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CONNECTIONS

Literacy Volunteers Association Cape- Atlantic, Inc.

Spring & Summer Newsletter 2011

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A Cause for Celebration Tutor/Student Recognition Night

Steve & Cookies by the Bay in Margate was the perfect setting for our favorite annual event. Tutor/Student Recognition Night is the time when we celebrate the productive partnerships that have flourished between our tutors and their students all year long.

This year's special night opened with tutor Fran Wizov and her students Mary Camara, Hieu Phan and Carlos Padilla leading the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance and a moving rendition of God Bless America. During the open mic portion of the program, tutor Kathy White and her student Kathy Brown spoke of the warm relationship that has developed between them. Student Dennis Gilson of Woodbine expressed appreciation for his tutor Deborah Adams, and Marlena Rebolledo shared her enthusiasm for how much she is learning with her tutor Benjamin Cromartie. Tutor Judith Rogers described her experience with her student Lidia Valencia as both rewarding and fun. Bob Wehymuller

(Continued on page 2)



LVA Board Front Row: William Paullin, Patrice Leatherberry, Sheila McLaughlin, Anne Nguyen, Back Row: Hak Kim, William Cradle, Clark Doran, Quenby Kotila, Roseann Kobialka, Johanna Johnson, Nancy McKinney



Tutor Kathy White & Student Kathy Brown



Carlos Padilla, Tutor Fran Wizov, Mary Camara, Hieu Phan



Tutor Shirley Shields & Student Juan Torres



Student Marlene Rebolledo talks about her LVA experience



Student Dennis Gilson tells the group about his tutor



Tutors, students and their families enjoy sharing the evening

Congratulations Clark!

Clark Doran, former LVA President and current LVA Vice-President, received the 2011 Award for Volunteer Excellence from Literacy Volunteers of New Jersey. The state-level organization honored him for his long commitment to literacy through his work with Literacy Volunteers Association Cape-Atlantic. He joined LVA-CA as a volunteer tutor more than two decades

ago, was later elected to the Board of Directors and served as President for six years. Clark has been a mainstay of our organization and continues to play a vital role as Board Vice-President. A dedicated volunteer, he is a creative and energetic fundraiser who has devoted countless hours of his time to the well-being of LVA. Thanks, again, Clark for all you do.

Horizon Foundation For NJ Renews Health Literacy Funding

We have received notice that our Health Literacy Outreach grant from The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey has been renewed for a second year.

"This grant from The Horizon Foundation of New Jersey will enable us to continue our important work in helping low-literate adults in Atlantic and Cape May Counties handle their per-

sonal and family healthcare issues," said Sheila McLaughlin, Executive Director of Literacy Volunteers Association Cape-Atlantic.

The Horizon Foundation of New Jersey promotes health and an improved quality of life across New Jersey by supporting charitable community organizations. We are deeply grateful for their commitment and generosity.

Why is this Pretty Girl Smiling?

Liangli Chen passed her driver's test and proudly displays her new driver's license. It was a goal she had hoped to achieve working with her tutor Ramona Amilani. Job well done! Congratulations to you both.



Lydia Torres & Tutor
Holly Deibler



Phung Vong & Tutor
Scott Ritson

Recognition Night

(From on page 1)

said that through his role as a Tutor Trainer he has a great opportunity to reach many students every year as he prepares volunteers to tutor.

Members of the LVA Board of Directors enjoyed sharing the camaraderie among the tutors and their students as well as the wonderful hospitality that Cookie Till provided.

KUDOS CORNER

Another LVA-CA Award Winner: LVA tutor Kate Snyder received the United Way of Atlantic County's Volunteer of the Month Award for April, 2011. Kate was cited for her outstanding work with the Civics Class she conducted at the LVA Learning Center this past spring. Congrats, Kate.

Tutor Gloria Reed has been enjoying her work with her student Jasper Jones so much, she's asked to take on another student from our waiting list. "Working with my student feels so good. It's calming for me and helps to take my mind off my mother's illness." Thanks, Gloria and our best wishes to your mom.

