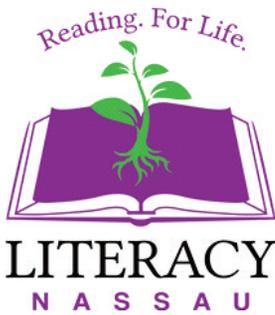




LITERACY MATTERS

JANUARY 2019



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

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GOVERNOR CUOMO ANNOUNCES EXPANSION OF ONA LEGAL SERVICES

(reprinted from the NYS Office for New Americans)

On December 13, 2018, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced the Office for New Americans is expanding and enhancing services to immigrants across the state who are under assault by the federal government. In response to federal immigration policies as well as feedback from impacted immigrant communities, advocates and service providers, ONA will establish Opportunity Centers in the North Country and the Southern Tier. ONA will hire 20 experienced, dedicated immigration attorneys to serve as full-time legal counsels in all regions of the state to provide free services to immigrants that need assistance. Additionally, ONA will partner with Cell-Ed to provide virtual English language courses, which can be more convenient than attending in-person classes.

"While the federal government pushes an anti-immigrant agenda, New York embraces our immigrant heritage and welcomes new Americans with open arms," Governor Cuomo said. "In New York, the Office for New Americans is the first line of defense against a federal government bent on closing borders and breaking up

families, and these critical services will help protect the immigrant community in the face of this assault."

"As the granddaughter of Irish immigrants who fled poverty in search of a better life, I have a deep appreciation for the struggles encountered by our newest Americans," said Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul. "The expansion of Opportunity Centers in the North Country and Southern Tier will provide immigrant services and support to upstate New Yorkers. I've seen firsthand while participating in countless naturalization ceremonies how the Office for New Americans helps individuals overcome barriers and teaches them *(cont'd on pg. 2)*



Governor Cuomo hosts a press conference regarding immigrant-based legislation.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

The dawn of a new year offers ample time for self-reflection. Rather, for me, those few days before the ball drops offer plenty of time for self-indulgence. Because I run a literacy organization, no one will be surprised to learn that my self-indulgence comes in the form of books.

I save books. The new book from my favorite author came out in October, and I bought it right away, but it sat on my nightstand for 10 long weeks because I waited for just the right moment to crack it open. This year, my self indulgence took on many new forms: while most people research diets and workout plans over the holiday break, I took up reading books that most would consider to be of the "self-help" genre. Now I am painfully addicted to them and can't stop reading! So, instead of offering my wisdom for the coming year with you, I will offer you some of my new favorite self-help authors: Brene Brown and Mark Manson. Google them, and then consume their titles at your own risk. Happy 2019!



2019 is my 40th year on this planet. To mark my mid-life crisis, I have started reading self help books!

Karen





CUOMO EXPANDS LEGAL SERVICES (CONT'D)

(cont'd from pg. 1)

the skills necessary to succeed. While the federal government pushes anti-immigration rhetoric, New York will continue to embrace our diversity that makes us the Empire State."

ONA recently issued two Requests for Applications totaling \$5.02 million seeking service providers for 25 Opportunity Centers spanning every region of the state as well as legal technical assistance to support the immigrant service providers and improve services.

Opportunity Centers

The ONA Opportunity Center Grant RFA seeks NYS-based organizations to comprise its network of neighborhood-based Opportunity Centers to provide services across the state, free of charge, including:

- **Legal Consultation:** Each Opportunity Center will be provided with a qualified and experienced immigration attorney to assist with the naturalization process and provide free legal consultations to clients. Each Center will hold at least 10 immigration law consultation days each year.
- **Naturalization Assistance:** Opportunity Centers will assist new Americans with citizenship applications, including N400, N600 and DACA applications on a rolling basis. Each Center must provide clients information on available financial resources for naturalization costs. Each Center will be expected to submit at least 100 complete applications to USCIS each year. Citizenship and DACA applications will be prepared by qualified, DOJ-accredited representatives or immigration attorneys.
- **Community Workshops:** Each Opportunity Center will offer eight community workshops each year, covering topics including parent engagement with schools, financial literacy, disaster preparedness, consumer protection and educational opportunities for immigrants and their children.
- **Citizenship Preparation Classes:** Each Opportunity Center will offer at least one class geared toward green card holders who are preparing for the naturalization test. Topics must include U.S. civics, history, government and other topics included on the exam.
- **Immigration Law/Federal Immigration Policy Workshops:** Each Opportunity Center will host at least four seminars covering immigration law and information on federal immigration policies. Topics may include: Developing a family emergency plan; Designating power of attorney; Knowing your rights and responsibilities if immigration officers come to your home or place of employment; What to do if you are arrested; How to find a family member in detention; and Consular services for applicable communities.

