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LITERACY
N A S S A U

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

What You'll Find in this Issue:

Tutor Spotlight: Melissa	2
Class Spotlight: Freeport	3
OG Summer Program	4

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ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE CLASS VISITS

(by Kate Quijano, Senior Program Director)

For the past two months, I spent some time visiting each of our adult ESL classes. It was an opportunity for me to get out to see our students and to get to observe our teachers in action. I loved seeing all the creative ways our teachers work to support and engage their adult learners every day. Each class is unique and tailored to the needs of the specific students in the group which is one of the things I have always found special about Literacy Nassau.

It also gave me the opportunity to share things I saw in one class with teachers of other classes so we can all grow and build on our practice together. I'd like to share some of my observations and suggestions for strategies/activities that you might want to implement with your group:

- Students have name tags on their desks and engage in activities that help them learn one another's names and build relationships.
- Students have connections with one another; they each have a buddy that they call and check on to see if they are coming to class - great positive peer pressure to build attendance.
- Teachers have a group text or WhatsApp and message students with reminders about class and check in on students who have been absent.
- Homework is teacher-created and specific to concepts the group needs extra help with.

- Teachers and volunteers walk around and check in with students individually to make sure everyone understands and is keeping up.
- Smart Boards, overhead projectors, dry erase boards, or large photographs are used to provide visual support.



Our Freeport Library students using the smartboard for their English lessons.

- Games and video clips are incorporated into the learning.
- Students work in partnerships or small groups.
- Students have opportunities to practice real life conversation topics with peers and teachers.
- Students engage in call and response activities and choral reading activities to practice pronunciation.
- Teachers incorporate resources from the library: visits from librarians, tours, getting library cards, joining their special events, and viewing art displays to use as conversation starters.
- Students set goals and frequently check in and discuss their progress toward their goals; students and teachers support and encourage growth.

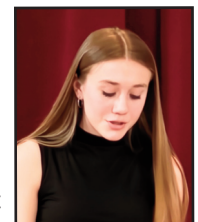
We've been building relationships, setting goals, and working hard towards them. I look forward to seeing the progress our students make and visiting them soon.

FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi everyone,

Spring is finally peeking through the endless string of clouds, snow, and wind we've experienced this winter, and I'm so grateful. This winter was exhausting, and I finally feel like I can look ahead to some of the big events that spring is promising. In my house, that includes my daughter Haley's eighth grade graduation.

In order for kids in her school to graduate, eighth grade students must participate in a Capstone project. This is a deep dive into a topic of their choosing, and Haley chose to explore her love of song writing. Her Capstone project was the development and presentation of a recorded piece of music along with a music video. She presented it to her school community along with a speech, a PowerPoint, and a project board. For the first time in her life, I saw my daughter as a young woman. Spring is the time when flowers bloom, butterflies emerge from their cocoons, and the earth is reborn. I hope you are able to experience the fruits of your labor in your students' growth this spring, too.



Karen ☺

TUTOR SPOTLIGHT: MELISSA BUCHBERGER

(submitted by Melissa Buchberger, ESL Teacher)

I am so happy to be working with Literacy Nassau this year. I learned about their Orton Gillingham certification program a few years ago, and was fortunate to be selected to participate in the training program. I learned so much during the training and had a wonderful opportunity to help a struggling reader during the year long practicum. My student made amazing progress, and it was a very rewarding experience. I remember Karen Micciche telling us that we were going to change the trajectory of someone's life. It was not only inspiring, but epitomized Literacy Nassau's mission.

This year I had the opportunity to work with adult learners at Literacy Nassau. They wish to learn English to better their lives. I have taught both elementary school children and adult learners during my career. I truly enjoy teaching and working in a collaborative environment. I enjoy the creativity of planning dynamic lessons and seeing the students' excitement when they have fun learning something new. I have students from many different countries including China, Brazil, Haiti, India, Colombia, and The Dominican Republic. The students have become friends and have a great time working together and helping each other achieve their educational goals. They support each other, share ideas, laugh together, and have built a learning community. They have even connected with my other class at a different library through writing to each other.

