



LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF THE TARRYTOWNS INC.
www.lvtarrytown.org

The Warner Library, 121 N. Broadway, Tarrytown, NY 10591 914 631-7734

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NEWSLETTER

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NELSON CORREA AND FREDERIC STEIGMAN LEARN ABOUT ASISTS AT LNY'S SUMMER TRAINING INSTITUTE

Nelson Correa and Frederic Steigman attended Literacy New York's Summer Training Institute in Hamilton on June 4 and 5 and immersed themselves in workshops dealing with a new reporting system. They returned with an introductory understanding of ASISTS, a new Web-based reporting system that will become available to LNY affiliates in November. Eventually, all affiliates who wish to remain in the LNY network and receive ALE funding must adopt this system.

As a prelude to the Hamilton conference, the board welcomed Kate Tornese of LV of Westchester to its May 14 meeting to present an overview of the NRS, ALIES, and ASISTS. The NRS, or National Reporting System, is a federal program for gathering data on educational activities throughout the nation. ALIES is a software database program that satisfies NRS requirements and is currently being used by many affiliates. (Note: LVT uses a similar database, LVAS, developed by Nelson Correa.) ASISTS is a Web-based database which will become available in November 2007, replacing ALIES.

Nelson and Fred prepared a detailed report on NRS and ASISTS and circulated it to the board. In their report, they describe the NRS and our current system LVAS which produces most of the information needed to comply with the NRS requirements. They outline three changes that would be necessary to take part in ASISTS. They point out that the Literacy Assistance Center in New York City would offer training and that the necessary software would be provided to LVT.

The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors will meet during the summer to digest all the information in the report and to discuss the options for LVT. The committee will report to the full board in September.

ANNE CAHILL SEEKS ASSISTANT

Can you help Anne Cahill, Director of Tutor-Student Matching, with data entry a few hours once a month at the Warner Library? Call Anne at 631-4493.

DOLLAR GENERAL AND SUAVE ANNOUNCE CONTEST FOR STUDENTS

Dollar General and Suave have announced their 2007 Education Essay Contest. School-age youth and adult learners are asked to submit stories about how someone changed their lives through education. Tutors, here is an opportunity for your students to win recognition and prizes.

In all, over 2,000 prizes will be awarded. The top four winners will receive educational grants or savings bonds, and a trip to New York City to see *The Color Purple* and to meet its star, Fantasia Barrino.

The contest ends on July 20, 2007, so if your student wants to enter, there is no time to lose. Applying through the mail is possible only by securing an entry blank from a store in Rockland County, so applying on-line is a better solution. Go to www.suaveessaycontest.com and your student can write his or her essay on the computer.

MEMBERS SUGGEST PLAN TO IMPROVE BEST PLUS TESTING RECORD

Concern was expressed at the June 9 annual meeting about the low percentage of students who have been tested by Best Plus. Members responded with a plan to have all students tested.

Under the plan, Director of Tutor Advisory Services Frederic Steigman would call a meeting for all tutor advisers to discuss the importance of the Best Plus test. Each tutor adviser would be asked to communicate this information to his or her assigned tutors. Advisers would also find out the days and times their tutors usually meet with their students and report this information back to Fred. Once LVT has a reliable listing of when students are normally in the tutoring center, Carol Solomon will be able to proceed with scheduling the rest of the testing.

The Board of Directors adopted Best Plus a year ago and is committed to making this work. Our future as a member of Literacy New York and a recipient of Adult Literacy Education (ALE) funding depends upon it.

Students give us personal information when they come to

us and the Best Plus tester will also ask them for some personal information. However, only cumulative statistical results of the testing and other information are forwarded to LNY. No student names are attached to the information. Thus the privacy of the students is respected.

Best Plus is not intended to replace ESLOA, which we have used for many years and which gives the tutor a picture of a student's strengths and weaknesses in English. ESLOA helps a tutor to plan lessons to meet a student's specific needs.

CAROL SOLOMON EXPLAINS BEST PLUS AT IN-SERVICE WORKSHOP

For the benefit of our members who have been wondering what the Best Plus test is all about, Carol Solomon, at the in-service workshop on June 9, explained how the test works and how the tester scores it. It is a completely oral test. The computer tells the tester what questions to ask, Carol said. They may be on topics such as food, shopping, free time, recreation, or other areas that would be familiar to a student.

