

LOOK AT US!



A Newsletter of the Los Angeles Public Library
Adult Literacy Services
Summer 2006
Edited by Ruth Gooley

IT'S A MATCH!

The Tutor's Tale
by A.S.

When I signed up to volunteer through the LAPL Literacy Program in February 2005, I wasn't exactly sure what to expect. I met Keyeh for the first time one evening @ the Los Feliz library. My first impression of her was how beautiful she was; her smile was just dazzling. In tow, she had an adorable little girl. My new friend spoke immaculate English, and I asked her where she learned to speak so elegantly. She replied, "I watched TV for a year". I was floored! She proceeded to tell me that she wanted to learn to read and write in English, which was hard for her, since her native tongue, Malinke, has no written component. This was the first—but definitely not the last—glimpse I got of the strength and self-determination my friend possesses.

As time went on, we moved the focus of our meetings to studying for the written driver's permit exam. My friend was taking a bus all the way to Santa Monica for her job, and was finally ready to tackle her dream of being a licensed driver in LA (no small feat, as we all know!). We met several times and she put in long hard, hours of preparation and made many trips to the DMV (I assured her several times over that this was an important rite of passage as an American...once you've been through this you can handle anything!). It took several times, but she never gave up and didn't let the DMV get the best of her. I remember the day I got the call. "I passed the test!" she said, and I literally screamed a "whoopie!" that made my co-workers look at me kinda funny. It was absolutely thrilling to hear the pride in her voice over her accomplishment. Recently, she passed the first portion of the citizenship test with flying colors, and we're now preparing for the written exam.

As I began to learn more and more about this incredible woman's personal journey to the USA, I grew increasingly in awe of her strength, self-will, and perseverance. She hasn't had an easy road the past four years since she left her native country of Guinea. She told me about the café she owned and managed in the museum of Conakry, and taught me the name of vegetables in French (one of three languages she's proficient in). Just like her daughter, I love to hear stories about Africa, and am fascinated to hear more and more details of her story. I have learned so much about her culture. Sometimes she's homesick, but she is bound and determined to make her life in America successful so that she's able to make trip back and her family can meet her

daughter. My friend's dream is to become a nurse. She's started ESL classes and tells me she likes it so much that she wishes she didn't have to work so that she could go to school full time. Her passion for learning and dedication to education will no doubt make her dreams realities.

I have learned so much from this special woman and feel so blessed to know someone with such an amazing sense of self and inner strength. The love and dedication she shows towards her daughter manifest in the commitment she has to being educated and learning to read and write. I want to see her succeed, and am so proud of how far she's come. However, I know in my heart of hearts that this is just the beginning. Nothing is insurmountable when you have the attitude this woman does.

The Learner's Tale by Keyeh

Nobody's perfect-but if you try hard and say "I can do it" then you *can* do it. At first I thought I would never be able to drive because I'm not perfect, and can't read and write like other people. Then I sat down and said to myself, "I'm not crazy. I have my mind, and I can use my mind, and I can do it." So I did it!

I want to learn so much. You have to love what you want, and I do love to learn. School is really amazing. I'm excited to learn more. I wish I could not work and just go to school all the time!

Working with Lewis By Rosemarie Martin

I started working with 78-year-old Lewis Ennis in the year 2004. He initially began the Literacy Program in 1993. Lewis is the primary care provider for his invalid wife but he always manages to be timely when coming to class and is always eager to learn. Lewis never learned to read and only finished 4th grade. He stated that he got in a lot of trouble and became a juvenile delinquent, which eventually led to a life of criminal behavior. Lewis's life has completely turned around and he is highly motivated to learn how to read.



Lewis and Rosemarie

I asked Lewis what is the main thing he would like to accomplish in the program and his response was that he just wanted to be able to read and to use a computer. My main

approach with Lewis is to expose him to as much reading as possible. He especially enjoys the stories in the student workbook and likes to discuss the events and the characters in the stories. I encourage him to read the stories out loud and we then read the story together. When he completes the story we discuss what he read. I also have Lewis practice writing some of the events that occur in the stories that he found interesting. The stories that are chosen for Lewis to read have some similarities to his own life that allows him to talk about how the story relates to his own personal life. We focus on stories that are simple and easy to read so that Lewis can feel a sense of accomplishment when he completes the story without struggling. He always displays a big smile when he finishes the story.

