

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



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 Maria Reed, Bookkeeper
 Barbara Fody, Literacy Specialist
 Jason Sapia, Literacy Specialist
 Emma Shinn, Literacy Specialist
 Ocaria Silva, Literacy Specialist
 Theresa Parker, Program Assistant
 Steven Gouzos, Office Assistant

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IT'S WORKING! CULTIVATING TUTORS IN THE NEW PROGRAM INITIATIVE

In our last issue of Literacy Matters, you may recall we shared information about our trip to the White Eagle Conference Center to be trained in the New Program Initiative. Unsure of what to expect, we quickly learned that the New Program Initiative was a module-based upgrade from our traditional Tutor Training Workshop (TTW).

We rolled out the module-based training in September, and to date have held four TTWs. Three were specific for English Language Learners (ELLs) and one was a combined workshop, based on our traditional model, targeting both ELLs and BLLs (Basic Literacy Learners). The new format is shorter, practical and uses a new book, Lit Start. The book shows specific strategies to use for listening, speaking, reading and writing. The shorter workshop format, combined with new configurations (twice a week for two weeks) has allowed us to dramatically reduce our student waiting list. In the past we front-loaded all of the training and tutoring began after up to 24 hours of training! With this new incarnation of the workshop, we are spreading out training opportunities over the entire tutoring experience. Tutoring begins sooner; then tutors can focus on and pursue training in specific skills.

The modules for the new TTW include an Orientation, 2 Basic Literacy Learner sessions, 2 English Language Learner sessions, a Successful Tutoring module and a follow-up session.

The first module, Orientation, includes an introduction to Volunteer Literacy Tutoring and adult learners, literacy statistics and all about our accountability to the New York State Edu-

cation Department. It also delves into the new three-way partnership about to be formed between the tutor, the student and the agency. This session also shows how Literacy Nassau is 100% aligned with Literacy New York in the New Program Initiative.

The BLL and ELL modules continue to be experiential and hands-on. They cover all the basic skills and techniques our students need. All best practices from prior workshop formats have been preserved (remember Shona and the Marlup?), with additional time to practice strategies to use with students.

The last module, Successful Tutoring, is about pulling together all the skills and techniques covered in the previous modules. We work on setting goals for tutoring sessions, techniques and activities to use with your student and strategies to help the student get closer to meeting their goals.

The follow-up session is all about sharing your tutoring experience thus far – telling the group about your new student, what's working and what's not and receiving your Tutor Training Certificate.

The new format has combined the best of the old with the convenience of getting started with tutoring sooner. This is a good thing, as perspective comes only once you start meeting with a student! Literacy Specialists on staff are here as a new resource to support all of our tutor/student pairs. Veteran tutors are invited to monitor selected modules of the new workshop. Call the office to reserve your spot! Tutors are invited to visit our library to check out the new book, Lit Start.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

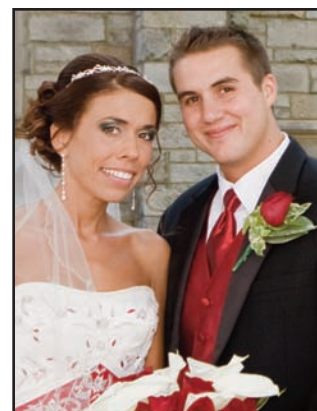
Hi Everyone,

Can you believe it's December already? Seems like only yesterday I was just getting started here at Literacy Nassau. Well, it's been a wild ride so far! We've got a great new vibe in our re-designed office, an energized staff, a New Program Initiative which is already proving successful, and I even have a new last name! I've really enjoyed getting to know all of you so far. I can't wait to see what 2011 has in store for us!

I hope you enjoy the fresh new look of Literacy Matters - we're trying something new and welcome your feedback.

I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you and yours a blessed, joyful holiday season. See you next year!

☺ Karen



PROFILE OF A LITERACY SPECIALIST: INTERVIEW WITH EMMA SHINN

by Brenda Alui

I've recently had several tutors ask me about the role of our new Literacy Specialists: Who are they? What are their credentials? How will they be able to help me with my student? So we figured we'd feature one of our newest staff members in this month's Literacy Matters, just to give you a better sense of who they are!

Tell me a little about yourself.

My name is Emma Shinn. For the past 6 months I have been a Literacy Specialist here at Literacy Nassau. I am working on my dual Masters in Elementary Education and Special Education at Adelphi University, and I graduated from SUNY Stony Brook with a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and Sociology. I minored in Adapted Aquatics.

What made you choose Elementary and Special Education as a major?

Personal experiences have given me a special place in my heart for the children who, at times, may be left behind due to various disabilities. I want to be able to make a difference for them.

Out of all your college experiences, what was the best experience you had?

I have gotten involved in an adapted aquatics program in Stony Brook. This is a free service offered to children and adults in the community with various physical and mental disabilities. The program provides physical and occupational therapy in an aquatic setting. I fell in love with the program when I was at Stony Brook, so much that I still volunteer with them once a week!



What is a typical day like for you?

