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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 is a not-for-profit organization committed to providing basic literacy services to adults and families in Dane County so they may achieve their employment, education and family goals.

Celebrate reading with us!

A week-long Literacy 24/7 celebration of reading will be held April 12-18, 2009. The fourth annual event will benefit Literacy Network of Dane County. This year, community members can participate at any time during the week in libraries, schools, coffee shops or anywhere else they are comfortable reading.

"The event is designed to celebrate reading and to support people in our community who are improving their reading," said Executive Director Jeff Burkhart. "We're hoping that kids and adults recognize the power of getting involved in the community and reading a great book."

An event capstone will take place at Borders Books West at 3750 University Avenue on April 18, 9:00 am to 9:00 pm. The event will feature a variety of guest readers who will read and discuss books. Celebrity readers include:

Sean Carroll, Professor of Molecular Biology and Genetics and author of *Endless Forms Most Beautiful* and *The Mak-*

ing of the Fittest.

Patricia McConnell, expert on dog training and dog behavior and author of *For the Love of a Dog*.

Gail Baker, novelist and author of *Cancer is a Bitch*.

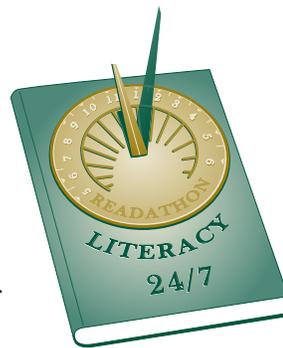
Bill Malone, historian and author of *Country Music, USA* and *Don't Get Above your Raisin*'.

Participants will choose any book they want to read, and collect pledges for the number of hours spent reading that week. Participants can also spend the day or a portion of the day reading at Borders

West. All proceeds will support Literacy Network's mission to help people reach their life goals through literacy.

"This is a chance to get caught up on your reading and help make a lasting difference in someone's life at the same time," said Development Director Karen George-Friedman.

To learn more, and to register for the event, visit www.litnetwork.org.



2009 inservices and events

To register for any of these sessions, contact Lynn at 244-3911 or lynn@litnetwork.org.

Volunteer Celebration – Monday, April 27, 4:00 pm to 7:30 pm

An evening of celebration and support for our fantastic volunteers. Events include an in-service focused on working with advanced learners presented by Brian Anderson from 4-5:30, an International Potluck 5:00 – 6:30, and a moderated student panel 6:30 – 7:30. Come for some or all of the time to learn more about tutoring, network with other tutors, hear about the experi-

ences of some learners, and enjoy some fantastic international fare!

Grammar Graphics Part 2 – Saturday, May 16, 9:00 to 11:00 am. Presented by Gregg Williard.

Citizenship ESL – Monday, June 8, 9:00 to 11:00 am. Presented by Jen Sell.

Taking it to the Streets Parts 1 and 2: Fun and Effective Ways to Make English More Real for Your Learner

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Literacy Network Board and Staff

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Executive Director:
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 jeff@litnetwork.org

Tutoring Director:
 Brian Anderson,
 brian@litnetwork.org

Group Instruction Director:
 Jennifer Sell,
 jen@litnetwork.org

Volunteer Manager:
 Lynn Pawelski,
 lynn@litnetwork.org

Student Services Director:
 Beth Gleisten,
 beth@litnetwork.org

Development Director:
 Karen George-Friedman,
 karen@litnetwork.org

Community Literacy Coordinator:
 Bailey Smolarek,
 bailey@litnetwork.org

ESL Teacher:
 Gregg Williard,
 gregg@litnetwork.org

English in the Schools Coordinator:
 Rachel Knoll,
 rachel@litnetwork.org

Newsletter Layout:
 Jamie Griffin

Printing by Thyss Printing

Civics gets students involved

By Beth Gleisten
Student Services Director
 beth@litnetwork.org

This year, Literacy Network received a federal grant to offer an ESL Civics class. The class began last August and will continue through June 2009. More than 20 students are enrolled in the class, hosted by the Catholic Multicultural Center every Tuesday and Thursday evening. The class focuses on English language skills in units designed to increase student participation and comfort in the Madison community. We began with a unit on the American government.