Bob Gervasoni's two students, Jose and Lidia, have made outstanding progress based on their recent post tests. Jose would like to prepare for GED classes and Lidia wants to improve her English for her job and to help her grandchildren with their homework. It sounds like they've had some excellent tutoring.

Linda Gordon has been such an outstanding role model for her student Winnie

Jeu, that Winnie has decided to become a volunteer herself, offering her services to the ESL group at the Egg Harbor Township Senior Center. "I would like to help others the way that Linda has helped me," Winnie says.

"I'm very proud of her," tutor Kathy Loveland says of her student Amina. When they first began their partnership, Amina did not drive. With encouragement and new confidence, she's now driving both herself and her sister-in-law.

After winning the US citizenship lottery, Hugo L. came to America, and in 2008 contacted LVA for help with his English. He has been participating in our programs ever since, and his speaking skills have jumped from Beginning to Advanced. He had to wait for four years before he was able to obtain the permits to bring his wife and young daughter to the U.S. Less than one month after they arrived, Hugo brought them to the LVA office so his wife Orfalinda could register for a tutor. Now, John McCarroll is tutoring them both.

From the Executive Director



Sheila McLaughlin

Low level literacy is defined as reading, writing and English language skills that are below the sixth grade level. Individuals who are encumbered by their inability to communicate effectively struggle to gain employment or advance their current employment. Most frequently they are relegated to low paying service jobs that do not provide adequate income for their families. Communities are negatively impacted economically, socially and culturally by their unemployed or underemployed citizens.

Literacy advocates have long recognized that deficient literacy is a subtle underpinning of some of our most troubling social ills, including unemployment, poverty and crime. But public awareness has been slow to catch up with the increasing need for attention to the problem.

Many Americans whom the public school system has failed become adults with limited opportunities because they never learned to read. They cannot complete a job application. They cannot pass a driver's test. They will never read to their children. They remain at the lower end of the socio-economic scale. If you know them, though, you probably don't know that they can't read. They are embarrassed and silent. Literacy Volunteers was founded 27 years ago in Atlantic County to help just such people.

And there are others. "Why don't they learn English?" It's a common complaint. You've heard it. We've heard it. And, yes, they are trying to learn English. So many, in fact, that we have a waiting list of highly motivated people who know that learning English will open the doors of opportunity for their families, in the workplace and in the communities we all share.

The demand for the services Literacy Volunteers Association Cape-Atlantic provides is increasing every year. We need the help of businesses, professionals, organizations and anyone who understands the cost to civil life when people cannot communicate with one another. We are grateful to our volunteers and to the supporters of our literacy initiatives who recognize the ominous consequences of not addressing this very real, but often hidden problem.

Dr. Johanna Johnson Joins the LVA Board of Directors

At their March meeting, Dr. Johanna Johnson was elected to the LVA-CA Board of Directors. Dr. Johnson is the Coordinator of Curriculum and Special Projects at the Atlantic County Institute of Technology. A life-long resident of Hammonton, she has been actively involved with her community over many years including service as an elected member of the Hammonton School Board. She is married to Superior Court Judge, the Honorable Nelson C. Johnson. They have three children and one grandchild. A committed educator with long experience in the New Jersey public school system, literacy is extremely important to Johanna. In welcoming her to the Board, President Roseann Kobialka said, "We are very pleased that Johanna has agreed to bring her considerable talent, experience and skills to the work of LVA."

Twenty-Nine Volunteers Step-UP

Our fall and winter tutor trainings produced twenty-nine new tutors who were matched with grateful students waiting to begin their adventure. Tutors who completed training at Shore Memorial Hospital were Jacqueline Anthony, Dawn Cooper, Stephanie Feldman, Dayle Friedman, Robert Galbraith, Sandra Keane, Patricia Kiernan, Susan Michaleski, Oksana Proskurina, Loreta Quimsing, Kathleen Ratz,

Dori Richwine, and James Usilton. Tutors who completed training at ACUA are Lisa Albanese, Barbara Allen, Matthew Biebel, Lisa Colangelo Holly Deibler, Elaina DiBartolo, Brittany Holmes, Mary Ingraham, Dana Kuppel, Wayne Miller, Pamela Nichols, Deborah O'Hagan, Denise Tamagnini, James Weisbecker, Gary Williams and Debra Witcher. Our community salutes your commitment.



