



Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County

*There's so much more to literacy
than just reading!*

2008-09 Annual Report

Our Mission

Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County is committed to promoting literacy throughout the community by providing student-centered tutoring for adults so that they may function more effectively in their daily lives. Our mission is founded on the belief that the ability to read and communicate is imperative to leading a productive and functional life, and is essential for the protection of individual freedom and equality of all people.

We are committed to accomplishing this mission by:

- Training volunteer tutors in the fundamentals of Basic Literacy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instruction that include reading, writing, listening and speaking skills*
- Providing tutors with ongoing support and in-service skills development programs*
- Locating and recruiting functionally illiterate learners*
- Creating and maintaining collaborative tutor-learner matches*
- Helping learners establish and reach realistic personal goals*
- Promoting learner self-sufficiency*

Since 1981, Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County (LVSC) has been providing free, one-to-one and small group tutoring to functionally illiterate adults through a network of volunteers trained in Basic Literacy and English for Speakers of Other Languages. A major misconception is that the organization only helps people learn to read. Just simple forms of communication that include reading, writing, listening and speaking skills are part of the world of literacy.

Our Leadership

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Missy Klingenburg

Office Volunteer

A Message from the Board President & Executive Director

They say the greatest compliment that one can receive is when another would like to copy your work. On more than one occasion, LVSC received such a compliment.

Our state-of-the-art website has grabbed the attention of other organizations to the point where they have copied our model. And why not? The site, which debuted toward the end of the prior fiscal year, is a clear indication of the tremendous leap our organization has made in the last year.

Take a look and you will see that everything happens right on our website - student applications, volunteer tutor applications, submission of tutor hours, a tutor mentor forum and, the most recent addition, the tutor library calendar. And, coming soon, we will have the tutor training sessions posted as a reference for our tutors.

Sure, the last 12-18 months have seen us go "tech-savvy" but the intimacy of our one-to-one and small group tutoring is still in high demand. During the 2008-09 fiscal year, 190 adults applied for our services. In fact, 109 students joined the ranks of those being tutored last year.

To support the influx of learners, 73 new tutors were certified during the three training sessions conducted over the course of the year. Our legion of volunteer tutors logged more than 10,000 hours with adult learners last year.

Outreach into the community is an important part of LVSC's commitment to combating illiteracy. A unique opportunity with Ortho-McNeil-Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc. has given us the ability to bring the non-profit and corporate worlds together to further our mission in a harmonious collaborative effort.

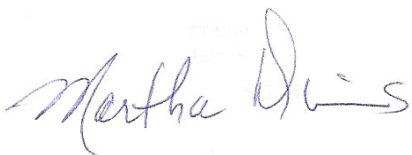
LVSC's Board of Trustees welcomed five new members, and formed new committees that will provide leadership in the areas of governance, fundraising and new programs.

So much positive movement has happened that it is hard to look at the negative impact of the nation's economy. Most of the non-profit world has suffered devastating ripples with most seeing downturns in excess of 30%. Although we felt some of the fallout, our ability to control and limit expenses softened the blow.

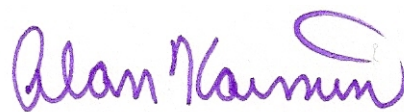
The current state of affairs has made us appreciate even more all of the people, corporations, foundations and organizations that support LVSC. We continue to grow thanks to the commitment of all of those who support us.

A special "thank you" to all of our volunteers. After all, we ARE Literacy "Volunteers" of Somerset County and it is all of you who make this organization what it is today.

We remain confident, that with the expanded participation of the current membership, the loyalty of our current donors, and the addition of new supporters, the future will shine brightly on LVSC and we will continue to serve as a source of pride and great accomplishment for the many people we serve.



Martha Davis, Board President



Alan Karmin, Executive Director

Service to the Community

The mission of LVSC is accomplished by providing two services: 1) the recruitment, training and certification of volunteer tutors; and 2) free one-on-one and small group tutoring for adults with a need to achieve a better ability to communicate using the English language.