After an orientation to the program, our class delved into the presidential election. Students learned about the parts of the federal government, checks and balances and how federal law affects state



and local govern- Cecilia Timmons and Esmeralda Monroy Vargas at the recent mock clinic in the ESL Civics class. We then launched into an investigation of the presidential candidates' platforms. Students divided into small groups. Each group was assigned a policy area, such as economy, immigration, environment, health care or national security. Based on Internet research, students created posters to illustrate to the rest of the class what they had learned. In the mock election that followed, the class voted almost unanimously for Obama to become the next president.

We then moved on to state politics. This unit featured a trip to the Wisconsin State Capitol. On November 11, Senator Fred Risser hosted 17 students and nine of their children for an introduction to Wisconsin state government and the Capitol building. To prepare for our fieldtrip, students read Senator Risser's biography and prepared questions to ask him. They

asked him about recycling, his reaction to the results of the presidential election and his opinions on immigration. They were pleased to find Senator Risser open and enthusiastic to answering all of their questions.

The Thursday following our trip to the Capitol, we had the opportunity to see The Big Top Chautauqua at the Overture Center. Made possible through the Center's Community Outreach Program, 20 students, along with nine of their children, met at the Overture Center to watch the performance that President Roosevelt dubbed as "the most American thing in

America." In addition to the original music and entertaining skits, students very much enjoyed the chance to visit the beautiful theater with their families and classmates.

To wrap up, we created a class newsletter. Six students were each assigned to a particular article. The students worked together to answer questions, write and proofread each other's writing.

In December, we began a unit on health literacy in which we visited the South Madison Health and Family Center and had a mock clinic with volunteer health care professionals. We also visited the Dane County Courthouse and Circuit Court Judge Juan Colas, a volunteer tutor at Literacy Network. We plan to offer more exciting fieldtrips to introduce the students to the Madison area, as well as give them the opportunity to practice their language skills in authentic situations.

Please contact me at 244-3911 if you are interested in enrolling or volunteering in this fun and educational class.

Helping parents connect to school

By Rachel Knoll

English in the Schools Coordinator
rachel@litnetwork.org

At 5:30 pm most parents are on their way home from work to begin the nightly routine of homework, dinner, and bedtime. Parents attending the English in the Schools programs, however, are racing home, only to head out the door again with their children to go to back to school to learn English, then back home to start their nightly routines. These dedicated learners are modeling the importance of education to their children by committing to learn English and gain an understanding of their schools. Parents of children who attend our area schools are participating in a nine-week program that teaches English skills through school related topics.

The goal of the program is to increase English language learning parents' involvement in the public schools. By teaching English to these parents we are helping break down the language barrier that often interferes with parents contacting their child's teacher and getting involved with the schools.

Special thanks to Raptor Solutions!

Special thanks to Raptor Solutions and owner Jeff Matthias for helping us with our computer networking. In December, Jeff agreed to help us move all of our email services to our internal network. Jeff and his staff spent a few days working with us to make sure that our email was up and running successfully and got our server back-up system running. They donated their service to us because they believe in our mission and want to do good work in the community. Plus, they've been very kind and patient as we try to work

Two nights a week, parents learn how to contact their child's teacher, call their child in sick, use reading strategies with their children, and become familiar with their child's school and their expectations. As the parents attend class, their children read books, play games, and work on homework with childcare workers and volunteers. This spring, Literacy Network is working collaboratively with Verona Area School District at Glacier Edge Elementary School, Middleton Cross Plains Area School District at Sauk Trail Elementary School, and several schools from the Madison Area School District, Hawthorne Elementary School, Sennett Middle School, and a new program that is meeting at the Goodman Community Center combining parents from Lowell Elementary School, Schenk Elementary School, and Emerson Elementary School. Our English in the Schools program is a concrete way to connect these parents to their child's school and in turn positively impact children's success in school.

through the inevitable kinks in the systems!

