



LITERACY MATTERS

MAY 2017

Literacy Matters is a recurring publication of Literacy Nassau, Inc.



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CALL TO ACTION: FEDERAL BUDGET PROPOSES DEVASTATING CUTS

(submitted by Karen Micciche)

The Trump administration's initial budget proposal, which was recently released, proposed a budget cut of 13.5% in the U.S. Department of Education for FY2018. While adult education was not specifically mentioned in this proposal, we anticipate that the complete budget, which will be released in mid-May, will include the cut of 13.5% for adult education along with most other education programs.

Given the tremendous harm that a cut of this size would cause to adult education programs and students across the country, the National Council of State Directors and COABE (Coalition on Adult Basic Education) is launching a national advocacy campaign to ensure that members of Congress do not approve this devastating cut.

The message for this campaign is **NO CUTS IN ADULT EDUCATION**. Each of us as adult educators, students, tutors, and friends of adult education have the responsibility to take swift and decisive action to ensure that the proposed cut is not enacted. As advocates for our students, we must ensure that the voices of our students from across the country will be heard throughout the halls of Congress.

To be successful, we need to generate a massive outpouring of support for our provision. The initial goals of the Long Island Regional Adult Education Network (LI-RAEN)

are for 500 contacts per Congressional district. Please remember that members of the House and Senate want to hear only from their constituents.

This campaign will focus on contacts between adult education students, alumni of adult education programs, tutors, teachers and administrators, and friends of adult education with **ALL MEMBERS OF THE U.S. HOUSE AND SENATE**.

Contacts should be made in the following ways:

1. Letters

All letters should be directed to the Washington, D.C. offices of the members of Congress. Letters can be sent either by U.S. mail or by e-mail, using the official website that each member of Congress maintains. Clicking on the member's website and the contact link will allow a person to write a letter that will automatically be sent to the member's office.

Below is an outline for student letters:

All student letters should include the reason that the student enrolled in adult education. Examples might include the following: receiving a high school equivalency credential, improving literacy, math, or writing skills, or participating in job training. Letters should also include what the student is planning to do when he/she completes the program. Lastly, letters should include the statement **DO NOT CUT FUNDING** (cont'd. on page 2)

THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

Where does the time go? Today, as I write this, two things are concurrently happening: 1) I am celebrating my 7 year anniversary as Literacy Nassau's Executive Director, and 2) I'm getting ready to celebrate my oldest daughter Haley's 5th birthday. It also happens to be the morning after (un)SCRABBLE. Last night, we executed a flawless event, and all credit goes to my amazing staff and volunteers. But really, it also has to do with time. We have been doing this for 7 years. That's 7 years of team building, problem solving, tweaking, and perfecting every detail to create this beautiful, well oiled machine here at Literacy Nassau. I'm reminded of the beginning of my time here and how similar it was to the beginning of my time as a mom. I worked so hard, and was so tired, and felt clueless most of the time! But now, I look at my beautiful Haley, who is a kind, friendly, inquisitive, funny little blessing, and I can tell that I must be doing something right. I felt the same way at our event last night. Our team works so well together because we've had 7 years of practice, hard work and effort. I'm doubly blessed because I get to have a great team at home and a great team at work.

Karen



This throwback picture of me and Haley was taken when she was about 3 months old and we went for a day at the beach. Next week, Haley will be 5.





CALL TO ACTION (CONT'D. FROM PAGE 1)

FOR ADULT EDUCATION.

Letters from alumni of adult education programs (or from graduating students) should focus on how the program helped them get a better job, earn more money, help their children learn more effectively, and make them better citizens.

Letters from tutors can include some capsule summaries of the students that they are teaching and the statement **DO NOT CUT FUNDING FOR ADULT EDUCATION.**

2. Telephone Calls

Telephone calls should be made directly to the Washington D.C. offices of the members of Congress. Student calls can go as follows: "My name is _____. I am a student with Literacy Nassau's adult education program. I would like Representative/Sen-

ator _____ to know that adult education works. Please oppose all cuts to adult education."

This campaign needs to start immediately, with the bulk of the contacts being made through the end of the school year in late May/early June. Given the slow pace of the budget through Congress it is possible that we will still be in this fight well into the fall.

History proves that advocacy works. Adult education has faced similar challenges in the past and prevailed because of advocacy efforts like these.