We also work with phonics/alphabet flash cards, crossword puzzles and word games. My focus with Lewis is reading, spelling, writing, word and alphabet sounds and practice, practice, practice.

Although Lewis still struggles with word and alphabet sounds he has come a long ways since our reading journey started in 2004.

I applaud Lewis for his dedication and commitment despite the numerous obstacles that he has faced in his life.

REFLECTIONS BY ADULT LITERACY STUDENTS

Helping to Change Everything
By Odin Catlan



Odin and Don

I have been with the ALP program for over 5 months. At first I was working with the Coordinator Rueben Serrano, at the Wilmington Literacy Center. My first knowledge of the Literacy program came to me by my friend Juan Jaramillo, who like myself was attending ESL classes at Harbor College. I had asked him about his experiences with the Adult Literacy program. Like Juan, I too was ashamed of my inability to speak and understand English. Since starting college I had not taken any classes in English as a second language. Last year was my first year to study English in the United States. It had only been a couple of years since my relocation to the US from Mexico.

But, like Juan, I went to the Wilmington Literacy Center and asked for Mr. Serrano. I told him of my situation, we at first started with a computer program called Reading Upgrade. A few weeks later he called me to say he had a tutor for me. I am now working with my tutor Don Dilworth as much as time allows. I am now finding that learning English is

much harder than I thought, especially at the college level. I meet with my tutor two times a week at the San Pedro Branch Library. I am so glad that I had met Juan and that he helped me find Mr. Serrano. Rueben has been a big help to me, and getting me started with my English tutor. As well as, getting to meet all the other students who are part of this program. I thank all of them for their continual help in learning to speak and comprehend the English language.

* * *

My Life Story By Clarence Hamilton

I was born in Walls, Mississippi in 1934. I started school when I was five years old. I lived on a farm two miles from school. When the weather was good I worked the farm. When the weather was bad I went to school. I missed so many days of school I kept getting put back. I dropped out in the fourth grade because I was older than the other students and I felt ashamed.

I left Mississippi when I was thirteen. I was drafted into the army in Los Angeles when I was twenty. I returned here to settle when I was twenty-two. I started working and got into construction as a laborer. I became a concrete finisher. I worked for years finishing commercial swimming pools.

I met my wife, Louannie, in the late 60's and we were married in 1970. We had a daughter, Kim, in 1975. I continued working in construction, but I always had my own business on the side. For example, when the weather was bad I had a wrecker to tow cars.

About twenty years ago I bought an apartment building. I eventually got out of construction to take care of my business and I sold it this year.

For a long time I thought about picking back up my reading that I started so many years ago. One day I said something about it to my daughter, Kim, and she made an appointment for me with Luva Coulson at the Literacy Center at the Pacoima Library.

I now have a new career. I am working to learn how to read and write.

* * *

A Success Story by Ana L. Ruvalcaba

I never thought I could get my GED but on January 26, 2006, I received a High School Equivalency Diploma. This is how I did it. I called the Adult Literacy Services at the Lincoln Heights Library. I told the coordinator Alicia Chavarin that I wanted to get a tutor. I asked for someone special that could help me with my reading and writing.

I wanted to give thanks to my tutor Marcia Terry for her patience and her dedication that she has given me. Since June 2006 we have been working very hard on all of the five GED subjects. We worked on one subject at a time. Starting in October I began taking the GED test and I successfully passed them all.

Now my goal is to become a Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN). My tutor and I are starting to prepare for my LVN classes. I feel confident that with the help of my tutor and the Literacy program, I will achieve my next goal in life.

