



LITERACY MATTERS

DECEMBER 2021



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

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FIRST BOOK DONATES HOLIDAY BOOKS FOR KIDS

(submitted by Karen Micciche)

This month, we are so excited to highlight First Book, a terrific organization that recently donated a gift of six sets of books from their Book Bank for us to distribute to our OG students as gifts for the holidays.

"The gift of reading is not something you can quantify," said Melissa Sansobrinno, OG tutor and mother of a child with dyslexia. "These children work hard just to accomplish tasks that fluent readers take for granted. With a gift of books that are suitable for side-by-side parent-child read-alouds, kids can foster an appreciation for stories and build their imaginative skills."

The gift includes hardcover titles featuring Disney princesses, Star Wars characters, inspiring books about female leaders who have shaped our world, joke books, activity books and more. We are also including an article about the importance of reading to your children and instructions on the best ways to foster healthy read-aloud time. "For many families, reading together is a tradition, ingrained in rituals such as bedtime. But for some, especially for children with dyslexia, reading is associated with stress and anxiety, so often parents shy away from it during time that is intended to be 'relaxing,'" commented Kate Quijano, Senior

Program Director. "By offering suggestions on how to make that time together more fruitful, we can help shift attitudes around reading for those kids."

First Book is a not-for-profit organization based in Washington, DC. The company is a social enterprise that provides new books, learning materials, and other essentials to children in need. Since their founding in 1992, First Book has distributed more than 175 million books and educational resources to programs and schools serving children from low-income families. Their Book Bank program enables publishers to donate high volumes of books to the organization, which are then "purchased" by member organizations for the cost of only shipping. In our case, First Book gave us a donation of a gift certificate to cover the cost of shipping and handling, so in all, we were able to order over 170 books for distribution to our kids this holiday season - for free. What's more? They are supported by our friends at the Guru Krupa Foundation, so their partnership advances literacy not only nationally, but also right here in the GKF local community.

To learn more about them visit their website at firstbook.org. Many thanks to First Book and the Guru Krupa Foundation for providing such a lovely holiday gift!

THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

It's crazy to think that the holiday season is here, in full swing! In keeping with the reason for the season, I'd like to offer a deep dive into the things I am thankful for.

- 1) I am grateful for my husband and my two beautiful girls. Everything else is a means to an end. I love spending time with them all year round, but it's extra special during the holidays.
- 2) I appreciate the donors, staff, board, tutors and students at Literacy Nassau who make it a joy to come to work every day!
- 3) I am thankful for my literary agent, Elizabeth Copps, who is helping me realize my dream of becoming a published author.
- 4) I'm grateful to my network of amazing friends and extended family, both on Long Island and in Cape Cod, who are there for support, fellowship, and who make life fun!

It's so easy to get bogged down with the stress of the season, but when you focus on the good things in life and practice an attitude of gratitude, the true holiday spirit shines through.



I'm grateful for so many things, but first and foremost is the love of my beautiful family! What are you thankful for this holiday season?

Karen 😊





TUTOR SPOTLIGHT: MEGAN

(submitted by Kate Quijano)

Megan has been a Citizenship tutor with Literacy Nassau for the past year. In addition to the civics and test-prep skills she knows her students will need to pass the Citizenship exam, she provides an amazing, supportive environment for her students. They even recently traveled to visit the Statue of Liberty together. In order to get to know more about Megan and her class, we conducted this short interview:

1. How did you get involved with Literacy Nassau?

I got involved during the pandemic. I was furloughed and looking for a way to give back to the community, and a way to help pass the time. Originally, I was looking to help teach ESL. However, once I heard about the citizenship classes I knew that was what I wanted to do. In college I majored in both English and History. Teaching citizenship is a way for me to share both of my favorite things to those who are interested.

2. Describe some of your experiences tutoring with us.

So far, I haven't had a bad experience tutoring with Literacy Nassau. Everything has been great. I find that I look forward to my class each week.

3. Tell us a bit about your students.

I started teaching/leading the citizenship study group in January. I'm currently in the middle of my fourth class/session and each student I've taught has been very nice and respectful. They genuinely want to learn and practice their English which makes the class fun.

4. Tell us about your field trip.

I got the idea to start a group trip to the Statue of Liberty when one of my students said that they would like to go but didn't feel comfortable going into the city/taking the train alone. That didn't sit well with me. Everyone should be comfortable enough to visit and explore their home.

That's when I decided to organize something. I opened up the trip to everyone I taught throughout the year and after a month or so of planning a few said they were interested. We ended up going on a Saturday and had a great time. We took pictures in front of the Statue of Liberty, went to the museum, took the audio tour at Ellis Island, and just really enjoyed ourselves. It was great to be able to meet my students and some of their family in person! It was a fantastic day and time well spent.



5. What are some activities you enjoy outside of tutoring?

Outside of tutoring I like to read, travel, hike, and cook (still working on that skill though).

REGISTRATION INFORMATION BELOW IS FOR **NEW** STUDENTS ONLY!

Literacy Nassau's

FREE ELL CLASS WINTER REGISTRATION

January 3rd to January 14th

We will have classes at Westbury, Hillside, Floral Park, Williston Park, Mineola, Oceanside, Baldwin, Freeport, North Bellmore, Hicksville, Jericho, and Farmingdale Libraries.