Many adult learners cannot participate in curriculum-based classroom instruction because they are unable to find the time to attend classes, have low level English communication skills, lack self-esteem and confidence, or have family obligations, transportation issues, or lack funding. LVSC offers tutoring services at a place and time convenient to each learner and works with each learner toward their specific goals. Our tutors are available to meet learners at a time and place that is convenient for them. Additionally, our individualized program allows the learners to set their own goals. Many students have very specialized requirements such as seeking to obtain a driver's license, or needing to obtain a license for their job. Tutors work with learners to help determine their personal goals, and to establish the best means of reaching those goals.

LVSC provides a non-threatening means of learning without fear of failure and humiliation. For those learners whose ability to progress is very limited, LVSC tutors are able to move as slowly or as quickly as is necessary. Tutors are able to try various methods and use a variety of real life materials in order to allow each learner to make as much progress as they are able. Many of our learners become lifelong friends with their tutors as they learn from each other. Our ultimate goal is to help our learners reach their potential and become more confident and self-sufficient employees, parents and citizens.

Tutor training consists of 15 hours extended over 5 sessions over the course of a few weeks, and is held at the PeopleCare Center in Bridgewater. Tutors receive certification in Basic Literacy & English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Training sessions are conducted three times a year - in the fall, winter and spring. LVSC trained 73 new tutors during the 2008-09 fiscal year.

Our ESOL program is our largest program, since 92% of our adult learners are non-native English speakers who come to us seeking to improve their ability to communicate in English. The majority of these students are beginners with little or no fluency in English. Our Basic Literacy program, while smaller, serves an important need for adults who speak English but are functionally illiterate, most of whom read below the fifth grade level.

Matching learners and tutors is a complex process. Personal information is collected, including details regarding tutoring preference (days of week, time of day and location). All factors are reviewed and coordinated to ensure matches meet the needs of our learners and tutors.

Area libraries have worked with LVSC to accommodate our tutors and most have designated special areas for use by LVSC tutors so that finding a public meeting place is made easier. Overall, matching learners and tutors is a complex process that requires thought and ongoing support. LVSC is often the only option many of these learner have to achieve their goals of being able to communicate in English.

During the 2008-09 fiscal year, 190 members of the community came to LVSC seeking assistance. Of those people, 95 were matched with a private tutor and another 14 were placed in a small group setting. Although more than 80 people remain on a waiting list, anxiously hoping to be matched with a tutor, LVSC tutors provided over 10,000 hours of tutoring during the year.



Above, LVSC trainer Catherine Mitch conducts a training session for new volunteers.

LVSC Success Stories

Miguel and Dinorah M., of North Plainfield, were able to log on to www.rockthevote.com and register to vote. We also reviewed a sample ballot and had many discussions about the Presidential election. We reviewed the Electoral College as well as a number of phrases used throughout the election (i.e. "swing states," "landslide," "oval office," "home stretch"). They both recalled occasions when speaking English, where they understood their entire conversation and were both a little surprised and very happy.

Gail Van Beveren

Luis S., of Bound Brook, recently took the oath to become a United States citizen. Luis has been a literacy student for the past six months and amazes his tutor with his progress. Congratulations Luis!

Linda Leparulo

Maria C., of Bound Brook, has proven to be a very dedicated student. She is learning to teach herself in everyday situations. She is seen as a leader at her job and continues to translate for her co-workers. She continues to make excellent progress.

Michelle Hurley

Jose L, of Raritan, continues to work on structure and verb tenses. Jose also enjoys learning about the history of the United States as we studied for his citizenship exam. Jose also started reading his second novel "Angels and Demons." Jose has become an avid reader!

Maryann Zecca



Rosio Leal Valderamos (above) spoke of her personal triumphs thanks to Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County at the organization's Annual Dinner and Silent Auction on March 26 at the Royce Brook Golf Club in Hillsborough.

EJ L's English has become more understandable and she comprehends better when I speak. EJ completed a job application and interview and successfully acquired a part-time job as a home care-giver. This gives her a great opportunity to use her English. EJ also has begun to speak English with her children, although they give her a hard time about this.

Janet Holloway

Hong C. is still learning additional vocabulary to get her to the point that she can put sentences together. In addition to continuing to increase her vocabulary, she can now read a calendar and schedule her next appointment, read simple stories that I have provided, and is continuing to learn numbers.

