



LITERACY MATTERS

OCTOBER 2015

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



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A NEW CHAPTER IN OUR STORY

(submitted by Kim Nau)

Literacy Nassau is thrilled to begin a new chapter. Throughout the years, we have provided services for hundreds of immigrants and adult basic literacy students. Now, through an innovative reading program called Next Chapter Book Clubs, we are expanding our reach to include those who live with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Next Chapter Book Clubs have over 250 affiliates across the globe with the main premise that anyone can participate in a book club, regardless of their reading ability.

All too often, adults with developmental disabilities are not thought to be capable of or interested in reading or other lifelong learning pursuits. With limited opportunities to attend college, learning for these adults often stops when they graduate high school. People with developmental disabilities are also frequently socially isolated and while they may live in the community, they are rarely included as part of the community. For this reason, Next Chapter Book Clubs are held in libraries, cafes, and bookstores so that participants can gather together in a relaxed, community setting to form lasting friendships through reading and talking about books.

NCBCs meet for one hour a week and each

group is supported by two trained volunteer facilitators. There will be six to eight participants, of varying reading levels, who read aloud books of their choosing and make meaningful connections. We are in the process of developing a library with a collection of high-interest, low-readability literature for members and facilitators to select from.

Literacy Nassau wants to train eager, compassionate volunteers to facilitate our book clubs. The main role of a facilitator is to guide the discussions and maintain group engagement. These book clubs are informal gatherings and the focus is on reading to learn, not learning to read. Since each book club has two co-facilitators, each volunteer meets every other week for only one hour. Though the time commitment is minimal, the rewards are limitless. If you are interested in meeting new people and sharing your love for reading, please sign up for a next NCBC Tutor Training Workshop. It will make a difference in your life and the lives of your book club members.



Next Chapter Book Club members enjoy each other's company on a weekly basis.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

Around my house, we've settled into a new routine for the fall. Part of that routine involves my husband working late from Mondays through Thursdays, so in addition to my full time job at Literacy Nassau, I've taken on the full time parenting role too. I've been trying to learn to ask for help, and last week, I reached out to someone I honestly never thought I would ask for babysitting help from: my mom.

Many of you know my mom overcame a lifelong battle with dyslexia thanks to Literacy Nassau. But despite my preaching about people reaching their full potential, I recently realized I'm kind of a hypocrite when it comes to my mom. I mean, she's been through it all: divorce, cancer, and many other trials in life, but because she's older (and my kids are a handful), I never put her in the running as someone who could babysit for me. Well, I was wrong. She was great with my kids and they loved having special time with "Mia". She truly enjoyed spending the evening with them and left feeling invigorated, rather than worn out.

My mom has a learning disability and joined Literacy Nassau at age 70 so she could be able to read to her grandchildren. Who am I to decide what she is capable of?



My mother, pictured right, read my daughters a bedtime story for the first time ever when she babysat for them last week.

Karen





TUTOR SPOTLIGHT: ELEANOR KREBS

(Interview conducted by Alison Orme)

I graduated from Queens College long ago and thought of going into teaching. However, I realized that I would have trouble maintaining order in a large classroom. Instead, I went back to work for as a Claims Representative and Claims Authorizer with the Social Security Administration. When I retired in 1996 I began to volunteer with Literacy Nassau. My first assignments were with basic literacy students. After working with several different students, I stopped volunteering after my grandson was born in 2006. I returned in 2011, this time to tutor beginner English language learners.

1. *As a non-educator, what's it like to tutor a beginner English language learner?*

I think it is very interesting and rewarding. Each person is different and it is a challenge to find ways to teach. I try to create opportunities for them to talk with other English speakers by having them speak briefly to whichever librarian is at the reference desk. I teach words for whatever we find in the room and explain signs we see around the building. I often do exercises half way through which include learning words like run, jump, right, left, up, down, turn around.

2. *What were some of the steps you took early on to establish a rapport of trust and respect?*

Tutors teach what students want to learn, so student respect them. One student always called me "teacher" and stood up if I stood up to point to something. It's important to be careful about personal questions. As time passes your student will tell you more about themselves.

3. *Tell us a little bit about your current student. What are his goals? How do you help him work toward those goals?*

My most recent student was a young man from Iran. He wanted to get a temporary job but had long term plans to perhaps have his own business. He applied for jobs and we went over a sample job application. I reminded him of interview tips, such as he bringing his social security card and his green card.