* * *

My Country
by Guadalupe Bravo

My city is Mexico, D. F. In Mexico we say: We have four seasons in one year. The March and June is Spring. In the morning it is cold; at noon it is hot. At night it is cold again and sometimes it rains. In Summer and July and September in the morning it is a little cold. And sometimes it rains. At noon it is hot, at four o'clock it is hot, at night it is hot. In Fall the months are September and December. In the morning it is cold and windy and sometimes it rains. At noon it is hot; at four o'clock it is rains and windy, at night it is windy and is cold again.

In winter the months are December and March in Mexico In the morning sometimes it is cold, it is cloudy and rains and windy; at four o'clock it cold again and windy; at night it is cold and rains and cold.

Four seasons in one year. In Mexico Destrito Federale it is very very pretty. I like my country.

CREATIVE CORNER

Stories by Students

My Favorite Meal
by Olga Santos

My favorite meal is chicken and rice. I like to eat this delicious dish at lunchtime on the weekends with my family. While we are eating, I enjoy talking with my family and hearing from them what happened on the weekdays. I like to cook healthier meals. When I cook chicken, I take off all the skin because it has too much fat and this is no good for your health. I always try to eat salads and fruits. After lunchtime, I clean the kitchen and later I enjoy watching television.

* * *

My Favorite Meal By Zoila Rodriguez

My favorite meal is breakfast. For many people this is the most important meal. I enjoy eating breakfast in my room because I like to be alone at this time. Every day I eat for breakfast a cup of cereal with milk. I eat some fruit too, like a banana, an apple, raisins, or prunes. When I am eating, I like to watch TV. All the time, I prepare my own breakfast. I don't like to cook, but I like to eat when the food is delicious. After eating, I wash the dishes, clean them, and put them away. Then I clean everything else. I go shopping for the groceries when it is necessary. In my case, I'm always planning my meals for a week.

* * *

My Recipe By Berrin Morales

My recipe is lemon pie. But my recipe is made Turkish style. Usually I bought pie crust, sometimes I made with biscuit dough.

Ingredients:

2 eggs
7-8 tbspoons sugar
2 tbspoons cornstarch
1 ½ lemon rind (grated)
½ lemon juice
½ glass water
little bit crushed nuts

How to make it.

Start with eggs and sugar. Mix. Then add cornstarch mix to lemon rind. Then add lemon juice and water. Mix together. Then put on low heat. Cook to simmer. Then sauce will get thick. Wait until it bubbles. After, turn off stove. You sprinkle the nuts on the crust, pour sauce on the crust pie. After put in the refrigerator and wait until cold. After, serve with whip cream.

If I have any guest to come to my house or I made for some party. Everybody like that because my pie much lighter than another company's pie. Because it so heavy. If you want to put whip cream or nor my pie is very delicious and it smells good. My pie taste different because I used lemon rind a lot and I used nuts. I like to make pie. If somebody likes my pie I feel so happy.

I like to cook for people.

WE GET LETTERS AND E-MAILS

The following is the message that was written on a Christmas card sent to tutor Lillian Kleinman, who was so moved by it that she sent her Literacy Coordinator a copy:

Dear Lillian,

Thank you for all you've done to get Kenny where he is today. You've taught him to read, which has enabled him to participate in our son's school camping event as a counselor. It's an experience he wouldn't have been able to share with Kenneth, had it not been for you and your dedication. You are a very special person in our lives. We sincerely appreciate you.

To the grandest teacher. Thanks for everything!

The experience at camp "KEEP" and the certificate Kenny received for volunteering as a counselor = priceless.

Love,
Kenny, Anna and Kenneth

Lillian Kleinman has been tutoring for The Adult Literacy Program for 20 years! When she started working with Kenny, he did not know how to read at all. And now, even though she feels that he can do without her help, he continues to drive down from Palmdale every Saturday to meet with her for two hours. Now he likes to pick out his own things to read. He has such an inquiring mind, he wants to read everything and talk about it with Lillian.

In response, Lillian exclaims, "This card I received is a good example of why we do what we do -- tutor!!!"

