



LITERACY MATTERS

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

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ELL CASE MANAGEMENT

(submitted by Kate Quijano)

While Literacy Nassau's primary focus is providing literacy instruction (both in teaching the English language and teaching reading), we also provide case management services for our ELL students as part of our grant requirements for that program. Case management includes helping students identify their short and long term goals, helping them choose an English class that best fits their schedule, offering supplemental classes and workshops of interest to them, and meeting one on one to support them with individual needs or to refer them to other organizations for outside services.

During the pandemic, most of these services were provided over the phone or virtually, but this year we are working to also include class visits. Literacy Nassau staff will be spending time in different classes so students get to see us in-person. We will give a short presentation to the class to talk about the services we provide. We will also meet with each student

privately to see if we can help connect him/her to additional resources in their local area. It is our hope that by spending time in the community increasing in-person interaction, our students will feel more connected to both our program and the ample services that exist in Nassau County, many of which often go under the radar due to limited funding and/or lack of marketing. The ultimate goal is for Literacy Nassau to build meaningful, lasting connections with our adult student population so that we can successfully maintain long-term engagement in our ESL program.

These visits are also an opportunity for us to see all of the amazing things our volunteer tutors are doing every week and to support you if you have questions or need further resources for your class. We look forward to rolling out this new format for case management with all of our classes and thank Cristina Morales, Program Assistant, and the classes that participated in her case management pilot during the fall session.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

I had an experience recently in my author life that I thought you might find interesting: I was invited to participate in an Instagram Live. For those of you who've never had the pleasure, an IG Live is basically a video chat that anyone on Instagram can tune into. (Talk about daunting!) I had to teach myself about filters and how to use a ring light, all in an effort to look as good as possible. But, afterwards, I had a very honest conversation with a friend of mine where we discussed the message that all of that filtering sends - particularly to my two young daughters. My friend asked me, "How can you tell Haley and Julie that they're beautiful and expect them to believe it if you don't show them that you believe you're beautiful?"

It really made me stop and think. She's right, of course. True beauty lies in our imperfections, in the things that make us unique and different. For better or for worse, none of us is perfect. Imperfections also make us relatable. You don't have to know everything about the English language to be a great, effective tutor. There's power in admitting when you don't know the answer to a student's question, or when you need to find out more information in order to give a solid response. What's more, your student will feel capable of learning if they see that you - their teacher, their role model - is still learning, too.

Karen 😊



Pictured above: Karen joins 3 other romance authors and a Bookstagrammer on her first IG Live.



TUTOR SPOTLIGHT: AMITA

(submitted by Kate Quijano)

I always enjoy getting to know my tutors via the Tutor Spotlight interview. I'm in awe of people who care enough about their communities to volunteer their time, and Amita is one of our best! She's fun, engaged, and since March 2022 has been making her little corner of Nassau County a better place.

1. How did you get involved with Literacy Nassau?

I was searching for a way to give back to the community and came upon Literacy Nassau. When I moved to the USA from India, I was six years old. I was taught English in school by an ESL teacher. By 4th grade I was placed in a Gifted and Talented program in my elementary school. Not only did I learn to speak and write English, I was very good at it too. And I can only thank my ESL teacher who made that possible.

2. Describe some of your rewarding experiences as a tutor.

The most rewarding experience of volunteering at Literacy Nassau is that I can help adults learn to read and speak with confidence, so they can communicate with their own children and their child's teacher so they in turn become successful in school. All the students are really eager to learn and I also learn from them as well about their own culture and traditions.

3. What are some challenges you have faced while tutoring and how did you overcome them?

Not having a teaching background, I was honestly nervous and anxious the first few classes. I kept reminding myself that they don't expect me to be a perfect English teacher like in school. They just need someone to help read and help comprehend what they are reading. By the time we got to our fourth class, one of my students came to me and praised me for how well I was doing. She thanked me for teaching and being patient with the class as we went through the session.



Amita (center) with her students.

4. What keeps you motivated to continue working with adult learners?

The appreciation that the students have for us is all the motivation I need. They understand that we are all volunteers who spend time our own time to help them. When my students thank me after each class, I know have done my best to help and keep them motivated as well to continue to learn.

5. What would you advise a new tutor just starting out?

There is no set way to teach. Prepare the Chapter lessons beforehand and expect to follow through but you might not be able to cover the the whole lesson in one class. It is better to go slow rather than to rush the lesson as not all students learn at the same level. I also include my own personal examples and experiences to help them understand the role-play activities within the chapter.

6. What are some of your interests outside of LN?

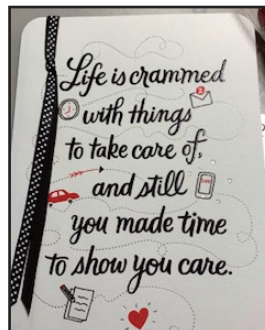
Besides tutoring at Literacy Nassau, I am fully involved in our family foundation that teaches Hindu religion and culture to children through various activities and crafts. I also enjoy spending time with my family as we love to travel, watch and attend sports events, and any outdoor fun activities.



Warm Birthday Wishes to our Tutors!