Help all our voices be heard by participating in the democratic process so that our elected officials make the right decision. This may well be the most important action we take this year in our role as adult educators.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Andrea Acosta - Joseph Amaral - Sr. Mary Alice Aschenbach - Donna Bennett - Dee Berger - Kathy Berry Lynne Borah - Carl Borruso - Linda Caginalp - Carol Ciccarello - Mary Conroy - Louann Cronin - Regina D'Allesandro - Anjana Dhansinghani Delia A. Espinal - Marjorie Farrell - Johnny Gilchrist - Laura Glenz - Maryanne Gogolinski - Carolyn Hecht Sandra Herman - Sara Izquierdo - Sherry Jagels - Mindy Kaiser - Barbara Kaplan - Michael Kauffman Ruth Lowenberg - Daniel McCarthy Evelyn Monaco - Gerry Mullins - Grazia Norton - Sandy Palma - June Prisand - Alisa Promakul - Barbara Randall - Kathy Scheiner - Mahendra Shah - Harriet Studness - Ernestine Warner - Gina Wood Hart - Deborah Zenir (Tutors all born in May!)

(UN)SCRABBLE 2017 - AN EVENING TO REMEMBER

On April 6, 2017, more than 225 tutors, supporters, and friends of Literacy Nassau gathered at Chateau Briand in Carle Place to celebrate our 19th annual (un)SCRABBLE Challenge! We were joined by our friends from MSC Industrial Supply (who brought 57 attendees to the event), Certilman Balin, Capital One, Berkman Henoah Pedersen Peddy & Fenchel, Smyth Nora, and of course, a wonderful and worthy honoree - the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock. UUCSR gives Literacy Nassau a very special gift every year - the gift of space. Their beautiful campus is used for our annual Recognition Night, Bridge Tournament, Tutor Conference, and several Tutor Training Workshops, and we were extremely happy to publicly honor their commitment to Literacy Nassau and the community at large through their generous spirit of sharing.



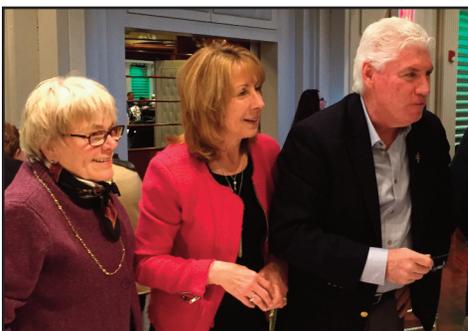
Board President Stephen Bendernagel kicked off the evening with a gracious welcome on behalf of the Board.



MSC staff members were all smiles over a delicious buffet dinner and great camaraderie.



Karen poses with Claire DeRoche, Director of Social Justice at UUCSR.



Bob Genalo (last year's honoree and previous Board President) and his team get into the Bingo Bonus Round!



Umama poses with a handful of our judges before round 1 gets started.



Rev. Ned Wight, Senior Minister of UUCSR, worked hard with his team to put together a high scoring board.



RESOURCE CORNER

(submitted by Sara Izquierdo)

Can you imagine a lesson about household chores so moving it brings tears to your students' eyes? Believe it or not, I have one for you. I recently discovered it on a wonderful online resource called film-english.com. This website provides short films and accompanying English language lesson plans.

Incorporating one of these short films can be a fantastic way to make an engaging and memorable lesson out of something as mundane as chores. Believe me when I say that the film "The Notebook" will leave the images of, and hopefully the words for mopping, laundry and other household chores etched in your students' brains. The use of images allows the student to connect with the material on an emotional level, regardless of how much of the language they understand.

But it's not all about chores. Films and lessons can be searched by level and theme. Themes range from animals and jobs to values and relationships. Some films are full of dialogue, others have few words. Some lend themselves to working on vocabulary or parts of speech, others promote discussion/debate.

The author of the website, Keiran Donaghy, is an educator whose work focuses on the effective use of film in the English language classroom. He writes about how pervasive film is in our society today, and how the ability to understand and analyze visual imagery is an integral part of literacy in the 21st century.

Interested? Check it out at film-english.com.

TUTOR SPOTLIGHT - SGIB

(submitted by Umama Pasha)

I recently sat down with Peter Walsh to discuss his experiences as a tutor for the SGIB program. Peter started as a tutor in 2009 and works for the NYS Department of Labor. He initially decided to volunteer with Literacy Nassau because he saw the language barriers his clients faced when seeking employment. He began teaching an SGIB group in January at the Baldwin library.

What made you decide to tutor in the SGIB program?

Peter: I recently started classes in teaching English and SGIB is a great way to get more experience working with different levels of learners. I wanted a challenge and to make more of an impact.

What do you like most about teaching SGIB?

Peter: The students' thirst for knowledge is palpable. When people are that eager to learn, that's the best place to be.

What is one challenge you've had when working with a group?

Peter: I had a really diverse, multilingual group, and it was hard not to personally overuse my Spanish because I didn't want to alienate those from other backgrounds.

What is one success that you have had with the group?