4. *As a tutor, you've shown a lot of commitment and personal resiliency (through medical/health issues); both qualities are so important for the adult learner. How do you inspire these same qualities in your student?*

Unfortunately in May I cracked a pelvic bone while walking with my husband on a hiking path. I am fully healed now and able to return to a new student. It is very frustrating not to be able to do the things you are accustomed to doing. The experience taught me to be more sympathetic toward the disabled, and to appreciate all the courtesies from strangers.

WELCOME CANDICE!

Candice Cantore recently joined our team at Literacy Nassau as an AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteer In Service To America). Candice has a Bachelor's Degree in Public Health from East Stroudsburg University. Candice has great hopes and dreams of being able to impact her local community, and help people improve their lives: "Being able to change someone's life in a positive way is something I will be eternally grateful for. I'm really looking forward to making a difference." In her role here, Candice will work on volunteer management and fundraising.



AmeriCorps VISTA Candice Cantore began her service year with Literacy Nassau on September 3rd.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations (and welcome!) to the following new Literacy Nassau tutors:

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Mary Conroy | Freya Grice |
| Sheree Jeanes | Austin Khorasanchi |
| Karen Meredith | Victoria Perrone |
| David Salazar | Virginia Walsh |

And a very special congratulations to these students, who recently became U.S. Citizens:

| | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Aleyda Collado | Joyal Gonsalves |
| Oznur Cihan | |

LITERACY NASSAU'S ANNUAL WINE PAIRING DINNER

Hosted by Board Vice President Stephen Bendernagel, Literacy Nassau's Annual Wine Pairing dinner raised over \$5,000! Held at the Fox Hollow Country Club on August 25th, guests dined on a sumptuous five course meal with a selection of mouthwatering entrees. Each course was complemented by a carefully selected wine presented by the evening's sommelier, Richard Kmitkes. Spectacular raffles, a Scrabble Tile 50/50, and a touching speech by Stephen rounded out the event. We were joined by friends from Berkman Henoch Pedersen Peddy and Fenchel, Smyth Nora, and Certilman Balin Adler and Hyman. A great time was had by all!



Our gracious host, Stephen Bendernagel, paused for a photo op with Karen before welcoming everyone for the evening.



We were joined by many friends, including associates and guests of Smyth Nora LLP (pictured above).



Great food + great wine + great cause = great night! Sam Honig, Cheri Gimpelman, and Alex Bendernagel are all smiles!





TUTOR CONFERENCE FEATURE: "STEPPING INTO THE SHOES OF A LANGUAGE LEARNER"

(submitted by Cindy Treminio)

"Por favor, repita: 'Necessito ir al doctor'"

What did she just say???

"Por favor, repita: 'Necessito ir al doctor'"

I have no idea what the teacher means. I think I heard the word "repeat." Could she want me to say what she is saying? I sure hope I don't get this wrong. Did I hear her say the word "doctor?" What does "doctor" have to do with "repeat?" I don't want to disappoint her or myself. I'll feel so stupid if I get it wrong. Is anyone else looking? I'll be so embarrassed if they are. This is so hard. Okay, here goes:

"Por favor, repita: 'Necessito ir al doctor'"

There. I said it. My teacher seems pleased. She just smiled; that must be a good sign! I'll smile back. Why are the

others laughing? Did I mispronounce something?

Imagine yourself, sitting in a classroom where your teacher is speaking Spanish or maybe it's Hebrew, Polish, Farsi, or Japanese. You're in the class because you've just moved to a new country for a better opportunity or maybe even because you can no longer live in your old country. How would you learn the language so that you could function in the day to day of your new life? What would that teacher need to do to create a comfortable environment where you could successfully learn a tricky, confusing new language?

When you're teaching an adult student a new language, there are a lot of factors involved. What is the student's education level in their native language? Do they have an aptitude for language or are they more mathematically-minded? What is their motive for learning the new language? How often do they/will they

speak the new language outside of the classroom? How urgent is it that they become fluent in the language, and what is their timeline?

Join me for an introductory lesson in Spanish that will put you in the shoes of your adult English Language Learner at Literacy Nassau's First Annual Tutor Conference on Saturday, October 17th at UUCSR. Observe the techniques that are used to communicate, engage interest and motivate. At the end of the workshop, there will be plenty of time to discuss what you observed and how you can implement these techniques with your student. I look forward to seeing you there!