Jacqui Alves – Linda Antin – Ruth Babicz – Margaret Barton
 Jodi Batan-Seegull – Linda Bleck – Joan Capello
 Lynne Ferraro – Deanna Glassman – Karen Grimes
 Ellen Gross – Bob Hanna – Bernie Hirschhorn – Judy Hoffman
 Pamela Jackson-Ware – Sylvia Jorisch – Christina Kachinoski
 Delia King – Susan Laufer – Nicole Maas – Terri Mangum
 Jessica Merkel – Carolyn Miller – Debbie Mincer
 Ephifany Morillo – Doreen Pechman – Cathy Perini
 Anand Persaud – Sandra Pesce – Joan Ratty – Anita Schwartz
 Pamela Shampan – Margaret Sherman – Ethell Smith
 Mary-Rose Waldron – Steve Young

A Wonderful Gesture



On my 1st day of class, I was surprised when some of my Fall session students came to visit and requested a few minutes of my time. I thought maybe they had some questions. Then, Justé (current student) stood up and spoke in Haitian and Spanish. I didn't know what was going on until I realized they were thanking me and gave me a long stem rose and a card. The inside message read, "That means everything. Thanks." They all signed the card with a written note: "We are proud of your class. 10-22 - 12/22" What a touching surprise!

Shared by our tutor Melva, Uniondale Library Class

MY FIRST REGISTRATION

(submitted by *Cristina Morales, Program Assistant*)

Since joining Literacy Nassau this past October, I have been looking forward to doing my part in helping my community by placing students in our ESL classes. As a new resident of Nassau County myself, it was a pleasant experience to travel throughout the county and visit all the many libraries that were generous enough to open up their buildings not only for registration purposes but also to house the ESL classes throughout the year. We wouldn't be able to do this without that resource. This being my first registration I was eager to learn all about the process. I attended 7 of the 13 locations in which we were able to test and register 254 students.

When potential students arrive at a registration event, you can tell most are nervous. It can be very intimidating walking into a strange place to be tested in a language that is new to you. The intake process can be daunting on both sides depending on the ability to communicate; Google translate was very helpful! Each student is briefly interviewed to fill out the necessary paperwork and then tested.

After paperwork is completed and their level of English is determined, we place them in a class. This year Karen had the fantastic idea to provide our students with a folder with their class placement information, a picture and short bio of their new teacher and a bio of each of us in the office. We want them to build a stronger connection with our organization and feel comfortable reaching out to us.

We also started a new Student Ambassador program where our more advanced students volunteered their time to assist with registration. They met with new students, shared some of their experiences as Literacy Nassau students, and assisted them in filling out their registration forms. A big thank you to our Student Ambassadors Miyuki, Kei, Hiromi, and Anderson. We appreciate your support for your fellow students and the extra assistance at registration.

We'd also like to thank our tutors Jerry and Bob P. for helping us out at some of our busier registration locations. Students were so happy to meet some of our volunteers and you made the registration process much smoother by welcoming students and keeping track of who was next in line to take their English test. I am excited to see how our students grow and improve throughout the year.

WELCOME MIKAYLA!

(submitted by *Mikayla Grote, Receptionist*)

I am a student at Stony Brook University majoring in Marine Vertebrate Biology, and I am the new receptionist at Literacy Nassau! In addition to my new role here as well as my full-time role as a student, I also have been working as a lifeguard for the past 5 years. When I'm not working or studying, I love to read, swim, and travel. When I graduate, I hope to do research in the field of marine vertebrates, but my main goal is to research whales. I've always wanted to be a marine biologist for as long as I can remember, but I'm sure my favorite song from childhood ("Baby Beluga") and frequent family trips to the aquarium and Sea World had something to do with it. In the meantime, I'm excited to be working here as I am an avid literacy supporter.

SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING RENEWED

(submitted by *Ann Silverberg, tutor*)

Donna Marie Cornell and David Nicholas Cornell have for more than five years been coming to the Hillside Library in New Hyde Park for Literacy Nassau's Next Chapter book club. On Valentine's Day this year, they were not renewing library books, but their wedding vows.

Donna, 50, and David, 59, planned a noon ceremony at St. James United Methodist Church, near their home in Lynbrook. An afternoon reception with a deejay is planned at the American Legion Hall in Malverne.

The couple married in a simple civil ceremony on June 12, 2007 at Hempstead Town Hall.

Donna got the idea for a fancier renewal ceremony after a wedding shop that was going out of business donated about 40 wedding gowns and bridesmaid dresses to the church thrift shop. She said yes to a full-length sleeveless dress with a ruched bodice and bottom ruffle. Silver sequins adorn the shoulder and the hip. David, a Marine veteran who served in Desert Storm, will wear a black tuxedo and a bow tie.

"She never wore a wedding dress before and never got married in a church before," David said. "Now we are."

Jason Cornell, 28, David's son from his first marriage, will walk Donna down the aisle and also will serve as David's best man, the couple said.

The Hillside Next Chapter book club is a friendly group. All the members worked together on this wedding renewal announcement. At the Tuesday meetings at the library they enjoyed playing a customized dominos game in which the words *renew, bride, groom, tuxedo, gown, love, bouquet, rings, cake* and *couple* replace the customary dots. The Cornells have invited fellow members Beatriz Garces and Charles Nickola and Literacy Nassau volunteers Donna Bennett and myself (Ann Silverberg) to the big event.

Donna and David planned the food, arranged the cake and selected a color scheme for the reception, in addition to putting the finishing touches on their renewal attire. Donna admits to being "a little nervous about wearing the dress." She says, "I have shoes, but they're not staying on all night."



Donna and David play a wedding-word domino game.





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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT :)

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY



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