

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



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## NEW YORK STATE FUNDING CHANGES

(submitted by Karen Micciche)

Many of you have heard me speak about where our funding comes from before. In our TTW, we also explain the role of Literacy New York in overseeing our NY State Adult Literacy Education (ALE) grant. We've discussed benchmarks at length and have worked diligently to meet or exceed all of the State's expectations. I want to bring you all up to speed on some major changes in the way New York State will be operating moving forward.

In March, the State released a new Request for Proposals which caught me (and many in the network of Literacy Volunteers affiliates in New York State) by surprise. Basically, NYS opened up the ALE funding to any organization wishing to apply. It used to be that the RFP was put out as an invitation for a statewide organization looking to address the needs of the lowest level learners. Literacy New York wrote a proposal on behalf of all Literacy Volunteers affiliates in the state, and then when they received the grant, their role was to divide it up among all of us and provide us with technical support and training. Now, with this new change, each Literacy Volunteers affiliate needs to write for their own piece of the pie. Similarly, Literacy New York needs to respond to a separate RFP applying for funding to remain a Statewide Training Center.

There have been some major shifts in the

regional allocations as well. We are extremely fortunate that the Long Island region did not receive a cut to the funding allocated to our area; it has remained steady at about \$442,000. However, other regions received major reductions. For example, the Greater Capital region (Albany and surrounding counties) took a \$150,000 total reduction, and the Buffalo area took a reduction of approximately \$90,000. Similarly, the statewide training center RFP was dramatically reduced by almost \$200,000. By contrast, the Hudson Valley received an increase of \$100,000 due to the large number of new immigrants moving there. Needless to say, these changes have had a huge impact on the Literacy Volunteers affiliates and more specifically, on their plans for how to operate moving forward. Many of my colleagues in other regions will be merging in order to form stronger regional coalitions. Some affiliates will simply be going out of business. Some will continue to operate but will do so without NYS ALE funding. The only common thread for all of us is that things are going to change come July 1st.

First of all, the benchmarks have changed. If we are awarded the funding we requested in our application, we will be charged with serving 184 students who are NRS Levels 1 and 2. These are the hardest students to teach because they are true beginners. It is directly in line with our mission to focus so heavily on

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## THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

I'm fortunate to work with a bunch of literacy geeks, and believe it or not we follow the Merriam-Webster "Word of the Day." Today's word was *dauntless*, which was defined as "bold; courageous; very brave." It reminded me of us here at Literacy Nassau. We are so bold: we put ourselves out there in ways we've never dreamed of before. Just last week, Ocaria, Umama, and I answered immigration questions for a day at the CUNY Citizenship Now Call-In Drive. It was awesome being able to provide information and referrals to folks who otherwise could become the victims of immigration fraud. When I think back to five years ago when I joined Literacy Nassau, I could never have imagined even having the knowledge I have now about immigration. We help people in so many new and interesting ways, all in support of our mission to help Nassau County residents learn to read, write and speak English, but more than that, to encourage their *dauntless* pursuit of whatever their long range goals may be.

*☺ Karen*



Ocaria, Umama, and I at the CUNY Citizenship Now Call In Drive on April 28th. Visitors included Governor Cuomo and Mayor DiBlasio!

## NEW YORK STATE FUNDING CHANGES (continued from page 1)

that population, though, which is precisely why we used the Kornreich funding to develop our SGI classes. SGI gives higher level students an immediate – and limited – pairing with a Small Group tutor so that we can keep the waiting list free of high-level students. We are able to move them in and out of our program much more smoothly and efficiently than before. This allows us to focus our one-on-one tutors on working with the lowest level students, and drastically reduces their wait time for services.

This has also altered our Tutor Training Workshop content. Knowing that we have to serve so many low-level students, we have targeted the strategies (for example, Total Physical Response) that work best for NRS Level 1 and 2 students. We are focusing more time on these strategies so that newly trained tutors come away from our TTWs feeling equipped and ready to be matched with true beginners.