Elizabeth Levine

Meredith S. is a very hard working student. We meet every week, reading a bit of the newspaper and he even finished HIS FIRST BOOK!!! He voted in the election and was VERY proud. We are continuing to read aloud at home. He has a long road ahead, but is working very hard to get there. We plan on continuing during the summer and will re-evaluate his needs in the fall.

Allison Caulfield

Yolanda's goals are to be able to read stories to her children, understand coins and their values, and talk more confidently with her daughters' doctors. Yolanda is smarter than she realized, but with encouragement has become more confident. She is very eager to learn. She often comes to our sessions with ideas and questions and our time becomes more of an expanded lesson in conversational English. Because I do not want to cut her off we sometimes do not get through the planned lesson.

Rochelle Levin

Fernando continues to make progress and has become much more proficient in English-speaking situations. During this period he had a medical emergency, and he had no problem communicating with doctors and nurses. Also, he went to NYC by himself and had no difficulty getting around.

Loretta Casalaina

Someone cut off my student while driving. She noticed the car had a bumper sticker saying, "Courtesy is my goal." She understood the words and thought to herself, "I don't think so."

Ann Jones

Rosa's Story: My Learning Journey

I feel that my English communication and comprehension skills are greatly improved since I started receiving tutoring services through Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County. I am able to understand some idioms that I heard at my workplace before, but did not know the meaning of.

I am able to use some of these idioms during conversations with my co-workers. This learning experience has given me a better understanding of how to use idioms and phrases properly. For instance, one day I heard my director say that "it will be a red tape" when she was referring about a new proposed policy being approved and implemented, and I said to myself, "What that heck she is talking about?" I thought that literally a red tape or red sticker needed to be placed on the proposal so it can be approved.

Another time, I saw the words "apprise" and "keep me abreast", and I was almost sure to know the meaning of these two words. But, guess what, I was completely wrong. I thought that "apprise" meaning was appraisal, and "keep me abreast" meaning was keep away from my breast or be careful with my breast.

Although I saw the meaning of "appraise" in the dictionary, I did not feel comfortable using it during conversations with other people. However, through examples and homework that my tutor gave me, I am able to use these new words now.

I am so grateful to my tutor for finding the ways and techniques to better help me in this learning process. For example, in the beginning of classes she asked me questions such as personal goals, areas in which I needed help the most, preference in using learning material. Telling my tutor that I was a visual learner helped her to prepare visual elements for our meetings. For example she placed a picture of each new vocabulary word on the back of an index card, which greatly helped me to memorized better the new words.

I feel very embarrassed when I mispronounce or misuse a certain English word during conversation with other people. But my tutor said that some native English speakers also make mistakes. Even North American people do not speak

proper English sometimes. It feels good inside knowing that I am not the only one in making mistakes when speaking English. Most of all, I am learning that we learn from our mistakes.

Thanks to the teaching methodology that my tutor has utilized I have been able to add new words to my daily vocabulary.

It is always pleasant to hear encouraging words from my tutor. This gesture inspires me to continue making the effort to enhance my communication skills. Every week, I look forward to meet with my tutor, as I always learn something new during our meetings. I could now say that speaking in English with some people puts me in seventh heaven. I test myself when I speak with others about what I have learned and try not to make the same mistakes I made in the past.

I did not want to read in English before, because I got frustrated when I did not know the meaning of certain words. Thanks to my tutor who introduced the "context clues" in our lessons plan, I am able to use them and understand what I am reading. I am paying more attention to the sentences before and after the unknown words that point me to the context clues. I am not getting frustrated and closing the books or magazines when I do not understand something as I did before. I am cultivating the habit of reading more often, so I can learn more new words. I feel more confident

when speaking English with people in public now. However, I feel that I still have difficulty using some idioms and understanding the "American Humor" in some comedy shows.

I feel so grateful to Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County for giving me the opportunity to improve my English as a second language. I really wish that people who are eager in expanding their English skills have the opportunity to benefit from these marvelous services.

Rosa is a native of Ecuador and has been in the United States for more than eight years. She is employed as a service coordinator for the Somerset Handicap Treatment Center in Somerville. Rosa has been working with LVSC for over two years.



Rosa Rios (r) with her tutor Pat Flannery.

Meet Some Of Our Volunteers

Sharon Caldwell

Sharon Caldwell is a special kind of volunteer. In fact, her value to the organization is such that she was a recipient of the highest honor given to a LVSC volunteer, the Alma Liotta Award, presented in honor of the founder and first president of the organization.