Thank you

Fu-Lai Huang sent this e-mail to Literacy Coordinator Diego Mora:

I'm fu-lai(fly) huang mailing from Tailei. I appreciate you for improving my English very much. I enjoyed the conversation class with you. I not only learned English, but also had lots of fun. I still study English from newspaper, internet, or radio everyday. I wish I could be a volunteer to teach English someday. I think language is very important in our lives. If people who live in USA know English well, they would enjoy the life and culture of America. How are you these days? I miss you very much. Please say hello to Beverly and another lady (I didn't ask her name) for me. Thank you again, bye!

"News for You": CROSSWORD PUZZLES

Nika Karimi, originally from Iran, has been working with tutor Joan Bell since November 2005. Nika speaks Farsi, and has been learning English since she came to the United

States two years ago. Nika is so dedicated that she puts in 16 hours per week, for a total of 64 hours per month! She has also been studying to take exams for her Registered Nurse's License (she was an R.N. in Iran). Nika loved working crossword puzzles in Iran, but was unable to do them in English. After receiving "News for You" from Bill Wells, Nika has been working the crossword puzzles and enjoying the text. She describes the experience below:

By Nika Karimi

The crossword puzzle is done. I feel gratified. Meanwhile I have learned a lot from it.

My teacher and I decided to do crosswords. One day she brought the "News for You", and it was the beginning. "News for You" is a weekly newspaper for adults, including a supplementary worksheet. The articles are easy to read and are prepared for people who are learning English. The most important weekly news stories, with relevant pictures and graphs that make them more interesting for reading, are in the newspaper.

The font is big enough to be read with or without glasses. The most important part is the worksheet. It is something like a homework guide. Exercises in it are so various in nature one will never get tired of doing them. One page of the worksheet is for teachers. It describes the process for teaching.

On the last page of the newspaper, there is a cartoon, "Wit of the World". I cannot understand it sometimes, but it is fun to talk about.

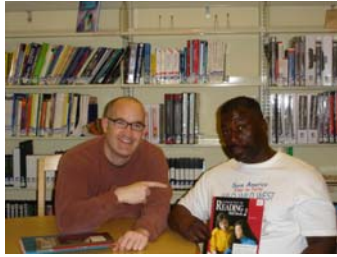
The last thing in the newspaper is the crossword puzzle that we started with. It is really fun. By the beginning of the class I have read the Across and the Down a couple of times. The ones I don't know the answers to are jumping down and up in my mind. After my teacher gives me a hint about them, they find a good place on my memory shelf.

CONGRATULATIONS

Adult Literacy Services would like to say congratulations to the following learners:

Gemale Johnson, who completed *The Laubach Way to Reading, Book 1* this quarter, has many things planned for the future. Among these are taking the driver's license test, reading novels, and writing e-mails and letters. "Gemale is a very hardworking student," says his tutor, Joe Cary. "We've both learned a lot through our time together. And where it was easy for me to see his progress, he was less convinced until we closed Book 1 and he received his diploma – then the proof was concrete. By far his favorite secondary tool was Scrabble letters – I would give him the letters to a word and he would spell it based on the rules learned from Laubach; it was a real pleasure to see the growth in his reading ability."

“It feels good to read and recognize more words,” Gemale remarks. *It’s a pleasure for us, too. Congratulations, Gema—keep up the good work!*



Gemale and Joe

Tutor Joe Cary's name has been in print as well. He was also recently featured in the article "Manly Men Answer Call of the Wild" in the New York Times on April 23, 2006."

Neil has grown tremendously in the two years he has been working with Tutor Anita Ruis, who notes that Neil is now self-confident and feels that he can express himself, both verbally and in writing. He also has a wonderful sense of humor.

One of his main goals was to improve his skills in basic math so that he could get a good job. The pair have been reviewing all of the math that Neil has learned in their time together and they are both so pleased because he remembers everything that he has learned. (He was sure that he would forget it, the way he had forgotten when he was in school.)

Neil, everybody in the Adult Literacy Program is so happy that you have done so well in our program. Congratulations from us all!