Legal Technical Assistance to Support Immigrant Service Providers

ONA will expand the availability of immigration lawyers around the state offering free and expert assistance. The ONA Statewide Legal Technical Assistance Request to Support Immigrant Service Providers RFA seeks qualified attorneys who can work full-time on immigration matters in conjunction with Opportunity Centers.

These 20 ONA Legal Counsels will provide legal technical assistance to Opportunity Centers and other immigrant service providers in each region of the state. Services will be available at legal clinics at community-based organizations within each region. Direct representation for clients in need of such assistance will be available, and they will conduct legal seminars and workshops. ONA Legal Counsels will travel within their regions to meet the needs of immigrants in their communities. Grantees will provide translation and interpretation services for non-English-speaking new American clients.

ONA Legal Counsels will provide direct representation to immigrants in select cases related to immigration related proceedings using a "universal representation" model that serves any immigrant in need of legal representation who meets geographic eligibility requirements. These requirements include resident immigrants in New York; families of mixed status with at least one family member with a tie to New York; and/or immigrant business owners in New York.

Each ONA Legal Counsel in upstate regions will provide legal representation to a caseload of 15-20 clients at a time. Downstate ONA Legal Counsels will handle between 12-20 cases, depending on the specific region. Immigration legal services provided by the ONA Legal Counsel should include the following cases and services, but not be limited to: Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, Asylum, U visas, T visas, Temporary Protected Status, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, Violence Against Women Act, Removal proceedings, for those currently detained or not, including those with a prior order of removal, Work permits, Bond hearings, Board of Immigration Appeals, Federal litigation, Advanced parole, Family reunification, Family-based immigration, Complex naturalization, and Family guardianship.

All services provided will be offered at no charge to clients.

As indicated in the Opportunity Center RFA, ONA Legal Counsels will conduct annual reviews of the naturalization application review process at each Center. They will also provide on-site immigration law consultations to new Americans with legal questions and hold clinics throughout each region where they process immigration-related applications and provide additional consultations.

Each ONA Legal Counsel must have three or more years of experience as an attorney, including at least two years of immigration law experience or work under the supervision of a senior attorney with three or more years of immigration law experience.

Between the two RFAs, ONA ensures Opportunity Centers are nearby and readily accessible free legal assistance is available statewide to those that need it. On Long Island, there will be two Opportunity Centers: one in Nassau, and one in Suffolk. Literacy Nassau has applied for the grant to host the Nassau Opportunity Center.

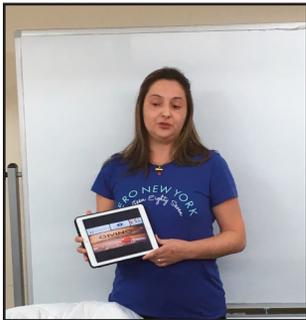


STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: SANDRA MILENA GOMEZ

(submitted by Kate Quijano)

Sandra is a student in the Freeport advanced level class (ONA). She worked hard throughout the session, always completed her homework, worked cooperatively with her classmates during small group projects, and attended field trips. On the last day of class, Sandra delivered an impressive presentation for the class on our theme "Giving." She created a PowerPoint presentation explaining the meaning of giving and how she applies those principles to her life. She included interesting quotes and pictures to engage the class.

She also planned an activity to get the class involved in the presentation. Each classmate received a card with a message on it. Students then had to respond to the message, such as "Tell someone thank you." or "Give a classmate a hug." Each person shared something related to the theme of giving. This was a great way to end the presentation and our fall session.



We are very thankful for Sandra's "Giving" personality and her enthusiasm for learning English.

We asked Sandra some questions to get to know her better. Here are her responses:

Q: Where were you born?

A: I was born in San Cristóbal, Táchira State-Venezuela.

Q: When did you come to the United States?