And a run-down of the many roles she has played shows Sharon has stepped in a lot since she joined LVSC in 2001. She has tutored six different students since then. In 2003 she became a student assessor and continues this valuable role currently. "I enjoy the energy of working with the students and knowing I'm helping them to be matched with tutors," she explained.

Bridgewater is home to Sharon and her husband of 40 years, Peter. Her appreciation of language extends to theater, and she's a regular subscriber to local and New York City productions. You might also find her at the Somerville YMCA during aquatic exercise class or keeping her math skills honed as an avid bridge player. Sharon retired from a career with the state as director of vocational rehabilitation.

Years before her retirement she remembers hearing a speaker at a community service council lunch meeting. A new organization was being formed in Somerset County to promote and assist with adult literacy. Sharon was inspired enough to know that 'when she had time' that would be something to explore. She doesn't recall the speaker's name but it might have been Alma Liotta, who would be glad to know volunteers like Sharon are still serving the people of Somerset County promoting literacy!

Stephen Klopfer

Stephen Klopfer had been serving as a volunteer tutor with LVSC when he was tapped as a member of the Board of Trustees and took on the office of Treasurer. In that role, he is responsible for overseeing the finances of the organization, maintaining the bank accounts, all accounts payable and receivables, payroll, tax filing, registrations and memberships. He also works closely with Executive Director Alan Karmin with financial reporting and analysis, as well as planning and budgeting.

"Stephen is a great asset to LVSC," said Alan. "As someone who serves on numerous boards, I can honestly state that Stephen's time and dedication goes above and beyond what is expected of any board member. His value to the organization is immeasurable."

Stephen, who along with his wife Alexandria Symos recently moved into a new home in Hopewell, says, "I like to help people who are willing to help themselves. I want to be a part of an organization that helps empower people to set and achieve goals that they may not have thought possible on their own, and that helps build the collective strength of our communities."

LVSC wishes to acknowledge its deepest gratitude to all of our volunteers who graciously and unselfishly gave their time to further our mission.

Partnering with the Community

Thanks to the foresight and initiative of Martine Grant, an employee of Ortho-McNeil -Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc. a graduate of the organization's tutor training, LVSC and Ortho-McNeil (OMP) have forged a unique partnership to train OMP employees who then, in turn, are tutoring other employees who are in need of services.

Martine, along with Laura Belanger and Deborah Cummins, two other LVSC tutors who also happen to be OMP employees, has helped the literacy program grow to multiple campuses.

LVSC Executive Director Alan Karmin has used the successful model of the LVSC-OMP partnership to explore and forge other such opportunities with additional businesses and organizations in the community.

*LVSC wishes to thank all
of its generous supporters!*



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Encyclopedia	\$10,000-\$24,999
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Zachary Blake
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Sarala Bogavelli
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LVSC wishes to thank all of its generous supporters!

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Various individuals contributed a total of \$5,210 during gift-wrapping campaigns

Anonymous donations totaled \$460.24

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Almanac \$5,000-\$9,999

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New Jersey

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Clover Hill Reformed
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The PeopleCare Center

Paperback \$100-\$249

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House
Mid-Jersey Labrador
Retriever Club
Somerville Civic League

Journal \$99 and Under

American Legion Post 304

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Angela Horan in memory of
Bing Yee Lew
Friends of the Wallace
House in memory of
Muriel Ade
Mid-Jersey Labrador Re-
triever Club in memory of
Marian "Mimi" Ruch

