice – Elinor Haber – Donald Hayde – Susan Higney – Amy Karofsky – Cynthia Katz – Margaret Latronica – Dianne Leahy – Kathy Leibowitz – Marie Levy – Maxene Liverpool – Mary Ellen LoConte – Jenny Marcotrigiano – Alison Marooney – Marie Marsac – Michaela McElhatton – Karen Meredith – Lois Miceli – Paul Nelson – Judy O'Connell – Uma O'Donnell – Karla Solomon – Gloria Petitto – Linda Pierce – Rona Rappe – Marcy Ruggiero – Irwin Scharf – Stan Shickler – Arlyne Skolnik – Jeanmarie Tener – Blanche Tyrkko – Maria Vivona – Janine Washinger – Loretta White – Linda White – Colleen Woodell

TUTOR SPOTLIGHT: ERICA DAVIS

(submitted by Cindy Cabrera)

Q: Can you tell us a little about yourself?

A: After teaching Elementary Vocal Music for 38 years, I retired in June, 2017. I was deeply involved in my career and love teaching. I trained with Literacy Nassau in December, 2017, observed another tutor in January and began my group that month. I am now in the middle of my third tutoring term.

Q: Why did you volunteer with Literacy Nassau when there are so many other volunteer opportunities?

A: I have always thought literacy and language acquisition were very important. Over 35 years ago, I tutored someone through the precursor to this program, "Literacy Volunteers." My student, a U.S.-born citizen, had fallen through the cracks in the education system and never learned to read through K-12 school channels. My mission was to find the missing pieces and solve the puzzle. I loved it and always wanted to go back to tutoring after my children grew up. I hadn't anticipated that the entire emphasis of the program would change along with the population it served: English Language Learners from other countries. The idea of giving someone the gift of communication is totally exhilarating, and even though I do other volunteering, this by far gives me the best sense of accomplishment and satisfaction.

Q: What have you learned from your students?

A: I have learned that all of my students have a story and their own personal, language, and cultural obstacles to overcome. I feel the sense of frustration and isolation my students are experiencing, not understanding the language or the customs of our complex society. Also, English is REALLY hard to learn!

Q: What would you advise a new tutor starting out with us?

A: I would advise a new tutor to read everything possible and to review materials every so often when you have a better frame of reference. Keep exploring the Internet. There is a wealth of ESL material out there, some of which is excellent.

Q: Can you tell us about your current small group?

A: My current group consists of four ladies, one from Haiti and one from Russia, who are with me for a second round, and two from Japan who are new this session and did not know each other before. When class is over and the Japanese ladies start chatting and giggling in their own language, I sense their relief in being able to speak from their hearts, unencumbered by limited words. The ladies seem happy, and I am getting better at working successfully with different learning levels at the same time. Also, I always start with a story that is not from the textbook. I try to make it relevant to current events, the calendar, or the New York/U.S. experience. Sometimes I adapt an article, sometimes I write my own. We've talked about holidays, The Everglades, Global Warming, Upstate vs. Downstate New York, Lincoln Center and Central Park, to name a few.

Q: What motivates you to keep on tutoring with us?

A: I keep on going because 1. I love it, and 2. I think it's important and I can make a meaningful difference in people's lives.



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**LITERACY NASSAU PROUDLY PRESENTS:
A DAY OF BRIDGE!**

Date: Friday, October 5th from 9:00am - 2:30pm
Location: Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset
Enjoy: Continental Breakfast, Lunch, 1/2 hour Lesson, Goody Bags & Raffle Prizes!
Win: An overnight stay at The Library Hotel in NYC, 2 tour tickets on Big Bus and a \$100 gift certificate to Keen's Steakhouse.
Price: \$55 per player, \$200 if registering a foursome includes raffle tickets!

To register call us at (516) 867-3580 x20 or email kmicciche@literacynassau.org by September 21st!

SAVE THE DATE!

Literacy Nassau's 1st Annual Dyslexia Dash

A 5K walk/run to support our new donation-based tutoring center for children with dyslexia and other learning disabilities

**Sunday, November 4th
7:30-10:30am
Eisenhower Park**

To register, visit:
literacynassau5k.greatfeats.com

(Please note: The minimum fundraising level is \$200. By signing up, you commit to raise \$200 from family and friends in support of this great cause!)