We have a wonderful volunteer named Patty Schwartz, who teaches with me on Mondays. She has been volunteering her time working with the students at Literacy Nassau and comes with a wealth of experience. She is very dedicated and eager to help the students learn. She is patient, caring and always has a smile.



Patty (second from right) with her students.

At the beginning of the school year the students came up

VIRTUAL TUTORING WITH ALANA

It has been a great experience teaching ESL with Literacy Nassau. I am passionate about language, culture, and supporting adult learners as they build confidence in their communication skills. My interest in teaching began years ago, but it wasn't until I started working with adult English learners that I truly felt I had found my calling. I enjoy creating a warm, supportive classroom environment where learners feel comfortable practicing, making mistakes, and celebrating their progress. Outside of teaching, I love to travel, blog, try new vegetarian restaurants, exercise, and spend time with my sweet fur baby, Sugar.



I was drawn to Literacy Nassau because of its strong mission, community-centered approach, and dedication to empowering adult learners. I appreciate the organization's supportive network of tutors and teachers, and I'm inspired by the determination of the students who come here seeking

with goals for the year. At the start of 2026, they reflected on their goals and created new ones for the new year. We follow the scope and sequence of The Ventures program. Students utilize the textbooks and workbooks for reinforcement of skills, vocabulary development, grammar, and reading. They also enjoy working cooperatively on projects, presentations, playing games to practice social language, and reinforce vocabulary, syntax and semantics. We use manipulatives and visuals to explicitly teach concepts. We utilize audio to improve listening comprehension as well as incorporating the information into group discussions and stating opinions. Lessons are differentiated to meet individual student needs and learning styles. Technology is integrated into every lesson, as is multi-sensory learning. Lessons incorporate listening, speaking, reading, and writing based on Language Acquisition Theory and research.

We are lucky to be at libraries with so much to offer. There is technology, including digital whiteboards, which allow the students interactive learning experiences. There are also digital resources with the Ventures program. The libraries graciously provided the students with tours of their buildings, including what materials, resources, and programs are available to them. We had a lesson on how to sign-up for programs, and one of the library directors even came to our class to



Students with library staff using their resources.

invite the students to a celebration they were holding that weekend! They learned how to get a library card to borrow books and build literacy. We took a tour of "The Innovation Station." The students learned about 3D printing, embroidery, computer programs and resources, laser engraving, the Cricut machine, and other technologies housed in this Makerspace, designed for creativity and encouraging learning by doing. They also enjoyed learning about the seed garden.

I am excited about what the rest of the school year holds for my students. I am proud of their hard work, determination, and dedication. I look forward to seeing how much they achieve.

opportunities to improve their lives through language learning. Working with adults has always felt especially meaningful to me because they bring rich life experiences, clear goals, and strong motivation to succeed.

One resource that has been particularly effective in my teaching is Ellii (formerly ESL Library) and Side By Side. Its lessons are engaging, well-structured, and accessible for different proficiency levels. My students respond well to the visuals, real-life topics, and practical vocabulary. I've seen noticeable improvement in their comprehension, speaking skills, and confidence when we use Ellii materials regularly.

This year, many of my students have made wonderful progress toward their personal goals. Some have improved their English for work, while others feel more confident applying for jobs or communicating with coworkers. A few have shared that they're now able to help their children with homework or navigate daily tasks more comfortably. Hearing their appreciation and witnessing their growth has been incredibly rewarding, and it motivates me to continue supporting them on their learning journey.

ABOUT THE TEACHER - NANCY SCHLEYER

(submitted by Nancy Schleyer, Teacher)

This is my first-year teaching English with Literacy Nassau. I am a retired New York City Department of Education Special Education and Early Childhood teacher. For many years, I taught in a public school in Corona, Queens, a predominantly Hispanic community. I retired in 2019 due to health concerns. A friend of mine, Janice, who currently teaches with Literacy Nassau, suggested that I might enjoy teaching English to adults in a library setting. I was hired in August and am now teaching Tuesday and Thursday evenings at the Freeport Public Library. I currently have 11 students in my class: one gentleman from Myanmar who speaks Burmese, and ten women from various Central and South American countries, including Guatemala, Colombia, Peru, and Honduras. I absolutely love working with these adults. Although their levels of English proficiency vary, they are all eager to learn to speak, read, and write more confidently. Some students are true beginners, while others have lived in the United States for several years and have basic vocabulary and conversational skills.