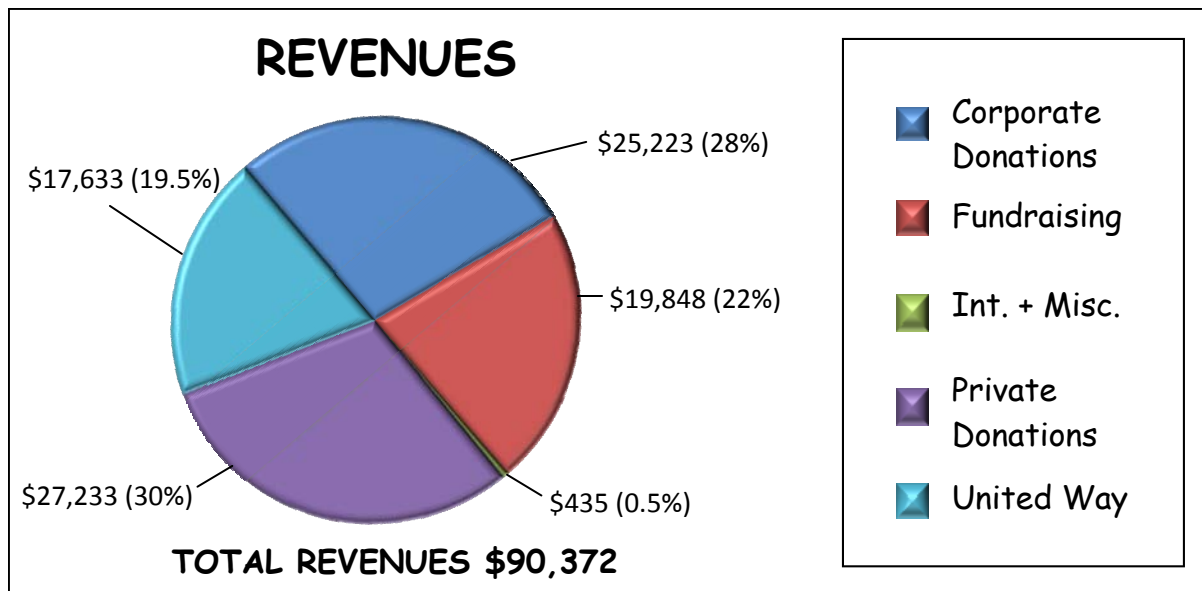
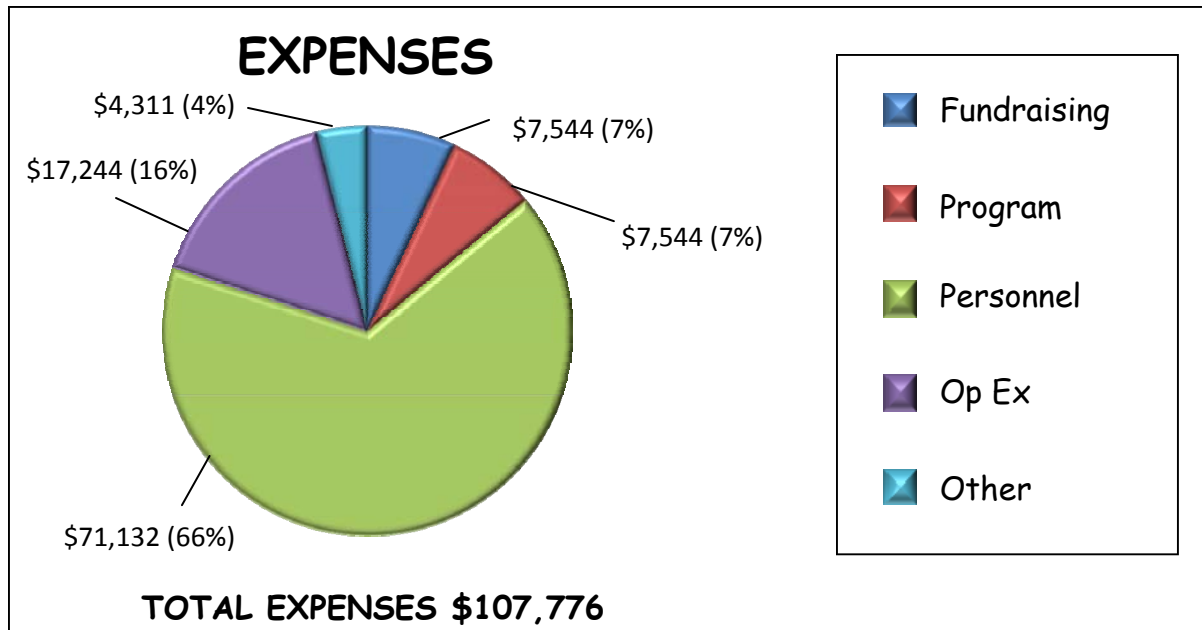
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New York Rangers
PeopleCare Center
Royce Brook Golf Club
Sammi Sherwin
Geri and Martin Taylor
Teaberry's
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Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County Statement of Activities For the Year Ending June 30, 2009