The student responds to each question and is scored by the tester on language comprehension (0, 1, or 2), language complexity (1, 2, 3, or 4), and communication (0, 1, 2, or 3). At the conclusion of the test the computer gives the cumulative score that the student has achieved. Carol demonstrated the test at the workshop by asking questions of those present, listening to their answers, and then explaining how she as the tester arrived at each score. The theory of the test is that when the student is tested again later on, it will be possible to tell how much the student has advanced by comparing the two scores.

In the second half of the workshop, Carol presented pronunciation exercises designed to help students differentiate between similar words, put stress on the correct syllable, form past tense, and understand contractions used in everyday speech. These exercises will be made available soon in the teaching materials file in the tutoring center.

Participating in the in-service were: Joe Ambrose, Alice Brothers, Juanita Carmi, Elisa Carrillo, Mitch Cooke, Nelson Correa, Mary Jane Driscoll, Candie Frankel, Ellaine Goodman, Sharon Hart-Fanelli, Lucille Hutchinson, Rhoda Kaplan, Cathy Lawner, Rachael Murray, Debbie Oliviera, Debra Portnoy and Mindy Stoller.

SIX NEW ESOL TUTORS TRAINED IN SPRING 2007 WORKSHOP

Director of Training Mary Jane Driscoll has announced that six new tutors were trained in the spring 2007 ESOL workshop. All have elected to stay and tutor with LVT. Certificates were awarded at the closing session on April 14 to Jay Albrecht, Helen Barolini, Debbie Olivieri, Sarah Roe, Rita Sanchez, and Rachel Schroeder. All have been matched with students.

Sharon Hart served as Assistant Leader of the workshop. Others who helped were: Alice Brothers, Anne Cahill, Ellaine Goodman, and Fred Steigman.

SIX RECEIVE SERVICE AWARDS

Ellaine Goodman and Cathy Lawner were awarded 15-year service certificates at the annual meeting on June 9. Ellaine has been a tutor of both basic literacy and ESOL, and for several years she has served on the Board of Directors and as Director of Teaching Materials. Cathy has been an outstanding tutor of ESOL and has helped many students to learn English and to adjust to life in the United States.

A 10-year service pin was awarded to Judy Levine. She has been an enthusiastic tutor who recently was interviewed with her current student. An article by Jane Forstenzer who conducted the interview is now on our Web site (www.lvtarrytown.org).

Three members received 5-year service pins: Tutors MarcheLe Courtney and Nancy Falco, and our Library Coordinator, Elizabeth Siracusa. All three have done a great job!

TWO FROM LVT ATTEND ROTARY LUNCHEON

Joe Ambrose and Elisa Carrillo attended the annual Rotary Club Awards Luncheon held at the Marriott on May 7. Joe spoke briefly about LVT's literacy program and its Web site.

MEMORIAL GIFT HONORS GERALDINE DENT

Joe Ambrose announced at the May board meeting that LVT received a donation of \$500 in memory of Geraldine Dent from Dan and Mary Dent of Baltimore, Maryland. We appreciate this thoughtful and generous donation,

PROGRAM REPORTS FOR 2006-2007 PRESENTED AT ANNUAL MEETING

Accreditation. Joe Ambrose reported on the ProLiteracy accreditation which we received early in our current year. The accreditation is good for four years.

Tutor Training. Mary Jane Driscoll reported that we trained 16 ESOL tutors, 10 in the fall 2006 workshop and 6 in the spring 2007 workshop. Of the total, 15 remained with LVT and one went to LVWC. One tutor who already was qualified to teach ESOL also joined us.

Tutor-Student Matching. Anne Cahill reported that 43 active tutors were working with 48 students. In addition, 6 tutors had been assigned to new students, and 5 were on hiatus but were expected to begin again shortly. There were 51 prospective students on the waiting list.

Teaching Materials. Ellaine Goodman reported 209 additions to the teaching materials collection. They included English without Barriers, which is being circulated by Warner Library, books purchased with National Book Scholarship funds, and ESLOA test booklets.

Teaching Statistics. Joe Ambrose reported that as of April 30, tutors had spent 2,054 hours teaching students during the first 10 months of the 2006-2007 year.