A: I came to the United States in November 2015.

Q: Tell us a little about your family.

A: I have a beautiful family. God sent us a very desired gift, our son, Matthew. He is 16 months old. My husband and my son are my motivation to learn English and be an excellent professional in this country too.

Q: How did you hear about Literacy Nassau and how long have you taken classes with us?

A: I heard about Literacy Nassau by the Freeport Library newsletter. I have been taking classes with you since the fall season 2018.

Q: Describe some of your experiences learning English.

A: One of the most impressive experiences for me has been to feel illiterate after having studied so much in my country, but at the same time, it is a great challenge that I enjoy because I love being in constant learning and personal improvement.

Q: What are your goals for the future?

A: I want to learn English as a second language. I want to validate my degree in education. I want to obtain the degree of teacher in this country. I want to work as a teacher in this country.

LITERACY NASSAU WINS FACEBOOK CONTEST

(submitted by Kelly Siry)

Bryan Karp is a Long Island native and former Stony Brook University football player. After he finished his football career he went on to become a successful entrepreneur but not without facing some hurdles. Bryan has struggled with dyslexia since childhood. Upon our first meeting, I elaborated on Literacy Nassau's new venture as the country's first donation-based tutoring center for children with dyslexia. His response was one of awe as he recounted his younger years saying, "There was nothing like that available to me when I was growing up on Long Island."

Bryan is a realtor from Re/Max Eastern Properties in Suffolk County. He sold more than 100 homes in 2018! To celebrate this milestone and give back to the local community he held a social media contest. Facebook members were asked to vote for their favorite charity. Thousands of people across Long Island voted for a variety of different nonprofit organizations. With the help of our supporters, volunteers and students, Literacy Nassau was nominated hundreds of times. As a result, we won third prize! We are truly grateful for his generous donation of \$1,000. We are also thankful for all of those who participated in the contest and nominated us as their favorite Long Island non-profit organization.



Literacy Nassau's Kelly Siry with Mr. & Mrs. Bryan Karp.



Warm wishes to the following tutors born in January!

Leslie Arluck – Mildred Aronson – Jonathan Baker - Irene Baydarian - Susan Braun – Debbie Buglisi – Roberta Cione - Frank Dorf – Connie Egelman – Josephine Feldman – Marleen Fenton – Janet Gordon – Samantha Gordon – LaToyra Graves – Gladys Greene – Helene Harris – Mara Jacobowitz – Ruthann Kennedy – Jan Kerr – Carol Kessler – Emma LaPrince – David Leibenhaut – Rose Lowe – Kiana Mahabadi – Roseann Martz – Marcia Mayer – Christine Merola – Harriet Morosoff – Debra Phanstiel - Barbara Phillips – Marion Polizzi – Honey Prager – Dorothy Royal – Alice Scharf – Patricia Searby – Paula Silverman - Addy Skolnick – Yolanda Stith – Dara Sullivan – Kourtnee Wallace – Kailey White – Gerard Wisla



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GOODBYE INTERNS: HELLO EXTERNS!

(submitted by Kim Nau)

Yelitza Bellavista, Lucy Rosenzweig, Maria Betancur, and Lidia Lazo spent the past 16 weeks learning many new office skills that they will take with them on the next step in their journey into the workforce. The Guru Krupa Foundation has generously provided paid internships for 20 Literacy Nassau students over the course of two years. Many of them have found gainful employment and are pursuing their American dream. Our interns have been hired by the Great Neck Adult Learning Center, Baldwin U.F.S.D., Capital One Bank, and the Hillside Public Library, among other local businesses as well.

In 2019, the Guru Krupa Foundation and Literacy Nassau are launching a paid externship program. Externships offer students practical, first-hand insight into their field of interest. The students will be placed in an outside company to do a job that hones in on their skills. For example, if we have a student who was an accountant in his/her native country, we will work with our partners to place him/her in a position within the financial field. This will enable them to gain valuable resume-building experience as well as the opportunity to learn about the nuances of American work-culture. Externships also allow for networking in pursuit of future job opportunities.



Left to right; Lidia Lazo, Lucy Rosenzweig, Maria Betancur, Mr. Mukund Padmanabhan, Karen Micciche, Kim Nau, and Yelitza Bellavista



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