Hang and Nancy Nguyen

A FAMILY AFFAIR

Bernice Izes began tutoring her first student, Lan Nguyen, in the fall of 2009. She helped Lan achieve her goal of entering Atlantic Cape Community College one year later. Her sisters, Hang and Nancy, were so excited by Lan's success that they asked Bernice to help them improve their English language skills, too. Pleased with her first student's success, Bernice began working with Hang and Nancy in September of 2010. With her help, both girls are now working toward their goals of receiving their cosmetology licenses.

Lan who is now in college wrote the following to Bernice, "Thank you very much for everything, teacher. You did your job perfectly. I am going to college now. I promise you that I will do the best I can because I know you want to see your first student achieve in her life. I always keep you in my heart."

A FIRST OF ITS KIND: *Summer Tutor Training*

This summer for the first time, LVA-CA offered our fifteen hour Tutor Training workshops compressed into two-and-a-half weeks. "We knew if we wanted to address the growing list of students waiting for tutors, we needed to train more volunteers," Program Director Anne Osman said. "Since summer is a busy time for many people, we decided we would deliver the training in shorter period of time." Consortium partner, ACCC offered space for the training at the Institute for Excellence at Hamilton Mall. Five new tutors, Kim Healy, Kelly Kirchoff, Sandy Siddons, Lynn Lessie, and Vicky Dilmore completed the training and will be matched with students in the first week of August.

Health Literacy – Raising Awareness

According to the New Jersey Health Literacy Coalition (NJHLC), health literacy "empowers the public and health-related personnel to find, understand, evaluate, communicate, and use health information effectively."

LVA is attempting to reach both the public and health-related personnel through several initiatives. First, through Health Literacy classes funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in partnership with AtlantiCare, we have provided participants with information and skills to improve their understanding of health information, as well as their ability to make informed decisions about their health care. Second, with funding from the Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, we have been able to offer trainings for tutors and medical professionals in order to build awareness of the profound impact of limited health literacy, and to improve their ability to communicate effectively with patients and clients.

The combined resources available to us through our grants enable us to develop creative programming that will raise health literacy awareness in our communities.

October is Health Literacy Month - Call LVA at (609) 383-3377 for Programming Information or visit our website lvacapeatlantic.org

Hurley in the Morning Golf Tournament Donates to LVA

Our thanks to Harry Hurley and his associates for recognizing the work of Literacy Volunteers Association Cape-Atlantic this year with a generous donation from the proceeds of their annual golf tournament. This is the fourth year of the very successful tournament that has raised tens of thousands of dollars for local non-profit community service organizations.

Our United Way Partnerships Flourish

The United Way of Atlantic County has notified LVA-CA that we will be funded in the amount of \$13,779 for the second year of the 2011-12 funding cycle. And the United Way of Cape May County has provided \$1,000 for our Adult Education Program for the coming year. We are grateful to the United Way of both counties for their efforts to raise and distribute the vital funds that make it possible for us to deliver literacy services to people in our communities.



Left: Tutor Barbra Allen and one of her students Amreen Khan

Courage at Work Tutor Barbra Allen

Barbra Allen is a volunteer tutor at Literacy Volunteers Association Cape-Atlantic. A nurse by profession, Barbra is disabled by chronic lung disease. Last winter, she decided that rather than sitting at home in despair, she would use her time to help someone else in the community. After completing the five-week, fifteen hour LVA tutor training workshop, she was matched with two women from Pakistan who wanted to improve their English language skills.