Peter: This is a small one but every class had a routine. Every day I would write, "Today is ____, Yesterday was ____, and Tomorrow will be ____." And by the end of the class, the students felt confident to go up to the board and write in the dates. I think the interaction between the students worked well. I felt like I created an atmosphere where they felt comfortable speaking to each other and were not worried about pronunciation.

What tips would you offer tutors working with beginner ELLs?

Peter: Be aware of how fast you are speaking to the student. Give the students latitude to practice, and add variety through language games whenever possible.

PL DEVELOPMENTS

(submitted by Cindy Cabrera)

Literacy Nassau is happy to announce a new partnership with PL Developments. Located in Westbury, PL Developments is a manufacturing company that produces various generic pharmaceutical products, which are distributed in stores like Walgreens. In January, I was asked to come up with a curriculum that would be geared towards developing workplace skills for English Language learners. Our staff went to register 50+ employees; and we created two classes for them. The first class is for the employees who are about to enter the second shift (so they go to class first, then straight to work), and the second class is for those just coming out the first shift (so they go to work first, then class). Many of the employees I teach are beginners with a strong desire to learn. On the first day of class, I wrote in bold letters #1 RULE: ENGLISH ONLY. All the students were in shock, since they are Spanish speakers and so am I, but I informed them that throughout these 12 weeks of classes, I want all of them to get the most out of the course. They were ready and so was I. We jumped right in reviewing and learning foundational skills.

When teaching a beginner class, the most important thing that one must remember is to repeat and review information. Those who are lower level than the rest of the class receive extra help packets to guide the students in the concepts we are learning as a class. At this point, students have already taken 3 exams. Now they are preparing to take the fourth exam. Exams offer great insight as to how the class is progressing and it pushes people to study. We are very fortunate partnering up with PLD. They are providing a great opportunity for their employees.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

(submitted by Kim Nau)

Just about everything can benefit from having a creative name and Next Chapter Book Clubs and Jot It Down Writing Clubs are no exception. To build camaraderie among our clubs, we had a "Naming Contest" in which members brainstormed together to create a unique name for their club. Here were some of the contenders:

- Book Fr"ends"
- The Character Explorers
- Book Worms
- The Pagemasters
- Reading is FRIENDamental!
- Word Up –It's Our Write!
- The Jungle Book Club
- Super Troupers Amityville Readers
- Tuesdays with Tara
- The Thursday Night Silly Social & Entertaining Book Club
- The Zebras
- Gryffindor Book Club
- Ocean Readers
- The Titanic Reading Club
- Gorgeous Genius Book Club
- The Disney Channel Book Club
- Monday Morning Marvels
- The C & C Team (Create & Collaborate)!

(Continued on page 4)



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RECOGNITION NIGHT

(submitted by Ocaria DiMango)

Recognition Night is upon us and we could not be more excited! On May 18th we will hold our annual event, Recognition Night, where we get to recognize our students and tutors' accomplishments. We reflect on the past year and congratulate everyone on their commitment. Awards are handed out to tutors and students and various speakers share their successes with us. It's also where we celebrate our program's graduates. Last year was Literacy Nassau's first graduation ceremony. After completing the student path and then attending one or more semesters of our advanced ESOL classes, students eventually score out of our assessments or move on to achieve other goals. We invite these students back on Recognition Night to celebrate them and their commitment to learning.

At Recognition Night, we also share our annually published student anthology, Open Door. Open Door

represents the population we serve through essays, short stories, poems, recipes, photos and drawings. Encourage your student(s) to write something that's meaningful to them. It could be a few sentences or a short story. We suggest leaving the student's work untouched, unedited, and as authentic as possible. If the story can be heard and the message gets across, leave the errors to be admired. The deadline for Open Door submissions is April 28th. Please send your submission via e-mail to your Literacy Specialist. If you do not know who to send it to, you can always e-mail it to Karen at kmicciche@literacynassau.org.

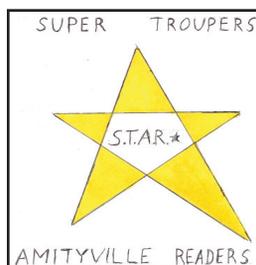
A formal invitation will follow this newsletter and we hope that you can make it. It's an inspirational night that you will enjoy with your students. Please share the invitation with your student or group. It is an event not to be missed. We will serve light dinner and offer some raffle baskets too. We truly hope to see you there!

WHAT'S IN A NAME (CONT'D.)

After an office-wide vote, the winner is ... the East Meadow Jot It Down Club with "Word Up – It's Our Write!"

The winning club will receive small wooden bookshelves donated by the Garden City Community Church and each member will also receive a special book from Literacy Nassau. Thank you to everyone who participated!

Below are photos of some of the contest entries:



A special thank you goes out to the children of the Garden City community Church who built, painted, and donated the bookshelves to Literacy Nassau to use as a prize for our contest.