

LOOK AT US!

A Newsletter of the Los Angeles Public Library
Adult Literacy Service
Edited by Ruth Gooley

Winter 2005

IT'S A MATCH



Miguel Garcia, who joined the Adult Literacy Program in March of 2004, immediately jumped into gear with the guidance of his tutor, Laura Marlowe. The pair has been concentrating on many different areas, from vocabulary to punctuation to how to write sentences. In addition, Miguel has been working hard on learning to "think," to express himself verbally and in writing. He feels more confident and happy when he is able to utilize these new skills at work, in casual conversation and casual situations, says Laura. Miguel has improved greatly—and Laura notes that at times he REALLY enjoys realizing he has improved!

Some of the specific things on which Miguel and Laura have been working on are:

- Recognition of verbs and conjugations
- How to use the comma
- Identification of singular and plural words
- The value of re-reading
- The value of proofreading
- The value of neat handwriting (printing)
- Spelling and pronunciation, including learning helpful rules

A few months ago, Miguel won an employee recognition award for outstanding hard work and dedication in quality assurance on the F-22 project. He is very proud of this achievement. He took Laura's advice to frame the certificate and hang it up where he can see it every day at work; on occasion he comments on how wonderful he feels whenever he glances up at the award.

He also recently attended a class/seminar on stress reduction, where he learned a lot, including how to better get a good night's sleep. He had wanted to take a class as part of his "roles and goals," and Laura is glad he attended, in spite of his very busy schedule.

With regard to extra-curricular reading, Miguel has been reading materials Laura provides for him, including various newspaper articles, sections of interest from magazines (including the "Verbatim" section of Time Magazine), and children's books. He has expressed sparks of interest in subject matters which are entirely new to him, including past and present facts about the island of Guam. This was an obvious area of interest for him, especially because Guam is going to be the new base for an F-22. Together he and Laura learned about the special Marine dogs of World War II who assisted American troops on the island. Special note: thanks to this article, Laura is planning on obtaining the book *Always Faithful: The Marine Dogs Of WWII*. Maybe someday Miguel will read it too?!?!?

Miguel has a lot of goals and Laura hopes he will reach each and every one of them. He's a great person, comments Laura. "He really has persevered and I am proud of him."

CREATIVE CORNER

My Family By learner Laura Carvajal

My name is Laura. I have five sisters and two brothers and we lived very happily together.

I liked to play with my brother. He is very special to me. We built castles with wood and mud. We loved to climb the trees and rode horses. We also collected all kinds of insects, frogs and fishes and he used to perform surgery on them. We spent a lot of wonderful moments.

When I wanted to feel like a girl, I just went with my older sister. She likes to design clothes for our dolls and made a lot of decorations for our house. She is very smart. She manipulates people to do her chores. She loved to do science experiments like put the thermometer in the freezer or in the fire. She used to like the microscope. They are both doctors now, like my dad.

I like to sing and play many games. I love to listen to music. I enjoyed working with my dad. I love to smell the flowers and all the farm smells. He taught me to do many things. I'm so proud of my father. He is very kind.

My mom is very smart and strong. She always helps everyone. I'm so lucky to have such a wonderful family.

Work and Healing:
Giving with Love
By learner Sandy Laney

I had been out of work, and my bills were piling up when my Uncle Ben asked me for help fixing the plumbing in his house. I have very little plumbing experience, and I didn't want to go, because I knew it would be a big job. But I remembered how my Uncle had helped my Mom, my brothers, and me when we were little. Having an opportunity to give back to him was more than just the right thing to do.

Honestly, if they weren't family, I probably wouldn't have walked through the front door. There was my uncle, his two adult kids, a daughter-in-law, ten kids under the age of 15 (three in diapers)—and no hot water. The insurance money to fix the plumbing hadn't arrived, and it was right before Christmas. On top of all that, my uncle had to be hospitalized the day I got there.

The plumbing would have to wait until the money arrived. In the meantime, there was a lot of cleanup to be done around the house. After much fussing, whining, and fighting among themselves, the kids finally began to pitch in.

