

LOOK AT US!



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

Summer 2005

IT'S A MATCH

Kyung Hee and Lucy

Kyung Hee Greenberg and Lucy Curtis have both grown a lot since they first met a year ago. This is what Lucy has to say about the experience. "At first, Kyung Hee's pronunciation was veiled beneath a thick, sometimes indecipherable Korean accent. She'd studied English for years in Seoul, but is making so much more progress here in California. I think that working with me at the library has given her so much more access to the English language. She tells me that she now relies less on Korean TV shows and web sites. She has even began buying and reading (!) the Sunday edition of the newspaper and keeps a list of questions about the material to ask me when we meet during the week.

"When we first met, personal pronouns were very difficult for Kyung Hee to understand. She constantly mixed up the pronouns, he and she, because they simply don't exist in Korean. Now, however, she hardly ever gets confused, and when she does she catches herself almost immediately. Kyung Hee is also fascinated by idioms, cliches, and other common English sayings. For instance, Kyung Hee gets tickled pink when we go over sayings like, 'one in the hand is worth two in the bush,' or phrases like 'turning over a new leaf' and 'that rings a bell.' The Challenger series of books makes terrific use of these sayings and Kyung Hee has a blast working them into her speech and writing.

"Another milestone of Kyung Hee's progress is evident in her use of the library and its wealth of materials. I had to coax her into getting a library card when we first met, which was difficult, because she told me that she didn't ever think she would actually use it if she got one. Now, though, she uses her card almost weekly! Most recently she checked out several travel books about Europe, to help prepare her for her upcoming vacation." Not only is she now reading various articles from the *LA Times*, she has also begun reading the novel, *Memoirs of a Geisha*. "I am so proud of Kyung Hee!" exclaims Lucy.

Tutoring has also changed Lucy's life. "My favorite aspect of tutoring with the Adult Literacy Program at the Venice library is the fact that I am learning just as much as my

student” she admits. “Tutoring Kyung Hee has not only taught me so much about Korean culture, but also about my own capacity for patience. It has recharged my love of the English language, so much so that I’m now taking my first baby steps toward a career in teaching with the LA Unified School District.” It seems that both members of the pair are learning!

Julian and Josh

Julian Martinez has been working with tutor Josh David since 2000. Josh does nothing but rave about his 5 exciting years with Julian. “One of the things I’ve been most proud of about working with Julian was the day he told me he’d become better able to read street signs. In L.A., which is such a driving city, he used to rely more on memory and visual clues to get around town. This struck me as a real achievement—how tutoring had really had a positive impact on his daily life. ADULT literacy should focus on practical improvements in a person’s life, and here was a prime example.

“He’s also bi-lingual and mentioned that he’s better able to read words in Spanish now as a result of our work together. It’s a general reminder that becoming proficient in reading English opens a student up to the possibility of learning other ... languages.

“Since I’ve been working with him, he has started taking designing courses to pursue an interest in clothing design. Though perhaps not directly related to improved literacy, that decision does indicate how better reading skills have given him more career confidence in general.

“I’m also proud that I’ve been able to introduce him to the experience of reading for pleasure--by helping him check out books from the library with him that he finds interesting--both fiction and non-fiction. And it’s gratifying to know he is reading on his own, when we reconvene and he summarizes the reading he’s done that week--also reflecting that his reading comprehension is improving.

“In our work together, it’s particularly gratifying for me to hear him read a word and then find out he doesn’t know what it means. It indicates that now he’s actually reading, because, obviously, reading and vocabulary are separate skills. Instead of simply guessing at a word, or just saying a word he already knows that might look close, he’s actually reading the word in front of him. It shows that his reading skills are now functioning at a much higher level. I think vocabulary skills will come later as a natural result of now being able to correctly read and pronounce more words.”

Julian and Josh actually broke up for a time this past year. After about six months they reunited and are now happily continuing to meet on a regular basis. “I think Julian is well on his way to his career goals--buying a house and becoming an investor in the stock market,” says Josh. Let’s hope so. We all wish continuing success to Julian and Josh. May they have many more good times together!

CREATIVE CORNER

T.C.

June 1, 2005

In May of 2004 I came to the library, wanting to learn to read and write, so I can better understand the language, to better communicate with others.

The task hasn't been easy. It takes hard work, devotion and really wanting to accomplish your goal.

I've come a long way. When I started it took me about 10 min. to read a paragraph. Now I'm enjoying reading books. My favorite subjects are motivational and psychology.

With my improvement now I know I am able to learn even more, so my goal is to go to college.