Another thing we have done in preparation for this change is to diversify our funding sources as much as possible. In 2010, when I first started here at Literacy Nassau, approximately 60% of our overall

budget was comprised of NYS ALE money. We were in a very unhealthy financial position at that time because if the State decided to pull the funding, we would not have been able to continue operating. Now, our money comes from many different places. Though ALE still accounts for about 33% of our overall budget, we also have significant funding from the NYS Office for New Americans, The John and Janet Kornreich Charitable Foundation, many corporations including Capital One, Bank of America, Bethpage Federal Credit Union, and private foundations such as the Guru Krupa Foundation and the RTS Family Foundation. Although I am confident in our ability to secure the ALE grant, if we didn't receive it, Literacy Nassau would not be forced to close its doors.

Because of this change in ALE distribution, our reporting relationship with Literacy New York will shift. While they have always been like our "parent" organization, our funding relationship will no longer be in effect, so there is nothing binding us to Literacy New York. I know that Literacy New York is currently

working on a strategy to keep the affiliates connected – some sort of membership program – and I will keep you all updated as the details are revealed.

Literacy New York has always been a guiding force for Literacy Nassau. Even during this stressful grant writing process, their leadership team was willing to proof-read and edit our work in the midst of their own deadlines. We are committed to keeping the affiliates united around Literacy New York, continuing to learn from their best practices and supporting them in any way possible.

We should know the outcome of our ALE application before July 1st. I will be sure to keep you all posted.

Pictured:  
The staff of  
Literacy NY:  
Sue Hens-  
ley-Cushing,  
Chip Carlin,  
Kathy  
Houghton,  
and Janice  
Cuddahee.



## TUTOR SPOTLIGHT: SANDY PESCE

Our featured tutor this month is Sandy Pesce who has volunteered with Literacy Nassau since 2003. Sandy teaches several small groups of English Language Learners here in Freeport, volunteering a total of 15 hours a week. She submitted the following story.

Unlike many of our tutors, I was never a teacher. I was actually a probation officer for six years before retiring to have children, but I have learned a lot from my students. I have learned the many sound-alike words, such as "foot" and "food", "bottom" and "bottle", and that, even if the student learns the names of the seasons, they will still freeze when you ask, "What is your favorite season?". Having the words in their heads will not necessarily make them come out of their mouths, at least not easily. I was also a Girl Scout volunteer for 18 years, so I know it's always important to have fun while learning. I enjoy tutoring a small conversation group because the students learn from each other, and have a lot of fun in the process.

I remember reading about Literacy Nassau in an article about volunteerism in Newsday years ago. The article said that while many people want to serve at a soup kitchen on Thanksgiving, not enough people want to help someone read for two hours a week. I thought it sounded like something I would like to do, but I wasn't sure if my mother's health would be stable enough for me to finish the year's commitment. In fact, my mother remained healthy for the next eight years, so maybe tutoring brings you good luck. Later, when I was spending a lot of time at the hospital or nursing home, I found that tutoring was a wonderful antidote to stress -- it's like a two hour vacation from your worries. I strongly recommend it!



Sandy Pesce (top right) pictured with three of her students - Blanca Morales and Javier and Dolly Cuartas - at (un)Scrabble 2014!

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

### English Language Teacher

**The Making of a Leader** is a one year program for children between the ages of 9 to 14. The project will consist of a one week intensive program during the summer. Lessons will be provided about creating a vision to serve as a compass for their lives, the importance of attitude, how to persist against the odds to achieve their vision, and emphasizing that success is not an accident. They will receive lessons on the importance of communication and interpersonal skills and will learn the basics of how the banking and finance system works.

#### Position Description:

Instruct children on the classic composition format and the five paragraph essay. Assign essays to students to read and teach them how to identify themes, point of view and other characteristics.

- Teach students about the structure and content of the English language including proper grammar, spelling, and sentence structure.
- Plan, prepare and deliver instructional activities.
- Develop incentives to keep participants in class.
- Create positive educational climate for students to learn in.
- Practice the five paragraph essay.

**For more information:** Contact Yvenice A. Belgrave, Program Coordinator at the Community Connection Center in Freeport at 1(800) 963.2129. There may be a small stipend for the 2-week program for interested volunteers.

## CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to our newly trained tutors:

April 13th BLL Tutors  
Linda Burdi  
Peg Kemp

April 14-16th ELL Tutors  
Sandra Bruh  
Maggie Cilingir  
Marian Collins  
Richard Collins  
Jacqueline Eill  
Sheila Leonard  
Rosemary Valenti

May 2nd ELL Tutors  
Arlene Cherry  
Abby D'Angelis  
Virginia Drowica  
Gerard Fitzgerald  
Giussepina Iorfino  
Edward Pennisi  
Dianne Saccone  
Bharat Shah  
Michelle Yadoo

Congratulations to our newest U.S. Citizens:

Lucia Alvarado  
Maria Teresa Gonzalez  
Dalia Orellanda  
Roxanna Grella  
Esther Cayemitte  
Jose Tapia  
Martine Geneus



**ARE YOU A CERTIFIED TEACHER?**

As a learner-centered organization, we at Literacy Nassau are proud of the difference that each tutor is making in the life of their student. Whether it is teaching them survival English, helping them to learn to read or even improving their literacy, we are excited to come to work, knowing that you are out there doing good in your community and having a positive impact on an individual's life.

*Would you like to extend your impact?*

Please consider becoming a tutor in our Small Group Instruction program. Classes meet two times a week for twelve weeks, and all it takes is a short In-Service Training to get started.

Contact: Ocaria Silva at (516) 867.3580 x12 or [osilva@literacynassau.org](mailto:osilva@literacynassau.org) for details.

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: BLANCA MORALES AND DOLLY CUARTAS

This month we are featuring two students from Sandy Pesce's English class, Blanca Morales and Dolly Cuartas (whose husband Javier is also a student of Sandy's). Read more about them below.

### Blanca Morales

When did you come to the US? *I came in 1999 when there was an earthquake in my country, Colombia.*

What is different about NY from Colombia? *The weather and seasons. Everything is more local in my village and the streets are smaller. The American dollar has more value.*

What do you like about living in NY? *I like the security, the organization, the transportation, the museums, and parks.*

What is your favorite English idiom? *My favorite expression is "costs an arm and a leg."*

What is your favorite American food? *Thanksgiving dinner.*

What do you like to do when you are not taking English classes? *In home watching TV in English.*

### Dolly Cuartas

When/why did you come to the US? *I came here 21 years ago from Colombia. I came to Brooklyn because my family was here.*

How long have you and Javier been married? *My husband and I have been married 51 years.*

What do you like to do together? *Take English classes. Cooking, gardening and playing cards.*

Why do you want to learn English? *We learned English in Colombia but didn't speak it. When we came here, our family would speak in Spanish to us. I take English classes because I want to learn. When I try to do something, I never give up.*

What is your favorite expression? *"That's a piece of cake."*

## TUTOR RESOURCE CORNER

*(submitted by Ocaria Silva)*

Have you ever wondered where you can find an extensive video library to add to your lessons? Videos are a great tool to use for language development. Not only do they provide topics and content for discussion, but they also supply reaffirmation of learned vocabulary and modeling! TED is another wonderful non-profit organization whose mission is to share ideas in the form of short, powerful talks. On [www.Tedtalks.com](http://www.Tedtalks.com), you will find hundreds of video clips, 18 minutes or less, that cover topics ranging from science to business to global issues. You'll find speakers you may already know and brilliant new minds sharing new ideas. These video clips are also offered in many languages for those of us learning other languages! Have fun with these and use them to create discussion and comprehension questions, as well as critical thinking activities for your student.





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**PAIR OF PUZZLES**

**The \$1.00 Word Search**

Each letter of the alphabet has been given a value between \$0.01 and \$0.26. Use the chart below to help you understand the value of each one. The goal is to find a word that adds up to exactly \$1.00.

Good luck!

A=.01	I=.09	Q=.17	Y=.25
B=.02	J=.10	R=.18	Z=.26
C=.03	K=.11	S=.19	
D=.04	L=.12	T=.20	
E=.05	M=.13	U=.21	
F=.06	N=.14	V=.22	
G=.07	O=.15	W=.23	
H=.08	P=.16	X=.24	

**WORD MORPH**

Can you morph one word into another by changing one letter at a time?

hole	chill	peace
comb	stall	slate