I commute to the office from Bayside, Queens and arrive by 7:30 am. I listen to voice mail messages and read e-mails, of which there are always plenty! I administer tests all over Nassau County.

After giving tests they need to be graded and results letters sent to the tutors. I am constantly in touch with tutors and students to get pertinent information to update the NYSED (NY State Education Department) ASISTS report, which is the tool the state uses for Adult Education Programs. I usually leave the office by 5:30 pm, and then I head off to school, where I have classes until around 9:30 pm. Once home, I do school work and any work I've taken home from the office.

Who is your hero?

My mom, because she is awesome and been a great role model. I would be lucky to grow up to be like her.

Tell me:

A book you love.

Tuesdays with Morrie. I like the impact of the message it gives.

A talent or skill you have.

Making people laugh.

A place you would most like to visit.

England. That's where my family is from and I would like to see it.

Your favorite movie.

The Notebook. It is nice to know that romance isn't dead.

The best trip you have taken.

To Hawaii. It is absolutely beautiful.

An accomplishment you are proud of.

Graduating college early.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Literacy Nassau has been abuzz with excitement from the field! We have recruited and trained 36 new tutors in the past 3 months, and 7 of our students have graduated! Hats off to the following people:

Graduating students:

Severine Dimenschstein – tutor
Marty Abrams
Maria Jara – tutor
Pilar Recio
Norbert Lis – tutor
Olga Scileppi
Liangshi Mei – tutor
Linda Weiss
Shawn Poole – tutor
Lorraine Brown
Yiseon Sim – tutor
Lisa Funk
Maria Truong – tutor
Sandra Meyer

Graduating tutors:

Nancy Bob
Karin Campbell
Mary Campbell
Gina Castell
Jean DeBary
Arlene Feuerman
Joseph Gaynor
Carolyn Germany
Ramona Gillings
Jennifer Gooley
May Hisler
Shennel James
Tracee Jean-Phillippe
Debbie Kaufman
Susan Langer
Maria Lerfald
Marianne Lovallo
Maria Marco
Yvonne McDonald
Laura Miniero
Miriam Oberreuter
Lisa Oldendorp
Theresa Parker
Evette Pettaway
Sandy Ramirez
Jessica Rhodes
Debra Risetto
Joyce Rodriguez
Kelly Rose
Marybeth Schmitt
Nicholas Serrano
Glenn Sheridan
Giovanna Sottile
Susan Taigue
Gloria Viruet
Francine Yesner

And an extra special congratulations to our trainers in training, Susan Brewer and Barbara Kaplan.

IN HER OWN WORDS: STUDENT WRITING BY MARIA ARAUJO

I came from Portugal in Europe.

Christmas is a Catholic holiday. It is my favorite holiday.

During my childhood Christmas was different from now. In my village we did not have lights or ornaments in the street or in the house. When I was a child my brother and my sisters never received toys because my parents did not have money. On Christmas eve my family had the traditional dinner. The food dishes were fish and my mother would bake a delicious dessert special for this occasion. After dinner my family would sit around the fireplace and the best part for me was being together praying, singing and playing games.

On Christmas Day my family and I went to church to attend Mass at eleven o'clock. The church was replete with children and their families. The community enjoyed the special celebration and the children did too because they believed in baby Jesus.

My first Christmas in America was like a dream. I loved all the lights and decorations outside. The trees inside the houses with pretty ornaments were beautiful. Children in America are blessed. Santa always brings them the gifts of their dreams. But the years have passed and now I am looking back. I am now missing Christmas from my childhood.

(Tutor: Maryann Fogarty)



From L-R: Karen Micciche, Maria Reed, Ocaria Silva, Brenda Alui, Emma Shinn, Jason Sapia, Barbara Fody, Theresa Parker. Not pictured: Steven Gouzos.

MEET OUR NEW STAFF!

Literacy Nassau has many new friendly faces to introduce to you. Beginning when you walk through the front door, you're greeted by Steven Gouzos, our new Office Assistant. A recent Hofstra graduate, Steven studied Business Management and is excited to learn about the non-profit industry. Head upstairs to our new offices, and in addition to veteran staff Brenda Alui, Maria Reed, and Theresa Parker, you'll find four new Literacy Specialists! Barbara Fody, Jason Sapia, Ocaria Silva, and Emma Shinn all began working with us this summer. In order to be qualified as a Literacy Specialist, they had to be trained by Literacy New York in the new Program Initiative, and then had further training in ASISTS (the New York State Education Department data tracking website), TABE Administration and Best Plus/Best Literacy Administration! It's an important new role that we believe will result in much more accountability to the state and a much better experience for tutors and students. Continue down the hall and visit our Executive Director Karen Micciche. Now 8 months on the job, Karen's excited to see what 2011 will bring! Stop by anytime!

WHAT IS MANAGED ENROLLMENT?

We have been off and speeding, running in the direction of showing the New York State Education Department (NYSED) how good we really are! Getting Literacy Nassau aboard the express headed toward Albany has kept us busy beyond belief. Shifting our focus to where it needs to be, along with months of training, revamping our processes and preparing new materials has left little time for much else.