Ruby Telemi is another student Anita Ruis has agreed to work with. Ruby is from Armenia and, when they first met, Ruby would not pick up the telephone if she was home alone because she felt sure that she would not understand if the person on the line spoke in English. Now, she is able to read a story from her book and tell Anita what she has read, in her own words. Both of Ruby’s daughters speak English fluently, but she is tired of having to depend on them. She is determined to continue learning to read in English so she can become more and more independent. For Ruby, these private lessons with her tutor are a door to freedom and independence. *That is so wonderful. What an achievement!*

ARTISTRY



This drawing of the character SPAWN was done by ALP student Wilson Gomez, who has been enrolled in our program since last Fall and recently made the move up to LWR 2.

Congratulations to our newly trained tutors:

February:

Sandra Castro
Donald Dilworth
Tobi Dragert
Williemeaner Caldwell
Eason
John P. Fer
Cortney Fielding

Barry Ghabaei
Ana Gonzalez
Nathan Griffin
Wilma Haynes
Ike Imaizumi
Malisa Luong
June Moore

Mike Ostrowski
Annie Roach
Kate Roden
Joe Tepperman
Arlen Zambrano

March:

Suzu Adler
Diane Bliss
Christine Calvo
Steve Evans
Marlene Glenn
Alexa Greenberg
Christine Hermosisima

Mary Ann Kebo
Eileen King
Michelle Maing
Susan L. Miller
Wanda Parton
Tracy Roybal
Matinah Salaam

Irving Simons
Kim Sorensen
Robin Strumlauf
Janet Unterman
Darlene Williams

April:

Chris Alfonso
Nadia Ayuyu
Guilbert Baradas
Alison Baxter

Mary Carew
Joanne David
Dolores De Guzman
Dawn Freligh

Anna Imperial
Lee Ann Kennedy
Sydia Lopez
Marchell Mack

Denise Malone
John Melcombe
Patricia Navarrete
Christine Nelson

Frantz Pierre
Radha Ranganathan
David Reed
Randy Schultz

Saruka Selva
Don Shirley
Bobette Stott
Penny Werner

May:

Bill Archer
Hugh Bell
Margarette Bolden
Lawrence Cummins
Jim Francis
Rebecca Gilsdorf
Elizabeth Ives
Stan Jones

Stephanie Jordan
David Kelly
Frances Kipp
Jennifer Kawk
Paul S. Lister
Scott Lyness
Dorothy Mc Quiston
Anitha Natarajan

Phil P. Patton
Sherry Purcell
Faryl Reingold
Carmen Rico
Allison B. Sklute
Tina Tomayama
Valerie Lynn Williams
Tim Zamora

FAMILIES LOVE TO READ TOO

by Julie Simonson



Noel Toro and Matias

A common question asked by many FFL parents is how young is too young to begin reading to children. The answer is, “No age is too young to read to your child.” Babies love books and sharing books with your infant is a time of bonding and stimulation. Remember, as a parent, you are your child’s first – and most significant – teacher.

Babies, as they mature, love the colors and shapes in children’s books. Books that rhyme or offer songs are especially beloved. When a book has a rhyme, chant or song, it can lull and soothe your child. Some popular titles for babies that we offer as part of our FFL collection include “The Wheels on the Bus”, “Five Little Monkeys”, “There Was An Old Lady”, “Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See”, “Chicka Chicka ABC”, “Ten Little Ladybugs”, and the ever-popular “The Wide-Mouthed Frog”.

Cardboard books such as “There Was An Old Lady” and “Five Little Monkeys”, are great choices for your infant due to their indestructible nature. The pages can’t be torn, and teething babies can chew on them without harm. Books with exceptionally large and colorful illustrations like “Brown Bear ...” are wonderful for babies who are just beginning to gain stronger visual skills. Pop-up books such as “The Wheels on the Bus” and “The Wide-Mouthed Frog” provide excellent stimulation. “Ten Little Ladybugs” offers a tactile feature of raised ladybugs that adds the dimension of physical contact. Children love the ability to touch and feel, so any book that provides an

opportunity for touch is sure to be a winner.

You don't have to read to your baby for hours. The smaller the child, the shorter the attention span. Twenty minutes at a time is a good amount to spend with your baby looking at books, singing and rhyming. As the famed children's author Rosemary Wells likes to say, if you read to your baby, your baby will grow up to read to you.

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.