



# LITERACY MATTERS

MAY 2023



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

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## WHEN LITERARY DREAMS COME TRUE

(by Karen Micciche, Executive Director)

This month marks a moment I've been dreaming of since I was a child. As of May 16th, I am officially a published author.

My love of literacy and language runs so deep that for as long as I can remember, I have enjoyed "playing" with words. When I was in kindergarten, my mom enrolled me in a Saturday enrichment program at Queens College for Creative Writing, where I began learning about poetry and fun stuff, like alliteration. (Somewhere in my house, there's a poem I wrote about a chubby chocolate-colored chipmunk named Charlie.) As an only child growing up in the 80's and 90's, it was easy to turn to books for entertainment, and I spent countless hours at the library piling on books to take home and read.

In junior high school, I used to delight my father by writing song parodies. To this day, I still do this, often with my girls. In these parodies, I make jokes about whatever the topic of the song is. In 2016, when my daughters were 4 and 3, I wrote one for my husband for Valentine's Day about how sick we always were because little kids are just a bundle of incessant germs. The lyrics were so funny that the girls and I filmed a music video to accompany the song. Since then, writing

parodies has become a tradition in our house, and my husband does it, too. Nothing is better, in my opinion, than the gift of a really good belly laugh.

It was no surprise when I took this job at Literacy Nassau. I'm passionate about words. I know and revere their power. And in my novel, I use them to make readers laugh. I weave them into tales about my main character Gracie's ridiculous antics in an attempt to a) become a successful author and b) find love. My novel, *The Book Proposal*, is a lighthearted, silly romantic comedy that got a starred review from *Publishers Weekly* and was selected as the Romance Debut of the Month by *Library Journal* in March. It turns out lots of people enjoy a good laugh, not just me.

In the acknowledgements section of the book, I call out Literacy Nassau in a show of gratitude. Truly, I could not be more appreciative to work in a place that values language as much as I do. I think making others laugh should be a goal for your students. If they can learn English to the point where they can use it to make jokes, well, I just feel like there's nothing better than that. So, *thank you*, tutors. I can't think of anyone I'd rather share a day job with than all you language lovers.

## FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

Rules are a funny thing. My girls are at the ages now where they love to test boundaries to see what they can get away with. When they were little, Chris and I used to tell them "Rules keep you safe." Now that they're older, our conversations about rules are becoming a lot more nuanced. Rules exist everywhere, I tell them, for lots of reasons and for a variety of different purposes.

Literacy Nassau is no exception. As our program year begins to wind down, I'd like to take a moment to remind everyone about the protocol and rules we are expected to follow regarding student data. You'll be hearing from our program team in the weeks ahead looking for post-tests, offering opportunities for case management, and seeking your attendance records. These are all things we do because we are required to as part of our contract with the NYS Education Department. The state gets our funding from the federal government, and without good data from us, the state won't get that money. Our ALE grant is what keeps our program free, so it's essential that our data tells the story of all the great things we do! On behalf of Kate and her team, thank you for your help in making our data as successful as our program is!

*Karen* 😊



Sure, they might be cute, but my two darling daughters hate listening to rules and following our family protocol!





## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

(submitted by Kate Quijano, Senior Program Director)

We have been getting invitations to share information about Literacy Nassau's programs at different community events. On March 25, I presented at the North Babylon ENL info session. They have a Saturday Academy for students (adults and children) and invited several organizations to visit and explain their services. I was able to tell everyone about both our ENL services for adults and children and our work with children with dyslexia. Several families were interested in our citizenship classes and took home flyers.



In addition to meeting students, I had the opportunity to visit with other organizations in attendance. I met representatives from the Empire Justice Center, which works with families in need of housing or immigration services; Latina Moms connect, which offers cultural resources and networking; representatives who could assist with SNAP benefits; and the LI Regional Partnership Center, which assists in understanding special education and the IEP process. It was a great day to meet potential students and to obtain information that may be of use for our current students.



On April 15, I had the pleasure of participating in Wantagh Library's Community Resource Fair. It was a great opportunity to network with people in the local community and to meet potential volunteers. I was able to talk about our services, volunteer needs, and offer information on signing up for a volunteer orientation. I shared about our adult and children's services, encouraged participation in our Orton-Gillingham Summer Program which we are enrolling for now, and explained how we offer services for adult ELL and Basic Literacy students in libraries throughout Nassau County.