You may know by now that Literacy Specialists are assigned to our Tutor/Student pairs to provide support for each match on behalf of the agency. Assignments are based on the first letter of the student's last name. (Karen has A, Brenda has B, Jason has C-G, Ocaria has H-L, Barbara has M-Q and Emma has R-Z.) The Literacy Specialists' primary responsibility is making sure our ASISTS report (NYSED's tool of measurement) has all the current information on our students. They are in constant contact with both tutors and students getting updates necessary for our report. Most important is attendance reporting! We have eliminated quarterly reports and need contact hours with students monthly. (A copy of the attendance sheet is included with this mailing.) **Please communicate hours to us regularly** – whether by fax, e-mail, US mail and/or by telephone. We are making a huge effort to keep our data current, but YOU are the crucial piece of the equation.

We are about to undertake managed enrollment for students new to Literacy Nassau. We have scheduled our first enrollment week for January 10 – January 14, 2011 at our office. The main reason for the wait until January is to create a pause, allowing us to virtually eliminate our current waiting students by pairing them with all the recent graduates from the many fall/winter TTWs. All potential learners wanting to register with Literacy Nassau for tutoring must schedule an intake appointment in our office. There are many advantages to this format. By making the trip to Freeport, students show their commitment to learning (which means they'll be less likely to take our service for granted and "stand up" their tutor for tutoring sessions later on). The intake appointment also establishes rapport with their Literacy Specialist. It facilitates data collection in a speedier time frame. It provides a current pool of students for newly trained tutors. It allows shorter wait list times for new students. Enrollment weeks will be scheduled throughout the year, so if an interested student approaches you for tutoring, please have them call the office for an intake appointment!

HERB'S BLURB: OUR NEW LIBRARY!

If you have not been in the office since we redecorated, it is time to visit our user-friendlier space! Our site has been transformed! The offices are now all located upstairs, with the downstairs becoming a comfortable place for tutors and students. The library, with our resident librarian in attendance on Wednesday mornings, now has small tables for tutor/student pairs to meet, tutors to peruse the resources available and/or students to work. (Space should be reserved if tutor/student pairs want to hold a session here.) A private space is also available in our computer lab. Computers are available for use, while new, updated computers are scheduled for installation. Inspirational quotes and artwork fill the walls. And, a cozy window seat is just the place to read a book! Please stop in when you are in the neighborhood. We'll make you a cup of coffee and be able to catch up.

OPEN DOOR 2011

Now is the time to begin the conversation with your student about writing for *Open Door* 2011. This is a wonderful opportunity for our adult learners to become published authors!

For our new tutors unaware of this annual publication, an explanation is in order. *Open Door* is an anthology of student writings. Any and all students are invited (and encouraged!) to submit a writing of any type for inclusion in *Open Door*. If your student is a reluctant or novice writer, try using the Language Experience Approach strategy to elicit a story. Work with your student to edit the story and then submit it for publication!

Recognition Night (to be held on May 19, 2011) is the roll-out date for the latest edition of *Open Door*. All students who have written for *Open Door* are invited to sit at the Authors' Table. The first hour of the evening is set aside for guests at the event to circulate among the authors and have their copies of *Open Door* autographed by the writers. It is one of the highlights of the evening!

More information regarding submissions will be sent early next year. But, remember that writing and editing takes time, so please begin talking to your student about it soon!

SAVE THE DATE! Our annual (un)Scrabble Challenge for 2011 will be held Monday, March 21st at the Chateau Briand in Westbury!



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'TIS THE SEASON ~ FOR A POST TEST!

It's hard to believe that it is December already! Once the holidays are over and we have all toasted 2011, we will be in the post-season. Post-testing season, that is. All Literacy Nassau students need to be post-tested prior to June, 2011. Your Literacy Specialist will be contacting you and/or your student in the next few months to arrange for a post-test to be taken. Post-testing is one of the three criteria for a student to "count" toward our NRS (National Reporting System) benchmarks. The other two criteria are a pre-test and a minimum of 12 contact hours with a student.

A SPECIAL WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST ADDITION!



Robert Genalo will join Literacy Nassau's Board of Directors this January!

Robert Genalo is a Certified Financial Planner and has been a Financial Advisor for over 20 years. He joined Merrill Lynch in 2007 after 15 years with Smith Barney Citigroup. Bob is a Vice President with Merrill Lynch and has also earned the Wealth Management Advisor designation. Bob and his team provide a broad array of investment services including portfolio development, retirement planning and wealth management. He comes to Literacy Nassau with a "wealth" of knowledge to share as our newest Board Member starting next month!

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...



Literacy Nassau's Holiday Party was held at our office in Freeport on Thursday, December 9th from 3:30-6:30pm! Approximately 40 tutors and students gathered to celebrate the holiday season with delicious snacks, festive music, great conversation, and a fun gift swap! Filled with holiday cheer, a fabulous time was had by all!

