



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

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A YEAR IN REVIEW

(by Kate Quijano, Senior Program Director)

As we embark on 2024, I'd like to look back at all the hard work that we at Literacy Nassau completed in 2023, as well as the many lives that have been touched.

This past year, we ran 30+ adult English as a Second Language classes and two citizenship classes per session, serving well over 300 students. Our staff members enjoyed visiting these students to implement a new level of case management. We compiled a comprehensive resource guide for students who need referrals to support them in their journey towards life goals such as employment, better health, and other needs.

Our adult population extends beyond the ELL community, though, and since the pandemic, we have been renewing our work around Basic Literacy students and adults with developmental disabilities. To that end, in 2023 we served over 30 BL students individually and in small groups, and we also supported 5 Next Chapter Book Clubs. We hope to increase these populations in 2024, as our mission to help those who need us the most remains at the forefront of all that we do. It's always so wonderful to visit with these individuals and see them engaging with language and literature in such a magnificent, transformative way.

In 2023, we were delighted to re-introduce our Appreciation series with a

luncheon celebrating all of our wonderful volunteers and students. It was lovely to gather at an outdoor potluck lunch at Literacy Nassau in our beautiful outdoor space. We hope to continue engaging with everyone (live!) more in the year to come.

On the Orton-Gillingham side of things, 2023 marked the launch of Karen's first OG cohort. 2023-24 marks her final year in the journey to becoming a Fellow of the Academy, and as such, she was tasked with delivering a whole year of training. It has been an illuminating experience watching her teach our current group of Associate-level trainees, and has given me much to think about since I will be doing the same thing next year! They've already received over 40 hours of instruction in Orton-Gillingham methodology and are putting their training into practice by meeting with their students in practicum and providing them with the tools they need to support their reading and spelling goals throughout the school year. Karen will train them through another 20 hours this year and we both look forward to supporting them as they apply to the Academy for certification.

Overall, 2023 was a year of tremendous growth for Literacy Nassau. As we look to the year to come, we hope to offer more trainings, help even more children and adults, and continue to position ourselves as a cornerstone for creating literate communities across Long Island.

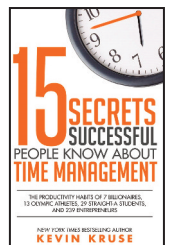
FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone!

The start of a new year always makes me extremely conscious about time. The passage of time draws attention to how we use it, spend it, even waste it. In managing my time, I've been known to use lists, calendars, and other planning tools, and this year, I'm feeling more and more like every moment is precious.

In 2024, I have two massive tasks ahead of me: the challenge of successfully applying to the OGA at the Fellow level, and launching my second novel. Behind the scenes, the amount of work and time it will take to accomplish each of these tasks is insane; and the time each task costs me in regard to my family and my home life is also quite notable. So, how do I manage?

I'm currently reading a book called *15 Secrets Successful People Know About Time Management* by Kevin Kruse and it's really helping me cull some strategies to help me get through the months ahead. I highly recommend it as a resource for anyone who may be feeling overwhelmed at the start of this year!



Karen ☺

THE EXPERIENCE OF CO-TEACHING

(submitted by Izabella Katz, Program Manager)

I had the great opportunity to stop into one of our fall session ESL classes. The class was led by Linda Ivans and Janice Collins. Together Linda and Janice co-teach a level one ESL class. The class was engaging for students and the teamwork between Linda and Janice was outstanding. Both Linda and Janice were actively walking around the classroom and teaching from opposite ends. The teaching between them was able to flow effortlessly, allowing for the students to follow along with ease.

Having two teachers available to students can lead to more individualized attention. While one teacher is continuing with the class as a whole the other can check on students individually. "Co-teaching approaches for bilingual classrooms have been found to produce significant possibilities for students, to include strong student-student relationships and increased student self-esteem." (Bahamonde & Friend, 1999). Not only does it benefit the students, it can also provide a benefit to both teachers in a co-teaching setting. Co-teachers can lean on one another for more support. If a teacher is unsure on how to approach a specific topic they have the other teacher for a collaboration of ideas or feedback. Between two teachers there can be differing ways they



approach instructional methods. The varying methods can benefit different types of learners in the classroom. This allows the strengths of a teacher to be utilized while creating a comfortable environment for both teachers and students. Co-teaching also allows for increased flexibility. If a teacher has an obligation that makes it difficult to get to a scheduled class date having a co-teacher can be reassuring knowing class will not have to be cancelled and can continue on with the other teacher. Providing the opportunity for students to still get the learning they need.

Linda and Janice went over the alphabet, grammar and conversation while I was present. It was a pleasure to get to see each student interacting with both teachers and peers.



Students were prompted to respond to conversation questions that could help them apply the grammar patterns being presented during the class. As co-teachers you can both share the responsibility of planning classes and teaching specific material. This can

make it less stressful on one teacher to come up with a multitude of ways to keep the class engaged. Linda and Janice are a great pair and we are so happy to have them on our team at Literacy Nassau. We are so glad that they will continue working as a team this winter session with their Level 1 English Language Learner students. Thank you both for your time and dedication.

TUTOR IN-SERVICE TRAININGS

(submitted by Izabella Katz, Program Manager)

At a recent virtual in-service training (IST) on Syllable Types and Syllable Division, we had a nice turnout with tutors from a mixture of programs: Basic Literacy, ELL, and Next Chapter Book Club. We reviewed the six syllable types: closed, open, magic e, r-controlled, vowel team, and consonant-le and talked about how this is so important for our students learning to read so they know the vowel sound the word will make. Then we looked at syllable division of longer words. Knowing where to divide or "chop" a word will support our adult learners with their ability to read adult level vocabulary even at a lower level.

