



THE FLAME OF LITERACY

Volume 1, Issue 1
Winter 2010



The 7th Annual Benefit Event for Literacy Suffolk

Sunset at Sunwood

The sun set behind threatening rain clouds this year, but our spirits were not at all dampened. Playing off a theme with a French twist, we started the evening by sampling outstanding hors d'oeuvres prepared for us by Lackman Culinary Services. Shrimp Cocktail with Beurre Blanc, Chateau Briand with Bordelaise Sauce, Savory Crepes and a lovely glass of wine were our first delight.

We were honored to have essayist and WSHU Public Radio music host David Bouchier present

"Reflections on Failing to Learn the Language."

His illustrated portrait of struggles, laced with humor, in coping with an unfamiliar culture and language was our second delight.



Indulgence and merriment continued after the presentation as we approached the dessert buffet. Another marvel to behold – a table abundant with French pastries and

sweet crepes - our third delight brought the evening to a close as we declared this, the 7th Annual Sunset at Sunwood, one of the best.

There are many wonderful people who are committed to the support of Literacy Suffolk. We are grateful to everyone who attended and involved themselves with this event. Fundraising is crucial to retaining the educational structure that provides greatly needed adult literacy services in Suffolk County. Giving benefit while enjoying each others' company in a beautiful setting..... *délicieux!*



Shop online with iGive.com, and a portion of each item's price can go to support Literacy Suffolk. Find out how at www.igive.com/LiteracySuffolk



Use GoodSearch to search the web, and help raise money for Literacy Suffolk's programs. Find out how! www.GoodSearch.com



TUTOR REFRESHER WORKSHOPS...DATES TO BE ANNOUNCED !!

Inside this issue:

Message from the Executive Director	2
Challenges	3
VISTA Volunteer	3
Tips from Amityville Public Library	4
Hispanic Heritage Month	5
A Pleasant Surprise	6
Tutor Tips	7
Contact Us	8



HAPPY NEW YEAR 2010 TO ALL OUR FRIENDS FROM EVERYONE AT LITERACY SUFFOLK!!!



A Message from our Executive Director

Gini Booth



January 2010

Dear Friend of Literacy Suffolk,

As we begin a new decade, it is perfect timing for reflection. And that is exactly what we've been doing at Literacy Suffolk, reflecting and then planning for the new decade. It is quite exciting to start fresh, especially in the area of programs and services for our communities.

The Tutor Training Workshop Schedule to begin January 2010 has been postponed until the new fiscal year, July 2010. In the spring, the new schedule will be posted on the web site.

For the past six months, the Education Committee has been working on a new Tutor Training Curriculum – it is more streamline, yet filled with the latest resources in adult education. It will officially be rolled out for the new round of workshops beginning in July.

In March 2010, we will provide opportunities for the current roster of tutors to “refresh and review” using the new curriculum as a tool. LS staff and

the Education Committee will host “Tutor as Adult Educator” sessions in all of the regions. The silver lining in this plan is that current LS tutors and new tutors will have the same standard of practice, armed with the latest tools in adult education, through the new tutor training curriculum.

“In March 2010, we will provide opportunities for the current roster of tutors to “refresh and review” using the new curriculum as a tool.”

Please check out our web site www.LiteracySuffolk.org – updates, alerts, and messages from me will be posted. Our goal is to keep the web site fresh, and a viable resource for all involved with Literacy Suffolk. Of course, please call the office with any questions – 631-286-1649.

In my heart, I believe that 2010 (twenty-ten) will be a positive and productive year.

With humble spirit,
Gini
 Gini Booth
 Executive Director



CHALLENGES MET, CHALLENGES YET TO COME!

By Susan Shiloni, Testing and Assessment Director

My first year at *Literacy Suffolk* has been full of wonderful experiences and amazing people. Although I have been involved in adult education for the past 20 years, I wasn't very familiar with all the great work that volunteer literacy organizations do and certainly knew little about Literacy Suffolk.

From training workshops to Sunset at Sunwood, staff and site meetings to Recognition Night, it has been a fun filled learning experience for me. I have had opportunities to be part of things and meet people that I didn't have in the classroom, and I know there is much more to come.

In this day of limited funds in both the private and public sectors, accountability has become the avenue to success in securing monies and ensuring our future. For state funding, accountability is shown by assessing our students and

demonstrating the progress that they have made. My main task this past year was to ensure that we follow the guidelines set by the New York State Education Department as far as testing is concerned. I'm sure we can all agree that implementing mandates, especially unfunded ones, is not an easy task.

The volunteers and staff at Literacy Suffolk have really come together and done an outstanding job making certain that we accomplished this in the fiscal year 2008-2009 (July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009). I am so proud to say that we have met most and even exceeded several of the benchmarks set by the NY State Education Department. Without the dedication of our volunteer testers, who not only administer the tests, but also attend training workshops, we couldn't have possibly met this challenge.

Of course, behind all the progress

"...we have met most and even exceeded several of the benchmarks set by the NY State Education Department."

that our students make are our amazing tutors who are there week after week, month after month, year after year! Our site staff did a stellar job resulting in compliance with state mandates.

Every year has its challenges, and certainly this one is no exception. With a reduced staff due to the cutting, elimination and late receipt of funding, the burden falls on fewer people. With that said, I know that we will do even better than we did last year.

I want to thank all of our volunteers in whatever capacity you so generously give of yourselves for helping make *Literacy Suffolk* the successful organization that it has been and continues to be.

THE PRESIDENT SENT ME!

My name is LoriAnn Brown, and the president sent me to serve as a VISTA volunteer. VISTA is an acronym for Volunteers in Service to America. Serving others in my community has always been my passion. The VISTA program has provided an opportunity for me to volunteer for Literacy New York. I was assigned to Literacy Suffolk, Inc. in September 2009.

In 1963, President John F. Kennedy envisioned a national service corps "to help provide urgently needed services in urban and rural poverty areas." Less than two years later, President Lyndon B. Johnson realized Kennedy's dream by launching the "War on Poverty." Johnson welcomed the first group of 20 VISTA volunteers saying, "Your pay will be low; the conditions of your labor often will be difficult. But you will have the satisfaction of leading a great national effort and you will have the ultimate reward which comes to those who serve their fellow man."

The 1990s saw a resurgence of national service. In 1990, President George H. Bush developed the Commission on National and Community Service. With the signing of the National Community Service Trust Act in 1993, President William Clinton expanded national service to create AmeriCorps. The programs merged to create AmeriCorps VISTA.



VISTA Volunteer at Literacy Suffolk

continued from page 3

Today, under President Barack Obama, VISTA is larger, stronger and more vital than it has ever been. Through the Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009 signed by the president on February 17, 2009, 3,000 VISTA volunteers were added. Today 6,500 members serve at 1,200 projects nationwide, continuing to address the root causes of poverty and illiteracy. They are developing new programs, raising funds, helping manage projects, and otherwise building the capacity of nonprofit organization to become sustainable. In addition, they are also striving to help families break the cycle of poverty.



Participants are also setting the standard for volunteer mobilization and leading the charge to answer President Obama's call for every American to engage in community volunteer service.

As a VISTA volunteer, I am committed to serve full-time for one year. The goal of the program is to fight adult illiteracy through creating awareness campaigns and recruiting volunteer tutors. In my year of service here at Literacy Suffolk, I hope to help strengthen the organization and assist in achieving its goals.



TIPS FROM THE AMITYVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Nora Schual, Director
Susan Benard-Handler, Librarian

Did you know?

Try these online resources for Literacy and ESL. A library card from any public library in Suffolk County is needed.



Mango Languages

www.MangoLanguages.com

Mango Languages is an online language-learning system teaching **actual conversation skills** for a wide variety of languages. Every lesson in Mango's system integrates vocabulary and grammar into real-life sentences. Included are English for Spanish speakers, English for Polish speakers and English for Brazilian Portuguese speakers.