Because of her disability, Barbra is required to use a portable oxygen tank at all times. This has not prevented her from making the trip from her home in Atlantic City to the LVA office in Pleasantville for her tutoring sessions. Her students who had waited several months for a tutor are highly motivated and enormously enthusiastic about what they are learning with Barbra. At almost every session, they bring another family member to share the experience. Barbra is amazed at the progress they are making. "I'm not a teacher, you know," she said. "Oh, yes you are," Executive Director Sheila McLaughlin responded. "You just didn't know it until you came to LVA."

Barbra's tutoring experience has added meaning to her life. "I'm so glad I did this," she said. "It saved my life." And her students? Their gratitude is evident at every session. One young family member has put Barbra's picture on her refrigerator. And the little girl's grandmother brought Barbra a feast of home-cooked Pakistani cuisine to say thank you for all that she has done for her family.

Every year, Literacy Volunteers Association Cape-Atlantic tutors help hundreds of individuals in Atlantic and Cape May County improve their English language skills so they can participate more fully in family, workplace and community life. The demand for literacy services is growing. Currently, LVA has a list of over fifty people who are waiting for tutors. The next tutor training will begin on Tuesday, September 13th at the ACUA Recycling Center, 6700 Delilah Rd., EHT and will continue for four consecutive Tuesday evenings from 6 to 9 pm. Anyone who is interested in volunteering to become a tutor should contact the LVA office at (609) 383-3377 or go to the website at lvacapeatlantic.org.

Leaders in Literacy Honors

Dr. Herman J. Saatkamp and George F. Lynn

We initiated a very special event this spring that we plan to hold annually. Over the years, we have received support from many prominent community leaders who recognize the vital importance of literacy in a civil society. We decided it was time to publicly express our appreciation for their efforts by presenting two of them with our first annual Leaders in Literacy Awards. George F. Lynn, President Emeritus of AtlantiCare was honored for his support of health literacy for our communities and Dr. Herman J. Saatkamp received the award for making a higher education accessible to so many non-traditional students in New Jersey.

A reception was held in the beautiful Bayview Room at Seaview where 100 guests enjoyed a buffet of hors d'oeuvres, gourmet pasta and a tempting selection of pas-



Left to Right: Clark Doran, Dr. Herman J. Saatkamp, Sheila McLaughlin, George F. Lynn

tries. The program featured the honored guests delivering wise words, often with humor, and a testimonial video of LVA tutors and students talking about their experiences in our program. Stanley Grossman, prominent local businessman, introduced George Lynn, and

Atlantic County Superior Court Judge Nelson Johnson, author of Boardwalk Empire and The Northside, introduced Dr. Herman Saatkamp. Many thanks to the sponsors of the event: AkPharma, Inc., AtlantiCare, Atlantic City Electric, Caesar's Entertainment,

CapeBank, Cooper, Levenson, Fox Rothschild, Schoffer Enterprises, South Jersey Industries and The Richard Stockton College Foundation. Signal Graphics donated all printing for the event and John Dimaio donated his services as photographer.

Leaders in Literacy Guests



Robert and Andre Johnson



Alan & Peggy Kligerman, Nelson Johnson



Lynn Kramer, Stanley & Marsha Grossman



Charles Coyle, Jill Ojerskis, Bill Honan



Debbie Jewel & Dot Saatkamp



Diane Epps, Kathryn Mason, Nancy Hicks

Become a Literacy Volunteers Advocate. If you belong to a local social group and would like to speak about what we do, please contact **Pat Epps** at the office for speaking points and to let us know which group you are talking to. Or—give us a call and we will be happy to speak to your group.

If you or someone you know is interested in **volunteering with LVA** or participating in the student program, please complete and return this form:

I am interested in:

- Becoming a tutor
- Becoming a student
- Helping with projects
- Making a donation

Literacy Volunteers Assn.
Cape-Atlantic, Inc.
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Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

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Search Literacy Volunteers Association

Our Next Tutor Training

Where: ACUA Recycling Center

When: 5 consecutive

Tuesday evenings

Time: 6:00pm to 9:00pm

Dates: Sept. 13, 20, 27 and Oct. 4 & 11



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Our Mission Statement

We help individuals in Atlantic and Cape May counties improve their English language skills so they can participate more fully in family, workplace and community life.