First, we cleaned up the side yard. We threw away a mountain of old lawn mower parts, broken toys, and recyclables. If I wasn't there every minute, my "work crew" would quickly disappear. But once we established which kids worked well together, they started to feel a sense of pride in what they had accomplished.

The girl kept the house in order, but they had their moments. I could hear them from outside. "I did the dishes, and you didn't do anything." Finding time to spend with all of them was a challenge. The boys wanted to go to the park and play, then get something to eat. The girls wanted to go shopping... for anything, they didn't care what.

In the end, when the plumbing was fixed, everyone got their reward for the hard work they did. I took the boys to the park, then the girls to the store. And when my uncle Ben said he wished he could pay me, I told him that God would reward me. I didn't have long to wait. A friend called me within the hour and offered me a job that was enough to cover my bills, and send some money home, too.

The hardest part of the job was being humble. I hadn't wanted to get involved in the first place, but when I set my own needs aside, they were met when the job was one.

SPECIAL FEATURE

Why I became an Adult Literacy Tutor

By Laura Marlowe

I had had a deep desire to become a literacy tutor for quite some time. Why? Because I feel that reading and writing are some of the most important tools a person can ever have. I have been an avid reader since the age of four; I cannot imagine life without it. The satisfaction I receive every time I gain knowledge from reading is priceless. To pick up a book, a magazine, a manual; to scan the internet (and what an incredible tool it is!); to recognize and understand vocabulary; to communicate articulately, these are key factors in building self-confidence. I wanted to “give” the gift of reading to those in need, who did not have the opportunity or even much interest as children and teenagers to learn.

I have been able to experience another’s pain and frustration at not having the necessary skills and knowledge to read and write well. The pain runs deeply. No one wants to be or feel “below par” or slowed down; it peels away the self-confidence and self-esteem that we all should rightly have. I understand these feelings all too well, as I suffer a learning disability, which I only--and bravely--had diagnosed a few years ago. Yes, I had been terribly ashamed, humiliated, crushed for most of my life with what is actually a learning disability in the area of analysis/synthesis, which includes the area of mathematics. For years I suffered; I was not given tutorial help at the time when it would have benefited me most; teachers did not recognize or even understand that I had a “problem.” Instead, they and others thought I was lazy, stupid, dumb, incompetent, hopeless, etc... I now feel no shame in my extreme difficulty to understand certain things. I concentrate on the intelligence and talents I was blessed with, including writing, music, languages, and a host of others.

It has given me indescribable joy to work with my student, to inspire him, to assist him, to guide him, to teach him. I am unable to measure the happiness I feel when my student shows a spark of interest in a subject which I introduce to him; the bright moments of self-confidence and higher self-esteem he feels when he reads, learns, memorizes and utilizes new vocabulary, rules of language, or proper pronunciation; and any and all victories he achieves as a result of his being tutored.

Everyone who knows me knows that reading and writing are two of my biggest passions, and I am pleased that I can share these passions with others in such a way as to better their lives. I thank the Adult Literacy Program for such an opportunity.

CONGRATULATIONS

Adult Literacy Services would like to say congratulations to the following

Learners:

Alfredo Arreola was so thrilled when he got the notice telling him he passed his citizenship test that he rushed in to the Singleton Adult Literacy Center to show the official letter to the staff. He also feels much more comfortable with his English skills and says his improvement is due to spending so much time at the library—two to three hours several times a week—working on Rosetta Stone and other online programs.

India Baker just finished a writing class at LACC, for which she wrote many stories. She also read two novels, which she enjoyed very much. She is looking forward to taking more classes next semester. “My tutor Barbara and I have a good relationship,” India observes. “We’ve been working together for two years. I’ve come a long way in my education.”

Leticia Buenrostro, who spoke very little English initially, enrolled in LEP/FFL a year ago and now is spending quality time—in English—with her youngest daughter, sharing books and playing games. She also volunteers every day at her daughter's school, where her language skills now enable her to serve as substitute yard guard.