I'll tell you, it feels good to write this. A year ago I couldn't even write a single sentence.

Wow! Way to go, T. C.! Can we all come to your college graduation?

How I Got My Job at American Airlines

By Learner Freddie Johnson

I moved from New Orleans, Louisiana to Los Angeles to try to make a better life for my family and myself. My first job was with Mallory Plumbing Company, which didn't last long. I got fired because I didn't know what a come-along was. I felt bad because I needed a job to take care of my family.

My next job was with the Longview Fiber Box Company, which lasted three years. It ended because the supervisor was prejudiced. The incident that caused me to quit, was when I complained to my supervisor about my assistant's failure to do his job. He would tell me that we must learn to get along. But when Larry, who was a white boy, was my lead, I was reminded that I must do what Larry said to do. I got tired of that, so I quit.

There I was, off to find another job. A week later, I was at another box factory, which lasted about three months. I was laid off because of lack of work. And there I was once again, off to find another job. Well, I hit luck this time, and it was good luck.

I applied for a job at American Airlines. In taking my physical, Dr. Budding – I'll never forget his name – told me, "Sorry young man, I can't hire you because your blood pressure is too high, but come back tomorrow and I'll give you another chance."

On that visit, I noticed that he was wearing a Masonic ring. I am a Mason myself. So I said to myself, "If he is a Mason and I am a Mason, then one Mason should help another."

So the next day, for my visit to Dr. Budding, I had my ring on and my blood was high again. He said, "Sorry, but you have high blood pressure. I can't hire you." So I looked down at my hand, rubbed my ring and said the right thing (I'd like to tell you what I said, but I can't – it would be against my Masonic oath). He paused for a second, and then he said, "OK. If you promise that you will get that pressure down, I'll hire you." I promised him that I would and got the job.

I stayed there thirty-five years. Surprisingly, I retired and I'm still trying to get that pressure down.



Freddie and Dan

Freddie is very pleased with the notion of being a published author, says tutor Dan Frank. And so is the staff at Adult Literacy Services. Congratulations on a wonderful success story!

The Luck of the "Irish" by Learner Ingrid Xu

"With ten circles on your fingers, you'll have the luck of having anything without walking." My husband would like to quote this old Chinese saying to praise himself for how attentive he is, so that there is almost no need to bother me to run errands. I'm not superstitious, but when my English tutor drives several miles to my home to teach me an English lesson, especially on a raining day, somehow I feel this old saying does make sense.

I don't have to pay my tutor, my tutor is sent to me as a volunteer from the Los Angeles Public Library. A few years ago, when I came to America, I had a chance to get enrolled in an adult English program at my neighbor's library. My first tutor was an old gentleman. Although he was an energetic and devoted teacher, I wanted to quit after several lessons. The problem was that I had not been a diligent student since I was an elementary student. I liked cutting class

whenever I felt lazy, and now being middle aged, a wife and a mother with endless housework and declining memory, how could I bear to be confined to the library class twice a week? But I had to stay in that program at least six months, because I pledged when I was enrolled. When time ran out, I told my tutor a white lie that I was going to college for a certain subject.

I'd idled hundreds of thousands of days away staying home when the library coordinator Mr. Wells left a message on my answering machine. He said that the library was considering arranging a new tutor for me. I had no idea how he found out that I didn't go to college, but I ignored his call. I had a good reason to excuse myself. Didn't I have the ability to study at home myself? Why must I be controlled by the library?

After I got another two messages from Mr. Wells, I felt it would be very rude if I gave him no response. Before I rang Mr. Wells I made up my mind that I would give him the brush off, whatever he says. Because of my poor English, I gave up within a few minutes, and agree with him that I would continue being under his command for another six months. Then I started having my second tutor Mrs. Gwenn Sayer. Mrs. Sayer is a young lady, who, because of a chronic health condition, had to quit her job and stay home. She has several volunteer jobs. Although the library policy says that we must take our classes at public places such as library etc. Since the available time for both of us was limited, Mrs. Sayer arranged class at my home for my convenience as I wished.

I have been studying English with Mrs. Sayer for over a year now, there is no sign that I want to stop. The reason I turned over a new leaf, should be credited to Mrs. Sayer. First, her illness made her very tolerant of my tiredness and laziness. As a remedy for a strict schedule, she made many audio tapes for me to listen to while I was doing housework. Secondly, she set the class at my home which really raised the percentage of my attendance.

As our country's great educator Confucius said: "Give different teaching methods according to different students." To my way of thinking, what Mrs. Sayer did for me, could be a perfect example for carrying out this wise idea in America.