Homework Help

www.SuffolkHomeworkHelp.org

Where **real tutors** are available to help you with your homework.

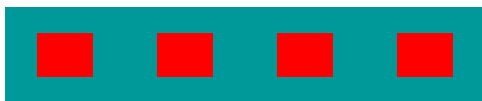
- * Tutors are present 7 days a week, 2-11 PM
- * Help for students grades Kindergarten to 12
- * Help for ESL students
- * Help for students studying to earn their GED



continued on page 6

National Hispanic Heritage Month

National Hispanic Heritage Month was celebrated with a family fiesta on October 4, 2009 at Mastics-Moriches-Shirley Community Library. Under the direction of Carmen Navarro-Gao, many students of Literacy Suffolk, Inc. participated in the program. The participants gave a Power Point presentation highlighting Latino culture. Eleven countries were represented. Cultural songs and dances were performed. Some of the students and their families were dressed in the tradition of their respective countries. The grand finale included about 30 children singing America by Neil Diamond.



The Community Family Literacy Project, Inc.

On September 25, 2009 Brookhaven National Laboratory awarded five nonprofit organizations on Long Island with the second set of BreakThru Mini-Grants totaling \$25,000. The Community Family Literacy Project, Inc. which serves the Mastics-Moriches-Shirley Community Library and the William Floyd School District was the recipient of one of these grants. The \$5,000 grant will be used to purchase 15 Apple iPod Touch devices for the "Anywhere, Anytime Learning: A Mobile Approach" program. Youths of primarily Hispanic and Latino descent will access, gather and process information with the use of these devices.



Science, math and literacy skills will be improved with the new knowledge gained.

The Community Family Literacy Project, Inc., which is led by Beth Donovan, services adults and children within the MMS Library area. Women and mothers are taught basic coping and English reading and writing literacy skills. At the same time, preschool children are exposed to an enriching program of play, music and literature. An evening program of literacy skill building is held for parents at the William Floyd High School. Some young people of these family units will be the beneficiaries of the BNL grant. Tutors for all these programs are volunteers trained by Literacy Suffolk, Inc.

A Pleasant Surprise from the Strangest of Places

by Danielle Orenzow, Literacy Suffolk Volunteer

I had a very amazing day on Sunday, February 8, 2009 which I would like to share with you. I sometimes pick up litter on my local roads near my home in Farmingville. As it was a beautiful sunny day, I went with my gloves and bags to an area where many day laborers wait for jobs.

As I had just finished my 4th bag of litter, a day laborer from Mexico came up and asked if he could help. I told him that I didn't have any money to pay him, but he could help. I began speaking to him in Spanish, and I learned a little about his life.

His name was Simon. It was the typical story. He was here to help his family. His 3 children live in Mexico, and he has 5 roommates. I began to tell him about an idea I have about having people like myself and people like him join together to help fight against litter while learning about each other, while advertising to passersby that

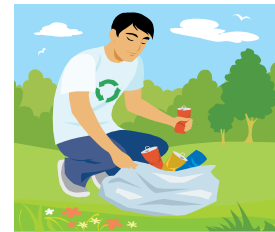
we all care about our community. Fifteen minutes later, 4 more day laborers came over to us and began talking. They were Simon's roommates. They began helping pick up garbage. Together, we joked about how Mexicanos son fuertes como toros". (Mexicans are strong like bulls) I played Spanish music from my car to keep us entertained. Many honked their horns as a way to say thank you. One lady stopped her car and said, "I don't know why you are doing this, but this is incredible, and I want to thank you all". It was really inspiring!

After only an hour, we had 30 large trash bags filled and a beautiful road side. Simon said with enthusiasm to help, "When can we do this again?". I laughed and asked him for his number for future events. More than anything, there was trust and bonding that occurred.

As a way to thank them, I asked if I could buy them a case of beer. They

said "No, gracias". Simon tried his best to ask me in English if I could meet him at the market and take him and his groceries home as they would be very heavy to carry. I said of course. I tried to give the men \$20 and they said "No, gracias", but I urged them to take it to buy food for the house as a thank you from me. So, they gratefully took the money.