Reginald Carhee, who completed his first book report on Muhammed Ali—a good report according to his tutor—was promoted from shopping cart attendant at Food For Less to deli worker. An 11 year-old boy asked for Reginald’s autograph at the store one day. It turns out that the boy had written a book report on the LA Times article about Reginald that appeared several months ago, and he got a good grade!

Larry Corley is now reading more fluently and continues to improve. He finished LW #1 and will begin LW #2 in his next session. His tutor is helping him study for an exam so he can get a promotion at work.

Jeramil Ferrer, who started with phonics and Laubach, recently finished all the Challenger books. She has made so much progress she is now studying pre-GED materials.

Norman Fisher just got a home telephone and a new computer. He plans to use the computer to get email, use the Internet, and type. “I know I have a long way to go,” he writes, “but still say I’m halfway there. I can able to read a lot better than I was before I came to the Center.”

Carolina Garcia, who began with Challenger 3 two years ago, just started Challenger 8. In November, she was awarded a diploma in ESL at the Abraham Friedman

Occupational Center, where she practiced filling out rental and job applications, resumes, and medical/dental forms. Her goal? To pass the GED and to enroll in a Parents Education program.

Harold Hyman, who has been studying with his tutor Elizabeth Moran since October 2004, wrote a letter to his mom for the first time and proudly displayed it to the literacy coordinator at his local branch library.

Frances Moreno completed her first book report on Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Her tutor was pleased and said that the report was written well. Frances has almost completed LW #4 and is working with her tutor in the book Safari Grammar. She continues to gain confidence, self-esteem and has vastly improved.

Semira Nurahamed has many things to be proud of. She enrolled in a two month long child-care training program and she will receive a certificate when the course is completed. In addition to keeping a journal for the training program, she also volunteers at an elementary school, where she reads to children. Since her original language is Arabic, she worked hard to complete the cursive handwriting book and is now writing in cursive.

Herman Satuye is continuing to improve. He got a new job, but still finds the time to help tutor other students at the adult school that he attends.

Leland Shaun Jacobs has made a lot of progress since he started working with his tutor Toni Brooks-Floyd two years ago. Originally a client at the Solid Foundation, where he was in a nutrition program, Leland later became a junior staff member there. At first concentrating on healthy eating and other subjects that interested Leland, the pair is currently working on Washington Irving. Leland credits book reading with giving him confidence in his life. Besides her tutoring, Toni works tirelessly for the Friends of the Library group at Washington Irving. Both tutor and student love being in the library. Things "light up" when they are here, and the place becomes a magical kingdom, says coordinator Carolyn Barelli.

Gal Lahat has learned how to write checks and he now pays his own bills. He learned how to use the dictionary and how to read a map, especially the Thomas Guide. He has also improved his reading skills, including the ability to recognize compound words. He recently attended a West Hollywood City Council meeting, where he spoke in favor of installing speed bumps on a residential street.

Sigi Mora boasts about the following achievements, which he did with the help of his tutor Dorothy Samuel. "My reading skills got better—I communicate better now. Reading got easier, at work, reading with my kids. (Reading) made my world bigger—I can read maps, help my kids with schoolwork, read menus." Sigi's proudest moment was the day he took the written DMV test for his motorcycle license. He scored 100%! Sigi's next goal is to become an American citizen and to

vote. He also wants to help teach his small son Christopher to read. He adds, the emphasis his: **"The program works."**

Deborah Osbourne, who is reading fluently now, is beginning LWR #4. Her future plans? She's training to become a Nurse's Assistant.

Yolanda Rodriguez has finished LWR 2 and is ready to take her skills checkup. Her pronunciation has improved and, she adds proudly, "I learned many words that I need to know and write, too... I read a little better now."

Frank Valencia at first didn't really want to be in the Adult Literacy Program, but his tutor Anne Johnston has been very patient and very persistent and Frank stuck with it. He has been building up his reading vocabulary and is learning to recognize between hard and soft "g" and "c". His progress, although slow, has been very meaningful, especially since he now really wants to learn and is asking for things to read when his tutor goes out of town. Frank is now working in LWR 3. Frank also enjoys whittling. He uses a cane that he whittled out of a very beautiful piece of bamboo and created a very interesting handle for it.

