



The Literacy Letter

Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County

Issue No. 1 2008

A Word from the President

The year is still young, but a lot has been happening. Our second tutor training session has ended, and that means 20 new tutors on board. For our next training session, which begins on April 26, we'll be trying a new schedule. Classes will be on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings. We hope this will make it easier for potential tutors to balance their busy schedules. If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a tutor, please call the office to register.

With Bridgewater Mayor Pat Flannery as guest speaker, our Fifth Annual Dinner and Silent Auction, held on March 6 at Royce Brook Golf Club in Hillsborough, was a wonderful event. Many thanks for the hard work by the committee, chaired by Stephanie Moravek and assisted by Elona Collazo, Tina Martin, Geri Krolin-Taylor, Martha Davis, Vivian OKrepky and Peggy Koppen. Thanks to everyone who donated auction items and attended the dinner.

Our executive director, Alan Karmin, has made some infrastructure changes to improve our support for tutors and students. A new phone system means you will never again get a busy signal when you call LVSC! And we have just unveiled a new web site that will provide easier access and more resources for both students and tutors.

We are always looking for volunteers to help support LVSC. If you are interested in becoming a board member, joining a committee or helping in the office, please reach out to us at lvsc@lvscnj.org.

너의 계속 지원을 위해 감사. (Korean)
 “Thanks for your continuing support.”

Allison

Take a look...

www.LiteracySomerset.org

Don't Forget LVSC Annual Meeting

June 9 will be recognition night for tutors, students and volunteers. That's when LVSC will hold its annual meeting at the PeopleCare Center, 120 Finderne Avenue, Bridgewater.

In addition to sharing the accomplishments of both individuals and the organization, everyone shares a potluck dinner – delicious dishes as diverse as all of those who attend. Please RSVP to the office at 908-725-5430.

We also distribute a booklet of student writing, in which adult learners share essays, life stories, poetry translations of a home-grown folk tale, or even a favorite recipe.

So, tutors, start working with your students now on writing samples to help them experience having their work published. You can even create a lesson using mailing vocabulary and a trip to the post office to submit their writing. Send submissions by mail or email. The deadline is Friday, May 9.



Dear Miss Reed

Believe me, I am no bra-burning feminist, but I am imbued with the egalitarian beliefs that most of my Baby Boomer cohorts endorse. And therein lies the rub.

I tutor a very lovely woman from another culture, a culture in which the women definitely take a back seat to the men. Since we have become closer, she has revealed to me that she has some new goals and desires, ones not supported by her spouse. (I freely admit I may have had something to do with planting the seeds of some of these goals and desires in her.) She wants to learn to drive. She wants to get a part-time job. She wants a little independence!

I feel she should stand up to her husband and should work toward those goals, rather than just learning to navigate the rough waters of American English grammar, pronunciation, and spelling. I also am fully aware that her family has functioned very well and very happily before she and I began meeting. Should I encourage her to stand up and fight for what she wants, risking the harmony her family has always enjoyed, or should I keep mum?

*Sincerely,
ERA Eva*

Dear Eva,

No, no, no. It's not just me advising this. ESL expert, Jackie Flamm at the last "How's It Going?" in-service training session said the same thing. Our mission is to help our students with reading, writing, speaking, comprehension. We can also familiarize them with American culture. But it is not our job to influence them in a way that might jeopardize their home life. The ramifications of doing that are endless.

Really, keep plugging away on the "navigating" you two are hard at work doing. Lighten up on the feminist rhetoric. If, eventually, your student begins pressing you

about studying the driver's manual or filling out job applications, it will be because she has made the decision to push ahead with these issues, not because you have tried to make her a liberated female all at once.

Some things are meant for us to deal with as tutors. Others are meant for Dear Abby.



Miss Reed

If you have a question for Miss Reed, please email her at swellcourt@verizon.net, or send a letter to her c/o Rosenberg, 9 Stillwell Court, Bridgewater, NJ 08807.

Borders Wrapping Rings Up Support

After another successful holiday season of gift-wrapping, LVSC will be back at Borders in Bridgewater this spring, raising funds and awareness of our literacy efforts in the community.