Raptor Solutions is a new business in Madison, and they've been very helpful in providing us resources that have helped us maintain our computer systems. We're now running smoothly, thanks to their generous support!

Raptor can be reached at 608-848-9649, or on the web at www.raptorsolutions.com.

Donation Corner

In our new "Donation Corner" feature, we'd like to highlight some specific ways that you might consider helping our learners. In this issue, we're putting out the call for:

DISPOSABLE CAMERAS!

Adults learn most effectively when they are excited and engaged by the topic. Think about your own experience. Doesn't it seem easier to learn when the materials are interesting and meaningful?

In coming months, teachers and tutors will be encouraged to put this principle into practice by introducing *The Home Project* to their literacy learners.

For *The Home Project*, students will write short stories (words, sentences, or paragraphs depending on their ability levels) to answer the question "What does home mean to you?" We will also ask students to bring their own photos to write about. With students' permission, we will display images and writing in our hallways and on our website. This will be a year-long theme throughout all of our programs, and we hope to have an end of year exhibit of all of our students' images.

Many learners do not have access to cameras. We would love to send disposable cameras home with students so they can create images of their lives to write about for this project. We piloted this in a class taught at Sauk Trail Elementary School in Middleton and it was a great success.

If you would like to donate disposable cameras and/or 11x14" black picture frames for this project, please feel free to bring one in or send a donation to us at 1118 S. Park Street specifying that you would like the funds used for that purpose. Give us a call at 244-3911 if you have any questions about how you can contribute to this exciting project.

Thank you again for your support!

What's the fuss about feedback?

Personal tutors hear about the monthly feedback forms often. Whether you are a new tutor or have many years' experience, you may have found that it can be difficult to remember to send in your feedback form each month. You may have wondered whether that information actually even goes anywhere.

Why are they important? Feedback forms help us when we compile reports and apply for funding. The United Way and other funders require that we report on the number of people served and how many hours of instruction are provided. We rely on tutor reports to accurately reflect these numbers. The reports also help us plan for our future needs.

The feedback forms also help your learner as we use them to track progress towards learner goals and let us know when somebody could use some extra help. And of course, the forms can help us help you if you let us know what additional support could help your match to thrive. We also encourage you to provide information on potential training topics.

Thanks for all you do to support your learner!

Events

continued from page 1

- Part 1 - Tuesday, July 21, 6:00-8:00 pm. Part 2 - Thursday, July 23, 6:00 to 8:00 pm. Presented by Beth Gleisten.

Acting/Making Movies with ESL Learners— August date to be determined. Presented by Gregg Williard.

International Literacy Day Celebration – September 8,

In-services will include Citizenship ESL, Real Life English, and Pronunciation. Volunteer Information will be available throughout the day. The celebration will be capped off by a Tutor/

Financial Snapshot of 2008

Below is a brief synopsis of our financial situation through 2008.

Income

United Way	184,773.64
City of Madison	11,366.10
Cremer Grant	9,825.00
Civics Grant (WI Tech College)	11,127.00
DPI - Wisconsin Literacy Grant	10,254.51
Madison Community Fund	19,265.94
Other Grants	4,431.00
Program materials	5,880.70
Fees For Service	33,524.38
Contributions	45,732.80
Run/Walk	48,616.87
Literacy 24/7	13,853.59
Total	\$398,853.66

Expenses

Staffing Costs	280,966.66
Occupancy Expenses	42,973.74
Professional Fees	5,571.11
Supplies	4,397.51
Office Expense	17,450.59
Program Expense	16,250.43
Fundraising	17,981.11
Mileage and Parking	3,643.80
Advertising	1,447.60
Conferences & Training	159.62
Dues and Subscriptions	309.00
Licenses	65.00
Memberships	385.00
Total	\$391,848.57
Net Income	7,005.09

Learner Panel.

Helpful Homework – Tuesday, October 20, 5:30 to 7:30 pm. Presented by Brian Anderson.

