

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



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## LITERACY NASSAU'S GROWING FOOTPRINT

(submitted by Karen Micciche)

Literacy Nassau has expanded its menu of services by leaps and bounds over the past few years. What started as a few hundred volunteers individually tutoring adults in Basic Literacy and ESOL has grown exponentially. Because of the breadth and depth of services we now offer, the inevitable has happened: word has spread, and people outside of Nassau County are actively seeking our assistance.

According to [www.suffolkcountyny.gov](http://www.suffolkcountyny.gov), Suffolk County is comprised of 1,493,350 people (as of 2009). Of these, 192,642 (12.9%) are foreign-born, 266,000 (17.8%) speak a language other than English at home, and 283,000 (18.9%) have developmental or physical disabilities. There are a myriad of wonderful organizations in Suffolk County that offer programs to address literacy and language needs, and there are also programs that assist with naturalization, green cards, and legal consultations for other immigration issues. And of course, there are plenty of programs that address the needs of adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities. However, most of the aforementioned agencies do not have the capacity to offer these services at no cost to the client. That is the beauty of being a volunteer-based

organization: our administrative costs are very low and are mostly grant-funded, so we can offer all of our services for free.

You may have noticed in our Spring Program Guide that we are offering our very first Tutor Training Workshop in Suffolk this month, at the Sachem Library in Holbrook. The TTW is for Next Chapter Book Club facilitators and stemmed from a group of parents out in Wading River who were looking to place their adult children with developmental disabilities into a book club. To create a club for them, we needed to first find volunteer facilitators that far east in Suffolk County, so we set up the TTW in Holbrook and are hopeful that it will attract some great new volunteers. Our goal is to plant several Next Chapter Book Club sites in varying locations throughout Suffolk so that as many people as possible have access to this wonderful, engaging resource.

Another meaningful activity that we've been able to bring "over the border" is our work with naturalization. Citizenship Drives give qualifying immigrants the opportunity to have their N-400 Applications for Naturalization completed by either a licensed immigration attorney or a BIA accredited representative. We are also able to complete fee waiver applications, green card renewals, and other immigration forms. We are excited to be (see page 2)

## THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

Support is a critical element of success. In my house, we all work to ensure that everyone has what they need. Julianne (our youngest who is 2) struggles to express herself with words; her language is often unclear to many. I usually understand her, but when I don't, my older daughter, Haley, never hesitates to translate. For example, if Julie is crying for a "kickysannie," Haley will let us know that Julie is hungry for a chicken sandwich. We then prepare the food that nourishes the children so they can return to their busy job of playing. As adults, we also support each other. If I am tired, Chris cleans the house or cooks dinner. If he is sick, I pick up the slack. We work together so that everyone is taken care of.

We have a similar setup here at Literacy Nassau. Volunteers provide direct support to our students and get to know them so they can articulate what services and assistance they need. The volunteers are supported by the Literacy Specialists, who provide the resources to nourish the volunteers and their students. And as a staff, we look out for each other by extending a helping hand when it is needed. Every layer is important. This month, we salute you, our volunteers, and acknowledge the role you play in supporting our students.

Karen



My husband Chris, pictured above, works with me to offer our girls a solid foundation of support upon which they can learn and grow.

## LITERACY NASSAU'S GROWING FOOTPRINT, CONT'D.

able to offer a Citizenship Drive in Huntington Station - a community of great need - on June 27th.

We are also excited to be launching our Small Group Instruction program in two communities in Suffolk County: Deer Park and Bay Shore. In partnership with the Deer Park and Bay Shore libraries (respectively), we look forward to bringing the small group dynamic to the adult ESOL population in these communities in the summer and fall of 2016.

In the months to come, you can expect to see more of our work in Suffolk County. Our Board of Directors is currently working on a strategic plan to help bridge the gap for potential students and/or clients in Suffolk County without duplicating the services of neighboring organizations. To that end, here is a list

of resources should you know of anyone who lives in Suffolk and needs help.

Literacy Suffolk: Offers one-on-one, volunteer based, adult literacy tutoring. [www.literacysuffolk.org](http://www.literacysuffolk.org), (631) 286-1649.

Western Suffolk BOCES: Offers ESOL and Adult Basic Education large group classes, high school equivalency test preparation, citizenship test preparation classes, and more at a variety of locations throughout western Suffolk. [www.wsbores.org](http://www.wsbores.org), (631) 667-6000 x.303

Eastern Suffolk BOCES: Offers high school equivalency test preparation, ESOL and Adult Basic Education large group classes, and computer instruction. [www.esbores.org/AE](http://www.esbores.org/AE), (631) 419-1609.