This article was originally published on Sunday, March 20, 2005 in the Chinese newspaper, *World Journal, Home Life*, who gave permission for it to be reprinted here, for which we are very grateful. It is a very impressive story.

Learning at the Adult Literacy Center
By Learner Norman Fisher

I hope that everyone who is using the Adult Literacy Center can say the same thing I am saying and that, that I is, am very glad to be able to use the Center and

not have to be worried if one day we will be told we are not welcome because we can't learn.

I have to say the Center has been very good and helpful to me. I am very thankful that Mrs. Singleton made the Center available for me to use. Mrs. Singleton is a blessing to us all.

My accomplishments while using the Center, I would like today I'm there. But I can't because I know I have a long way to go but still I can say I'm half way there as well. My accomplishments so far is giving my own computer and a home phone. Also I can read a lot better than I was before I came to the Center.

Such a wonderful attitude! That's great, Norman. We wish you the best of luck.

CONGRATULATIONS

Adult Literacy Services would like to say congratulations to the following

Learners:

Steve Cervantes, who had just enrolled in Reading Upgrade, worked on the program for quite a while one Thursday. When he was finished, he was so happy to find something that he could use and understand that he was practically in tears. "His smile just lit up the room," says coordinator Mary Anne Arensdorf. "It was all I could do not to cry myself." She goes on to add, "For all that we work with potential students, interviewing them, assessing them talking to them, it is really difficult for us to understand, deep down, what it means for them to find something that will give them a little hope." What a heart-warming story. Thanks for sharing it, Steve.

Carolina Derromediz has shown steady improvement over these past few months. "Rather than giant breakthroughs," her tutor Robert Bernal states, "I have noticed a growing level of comfort in her reading, writing and speaking in English... Carolina can read sophisticated materials about things that interest her, such as computers. She's also able to communicate effectively over the telephone and via e-mail, as well as compose formal documents, such as business letters. As a songwriter, her lyrics have become more grammatically correct. Carolina has been able to take on part-time jobs that require advanced English language skills." And recently, she successfully passed the California driving test. "I think our lessons have benefited Carolina greatly," Robert concludes. "And I'm sure she'd agree." I'm sure we would all agree.

Bill Duckett has made terrific progress over the past few months. He is reading at a much faster pace now, and his spelling has improved dramatically. In the coming months he and his tutor Tom Pikor plan on "checking out" a few children's books so Bill can read to his grandkids.

Edwin Flores, who was a medical doctor in his native country, achieved one of his major goals – he got a job back in the medical field. He will be transcribing doctors' notes into a computer and preparing claims for Medi-Care. He will be working 9-6 near Wilshire and Vermont and will even be able to take the subway to work. His tutor, Phil Moser, is very proud of Edwin. "Things are looking up for him," he exclaims. Congratulations to Edwin and Phil both!

Maria Magdalena Martinez, says her tutor Steve Topoozian, has greatly improved her understanding of short vowels sounds over the last couple of months. Her handwriting and spelling skills have also grown considerably since she started the program.

Maria and Steve have cultivated a relaxed, friendly atmosphere from the beginning. The pair are honest and sincere with each other but still have fun. Steve believes in encouraging Maria, but is persistent--yet gentle--while correcting her when needed. For example, he consistently alerts her that when she prints the letter "r" in the lowercase, it looks more like a pretty ribbon than an "r." She always smiles broadly and laughs aloud.

On the other hand, Maria has taught Steve to be more patient with his handwriting. She coined a phrase early on that they both use with each other and themselves: "Don't be lazy" when either of them makes a careless mistake. They just laugh and move on.

Hector Jimenez and his tutor John Munson have made outstanding progress, working through the first seven books of the Challenger series in less than a year and a half. Most of this was done from May 2004 to March 2005 when they competed Books 2-7. John and Hector have been able to make so much progress by logging many tutoring hours, an average of about twenty-two hours a month. "Great job, guys!!!" exclaims coordinator Bill Wells.

Larry Nix, 49 years old, has been working with tutor Catherine Walsh, who proudly boasts that he is reading so much better than when he started in January. He reads more fluidly, doesn't pause so much, sounds out new words, and has learned to write in cursive. Spelling is something that he struggles with, but he is getting better. When he was interviewed, he stated that one of his goals was to become a youth minister in his church. He now reads announcements and Bible readings in church without help, so he is on his way to his goal. Catherine says that Larry particularly enjoys "News for You" and always does the crossword puzzles. What a great symbol of hope to adults who want to learn to read, because he has come so far, so fast!