Cultural Literacy – Wednesday, November 11, 5:30 to 7:30 pm. Presented by Bailey Smolarek.

Literacy Network: The Year in Pictures – Friday, December 4, 6:00 to 8:00 pm. Potluck Celebration of the year's accomplishments. Lussier Community Education Center

Literacy Network honors super volunteer Kathy DeMets for her 15 years of service!

Nearly 15 years ago, Kathy DeMets started volunteering with Literacy Network, which was then called the Madison Area Literacy Council.

In May 1994, Kathy started volunteering-- she just walked into the office and asked if there was anything she could do. A former elementary teacher, she was interested in helping with an organization that worked on literacy issues. She started calling many area churches and libraries to see



if they would be willing to let tutors/

learners use a space in their location for lessons, and made a listing of those places for the volunteer manager. Later that summer, the director asked Kathy to help make the bank deposits and pay the bills. She has been volunteering in that capacity ever since.

At the same time, she also started tutoring and has tutored three students over the years.

Kathy has been an integral part of our financial and fundraising efforts. She began volunteering to help out with the Canterbury Run/Walk in 1996 and has been helping ever since! She started as a corner direction aide and then moved to helping with the preregistration. In the last 6 years, she has been in charge of finding volunteers for the preregistration. Last year she was in charge of calculating the amount of money donated to Literacy Network and preparing the bank deposit. Even with that high level of responsibility, Kathy still found time to snap several photos of the event for our marketing purposes. Kathy helps us tremendously by making deposits and paying bills. She recently learned how to use Quickbooks to issue checks and always enjoys taking on a new challenge.

Kathy DeMets has been a regular volunteer at Literacy Network since 1994!

When the office moved from Atwood Avenue to Park Street in 2002, she helped find furniture for the children's area and artwork to hang on the walls of the new building. Every now and then, she helps out with a large mailing when needed. Kathy is literally a nurturer, too. She waters our plants each week when she comes in.

Through many changes to the organization, Kathy has been an incredibly valuable person. In addition to just helping out wherever she can and being an amazingly reliable presence in the organization, Kathy is also

incredibly kind and positive to everyone she meets. She is generous with her time and energy, and truly cares about making a positive impact in her community. Even more remarkably, she also volunteers with other organizations, such as food pantries and shelters.

“I am proud to be part of this organization,” says Kathy.

Literacy Network honors and celebrates Kathy's 15 years of service to the organization. Kathy is the volunteer who has

the most experience of anyone in the organization, including staff and board members. She has experienced new faces in the office, marriages, births, new family members, departures, and even a name change for the organization. She is a tribute to the power that one person can have when she dedicates herself to something she believes in.

“The Literacy Network is a very important source for those who need its help. I am proud to be part of this organization. I have seen it grow from a very small organization to what it is today. I plan to continue helping the Literacy Network wherever I can,” says Kathy.

Marilyn Neiman: Teaching and Learning

By Lynn Pawelski
Volunteer Manager
lynn@litnetwork.org

“You really should be honoring James, it’s all about him” says Marilyn Neiman as she talks about her Adult Basic Education learner. Her gift as a tutor is that she makes room for it to be all about him. Marilyn claims that she isn’t doing anything much, emphasizing that tutoring is pretty ‘low key’ – it just kind of happens.”

Marilyn and James have focused on his three goals over

the last year: improved computer, reading and spelling skills. “Writing is what he has a hard time with and doesn’t want to do,” according to Marilyn. She looks for ways to get James interested in writing. Recently, this meant learning about horse racing during the lead up to the Kentucky Derby and Belmont Stakes. James ended up doing the teaching, and learning a lot along

the way too. This openness to finding lessons in James’ interests led to James writing several paragraphs about the Belmont Stakes.

Having taught 1st and 2nd grades, Marilyn has had to re-learn a lot of higher-level reading tips and tricks that had gotten rusty. She attended the recent “Grammar Guts” in-service which she says “helped give [her] ideas for presenting grammar questions that James has been asking.”