The Learning Connection: Offers large group ESOL classes in Brentwood. (631) 951-4783.

Suffolk Community College: Offers high school equivalency test preparation large group classes in Brentwood, Riverhead, and Selden. [www3.sunysuffolk.edu/continuinTASC/](http://www3.sunysuffolk.edu/continuinTASC/) (631) 451-4927.

The Opening Word Program: Offers large group ESOL classes in Amityville, Wyandanch, and Huntington Station. [www.theopeningword.org](http://www.theopeningword.org), (631) 643-0541.

Check your local school district as well for adult education class offerings. Many districts offer services for a nominal fee.

## AZAR, THE GRAMMAR GURU

(submitted by Kim Nau)

Betty Azar is highly respected in the field of language acquisition. She is the author of the Azar Grammar Series which has been used by ESL teachers for over thirty years. This series uses a grammar-based teaching approach in which grammar is used as the foundation for language learning. Whether or not you own her textbook, you can visit her website and utilize the many free, valuable, and practical resources that are provided.

When you visit the website, [www.azargrammar.com](http://www.azargrammar.com), click on the "Classroom Materials" link. Here you can view an array of supplemental materials, such as: PowerPoint presentations, song lessons, vocabulary expansion activities, and teacher-created worksheets. Activities are listed by skill level: beginning, intermediate, and advanced. On this page, you can also view a pdf version of a book of communicative activities called "Fun with Grammar." All of the grammar games are organized by topic: verbs (past, present, future), questions, nouns, pronouns, prepositions, modals, adjectives, gerunds, infinitives, and more.



To be honest, I learned many of the nuances of grammar by teaching. Prior to teaching a grammar lesson to my ESL students, I would research the topic extensively. Teaching others made me more well-versed in grammar than I ever was before. Good grammar is essential for effective communication and grammar instruction should be integrated meaningfully into lessons.

Do not be intimidated by grammar. You can learn with your student. Also, do not try to reinvent the wheel when lesson planning because the Internet has a wealth of teaching tools. You just have to know where to look. If you visit our website, [www.literacynassau.org/resources](http://www.literacynassau.org/resources), you can view a comprehensive list of resources that we recommend to our literacy volunteers.

## SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

The Linda Ross-Harrington Foundation is dedicated to promoting foreign language studies and multicultural education among Long Island students. The Foundation celebrates the life of the late Linda Ross-Harrington. Linda taught ESOL in the Three Village School District and believed fiercely in the fundamental need to promote tolerance and understanding among different countries and cultures.

The trustees of the Linda Ross-Harrington Foundation have granted Literacy Nassau \$2,500 to create an SGI group in Deer Park. We are grateful for this gift and look forward to meeting the ESOL needs of this new community.



Linda felt every student deserved an education, no matter their cultural background.

The next  
**TUTOR NETWORKING GROUP**  
is on **Saturday, April 16th** at 2pm in our Freeport office. April's topic will be how cultures can both conflict and cooperate. You won't want to miss it!

RSVP today to Candice at [ccantore@literacynassau.org](mailto:ccantore@literacynassau.org) or call 867-3580 x25 to join in on the fun!

## STRUGGLING WITH WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN AND CELEBRATING WHAT IS: MY DAUGHTER, THE AUTHOR

(submitted by Jackie Shenkman, parent)

The writing is often indecipherable, the words are frequently unrecognizable, but my daughter, Mandy, is quite copious with regard to writing down her thoughts, her experiences and her feelings. Papers, pads, notebooks, diaries and journals are filled with fragmented sentences of misspelled words.

So many people, including myself, become very frustrated when Mandy asks for help with her writing. She is unable to communicate the things she wants to write about. She continues to appeal for support. We try, but quickly become exasperated.

"I want to write a book", she told Kathy, her Literacy Nassau reading tutor.

In order to write stories, one must be able to read stories!

We have always struggled to find Hi-Lo (high interest – low readability) books. Kathy often finds reading material, and they enjoy reading together each week. But Mandy's desire is to "write a book."

Kathy worked with Lori Caniano and Sharon Rappaport at the Manhasset Library to secure a Hi-Lo collection. The collection includes biographies, fiction and non-fiction books appealing to

different reading levels. Also available at the Manhasset Library is the easy to read newspaper, *News For You*.

Mandy's own "book" was recently created, and she is thrilled. She enthusiastically boasts about the book she is writing with Kathy and continuously jots down her ideas. Kathy's patience is inspiring. Although reading Mandy's writing is still a challenge, they talk and smile together as each sentence is crafted. Reading and writing not only lead to the development of instrumental skills, but literacy connects people and generates meaningful communication.