Note: A complete audited consolidated statement of Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County for fiscal year ending June 30, 2009 may be obtained by contacting LVSC by:
 Mail: 120 Finderne Avenue, Box 7, Bridgewater NJ 08807
 Phone: 908-725-5430
 Email: info@literacysomerset.org

LVSC Fundraising Efforts

The vitality of any institution is often defined and measured by the strength of its annual giving program, both in terms of financial commitments and the rate of participation. An annual gift is truly a vote of confidence in Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County and its mission.

Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that relies strictly on private contributions from individuals, corporations, foundations and other organizations. LVSC's annual fund provides support for every area of activity undertaken by the organization including tutor training and supplies, student assessments, tutoring services and administration, ongoing programs and promising new initiatives that make LVSC's programs not only exceptional...but FREE.

It is imperative that Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County continually strive to increase annual contributions, establishing a reliable source of unrestricted support to fulfill its ongoing operating needs. And given the state of the economy, it has become more important than ever before to create and maintain multiple revenue streams to ensure financial stability.

Online Giving

LVSC's state of the art website has made donating simple. With a click of the mouse, donors can make a gift online donation and know that their information is totally secure and will not be shared with any other entity. As part of the initiative to promote online giving, LVSC gave away t-shirts to the first 100 donors who made an online gift of \$50 or more.

Clothing Donation Bins

LVSC collects unwanted used clothing to generate revenue. The organization receives funds for every pound of clothing deposited in the donation bins. Bins are placed in locations throughout the county. LVSC wishes to thank Chester House in Manville, Somerset Diner in Somerset, Star Diner in Hillsborough and FINDERNE Center in Bridgewater for supporting this important initiative. The organization hopes to achieve a minimum of one donation bin in each of the communities served.



Bins such as this one provide much-needed revenue.

Phonathon

LVSC held its first phonathon in June. Thanks to organizer Linda Leparulo and the volunteer callers she recruited, it was a big success. More important than the funds brought in, the phonathon saw many inactive donors become active once again.

Payroll Deduction

Many donors make their gifts through employee payroll deduction, so that the money comes directly from the employee's paycheck. And, in a lot of cases, the employer will match the gift by 100%.

Corporate Sponsorships/Partnerships

LVSC has had many loyal corporate partners and openly welcomes the opportunity to forge new partnerships. Corporate sponsorships are available throughout the year for the LVSC website and special events.

The Big Event

LVSC held its Sixth Annual Dinner and Silent Auction on March 26 at the Royce Brook Golf Club in Hillsborough. While the silent auction raised over \$8,000, the big hit of the evening was the line-up of speakers—students Rosio Leal Valderamos and Rosa Rios, and special guest Robyn Gaby Fisher, who provided the keynote.



Guests review the auction items at the annual dinner and silent auction in March.

Leal Valderamos, a native of Costa Rica, provided a heart-warming tale of her appreciation for the opportunity provided to her by LVSC. She is tutored by Deborah Cummins, a finance manager with Johnson & Johnson, Inc.

Rios, a native of Ecuador, added a touch of comic relief while explaining how language barriers can lead to some funny, but awkward, situations. Rios is currently working with volunteer tutor Pat Flannery, the Mayor of Bridgewater.

Fisher, author of the New York Times best-selling book "After the Fire," told how her mother passed on to her a love for reading and how that love has since transcended into her love for writing.

Imagine a life without literacy skills. Street signs, a menu, and the mail are impossible to read. Speaking clearly to co-workers or understanding telephone conversations is difficult. Writing checks, an e-mail or a note to a child's teacher is overwhelming. Then imagine the triumph when, after spending time with a literacy tutor, hard-fought personal goals are won. Job situations, family life, and interactions with others are improved. Participation in the mainstream of society is a reality. The end result is a community that includes more confident and productive members.

Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County is a non-profit organization that provides FREE one-to-one and small group tutoring to functionally illiterate adults like the ones described above. We fulfill our mission through a network of volunteers - recruited and trained in both Basic Literacy and English for Speakers of Other Languages - and that are matched with one or more adult learners.



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