According to Marilyn, the main thing that James has gained in the last year is confidence. Marilyn helps him stretch outside his comfort zone, opening up a world of reading. In the past year, James has signed up for computer classes at the library and MATC, attended a large consumer show to

purchase a computer, volunteered at a Literacy Network event, attended community events, and sought out books that interest him at his reading level.

Marilyn’s encouragement and coaching are a big part of his success. From the beginning, Marilyn has been a reliable and thoughtful tutor. Marilyn and James are both flexible, shifting meeting times instead of letting lessons slide when either one of



Marilyn and James work together every week at Literacy Network.

them has another commitment.

“He stretches me,” declares Marilyn. It seems like they stretch one another.

First Literacy Network Spanish class begins in March

By Bailey Smolarek
Community Literacy Coordinator
bailey@litnetwork.org

We’re very excited here at Literacy Network to offer our first Spanish class. The class began on Thursday, March 5.

The class is held weekly until May 14. The cost of the class is \$130 including materials (this money will go directly towards Literacy Network programs).

This is a beginning Spanish class and is specially geared towards Literacy Network tutors, putting the strongest emphasis

on conversational situations. The last 15-20 minutes of every class will involve a language intercambio (exchange) with native Spanish speaking students participating in a Literacy Network English class at the same time and location.

Students who feel as though they have a higher level of Spanish, but would still like to get some extra practice, are urged to contact Bailey Smolarek or Beth Gleisten at 244-3911 about a Spanish/English conversation partner to meet with outside of class.

Hopefully, more Spanish classes and opportunities will be available in the future.

Safety in Numbers: A Glimpse at Group Instruction

By Jennifer Sell

Group Instruction Director

jen@litnetwork.org

Say “Literacy Network” and the first image that may pop to mind is that of a learner working diligently at a small table with a volunteer tutor. And this scene does indeed play itself out morning, noon and night at hundreds of locations in Dane County. In addition to one-on-one personal and community tutoring, however, learners can also improve their skills in Literacy Network’s group ESL classes. How much do you know about your agency’s group instruction program? Take our little newsletter quiz and find out!

1) Literacy Network group instruction has partnered with all of the following EXCEPT...

- a. Employers including UW Hospital & Clinics and The Wisconsin Cheeseman
- b. Dane County Parent Council and Madison Public Libraries
- c. Madison Metropolitan, Middleton-Cross Plains, and Verona Area School Districts
- d. Everybody and their brother

1) d. “Everybody and their brother”... we’re working on it though! Currently, Literacy Network runs over 15 group classes in three instructional areas—public ESL, workplace literacy, and family literacy. **Public ESL:** At any given time, students can attend one or more of the seven public ESL classes held at our South Park office or in partnership with Catholic Multicultural Center on Beld Street. Like all of Literacy Network’s services, the classes are free. Instruction spans levels 1, 2 and 3 and students work to improve the “four skills” of language learning—speaking, listening, reading and writing—in an atmosphere that is supportive, comfortable and tailored to their practical communication needs. **Workplace Literacy:** We have collaborated with over 10 businesses in Dane County to offer onsite workplace

English to employees in factories, hospitals, bakeries, and other industries. Literacy Network works closely with employees and supervisors to identify workplace needs, analyze job tasks and tailor-design curriculum for each site. In 2007, our UW Hospital and Clinics partnership won Wisconsin Literacy’s Outstanding Achievement in a Workplace Literacy Program award. **Family Literacy:** Literacy Network helps parents become literacy leaders in the home and strong advocates for their children’s education. We teach parents English skills while their children attend early childhood classes with partners such as Dane County Parent Council. Families then apply what they learn to fun, educational activities in the home and community. Literacy Network also teams with area school districts to teach parents English skills to understand and communicate with the school system. In spring 2009, we’re customizing “English in the Schools” curriculum for Lowell, Emerson, Sherman, Hawthorne, Sauk Trail, and Glacier Edge families.

2) How large are group classes at Literacy Network?