The annual Mother's Day and Father's Day gift wrapping fundraisers will run from May 3 – 11 and June 7 – 15. It takes more than 100 hundred volunteers, scheduled in teams of two for two-hour shifts. The committee will begin calling the roster of previous wrappers in April, so talk to your friends, family, students or community groups interested in a service project. You don't have to wait for a call – contact Lisa at 908-369-5646 or lvsc@lvscnj.org.

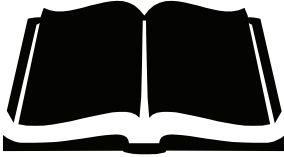
Peggy Koppen, Lisa Leifer
Borders Wrapping Fund Raiser Coordinators

The Literacy Letter

Thrift Shop Helps Literacy Thrive



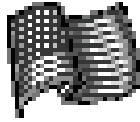
St. John's Episcopal Church in Somerville runs a thriving thrift shop and donates the proceeds to community organizations. LVSC was a recent recipient. Executive director Alan Karmin and former marketing director Beth Kullback (far left) accepted the donation from representatives of the From the Heart Thrift Shop.



Tutor Brag Book

These are just some of the many student accomplishments that tutors have shared in their reporting logs.

Rosa found a Junie B. Jones book that related to her occupation. One of her SMART goals was to read a book in English. We both enjoyed the humor in this story AND she accomplished a goal!



Kanti wanted to learn The Pledge of Allegiance. She is learning to pronounce the words – and we discuss what they mean.

Maggie can now participate in conference calls at work – great progress!

Maria’s manager at work complemented her on her improved ability to speak English.

Fernando has obtained a library card and has learned to use the online catalog to check out things of interest. He now brings things to our meetings for discussion.



Sonia has made real progress with vocabulary building of household words that are relevant for her job as a house cleaner. She also enjoys food vocabulary.

From the Director’s Chair

When a baseball team has more good pitchers than there are openings for their pitching staff...the team executives call it “a good problem.” Perhaps it is an oxymoron but who cares, right?

LVSC has an overwhelming number of students waiting to be matched with a tutor. The number keeps growing and the phone keeps ringing. The growing numbers show there is a great demand for what we do. But the mounting surplus we have is not “a good problem,” not the way it is for a baseball team anyway. People need us, and we have to be able to answer the call.

The demand for our services proves that we are putting out a good product, and the public is calling for more. We are providing services for more than 200 adult learners from 37 countries around the world speaking 25 different languages. And there are well over 100 individuals waiting in the wings.

To keep up with the demand, we need more resources. We need more tutors. But we also need more financial resources to be able to keep up with the needs of the community. Our organization continues to grow and with it, the need for support continues to grow.

We are working to expand our outreach to the community, but we are also looking to bring back the people who made this organization the worthwhile cause it is today. By starting the LVSC Alumni Association, we hope to reunite the success stories of our past and provide a peer leadership opportunity for all of those

individuals who look to us for support. (Read more about this in the article below.)

It is an exciting time of growth. We can all be proud of what we are doing for the community, and I thank you for your support.

Alan

LVSC is Looking for Alumni

Patrick Henry wrote about being guided by the lamp of experience, and LVSC would like to do the same.

As the “elders” of the organization (and we mean that in the only the most complimentary way), former students, tutors, assessors, trainers, office volunteers and board members all are a valuable resource to help guide LVSC in serving the community.

An LVSC Alumni Association is being created to provide a forum for those who have been involved in the past to help direct our literacy efforts in the future. Students can tell us what they liked and didn’t like about the process. Tutors’ and trainers’ experiences can help improve our teaching techniques.

It is especially important to know what former students are doing so we can spread the word about the continuing impact of LVSC programs on the communities we serve. Please contact Executive Director Alan Karmin by phone or email if you would like to be part of this effort.



News and Notes



State Conference Sharpens Skills

Literacy Volunteers of New Jersey will hold its 2008 Literacy for Life Conference on Saturday, May 3 at the Enterprise Center at Burlington County College in Mt. Laurel, N.J.

The conference offers 22 workshops for adult literacy instructors, program leaders, board members, trainers and students.

Topics include:

- Student Retention
- Reading Comprehension
- Student Involvement in Programs
- Financial Literacy
- Internet Resources
- Roundtables for ESOL/Basic Literacy/Trainers/Boards

Professional development certificates will be presented for those who complete the workshops, where appropriate.

New Tutors Ready to Teach

Congratulations to our new tutors: Kathleen Amberg, Annapurna Arikravyla, Gretchen Barlow, Sumita Chandrasekhar, Adriana Cruz, John Fiorino, Pat Flannery, Emma Gilroy, Dorrie Guarnerio, Angela Horan, Linda Leparulo, Anna MacDougall, Bruce MacGillivray, Arundhathi Marthi, Judith Petronchak, Melissa Ross, Nina Singh, Monica Speight, Kathryn Tepedino, Joy Tsuzuki, Elaine Whelan, John Willcox

Tell Us a Tutor Tale

Keep the presses running with your stories. One of the ways LVSC tells its story to the community and reaches out for new volunteer support is through articles in local publications like Strictly Somerset. If you have a story you would like to share about your tutoring experience – humorous, heartwarming or anything in between – please contact me. Maybe even turn it into a lesson plan. I want to hear from YOU!

Kathryn Weidener, Outreach Coordinator
kweidener@patmedia.net.

Help Wanted: Blogger

Interested in chatting with others about LVSC? The Star-Ledger, in cooperation with NewJersey.com, is developing a new project to inform people about non-profit organizations and volunteerism. If you'd like to represent LVSC on their blog, contact Michelle Howe of the Star-Ledger at 973-392-5805 or mhowe@starledger.com.

Donate your used auto to LVSC

Receive a tax deduction and help fund new programs and services. Contact the office at 908-725-5430.

Bins for literacy!

You can get \$100 for a placement!

LVSC is conducting a mass clothing drive. This starts with the placement of clothing donation “drop boxes” or “bins” at strategic locations in our community. LVSC receives a credit for poundage of clothing collected in the bins. These funds go directly for services.

LVSC needs businesses to accept the placement of bins. And we are also looking for people who have the drive to go out and get permission from businesses in the community to take our “bins for literacy.” In fact, anyone that gets LVSC permission to place a bin will receive \$100.

The bins are managed and maintained by a professional team of uniformed drivers that regularly and frequently monitors and services the bins. If there is a complaint about any clothing pile-up or graffiti, it will be cleaned up within 24 hours.

Supporting this program will help the Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County continue to provide valuable services to the community.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions at 908-725-5430.



Bridgewater Mayor Patricia Flannery commended LVSC volunteers for improving lives through literacy.



Members of the planning committee celebrate a successful evening. From left, Geri Krolin-Taylor, Vivian Okrepky, Tina Martin, chairperson Stephanie Moravek, Elona Collazo, Martha Davis.

Celebrate Literacy!

Fundraising Dinner Draws Generous Crowd

More than 60 guests gathered on March 6 at the Royce Brook Golf Club in Hillsborough, NJ for great food and great fun and to participate in our silent auction. The guests bid on 64 items ranging from a hand-made afghan to a 32" LCD TV. LVSC's Fifth Annual Dinner and Silent Auction raised more than \$8,000 for literacy.



Executive Board Members, left to right: Treasurer Stephen Klopfer, President Allison Kalban-Gernett and Secretary Stephanie Moravek.

LVSC Spans the Globe

37 Countries

25 Languages

Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County has 201 active students. Eighty-nine percent (178) are ESOL students and 11 percent (23) are basic reading students. Their ages range from 18 to 60-plus. More than half are between 25 and 44. The tables at right show some of the countries and languages represented among our students.

Country of Origin	# Students
China	26
US	18
Costa Rica	15
South Korea	15
Colombia	14
Ecuador	13
India	12
Poland	11
Mexico	9
Other	73

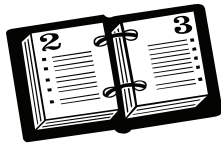
Native Language	# Students
Spanish	83
Chinese	19
English	18
Korean	16
Mandarin	15
Polish	11
Arabic	8
Urdu	6
Hindi	4
Other	24



**Somerset County
United Way**

Affiliated Agency

SAVE THE DATES



Spring Tutor Training:

Orientation: April 23

Sessions: April 26, May 10, 21, 31, June 14

Borders Gift Wrapping:

May 3 to 11 and June 7 to 15

Annual Meeting:

June 9

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter or other mailings from LVSC please send an email to us at lvsc@lvscnj.org and we will remove your name from our mailing list.



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

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