Tutors had the opportunity to sort words by syllable type and practice dividing and coding words. They also had the chance to talk to each other about what they have been doing in their groups, ask questions, share concerns, and receive support and feedback from the group.

It was a great night and we would like to thank everyone who participated. Beginning with the winter 2024 session, we will be bringing back in-person ISTs. This will replace the current virtual bi-weekly tutor meetings for the ELL tutors that were started during COVID. We want everyone to have the opportunity to gather together in-person at our office and to receive further training/support on various topics. Look out for an email from us when we finalize the IST schedule. If you have any suggestions of topics for ISTs that you would like to see given, please let me know.



Warm Birthday Wishes to our tutors celebrating in January!

Leslie Arluck – Mildred Aronson – Jonathan Baker
Debbie Buglisi – Carla DePasquale – Frank Dorf – Keith Drayer
Connie Egelman – Josephine Feldman – Marleen Fenton
Samantha Gordon – Latoyra Graves – Mary Howley
Mara Jacobowitz – Pamela Jahn – Ruthann Kennedy – Jan Kerr
Carol Kessler – Emma LaPrince – David Leibenhaut
Kiana Mahabadi – Michelle Malone – Michael Marrin
Marcia Mayer – Christine Merola – Harriet Morosoff
Honey Prager – Juan Quijano – Alice Scharf – Patricia Searby
Julie Seghrouchni – Paula Silverman – Addy Skolnick
Janet Trajbar – Karen Vermut – Melva Victorino
Nina Wachsman – Steven Windwer – Gerard Wisla

Warm Birthday Wishes to our tutors celebrating in February!

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 Shampam
Margaret Sherman – Ethell Smith – Julie Vetter
Mary-Rose Waldron

TUTOR SPOTLIGHT: PAMELA

(submitted by Kate Quijano, Senior Program Director)

Pamela has been volunteering with Literacy Nassau since 2018. She has taught several different levels of our adult English Language Learner (ELL) classes and has tried out various locations. She has even spent some time volunteering in the office, answering phones. We are so thankful to Pam for her continued dedication to her Literacy Nassau students and her flexibility in teaching in different locations and at different levels. After a recent visit to her class in Hicksville, it was evident that her students enjoy her well-planned, interactive lessons. They always appreciate visiting with her at tutor meetings and events. We asked Pam some questions so that everyone can get to know her better:



1. How did you get involved with Literacy Nassau?

I had just retired from a long career with the Department of Education, working first as a teacher, then Staff Developer, and later as School Administrator. So post-retirement I knew I wanted to do something related to teaching/tutoring. Initially I volunteered at a Resource Center in Hempstead. There I met a woman who had previously volunteered with Literacy Nassau. That piqued my interest, so I explored further, and here I am!

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

Every class represents a new adventure. Meeting different students from far-flung places who are so highly motivated to learn English brings me joy. They are immensely grateful for the instruction we provide on their journey to language proficiency. Some want to make advancement in the workplace, others just want to navigate their new lifestyle and environment more easily. A few students wanted to keep in touch after they left my class. One student who later became a citizen expressed her gratitude for my assistance on her journey. She expressed that her success was a shared success. It feels good.

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

Two challenges come to mind. One is that students from the same area tend to form a clique, and talk among themselves in their mother tongue. This is both good and bad. I want them to form connections, but the ongoing chatter during class, in a language that half the class does not understand, can be quite distracting. To minimize this problem, I provide ample time for partner work. Students talk to each other and help each other, when they are expected to do so. This does not interrupt the class. Another strategy is to rotate partners for different activities. This increases the likelihood that the student is paired with someone who speaks a different language. This forces them to speak in English, which is the goal.

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

I think we can all agree that giving enriches the giver, as much as the receiver. My satisfaction in observing their progress is surpassed only by their success. As their vocabulary increases, they become more talkative, and their confidence with constructing simple sentences grows. They ask meaningful questions that may require a detour in the lesson, or inspire something more for the next session. It is very satisfying.

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

Just relax, and enjoy the experience. You have a wealth of knowledge and experience to share, likely more than you realize. Be open to the big picture, embrace the differences, culture, lifestyle, values, and food. These can generate great discussions too! I have found the resources on the ESL website, Elli, to be useful and extensive. Also, Easy English News can be your friend.

6. What are some of your interests outside of Literacy Nassau?

I enjoy travel, studying Spanish, reading, walking, and Yoga. The goal is balance!



New Year's Resolutions

This year, I need to apply for my Fellow certification through the Orton Gillingham Academy. My resolution is to give it my all and to be a Fellow by this time next year! - Karen

A new year. A new beginning. A time to reflect on the past. A time to bring some new life to the life you're living. I do not plan to set lofty goals or a goal at all. Instead will have a keyword to guide me. One word to represent 2024. STRETCH. Stretch my heart, Stretch my body. Stretch my mind. Stretch my smile. Stretch my limits. - Stephanie

"Connect more, screen less": Reduce my use of electronics while spending time with my son, Lucas. - Christina

I need to stop multitasking and just focus on one thing at a time and enjoy the moment. - Anne-Marie

As we move into the new year, I will start to shift my focus to planning OG training curriculum. In August, I will begin my final year as a FIT and will be delivering the training to our new cohort of OG trainees. - Kate

This year's resolution is to decompress. I need to learn to take a break and relax. I'm always on the run and never take time for myself! - Renae

My New Year's Resolution is to find a healthy balance and to be more organized. - Izabella



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Happy
NEW YEAR
2024

Happy
Valentine's Day
Wednesday, February 14

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