Ingrid Xu wrote and submitted a letter to Writer-to-Writer, began reading the Argonaut weekly and began writing one story per month.

Graduates of the April Tutor Training Workshop:

Rudy Barbee	Njeri Mukuru FC
John Butler	Joscelyn Perry FC
Chantal Cedillo	Richard Reese
Sondra Cornejo	Rev. Jackie Russell FC
Maria Demonte	Carole Ann Taylor
Faye Griffin	Leola Truly FC
Sharron Haynes	Maria Velasquez CL (Midnight Mission)
Cynthia Izaguirre	Gwen Whitlock
Su-Yin Kok	Laura Wilhelm
Denise McIver FC (Faithful Central)	

Graduates of the May Tutor Training Workshop:

Mustafa Adbul-Wahid	John Kralick
Kathy Achee	Judith Lewis
Julie Bowles	Yeshume Limenih
Geoff Bride	Marissa Llanes
Roslyn Burkes	Mechiana Martinez
Michael Cormier	Lauri Mattenson-Hoffman
Bonnie Felix	Mike McDermott
Dale Friedman	Lana Nelson
John Gillespie	Mittwa Park
Howard Gittleson	Acquanetta Parrott
Ralph Haack	Gerald Jerry Romanik
John Hon	Sherman Rosen
Claudia Jaime	Patrick Sinclair
Gail Robert Jones	Barbara Singletary
Ola Morris Jones	Brenda Watts
Rebecca Kinder	Arline Zuckerman

Graduates of the June Tutor Training Workshop:

Mae Allen	Elizabeth Keltz
Diane Calderon	Frank Ludwig
Lizette Cardenas	Israel (Nick) Minick
Joe Cary	Kathy Newton
Mark Chun	Phyllis Pearson
David Johnson	Lynn Wilkinson

Upcoming Tutor Training Workshops will be held on July 16 at the Venice Branch, August 13 at the Washington Irving Branch, and September 17 at the Mid-Valley Branch.

NEW COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Welcome to our two new Community Partners: Faithful Central and the Midnight Mission.

INTERN APPRECIATION

Heather Hendy
Intern at the Venice Adult Literacy Center



Heather Hendy is an intern from UCLA where she is a Senior majoring in Sociology. Her internship is with the LAPL Adult Literacy Program at the Venice Library Reading Center. She volunteered to help in our program through the Center for Community Learning at UCLA for class credit toward her graduation.

Sounds very cut and dried and boring doesn't it? Well, normal, regular, cut and dried—whatever you wish to call it, stops right there! Not only could she do any job that was assigned to her, but she would finish any job or task very quickly and efficiently and then look for another job to do! Within a month she was assigned tutoring duties. She also kept the Literacy Center open by herself at times when the coordinator's schedule did not allow him to be there.

Some of the tasks undertaken by Heather were to gather and compile information dealing with all phases of Literacy instruction; to keep all Literacy source materials shelved and orderly; to learn to interview new tutors and new students; and to interact with all active tutors and students. Her computer knowledge was of great help to this coordinator!

She loves and appreciates the program and its objectives so much that she has stayed on as a volunteer intern well past the finals and the completion of the Winter Quarter class for which she began this internship.

Kudos, appreciation, and great respect go to Heather Hendy.

By Bill Wells
Literacy Center Coordinator
Venice Branch Library

This is what Heather has to say about it all:

I applied for the position because I think education and literacy are the most important tools for improving one's life and getting the most out of what the world has to offer. I

really like the program because it demonstrates that even in a place like LA--where people have a rep for being self-centered--there is a non-profit program where people donate their time to help someone else in such a dramatic way. My own experience as a tutor has been great, it is nice to meet someone from another culture and see how much someone can improve just having conversations and asking and answering questions. And of course working with Bill is a reward in itself because he is so considerate and really cares about the program, as has been my experience with everyone who works for the Adult Literacy Program.

Thank you, Heather. You have helped Bill, the tutors, and the learners at the Venice Branch tremendously.

TUTOR TIP

Teaching Math with Dracula's Mother

If your student wants to learn long division, after you have explained the process, tell him/her to remember this important fact: "Dracula's Mother Sucks Chicken Blood." Why? Because this mnemonic can help your student remember the steps of long division: **D**ivide, **M**ultiply, **S**ubtract, **C**heck and **B**ring down.

Taken from Politeracy America's *LitScape*, Spring/Summer 2005.

THANK YOU

Adult Literacy Services would like to thank the 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.