Workshop: Stepping into the Shoes of a Language Learner is being held during Session II (11 am – 12 pm) at Literacy Nassau's First Annual Tutor Conference on Saturday, October 17th.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: UPASNA CHOPRA

(submitted by Ocaria Silva)

When I first met Upasna, she had only been in the U.S. for a year. Shortly before she was matched with her tutor, she and her husband welcomed a baby boy to their family. Despite having a newborn, her focus was on improving her English and passing her certification tests in order to teach in the U.S. She worked with her tutor 4-6 hours a week until Upasna passed the certification exam to become a paraprofessional in the NYC School System. This fall, she was offered a regular, full-time position as a paraprofessional with a school in Queens, but declined in order to continue her English studies and take care of her family. She works as a substitute paraprofessional in Queens and hopes to one day lead her own classroom.

When did you come to the U.S.? *After getting married I came to US in 2010.*

Where in India are you from? *I am from Punjab District Jalandhar.*
Was it hard to leave your family to start a new life here in the U.S.? *In the beginning, it was hard. My life has changed a lot.*

What was your profession in India? *By profession I was a teacher in India.*

What are your goals in working with a tutor at Literacy Nassau? *My goals are to become a teacher in the U.S.*

Did you achieve those goals? *I am on my way to achieve my goals.*
What kind of work have you done here in the U.S.? *I worked in Day care, Staples and now I am working as a substitute paraprofessional in school.*

Anything else you'd like to add? *In the end, I would say through Literacy Nassau Alison helped me a lot. In the beginning, I requested to Ocaria to find a teacher that was really great help. Now I am on my way to achieve my goals. I am really thankful to Literacy Nassau.*

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Call Literacy Nassau TODAY at (516) 867-3580.

**IS YOUR STUDENT ALREADY A CITIZEN?
PLEASE ASK THEM TO REFER A FRIEND.**

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All are welcome!



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**REGISTRATION IS
 OPEN FOR THE FIRST
 100 TUTORS ONLY!
 SIGN UP BEFORE IT'S
 TOO LATE!**

LITERACY NASSAU'S FIRST ANNUAL TUTOR CONFERENCE

Join us for our first annual tutor conference on Saturday, October 17, 2015, from 9-2:30 at UUCSR! See below for conference topics. Tutors who register by October 1st receive a raffle ticket for our School Supplies Giveaway. Space is limited; reserve your seat today!

| 9:45 – 10:45 | 11:00 – 12:00 | 1:15 – 2:15 |
|--|---|--|
| Informally Assessing Your English Language Learner (Umama Pasha, Literacy Specialist) | Links to our Future Success: Making the Most of Library Resources (Ed Escoffier, Librarian) | Informally Assessing Your Basic Literacy Learner (Umama Pasha, Literacy Specialist) |
| Hands-On Pronunciation Tricks (Kim Nau, ESL Teacher) | Basic Literacy Roundtable (Barbara Fody/Ocaria Silva, Literacy Specialists) | How Are You Lesson Planning? (Digna Johnson, ESL Teacher) |
| Next Chapter Book Club: Promoting Literacy, Connection and Community for Adults with Developmental Disabilities (Karen Micciche, Executive Director) | Financial Literacy Education for Low-Level Learners (Anthony DeGuzman, Bethpage Federal Credit Union) | Beginner English Language Learners: It's Easier Than You Think (Barbara Fody, Literacy Specialist) |
| Breaking Bad Habits (Ocaria Silva, Literacy Specialist) | Stepping Into The Shoes of a Language Learner (Cindy Treminio, Literacy Specialist) | Speed Networking: It's All About Connections (Alison Orme, Director of Volunteers) |

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT



Special thanks to our friends at Bank of America for their \$20,000 workforce development grant! Bank of America is working to connect communities to better economic futures by responding to fundamental issues related to jobs, housing and basic human services. These focus areas allow them to take a comprehensive approach to a wide range of needs related to workforce development and education, community development, and basic human services. We are so proud to have such a great partner in Bank of America!

DID YOU KNOW?

The following famous people suffer(ed) from dyslexia:

- Tom Cruise
- Agatha Christie
- Albert Einstein
- Jennifer Aniston
- Whoopi Goldberg
- Pablo Picasso
- Orlando Bloom
- Vince Vaughn
- Thomas Edison
- Harry Belafonte
- Jay Leno
- John Lennon