



# The Literacy Letter

Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County

Winter 2009

## "Laugh for Literacy" Provides More Than Just Comic Relief

Torrential rains did nothing to affect the attendance or dampen the spirit of the audience during Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County's *Laugh for Literacy* comedy show featuring New Jersey comedy legend Uncle Floyd and comic hypnotist Marshal Manlove on Saturday, October 24, at the Somerville Elks Lodge in Bridgewater.

One hundred fifty people were served a buffet dinner and treated to comedy and song by Uncle Floyd before succumbing to the powerful suggestions of Marshal Manlove.

The event netted nearly \$2,000 for LVSC but, more importantly, brought a whole new audience to learn about the organization.



And the captured audience was mesmerized...



Left to right: Executive Director Alan Karmin, President Martha Davis, Bob Kane, Stephen Klopfer, Uncle Floyd, Marshall Manlove, Michelle Bobev, Morris Balacco, Sheila Cancell, Laura Belanger, Michelle Molinaro-Burke

## Upcoming LVSC Events

Tutor-Assessor Holiday Tea  
Saturday, December 5, 2:00-4:30 p.m.  
Weybridge Townhomes Clubhouse  
Hillsborough

**GOLD RUSH!**  
Sunday, December 13, 1:00-5:00 p.m.  
PeopleCare Center Conference Room

**fiVe BEL<sup>o</sup>W**

December 1 through December 31  
Somerville Circle Shopping Center

# A View From The Top...

## Thoughts from LVSC's Board President

It seems not very long ago when, for a fleeting, celebratory moment, *Auld Lang Syne* ushered in the year 2009 with many uncertainties. Yet, I am happy to say that for LVSC it has been a significant year of growth and numerous successes.

Our Board of Trustees welcomed new members - Morris Balacco, Laura Belanger, Michelle Bobev and Michelle Molinaro-Burke. New partnerships have aided in expanding our mission to promote literacy and awareness in the community.

Our fundraising efforts have spread to areas not tried before. The June Phonathon, spearheaded by Linda Leparulo, was very successful and netted the organization \$2,400. The Auto Donor program got its initiation onto the income line with Sheila Cancelli's donation of her old car.

On the evening of Saturday, October 24, 2009, a very different type of fundraiser took place at the Elks Lodge in Bridgewater. *Laugh for Literacy*, organized in record time by Michelle Bobev and Laura Belanger, featured legendary New Jersey comic Uncle Floyd, followed by hypnotherapist, Marshal Manlove. In spite of the torrential rains, an audience of 150 people enjoyed an evening of great fun and good food. And while the event netted nearly \$2,000, even more important were the new people who came to learn about LVSC.

Our annual gala, the dinner and silent auction in March,

featured Pulitzer Prize-winning writer and New York Times best-selling author, Robyn Gaby Fisher, and equaled the net profit of the year before despite the shaky economy.

Thanks to the generosity of Borders, we been able to continue to gift-wrap at the Bridgewater store for Mother's Day, Father's Day and for the Winter Holiday Season. This has been an ongoing source of revenue for us, organized and looked after by Peggy Koppen, Lisa Leifer and Michelle Burke. Thank you for your time and commitment; and BIG thanks to our faithful volunteers who help with this effort. This fundraiser brings in close to \$8,000 every year.

As I reflect on a rapidly ending 2009, I am comforted in knowing that every event and every effort made this year will help our organization to stay financially solvent and to start the year 2010 on a positive note.

My thanks go to Alan Karmin, our Executive Director, to my engaging Board, to the tutors, assessors, students and volunteers. To individual donors, foundations, corporations, and to the libraries and public officials who support our mission.

As we prepare for the coming holiday season, may I wish you sweet memories of times past, and bright hopes for your tomorrows.

*Martha Davis, Board President*

### 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*

# Volunteers Honored at LVSC Annual Meeting

## Peggy Koppen given Alma Liotta Award

Peggy Koppen has meant a lot to Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County, probably more than anyone can imagine. Over the past decade, Peggy has served as a tutor, an assessor, a tutor trainer and a board member. But most people know Peggy as the organizer of LVSC's gift wrapping at Border's Books in Bridgewater every holiday season for the past five years.

At LVSC's Annual Meeting on October 5, Peggy Koppen was given the organization's highest award—the Alma Liotta Award.