Nancy (in pink) surrounded by her students at the Freeport Library.

We use the Cambridge Ventures Program, and each student has both a textbook and a workbook. So far this school year, we have covered Personal Information, At School, Friends and Family, Health, and we are currently working on Unit 5, Around Town. Each week, we follow the Ventures curriculum, and I supplement lessons with materials from YouTube, Teachers Pay Teachers and ChatGPT.



Wendy (left) and Nancy (right) with a student.

We are very fortunate to have a weekly volunteer in our class. Wendy, a retired NYC Department of Education Assistant Principal, provides invaluable support by working one-on-one with students and helping them better understand challenging concepts. We are truly lucky to have her extra set of eyes, ears, and hands in every class.

A few lessons ago, students were learning about community maps and directional words. I found a YouTube video by an artist demonstrating how to draw a community map. Each student was given an 11x11 sheet of paper, and together, following the visual and oral instructions, they created their own community maps complete with a map key and color. The students were listening to directions in English while simultaneously following step-by-step instructions to draw their maps. The results were wonderful, and the students were incredibly proud of their work.



We use all of the great resources at the library.

On December 18th, we held a holiday party with another class that also meets on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at the Freeport Library. The idea for the celebration came from my students. We reserved a room large enough to accommodate everyone, and students from both classes brought food to share from their native countries. The spread included empanadas, chicken sandwiches, sushi, buñuelos, a ham and cheese platter, and a variety of cookies and desserts. Everyone contributed, and the evening was filled with conversation, laughter, and plenty of English being spoken.

In just a few short months, from September to January, it has been wonderful to see how my students have formed friendships. They share rides to and from the library, exchange phone numbers, and notify me when someone will be absent. We talk about our families, jobs, and current world events. Many students were especially engaged in discussions about what is happening in Venezuela, as several have family members living there. Their perspectives added depth and meaning to our conversations.



The Freeport Memorial Library has always been a great partner and always welcoming to our students. They host five of our ESL classes.

The students were also given a tour of the Freeport Public Library, where they learned about the services available to them, and some even signed up for library cards. On another evening, CARECEN—an organization based in Brentwood and Hempstead that supports immigrants—provided a very informative three-hour presentation. Additionally, the Cornell Nutrition Program visited to conduct a workshop on nutrition and healthy eating. These experiences greatly enrich our curriculum and provide valuable resources for our students.



At each class, I administer a short 10-question vocabulary quiz to assess retention and understanding. Most students are doing well and making steady progress, and they take great pride in their accomplishments. I assign homework each class to reinforce vocabulary and concepts, and all students complete and submit their work the following session. I review their assignments and return them with feedback.

It is incredibly rewarding to watch my students grow more confident in reading, writing, and speaking English. Learning a new language in a new country is not easy, but we support and encourage one another and continue showing up week after week. My life has truly been enriched by these hardworking, determined students, and I feel grateful to support them in every class from now until June.





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**Literacy Nassau's
OG Summer
Intensive Program**

**JULY 6 - JULY 30
MONDAY - THURSDAY
9:15am-12:00noon
FOR STUDENTS ENTERING GRADES 1-6
Located at: 1 Ivy Lane in Wantagh**



To learn how our program can help your child join our IN-PERSON open house on one of the following dates:
Monday, March 16 @ 6:00pm
OR
Monday, April 13 @ 6:00pm
Early Bird Pricing: \$1900
Due by April 20th.

Daily Schedule:

- OG-based reading and writing lesson
- Snack break
- OG-based game, craft or activity
- Lesson review and/or read aloud



To sign up for an open house please email
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Building literacy skills for students with dyslexia, or other language-based learning disabilities using Orton-Gillingham in a small group.





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