Natasha White has achieved her goal to obtain certification as a nurse's assistant. She has earned a certificate in Home Health Care (caring for people in their homes) and would also like to work as a nurse's assistant in a hospital.

Lilian Yax, who has been working as a student in the Adult Literacy Program for several months, now enjoys reading to her little boy.

Charles "Chuck" Young has passed both the written and the actual driving exam and is now the proud holder of a California State Driver's License. A vehicle purchase is planned for December, after which he insists he will take his tutor Sherry Price and coordinator Amit Mehta for a spin.

Wanda Zepeda, who did not know how to read or write, can now pay her bills and read the newspaper. A born story-teller, she makes up and writes stories and would someday like to be a movie director. "I do not know if I am a good director yet," she writes, "but your program has given me hope for life."

Graduates of the September Tutor Training Workshop:

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Jonathon Alvarado | Heidi Lamprecht | Sarah Sherman |
| Sarah Archer-Beck | Porsche Martin | Mark Sherwin |
| Kent Bennett | Elizabeth Moran | Alberta Simms |
| Jacki Brown | Sylvia O'Gilvie | Alberta Taylor |
| Arely Burgos | Ray Pike | Maureen Wade |
| Dianne Chickering | Rosa Ramirez | Michael Wheless |
| Jean Do | Peter Rhodes | Emi Yoshimura |
| Shannon Kelly | Derek Scally | |

Graduates of the October Tutor Training Workshop:

| | | |
|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Kiyo Bouhier | Vivianne Mack | Marcia Terry |
| Kathy Boyett | Sarah Pharris | Tina Thieros |
| Mary De Carlo | Teresa Reynoso | Naomi Turner |
| Dennis Dullea | Anastasia Rose- | Joseph Mendoza |
| Hazel Graynor | Douglass | Lory Allison |
| April King | Raye Smith | |
| Chris Lusvardi | Elizabeth Sorensen | |

Graduates of the November Tutor Training Workshop:

| | | |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Mae Allen | Kathy Gray | Kimberly Spear |
| Willi Brown | Ivan Hernandez | Andrea Thompson |
| Merilyn Cuttrell | Susan Pina | Mario Tuazon |
| Fred Deichmann | Ann Raymond | Michelle Ward |
| Brian Finch | Marjatta Rikala | Laura Yamanaka |
| David Glover | Brad Shipley | Bill Thomas |
| Antonia Gomez | Mary Jane Shubow | Jennifer Martinez |

Graduates of the December Tutor Training Workshop:

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Nasim Ahmed | Elaine McGladdery | Estaire Press |
| Robert Bernal | Sarah Miller | Claire Workman |
| Roxanne Elliott | Rochelle Olifson | |
| Phil Glist | Paul Pomerleau | |

Upcoming Tutor Training classes will be held on January 8, 2005, at the Baldwin Hills Branch, February 5 at the Cahuenga Branch, and March 12 at the Panorama City Branch. For information please call (213) 228-7037.

TUTOR TIP

Start Small

The Second Start Adult Literacy Program in Oakland suggests starting small, no matter what the reading level of your learner is. Why? Several reasons:

Finishing something gives a person a sense of accomplishment. So start with a single line of poetry, a single stanza, or perhaps even an entire paragraph, depending on your student. Prepare your learner for success by choosing something well within reach.

Starting small helps the learner gain confidence in his or her abilities. The more confident s/he feels, the more challenges s/he will be ready for.

Your learner will learn a lot by repetition. Practice the little piece you have chosen over and over again until your learner really has it down.

THANK YOU

Adult Literacy Services would like to thank the library staff for their invaluable help at the following branches, where Literacy Centers are located: Baldwin Hills, Cahuenga, Central, Exposition Park, Jefferson, Lincoln Heights, Mid-Valley, Pacoima, Panorama City, Pio Pico-Koreatown, Robert Louis Stevenson, Venice, Washington Irving, Watts, and Wilmington.