"Peggy's hard work and dedication to the organization is immeasurable," said Board President Martha Davis. "She has not only been a good friend to me, but she is a great friend to this organization and we would be lost without her."

Others honored that evening were Linda Leparulo, Donna Sturm, Rosio Leal Valderamos and Ortho-McNeil-Janssen Pharmaceuticals.

Linda Leparulo is not only an active tutor, but she has been serving as a volunteer development associate for LVSC. Linda, honored with the Outstanding Service Award, spearheaded the organization's first phonathon which brought in nearly \$2,500.

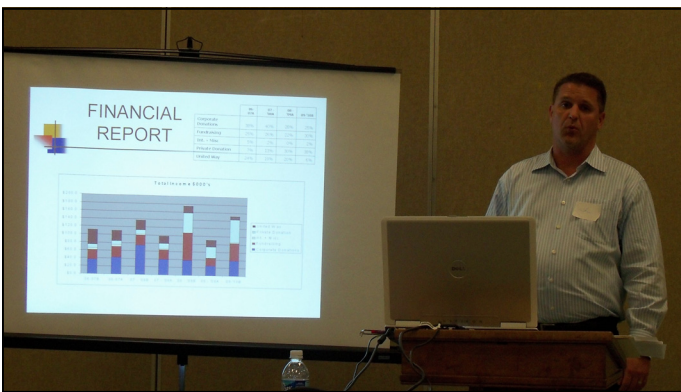


L to R: Deb Cummins, accepting on behalf of her student Rosio Leal Valderamos, Student of the Year and Ortho-McNeil-Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Community Service Award; Linda Leparulo, Outstanding Service Award; Donna Sturm, Tutor of the Year; Board President Martha Davis and Peggy Koppen, Recipient of the Alma Liotta Award.

Tutor of the Year Donna Sturm has been a very active tutor for LVSC. In fact, Donna logged nearly 100 hours with her student last year.

Rosio Leal Valderamos, Student of the Year honoree, was also very active, logging over 90 hours with her tutor, Deborah Cummins. Rosio was a speaker at LVSC's annual gala in March.

Ortho-McNeil-Janssen Pharmaceuticals was given the Community Service Award in honor of the company's commitment to literacy. LVSC and OMP have teamed up to train employees as tutors, with those volunteers tutoring other OMP employees.



LVSC Treasurer Stephen Klopfer talks about the organization's financial picture.





# Gold Rush

To Benefit LVSC



## Money on the Spot!

*Proven Highest Prices*

**Sell your unwanted gold...**

**Bent, broken, tangled**

**Sunday, December 13**

**1:00 to 5:00 p.m.**

**PeopleCare Center**

**120 FINDERNE AVENUE**

**BRIDGEWATER**



# Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County FUNdRAISER

at



**Somerville Circle Shopping Center**

(near Petco, Staples and Toys R Us)

300 Rt. 2002 So., Raritan, NJ 908-707-0400

Monday - Saturday: 10 a.m.-9 p.m. & Sunday: 11 a.m.-6 p.m.

The best place to get **hot** stuff, **cool** prices and **raise** money for Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County!

Show this flyer whenever you shop at **fiVe BEL<sup>o</sup>W** from Tuesday, December 1 through Thursday, December 31 and 10% of the dollars spent will be donated back to Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County!

**fiVe BEL<sup>o</sup>W** carries seasonal items, wrapping supplies, stationery, school supplies, computer software, books, electronic accessories, sporting goods, games, t-shirts, jewelry, hobbies, collectibles, bath and body, candy, snacks and beverages, room décor, storage, plus much more. What a great way to get your holiday shopping done. Stock up on teachers' gifts, stocking stuffers, gift exchanges!! And everything is priced at \$5 or less!

**Don't forget to bring this flyer so that we get credit for your purchase!**

(pre tax) Purchase Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*To be completed by Five Below Associate*

Register: 1 2 3 4 5 6 (circle one) Associate Name \_\_\_\_\_

Visit us at [www.fivebelow.com](http://www.fivebelow.com)

[www.literacysomerset.org](http://www.literacysomerset.org)

*The Literacy Letter*

*Winter 2009*

# *Donate Today and Become a Friend of Literacy!*

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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.

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 LVSC continually strives to increase annual contributions, establishing a reliable source of unrestricted support to fulfill its ongoing operating needs.

Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. We rely strictly on private contributions from individuals, corporations, foundations and other organizations.

Donating to LVSC is a easy. You can make an online donation and know that your information is totally secure and will not be shared with any other entity. In fact, if you are one of the first 100 people to make an online donation of \$50 or more, you will receive a free LVSC t-shirt as our way of saying "thanks" for your support.

Donate online by simply visiting us at [www.LiteracySomerset.org](http://www.LiteracySomerset.org). All donations made via credit card will appear as "Netcharge (877) 625-0290" on your billing statement.

All transactions are fully secured for your protection.

If you prefer to send a check, mail your gift to:

LVSC  
120 Finderne Avenue, Box 7  
Bridgewater, New Jersey 08807

## **Payroll Deduction**

Ask your employer about having your gift to LVSC come directly from your paycheck. And, in a lot of cases, your employer will match your gift by 100%. So that is a way to have your gift make even more of an impact.

## **Corporate Sponsorship**

Corporate sponsorships are available throughout the year for the LVSC website and special events. Check with us to discuss the sponsorship giving levels available.

## **Legacies and Bequests**

Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County deeply appreciates those that have remembered us in their estates. If you would like to consider us when you do your estate planning, please contact us to provide the necessary assistance and appropriate paperwork.

*Thank you for your continued support!*



## Tutor Brag Book

*This is a story about success. However, as a literacy volunteer, it is not about my success. It is about the success of my student.*

*Several years ago, I completed my training and was assigned a student from Iraq who had a Ph.D. in mathematics. His goal was to improve his English and to obtain full-time employment. My student came to the United States in 2005 with his wife and children. His native language was Arabic.*

*We were a good match since he was working as an adjunct professor at different universities, and I had worked as a professor, administrator and teacher. We spent many hours talking, reading and revising resumes and cover letters. We took advantage of the resources at the library, and the staff was extremely helpful. Periodically, we checked the newspapers for possible full-time employment.*

*My student was extremely motivated. When we first met, my student had several part-time positions. However, at this time, he has obtained a full-time position. When we first met, my student was renting an apartment. Now he has purchased a townhome for his family. In fact, two of his children are currently in college.*

*I also encouraged my student to take the Praxis exam to enable him to teach in the public schools via the "alternate route." He succeeded in this endeavor and now has the option of other positions.*

*He has demonstrated that with hard work and perseverance anyone can accomplish his/her goals. I am confident that he will have even more successes as his future unfolds.*

**Maureen O'Neill**

*During this beautiful holiday season,  
may our hands give the gifts of caring,  
our hearts touch in the spirit of kindness,  
and our world be united in peace and love.  
May the beauty and peace of the season  
stay in your heart all throughout the year.*



*Your friends at  
Literacy Volunteers of  
Somerset County*





**Executive Committee**  
 Martha Davis, President  
 Peggy Koppen, Vice President  
 Stephen Klopfert, Treasurer  
 Sheila Cancellia, Secretary

**Trustees**  
 Morris Balacco  
 Laura Belanger  
 Michelle Bobev  
 Michelle Molinaro Burke  
 Patricia Flannery  
 Bob Kane

**Staff**  
 Alan Karmim, Executive Director  
 Angela Horan, Office Manager  
 Linda Leparulo, Dev. Assoc.  
 Missy Klingenburg, Office Volunteer

**Literacy Volunteers  
 of Somerset County**  
 An Affiliate of  
 Proliteracy America  
 120 Finderne Ave, Box 7  
 Bridgewater, NJ 08807  
 908-725-5430



**Somerset County  
 United Way**

Affiliated Agency



**Get a free t-shirt!**

Make an "online" gift of \$50 or more and you can get an LVSC t-shirt.  
 Just go to [www.literacysomerset.org](http://www.literacysomerset.org) and make your gift today!

**Donate your used auto!**

Get a tax-deduction of full blue book value! Call the LVSC office  
 at 908-725-5430 for details.



**Donate your unwanted, used, good clothing!**

LVSC is collecting clothes to raise money for our ever-growing organization. Visit  
[www.literacysomerset.org](http://www.literacysomerset.org) or call 908-725-5430 for drop-off locations.

We are also searching for more locations for our clothing donation bins. Email us at  
[www.literacysomerset.org](http://www.literacysomerset.org) to find out how you can help with our clothing drive.