I was also able to network with several other organizations including: Book Fairies, the Long Island Volunteer Center, Eager to Serve, NY Marine Rescue Center, South Shore Guidance Center, EPIC, New York Blood Center, LI Center for Independent Living, CN Guidance and Counseling, Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Community Development Corporation of Long Island, and the United Way. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet people right in our own neighborhood. I hope that it will bring us some new volunteers for our programs, some potential students, and will also help us to increase the number of community referrals we can make for our case management work with our adult English Language Learner population.

I especially enjoyed the opportunity to chat with the two volunteers representing The Book Fairies. This is an organization that we have partnered with in the past so it was nice to get to know more about them. When we first moved to our new location, we received some books from the Book Fairies. Back in November, our OG students did a book drive and we donated to their organization. We have been invited to a book donation event in May and are looking forward to visiting the Book Fairies to see if there are any books that we can add to our Next Chapter Book Club library. We love community outreach events and spreading the word about Literacy Nassau.

## NEXT CHAPTER BOOK CLUB PROGRAM

We are looking for students interested in participating in a Next Chapter Book Club. For more information contact: [cmorales@literacynassau.org](mailto:cmorales@literacynassau.org)



# NEXT CHAPTER BOOK CLUBS

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[cmorales@literacynassau.org](mailto:cmorales@literacynassau.org)





## LITERACY FOR ALL

(submitted by Cristina Morales, Program Assistant)

I wanted to share with you all about my experiences working for Literacy Nassau and registering non-native English speakers for English classes in multiple libraries across Nassau County. It's been an exciting journey, to say the least! Every day, I travel by bus to different libraries to help register students for our free English classes. I've had the pleasure of meeting so many incredible people who inspire me with their determination and courage. They are working tirelessly to learn a new language, and I'm honored to be a part of their journey.

Our teachers are all volunteers, and they're some of the most amazing people I've ever met. They have tremendous patience and are incredibly creative in their teaching methods. They create such a fun and welcoming atmosphere for learning, and it's amazing to watch them in action. The students absolutely love them too! Here are some quotes from our students about their experiences in the program:



Bob is always prepared to engage his students in class.



"My teacher makes learning English feel like a breeze. I never thought I'd be able to do it, but now I'm confident that I can." - Maria, student

"I used to be afraid of speaking English in public, but my teacher helped me overcome my fears. Now, I feel so much more confident." - Ricardo, student

"The program has changed my life in so many ways. I can communicate better with my coworkers and my family. I'm so grateful for this opportunity." - Tanya, student

As someone who never imagined working in this field, I am grateful for the opportunity to help others in such a meaningful way. It has taught me to be more understanding, patient, and compassionate. It has also made me more grateful for the opportunities I have in life. I am humbled by the hard work and dedication of our students and volunteers. I'm so grateful for this program and for the opportunity to help others achieve their goals. Becoming a part of this team has truly changed my life and I am thankful.



Lisa enjoys meeting with her beginner students at the Hillside Library.



Adrienne has been tutoring with us for many years and her students are always appreciative of her time and efforts towards teaching.

**Teacher Appreciation Week**  
May 8 - May 12

"Great people can produce some quality works, But good teachers can produce thousands of great people.  
Thank you for your dedication."



### Warm Birthday Wishes to our Tutors!

- Roslyn Armstrong Powell – Donna Bennett – Dee Berger
- Lynne Borah – Carl Borruso – Esther Braun – Marjorie Brown
- Christopher Cantanno – Kathryn Cassidy
- Regina Dallensandro – Nicolas DeMarco – Kate Dickson
- Delia A. Espinal – Joanne Finochiarro – Johnny Gilchrist
- Maryanne Gogolinski – John Gomes – Laura Graves
- Linda Hayduk – Daniel Henick – Sandra Herman
- Sherry Jagels – John Jansen – Mindy Kaiser – Daniel McCarthy
- Kaitlyn Migliore – Evelyn Monaco – Meena Natarajan
- Grazia Norton – Sandy Palma – June Prisand – Alisa Promakul
- Barbara Randall – Ryan Rodrigues – Frank Roggenkamp
- Sheila Saad – Mahendra Shah – Lanie Spence
- Harriet Studness – Ernestine Warner – Madeleine Weinberg
- Sherika Wheatley – Meryl Wiesenberg







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