- a. only slightly bigger than a breadbox
- b. on average, 10 students
- c. busting at the seams
- d. all of the above

2) d. “All of the above.” Public group classes are open entry (students may join at any time) and can range from 4 to over 20 students. Although class levels are specified, most groups are multilevel in some way. Sometimes a learner may come as a beginner reader, but speak quite fluently. Others learned some writing skills in their home country, but have trouble conversing. Most have incredibly busy lives and can only come at particular times, or to a class that offers childcare, regardless of level. Our goal is to provide all of our students with quality instruction that meets their particular needs and makes

a difference in their lives...a tall order given so much variety in our student population. Literacy Network employs certified, experienced ESL instructors to tackle these teaching challenges.

3) Is there a “typical” group instruction student?

- a. Definitely not
- b. Maybe?
- c. Not really
- d. Yes, and he or she speaks Spanish, Tibetan, Hmong, or French.

3) c. “Not really.” For me, one of the most exiting aspects of group instruction is the diversity of our student population. While all of our students are motivated and hard-working adults, each brings a unique background and experience to the table. On a recent Tuesday night, students in a Level 1 class took turns telling fellow classmates their names and where they were from. We began pointing out homelands on the world map posted on the wall. It was a fascinating exercise. Among the 10 people present, EIGHT countries were represented: Ecuador, Mexico, Laos, Bulgaria, Russia, Rwanda, Honduras, and, of course, the United States. (Their American teacher was born a few blocks down the street at Meriter, back when it sported the soap operatic name Madison General Hospital).

Looking around our little classroom, we counted world citizens from five different continents sitting together and working to communicate in English—their one common language. The students were impressed. And so was I...reminded once again how thankful I am to be working with such inspiring adults, people who bring the best the world has to offer to our community and work so hard to share it.

Literacy Network
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Madison, WI 53715

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Director's Notes

By Jeff Burkhart
Executive Director



You might be surprised by the number of people who have come to work with us at Literacy Network. We have had an amazing number of new learners and tu-

tors this year. Our classes are filled, community literacy programming is operating near capacity and we have many new students seeking personal tutors. We have gotten the word out broadly to both new volunteers and new learners. And already this year we've had 287 new potential volunteer contacts!

Our outreach strategies seem to be working well. La Movida Spanish-language radio has offered us a free public service announcement, which has brought in

many people who are interested in classes and tutoring. We are now averaging more than 10 people per class, and our numbers continue to rise. Most of our Community Literacy programs are operating near capacity. Our English in the Schools programs have gotten off to a great start, and we're offering instruction to more than 40 adult family members in the schools.

This is a tribute to the great work of our staff. Lynn Pawelski, our volunteer manager, has done a great job of getting the word out about volunteer opportunities. Brian Anderson has been hard at work in training new tutors and matching them up with learners. Jen Sell has coordinated 16 classes this semester and is teaching one of them that is completely full. Beth Gleisten makes sure that we're meeting the needs of our learners and is a wonderful classroom teacher. Rachel Knoll coordinates our English in the Schools classes, which have been a big success so far this semester. Bailey Smolarek coordinates all of our Community Literacy programs, hires and trains interns, and is

teaching our new Spanish class designed for tutors. Gregg Williard is our dynamic, fun and creative ESL teacher. Karen George-Friedman is helping move our development in new directions by working on grants and contacts, and is coordinating the Literacy 24/7 event on April 18. Our ESL instructors Julie Cherney, Jim Sajdak, Catalina Thomsen, Lisa Urbonya and Sara Ewing have helped us expand our classes to meet the needs in the community. And of course, our volunteers do an incredible job of helping us all improve our work. We appreciate all you do to help provide training, education and related services to the community.

There's no doubt - 2009 is going to be a challenging year financially. We'll have to work a lot harder to keep our free services available to those in our community who are in need. In all, we need the support to raise \$153,000 this year to meet our financial goals. Please give me a call if you'd like to get involved. I look forward to working with you to continue improving our services.