CLASSES WILL BEGIN JANUARY 24TH
AND END APRIL 1ST.

Please visit our website in December to make an appointment to register
www.literacynassau.org/appointment
 Call: 516-867-3580
 Email: jdaprile@literacynassau.org



Warm Birthday Wishes to our Tutors Celebrating in December!

Anita Achkhanian – Linda Bernstein – Laura Blanca de Silva
 Anita Bloom – Mercedes Carbonell-Scudero
 Marie Catalano-Gruen – Fran Dowling – Lauri Englert-Sacco
 Johanna Esposito – Helene Fleisig – Fran Fox
 Patricia Goldberg – Julie Goldstein – Kathleen Gyves
 Georgene Harrison – Georgine Hartenfels – Maryann Harvey
 Nancy Keegan – Leslie Leber – Lilianna Carolynea Llanos
 Maureen Lomangino – Janice Mazzari – Bridget McFadden
 Andrea McLaughlin – Susan Molinelli – Neil Moran
 Salvatore Morici – Kathie Novak – Robert Palleschi
 Sharon Parker – John Pizzo – Sue Rachell – Timothy Reedy
 Shivani Devi Singh – Lucy Smorto – Barbara Spun
 Harshini Suresh – Sheldon Wald



A STUDENT SUCCESS STORY

(submitted by Kate Quijano)

One of our ELL students, Catalina Proano, recently achieved her dream of opening her own bake shop. Catalina's Bake Shop, located at 1155 East Jericho Turnpike in Huntington, is the result of many years of hard work and dedication.

Catalina came to the United States 22 years ago with her husband and daughter. The move wasn't easy. She had a college degree in her country, but everything was different here. Her life changed so much. Her journey to opening her own bake shop started with her mother-in-law's special tres leches cake that she would make for parties. Everyone loved it so much that Catalina decided to take a six-month training program for cake decorating. This went so well that she went on to study at a pastry and baking school. She worked in several bakeries over the years and most recently at a hotel.

During the Pandemic, her life changed again. She was laid off from the hotel and her husband lost his job as well. At this point, she decided to work towards opening her own shop. At the same time, she began taking virtual English classes at Literacy Nassau, with tutor Ellen Gross. At first, she struggled with the technology, but she says that Ellen was amazing and always open to teaching new ways to manage the technology. Catalina says that she is shy, but the experience of talking to her tutor and other students helped her to overcome her shyness. She said that her class was a very nice experience and that Ellen was always there to help whenever anyone had any trouble. Ellen says, "Catalina arrived in the Spring '21 Level 4 class already well-versed in English communication. I recall that she devotedly worked to improve grammar, add broader vocabulary,

and better understand idiomatic expressions. She was an active participant in class. During conversations, she took enormous pride when speaking about her family and specifically her daughter's educational accomplishments. (She received a full scholarship to college.) Coupled with her own goals of opening a bakery, it's clear that Catalina has made her dreams of life in America a reality by staying focused and working hard. What a joy it's been to watch her story unfold."

Catalina said of Literacy Nassau, "I appreciate the program that you have so much. It's an opportunity for any immigrant. It was a huge help and I hope you continue helping the community this way."

It took a full year to prepare before she could actually open the doors to her bake shop. She said it wasn't easy, but she still had her dream. It was an adventure for her family. Once she started seeing return customers, she knew she would do well. "If they come back, it means they like it." Ellen even went to visit the shop and said, "Her cakes are works of art, the baked goods and the empanadas are delicious. I look forward to staying in touch and frequenting her shop whenever I'm nearby."

Catalina's Bake Shop has been open for about four months now. She is currently preparing special treats for the holidays: cookies and pies (apple, blueberry, pumpkin, and pecan) are her top sellers. We highly recommend that you visit her shop and try out some of her pies for your holiday celebrations. Catalina describes her experience as a new business owner: "It is a beautiful experience and at the same time scary. Little by little it gets easier and easier."

We are so impressed with Catalina's success and so glad that we could be a part of her journey. We wish her the best of luck. Please be sure to stop by and support her!





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** Our warmest wishes this holiday season!*

FROM ALL OF US AT
LITERACY NASSAU

*
*
OUR OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED FROM
DECEMBER 24TH THROUGH
JANUARY 2ND.



Instagram: @literacyNassau
Facebook: Literacy.Nassau
Twitter: @LiteracyNassau

#1 holiday hack:



When you buy your gifts at smile.amazon.com, Amazon donates.



A SIMPLE CLICK CAN HELP US. WHEN YOU SHOP ON AMAZON JUST GO TO WWW.SMILE.AMAZON.COM, SELECT **LITERACY NASSAU AS YOUR CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION TO RECEIVE DONATIONS FROM ELIGIBLE PURCHASES BEFORE YOU BEGIN SHOPPING. AMAZON WILL REMEMBER YOUR SELECTION, AND THEN EVERY ELIGIBLE PURCHASE YOU MAKE AT SMILE.AMAZON.COM WILL RESULT IN A DONATION TO US.**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT :)