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Office Hours

Monday and Wednesday
8:30 am-8:00 pm

Tuesday and Thursday
8:30 am-5:00 pm

Friday
8:30 am-1:00 pm

Literacy Network's summer potluck is planned for Sunday, June 24 at 5:00 pm at Brittingham Park. RSVP by calling 608-244-3911.

Literacy Network teaches reading, writing and speaking skills to Dane County adults and families so they can achieve financial independence, good health, and greater involvement in community life.

Civics class visits Senator Risser



Gloria Meyo, Instructor Lisa Hollman, Leticia Almonte, Sondra Diaz, Senator Fred Risser at the Wisconsin State Capitol building.

*By Lisa Hollman
English in the Community Instructor
lisa@litnetwork.org*

On March 1, 2012, the English in the Community class took a tour of the Capitol and met Senator Fred Risser in his office. During the tour, we discovered a lot about the building and its history. The Capitol dome, which is measured by volume, is the fourth largest dome in the world. The three larger domes are all on religious buildings outside of the United States. Our tour guide also pointed out the vast array of stone in the building and explained where some of the varieties had come from.

As part of our tour, we were led through the Governor's chambers, the the Wisconsin Supreme Court, and the Wisconsin Assembly and Senate chambers. In the courtroom, we learned that the artist who created the artwork included his son in all four paintings, so that he would always be a part of the artwork. We also learned that when bills are being voted on, everyone has

to stay until all business is done. This can make for some very long sessions! Although we weren't allowed to sit in the seats of the elected officials, we did get to see the electronic buttons in front of their seats that they push to vote.

After our tour was complete, Senator Risser showed us a framed picture he has up in his office of his great-grandfather, his grandfather, his father and himself. Each of them has been elected and served the State of Wisconsin voters. Although none of them were in the same political party, Senator Risser explained that they all believed in the same things. Senator Risser has represented the Madison area in the Wisconsin Legislature since he was first elected to the State Assembly in 1956. He served for three terms in the Assembly before he was elected to the State Senate in a special election in 1962. He has been re-elected to the State Senate in every election since. We were very appreciative that Senator Risser took the time to meet with us and for the opportunity to tour the Capitol.

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Community Literacy Interns:
 Robin McGuire, Kim Ross, Jackie Wice, Andrew Bray, Anjali Misra, Doug Lechner

Humana funds second year of English for Health

The Humana Foundation will provide \$40,000 to support Literacy Network of Dane County to continue to improve the health literacy skills of area individuals and begin the development of a replication model for national distribution to improve health literacy in healthcare systems.

Based on the organization's success, Literacy Network will take leadership of a balanced, multi-partner solution. Literacy Network staff will build on their successful relationships with St. Mary's Hospital, GHC and UW Health in Madison, WI.

Multiple studies link low literacy skills to rising healthcare costs, due to medication misuse, unnecessary ER use, and more. Up to \$238 billion is lost in the US each year, including \$7.5 billion in Wisconsin and \$465 million in Dane County.

"Literacy Network offers an innovative and collaborative solution to the growing problem of low health literacy, affecting millions of people in this country," said Virginia K. Judd, executive director of The Humana Foundation.

Literacy Network will begin work on replicating the project for a national audience. Literacy Network's *English for Health* program has been highlighted at national conferences in Wisconsin, Texas, Florida, Iowa and California. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services named the program a *Promising Practice* to improve minority health and was awarded the first *Outstanding Achievement in Health Literacy* by Wisconsin Literacy.

Citizenship program in need of tutors

By Jennifer Sell

Group Instruction Director
 jen@litnetwork.org

This spring's English for Citizenship group class—meeting on Tuesday evenings at Goodman Community Center—has sprouted a crop of highly motivated learners seeking to prepare for their naturalization exams in the next few months. Coming from Afghanistan, Colombia, Mexico, Gambia, Nicaragua, Taiwan, and Laos, they bring genuine curiosity and rich life experience to their studies of U.S. history, geography, culture, and government. In March, guest speaker Janice Beers, Director of Immigrant and Refugee Services at Jewish Social Services of Madison, presented valuable information to the class on fee waivers and legal support for completing the N-400 application form.

Understandably nervous about their naturalization interviews, the students are putting in extra hours with the text-

book *Citizenship: Passing the Test*, by Lynne Weintraub, and materials accessible on helpful websites sponsored by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (<http://www.uscis.gov>), Minnesota Lit-

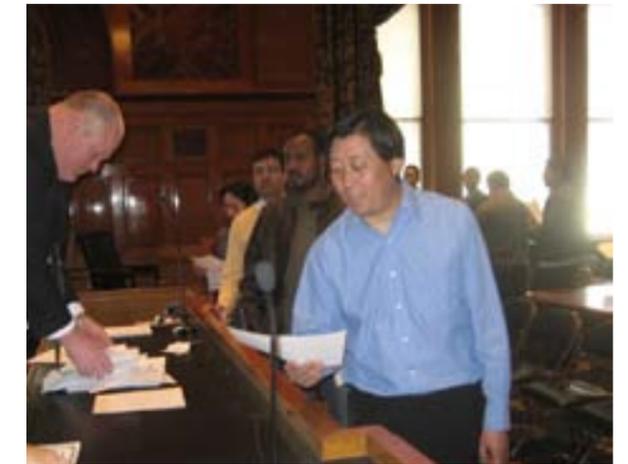
eracy Council (<http://www.mnliteracy.org/>), and the Adult Learning Resource Center (<http://www.thecenterweb.org/alrc/>). They work hard to take responsibility for their own learning, but most would still benefit from the additional support of a trained Literacy Network citizenship tutor. Unfortunately, there are not currently enough of those to go around, which leads us to...

...our call for prospective citizenship English tutors. We want to be sure that every learner with the goal of citizenship has the chance to study for the test with a tutor trained in the topic. It doesn't require the expertise of a Ph.D. to tutor citizenship English, but it is essential to have updated knowledge of what the citizenship process entails, what the current test components are and how they're scored, and a familiarity with language teaching techniques that work well for this specialized material. If you have completed LitNet's ESL tutor training, please consider attending our 2-hour inservice on Teaching English for Citizenship. We keep a running

list of tutors willing to jump in for short-term assignments helping learners prepare for naturalization.

It is extremely rewarding work! Please call Jen at 244-3911 for answers to your questions. We'd love to set you up with one of our eager and deserving citizenship students.

"The very best part of teaching citizenship for me is seeing how much my students want to become citizens of our country, something I all too often take for granted. Some students work two or three jobs, but find the energy to faithfully attend class and work hard at mastering the English and citizenship



Jamyang Nyima receives his certification of citizenship after successfully completing classes and his citizenship exam.

information they will need for their interview. I am awed by their perseverance and commitment to learning."

—Betty Braden, Volunteer Citizenship English Instructor

Summer Spanish classes begin in late May!

Beginning level class
 Wednesdays, 6:00-7:30 pm

Intermediate level class
 Tuesdays, 6:00-7:30 pm

Held at Catholic Multicultural Center, 1862 Beld St.

To register, call Amy at 608-244-3911 or visit www.litnetwork.org

"The class is convenient, set up for people who are working and appeals to adult learning styles of 'I need to know this' or 'I always wanted to know that.' It is manageable and stimulating."

—Past Class Participant



Busking for Books, with 25 musical acts on every corner of State Street, raised \$2534 on April 21 for Literacy Network. Thanks to the more than 150 volunteers, including Mad Celts, who helped with the event! (Photo: Richard Kessler)

UW Medical Students Advise Learners at GHC Clinic

By Matt Miller
Health Writer

"I know what kind of questions to make now," said Beatriz Alvarez, a learner in the Literacy Network English for Health class. Beatriz came to the health clinic at the Group Health Cooperative-Hatchery Hill on March 15 hoping to learn about proper nutrition and stress relief. UW Medical Student Susie Reithel helped her come up with ways to implement appropriate diet and exercise standards in her daily life. Beatriz came out of the clinic feeling like she could fit healthier habits into her hectic daily routine.

English language learners in the program filled out health surveys that would later inform and guide their conversations with medical students. After filling out their forms, the program learners met with the medical students, some of whom are affiliated with Health Hearts and the American Medical Association. The medical students came to the event as volunteers to help the learners gain empowerment, accountability, and confidence when addressing their health. They were prepared to share their expertise on topics like diet, exercise, stress relief, blood pressure, body mass index, and typical risk factors for certain illnesses.

Each learner's opportunity to meet individually with a medical student allowed them to candidly discuss their concerns and receive a specific response. The conversations between the students and learners often began with an explanation of the learner's day-to-day life. Through this discussion, the medical students helped the learners set a basis of realistic goals and healthy options that fit into their busy daily routines. While the medical students came in with general topics they wanted to address, the individual meetings gave them the opportunity to provide the learners with counsel that was specific to the learner's lifestyle, needs, and worries. Some learners found that they did not need to worry about exercise as much as diet, because the work they do at their job provides sufficient physical activity. Others learned how to eat healthier during their short lunch breaks and manage stress during demanding work days. The open communication between patient and caregiver facilitated a common understanding between the two groups, and it helped the learners decide how they could compromise and fit alternatives into their busy schedules. "People are willing to make changes to their health if you give them the proper tools and approaches," said University of Wisconsin Medical Student Victor Gonzalez, "The goal is to make healthcare a process between patients and caregivers."

At the end of the clinic, the learners were given a variety of paperwork which covered topics like yoga routines,



Adult learners Beatriz Alvarez and Norma Enriquez work with UW Medical Student Lynn Stiff on better fitness at GHC's Hatchery Hill clinic as part of Literacy Network's English for Health program. (Photo by Chuck Haacker)

healthy diet choices, stress management tips, ways to work out at home, and heart health risk factors. The learners and the medical students thanked each other and left in high spirits, feeling like the program was a success. "It was nice to actually help people who want to know how to be healthier," UW Medical Student Katya Voelker said, "If you've never met somebody and treat them with respect at a comfortable level, they will feel free to open up."



Check out our Facebook page for stories, photos and event news:

<http://www.facebook.com/LiteracyNetwork>

New Literacy Network staff members

Linda Murray is the new Development Director at the Literacy Network. Most recently, she was the Project Leader for the 2011 Partners in Giving: The State, University, & UWHC Employees Combined Campaign of Dane County; which raised over \$2.5 million for charitable organizations. Prior to that campaign, she served as a Director of Development & External Relations



Development Director Linda Murray

at the UW-Madison Morgridge Center for Public Service. Her responsibilities included identifying and connecting with funding sources, building relationships with potential supporters, communicating with staff and campus partners, strategic planning, and other external relations activities.

Linda has worked for 25 years in progressively responsible positions in government, healthcare, human services, and education. She has over 15 years of fund development experience including research, grant-writing, annual fund, major gifts, planned giving, capital campaigns, and external relations. Linda is also a licensed social worker in the State of Wisconsin. Personal interests include gardening, home and

landscaping projects, vocal and instrumental music, walking, and reading.

Lisa Hollman is Literacy Network's new College Transition Specialist. In Lisa's 13 years at Madison College, she has developed curriculum for workplace programming, assessed skill development of learners, trained other instructors, and supervised instructors for continued excellence in college programming. Lisa is a welcome addition to our staff and will be focused on helping learners work toward their goals of higher education by collaborating closely with staff at Madison College and other partner agencies.

Eileen Zeiger is Literacy Network's new Family Literacy Program Coordinator. Eileen has taught English and Art in Costa Rica and South Korea and has worked as a Clinical Research Coordinator and Supervisor at the UW Medical Foundation. Eileen is completing her Master's degree in Gender and Women's Studies at UW-Madison this semester. Previous collaborators have praised her ability to build partnerships, work with key players in various areas, and her eagerness to learn new skills. Eileen will oversee programs at area schools for parents, as well as family literacy partnerships with other community-based organizations.



Family Literacy Program Coordinator Eileen Zeiger and College Transition Specialist Lisa Hollman.

More than 100 learners are waiting

With more than 100 learners waiting, volunteer tutors are needed now more than ever. You do not need experience or foreign language skills –just patience, kindness and three hours every week to dedicate to tutoring an adult that needs your help. Contact Shawn at volunteer@litnetwork.org or 608-244-3911 to find out more information or to get flyers to hang in your workplace, church or neighborhood.

Reading Between the Wines, a Celebration of Student Writing

By Beatriz Cantelmo,

Literacy Network Board Member

Literacy Network's Reading Between the Wines event took place on March 22 at beautiful Washburn Heritage Room at Edgewood College. Literacy Network learners gathered with family members, friends, staff, volunteers, guests and sponsors and to read their essays from the recently published book, *Moving Forward*.

Our first reader and guest speaker of the night was Andy Moore. Mr. Moore is a regular columnist for *Isthmus*, Senior News Producer for Wisconsin Public Television and a supporter of numerous causes, such as Literacy Network. He read an entertaining essay about helping a friend move a wood stove. "I was one of many Americans who were blessed by letters and words while growing up. And also someone who took letters and words for granted," he said. "In reading over just the expressions used in the beautiful book *Moving Forward*, I am deeply humbled and will be very self-conscious about how I use language from now on. I am inspired to try to use it better myself," said Moore.

As Literacy Network learners read their own work, the audience was transported to a magical place, where reflection, new appreciation and perspectives were gained. Teresa Adler, a volunteer at Literacy Network said, "I hope to someday be as brave as our learners are."

Bertha's daughter Liliam stated: "I remember exactly what my mom just read. I heard her talking about her experiences at home. We know where we came from and why we wanted to live in the U.S. I always thought that people in the U.S. would see us immigrants as intruders. I was wrong. There are so many people who want to help us. I had no idea.

I did not expect to receive so much help. My mother is my inspiration to continue to grow and to learn. If she can do it, so can I. For now, my main priority and focus in life are my children."

With so much talk about the achievement gap in our schools, parent involvement and proper skills are crucial elements that will make a difference in their children's ability to succeed. The single biggest factor in a child's success in school is the educational level of their parents. "Our work impacts more than the individuals that we serve," said Executive Director



Abimeleth Bustamante reads his work to a capacity audience at Edgewood College on March 22 as part of a celebration of learner writing and fundraiser, *Reading Between the Wines*. (Photos by Chuck Haacker)

Jeff Burkhart. Tutors make a difference in a learner's life and in our community by creating and sustaining community connections through literacy.

Thanks to learners Omnath, Palee, Dan Fan, Bertha, Abimeleth, Ira and Hilario for sharing your stories. Your hard work, perseverance and courage evoked a sentiment of gratitude, hope, partnership, connection and pride among us all, as well as the reassurance that Literacy Network's work has been able to positively impact and transform the lives of learners, tutors as well as our community.



Omnath Dhimial



Dan Fan



Bertha Rodriguez

Moving Forward

By Rani Wickramatne

Literacy Network Learner

I am Rani Wickramatne from Sri Lanka. I came to the USA in 2008, and I worked in NJ two and half years. Last year I relocated to Wisconsin because my daughter lives here. After I got to Wisconsin, I wanted to improve my English because I faced some hard times when I was working for my previous company. I didn't have that much money to spend for English classes, and I was looking for free classes.

One day I traveled by bus to the South Transfer Point, I saw the notice board of Literacy Network, and I suddenly got off the bus and met the Literacy Network receptionist. So, she explained to me about their summer program, and I started to participate. It was June 2011. While studying with them, I could memorize my knowledge, and I took the placement test of MATC. I could have taken grade 7, so I could participate in MATC academic English reading and writing grade 6 classes. It was a little hard to follow because my writing instructor was a very tough teacher. I needed somebody to help me with my academic writing, and I applied for a private tutor from Literacy Network. Luckily, I got the real person who had a good English teaching ability for an ESL student. Working together at my home and by email, we did a good job, and I got an A grade for both classes.

While I was taking English classes at MATC, I looked for some courses which will help me for my career improvement, and I found information about Biotechnology intensive certificate program, and I applied for it. It was a post baccalaureate course, and I had to show my previous education for my science degree. I submitted my educational history through the credential service. MATC accepted my degree, and I was able to start the biotechnology intensive course this spring semester. Now I am studying at MATC. It is a big deal for me. I think I will be able to earn this certificate, but still I have the language problem when I deal with the native students. I think it is my pronunciation. I hope to improve my pronunciation pattern before I face my next job interview.

I think I am moving forward on my path. Literacy Network helps me to improve my English and get involved in community life. So, I want to thank them. Especially, Jen Sell- my evening English class teacher, Beth-Health English class teacher and my private tutor, Mary Collet and everybody who spends their money and time to build up community literacy.

THANKS LITERACY NETWORK!

Editors note: because of an editing error, Rani's submission was not included in the Moving Forward compilation. We regret the error.



Ira Stolnova



Palee Thao



Hilario Contreras

The Return on Your Investment in Literacy

By Linda Murray,

Development Director

The Wall Street Journal and bankrate.com made interesting observations recently about how much you would have earned by investing \$1,000 in the financial marketplace in 2011:

- Invested in S&P 500 index fund = -0.003%
- Stuffed it in your mattress = 0
- Deposited in a money market account = 0.90%
- Invested in a DJIA index fund = 5.53%

But in the Literacy Network philanthropic market, \$1,000

earns a different dividend. It can:

- Provide 4 full training sessions for 20 volunteer adult literacy tutors.
- Help 15 adults learn how to better read a prescription label in English for Health classes.
- Teach 20 parents how to help with their children's homework.

Every contribution to Literacy Network brings tangible results. What a relief to know you can actually count on a return for your investment! To invest in literacy, contact me at linda@litnetwork.org or call 608-244-3911.

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Director's Notes

By Jeff Burkhart
Executive Director



Words matter. Words can get a job done. They can convince friends and family to support a cause, they can create social change, and they can change lives. Adult learners in our community are learning to better assemble their words and express themselves. In the last few months, we have heard the strong voices from adult learners in our programs, which have moved our staff, tutors, volunteers and other community members. We are moved by the words of

Omnath, a man from Bhutan who saw his family's home burned to the ground and spent more than 18 years in a refugee camp. We are moved by the words of Bertha, a mother who worked for more than 10 years, listening and writing down words until she finally got up the courage to speak in English. These words emphasize the power of adult literacy to thousands in our community.

Because words matter, so does literacy instruction. Literacy matters to parents who can't help their children with their homework. It matters to people who avoid using a hospital or clinic, or can't read a prescription label. Last month, I had the privilege of listening to learners read their work at an event and was inspired by the expression of hopes and dreams embodied in

the *Moving Forward* compilation. The words in our student writing are powerful—they help our community members connect the dots of the reality of the lives of our learners, and empower the adult learners who have contributed their writing to the book. I hope you will be inspired, too. I would like to send you a copy of this compilation. Please just send me an email at jeff@litnetwork.org or give me a call at 608-244-3911. If you commit to support our work with a contribution of any size, I'll get one in the mail to you right away while supplies last. I am certain you will be moved when reading the words that matter so much to learners in our programs.

Thanks so much for helping make the words of adult learners come alive on the page.