Because true communication is a give and take of ideas, Literacy Nassau

recently saw fit to pilot a new program to assist individuals who struggle with writing. Jot It Down is an offshoot of Literacy Nassau's Next Chapter Book Club program, offering opportunities for peer support and sharing through a writing club. Jot it Down members will meet weekly at the East Meadow Public Library beginning in late February. Led by Patricia Rossi, a volunteer tutor who has facilitated a number of writing clubs, this addition to the ever-growing menu of services offered by Literacy Nassau will offer techniques, writing prompts, and space for adults with developmental disabilities to find their inner voice.

The need for literacy competence for individuals with developmental disabilities is critical and urgent. The movement to promote literacy skills by Literacy Nassau's Next Chapter Book Clubs on Long Island, Manhasset Library's eagerness to develop a Hi-Lo collection and East Meadow Library's launch of the Jot It Down writing club demonstrate a commitment to provide literacy opportunities to individuals with developmental disabilities, which will thereby support genuine community inclusion.



Author Mandy Shenkman will be featured in *Open Door*, our annual anthology of student writing.

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Happy birthday to all of our tutors born in April! They are:

Kami-Leigh Agard	Mary Alibrandi
Carol Aronin	Nancy Benchimol
Sheri Berkowitz	Nancy Bob
Seena Bryan	Candice Cantore
Eileen Capriotti	Arlene Cherry
Felicia Dunbar	Barbara Fritz
Janet Geduldig	Jeanne Geib
Linda Goldbaum	Michele Haber
Florence Harff	Dolores Joseph
Lorri Klonsky	Eleanor Krebs
Agnes Lasetchuk	Juan Manzano
Carol Markman	Antonia Obara
Carol Padovani	Terese Pizza
Josephine Palazzolo	Elisabeth Reilly
Chris Rochford	
Stephen Salyk	
Vasu Shah	
Linda Shine	
James Tenney	
Mary Thrall	
Rosemary Valenti	
Virginia Walsh	
Joan Whiteside	



### REFER A FRIEND

Do you have a friend in Suffolk County who you think would make a great Next Chapter Book Club facilitator? As we expand this program east into Suffolk, we will be looking for volunteers who are interested in co-facilitating a book club for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities for one hour a week.

Best yet - if you refer a friend who then takes one of our training workshops, we'll send you an Amazon.com gift card!

Happy reading!



Want to expand or refresh your tutoring skills? Join us for a FREE **April Workshop**:

April 19th **Next Chapter Book Club Facilitator** - Train to become a facilitator to lead a book club with adults with developmental disabilities.

April 22nd **Integrating the 4 Language Components** - Learning language requires speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Evaluate your lessons and learn new strategies to enhance your tutoring sessions.

April 28th **Talk-A-Tivities** - (for SGI Tutors only) This workshop will review fun activities and conversation starters to give intermediate level SGI students more speaking practice.

**Advance registration is required.** Please email Alison at [aorme@LiteracyNassau.org](mailto:aorme@LiteracyNassau.org) or call (516) 867-3580 x21.



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**SAVE THE DATE!** This year's **Annual Recognition Night** is on Thursday, May 19th. Invitations will be mailed out soon, and we encourage you to attend with your student. We are now also accepting student submissions for **OPEN DOOR**, our annual published anthology of student pieces. **OPEN DOOR** allows students a creative outlet through a written story, poem or experience piece OR photography and/or artwork with a written caption or reflection about the visual.

**What does this mean for you as a tutor?** Please encourage, and even work with your student, to submit a creative work by Friday, April 22nd. Some tips below:

- ▶ **Start early.** Writing is a process and you cannot expect your student to complete a finished written piece in one session. Help them brainstorm, formulate their main ideas and format.
- ▶ **Choose a topic carefully.** Brainstorm with your student(s) topics that are engaging and personal that they want to share with others. Some ideas to explore: how they came to the U.S., travel in the U.S., how they have improved their English, favorite recipes or hobbies, or experiences in their country.
- ▶ **Maintain their authentic voice.** The purpose is to celebrate and highlight your student's journey and progress. An authentic voice may not read as perfect grammar, and tutor edits should only be made for clarity rather than to perfect grammar.
- ▶ **No translators.** If your student works on the piece on their own, tell them not to use a translator as this will not accurately convey the student's message.
- ▶ **Send a photo** (JPEG file) of you and your student with any written submissions.
- ▶ **Microsoft Word documents** (.doc or .docx) in electronic format are required for written submissions. You can also cut and paste the submission into the body of an email.

**All submissions for OPEN DOOR must be sent to your Literacy Specialist by Friday, April 22nd.**



At last year's ceremony:  
Above, Digna with Maria  
Gonzalez. Below, Cindy  
with Mara Jacobowitz.