I arrived at the grocery store where they asked if they had 20 minutes to shop for the groceries. Following, I took them home about 2 miles away. Simon reached into his pocket and said, "How much do we owe you for the ride?" I was shocked again. I said with a smile, "Absolutely, nada!"



More Tips from Amityville

continued from page 4

These resources are available at many, but not at all, public libraries in Suffolk County.

Learning Express (especially for GED & TOEFL)

<http://www.learnatest.com/LEL/index.cfm/>

Each of the Learning Centers offers the practice tests, exercises, skill-building courses, and information needed to achieve the results wanted at school, at work, or in life. GED prep and US Citizenship Preparation are available in both English and Spanish.

Tumble Books Library — <http://tumblebooks.com/>
(for reading with your children)

Second language learners can listen to a correct model while following along with the text which is excellent reinforcement for correct pronunciation and

grammatical structure. Additionally, there are multiple languages available allowing children who are non-English speakers the opportunity to enjoy books in their primary language as well as their second. Studies show that competency in the native language translates to increased competency in the second. Finally, the selection of titles is quite varied, appealing to many interests.

Literacy Connections —

www.LiteracyConnections.com

Literacy Connections provides a wealth of information on reading, teaching and tutoring techniques, ESL literacy, and adult literacy. It recommends resources that are useful for teachers, volunteers, and directors of literacy programs. Topics include the language experience approach, phonics, word study, and the best in children's literature.

Perfect Tips From Our Tutors!

Oldies but goodies from *Mary Sanford*, tutor extraordinaire!

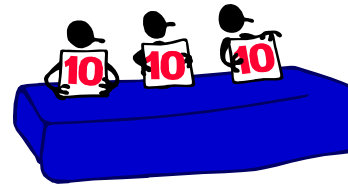
- * ***New Practice Reader*** (Anderson, Stone, Barton Phoenix Learning Resources) is very easy to use. A tutor who is apprehensive about creating her own materials could get good guidance with this series. Vocabulary is introduced, then used in a reading selection and comprehension is checked. Individual books cover skill levels from A (beginning reader) to G (advanced reader). When I've used it in the past, my students expressed interest in the reading content.
- * ***Comprehension Skills*** (Steck-Vaughn) is a series of small books covering skills such as Main Idea, Context, Inference, etc. After each story comprehension is checked. This series also comes in levels A-G.

Mastics-Moriches-Shirley Community Library has both of these series. You could check them out and give them a try. If they work, perhaps your library could order them. Hope this is helpful!

Tips from *Jeanette Hotmer* another stellar tutor/tester!

Three of my learners and I used ***Challenger 1***, and I found it very useful. Two of the twenty short readings were awkward but usable. We do a lesson a week supplemented with basic grammar (found on internet), pronunciation drills, ***Easy News***, and information about US customs and holidays (treasure trove of

information on the internet). We've done the first two lessons in ***Challenger 2***. It looks easy, but it's subtly reinforcing good pronunciation, initially concentrating on blended consonant sounds, and it's craftily introducing basic reading comprehension. They are geared to adult learners, and they aren't patronizing or belittling.



Early on, we used ***Lit Start's*** pronunciation strategies. They are helpful. I find that ***Challenger*** allows me to organize material and to gradually increase the difficulty of lessons. The short readings in ***Challenger 1*** are interesting. The short reading in ***Challenger 2*** are informative and both books contain stories that can be consciousness raising.

I started making a list of internet sites I use. When I identify a problem or a learner is interested in a particular subject, I use Google. My standby sites are:

Enchantedlearning.com	Towson.edu
EvaEaston.com	Virtuallsalt.com
About.com	Webster.commnet.edu
Ego4u.com	Englishclub.com
English-zone.com	Speechcom.com
Aliscot.com/bigdog	Better-English.com

Save the
Date!
April 3, 2010

Spring Concert to Benefit
Literacy Suffolk!
Details to follow. Check our
website
www.LiteracySuffolk.org



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