Web Site. Nelson Correa reported that the LVT Web site, lvtarrytown.org, is now online. Through the Web site, we have received 12 tutor applications, which were forwarded to Mary Jane Driscoll, and 10 student applications, which were sent to Anne Cahill. A Spanish translation feature was added to the Web site.

Publicity and Newsletters. Lucille Hutchinson reported that press releases were sent to a long list of newspapers, organizations, and churches twice during 2006–2007, to publicize the fall and spring workshops. Kendal-on-Hudson has been a good source of new tutors. The member newsletter is issued four times a year. Candie Frankel has been assisting by formatting the newsletter on the computer so that it can be viewed on our Web site. The student newsletter was not issued in December because of a lack of student stories. It is hoped that there will be enough material so that Maria Weeks may be able to publish a June issue.

Grants. Lucille Hutchinson reported that LVT applied for and received three grants in 2006–2007: Rotary Club, \$500; United Way, \$500; and ALE (Adult Literacy Education), \$1,300. We may consider applying for a second \$5,000 grant from the Westchester Community Foundation in 2007–2008, if the organization decides to seek major items—computers for student use have been suggested.

TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT

Treasurer Alice Brothers presented her report of income and expenditures through May 31, 2007, at the Annual Meeting. Income included grants, workshop registration fees, memorial gifts, tutor contributions, and interest, for a total of \$3,049.62. Expenditures were for workshop and library acquisitions, Web site hosting and security, conference and travel expenses, liability insurance, postage and office supplies, for a total of \$2,455.88. Alice will file another report to include the full year of 12 months ending June 30 at the September board meeting.

JOE AMBROSE TO LEAD FALL ESOL TUTOR TRAINING WORKSHOP

Joe Ambrose, a qualified workshop leader who has assisted at a number of training sessions in recent years, has volunteered to lead the fall 2007 ESOL tutor training workshop, which will begin September 29. Mary Jane Driscoll and Sharon Hart are both unable to take on this responsibility in the fall because of family obligations, though both may be able to serve as assistants at some of the sessions.

Dates for the workshop are September 29, October 6, 20 and 27, and November 3 and 10. Joe will confer with Mary Jane during the summer to go over some of the workshop materials. Anyone who is willing to help out for a few hours or longer is asked to phone Joe at 591-6750.

TUTOR TODD SCHMIDT ANSWERS APPEAL FOR STUDENT STORIES

In response to the call in our March issue for student stories, Todd Schmidt submitted an essay written by his student, Luis Dutan. Thank you, Todd! The story has been forwarded to Maria Weeks for publication in the student newsletter.

We hope that many more of our tutors will follow Todd's lead and submit stories written by their students. Drop off your stories in the LVT mailbox in the library back office (by the key pickup). Students whose work is published will receive a voucher for two tickets to a movie at the Tarrytown Music Hall.

YMMA ROBLES RECEIVES AWARD

The Women's Enterprise Development Center presented a cash award to Ymma Robles, which she will use to develop her business, Brunella Fashion and Design. Ymma is a student of Elisa Carrillo and the student representative on LVT's board.

NEW TUTORS REPORT ON THEIR EXPERIENCES

by Mary Jane Driscoll

Beverly Chabinsky's student is a young woman from Peru. Vilma has a 4-year-old daughter Stefanie and is expecting another baby. They live with her husband who came here a long time ago. Vilma has been here for 1 1/2 years and had about 12 years of schooling in Peru. She relies on her husband to do a lot of translating, but she can shop by herself. Vilma tests at Level 1 on the ESLOA. Beverly said Vilma told her she used only quarters and bills when making purchases because the other coins were too confusing. So Beverly built a lesson about learning the names of the other coins for homework and they discussed the value of each coin. They have also been working on pronunciation. Beverly constructed a paragraph containing all the sounds Vilma has to work on, like "sh" and "y." Beverly says Vilma has made a lot of progress—she likes to write everything down. They do a lot with the equal sign: for example, "gonna" = "going to." Beverly says Vilma can read English but she does not understand English when people speak. For example, when Vilma went to the doctor, she did not understand what "take off" meant when she was asked to take off her clothes. Vilma brings books that she wants to read to her child. They go through them to make sure she understands the vocabulary. With Beverly's help, Vilma was able to teach her daughter how to sing *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* in English.

Susan Hecht has a student she describes as "delightful." Marlene is from Ecuador, is 41 years old, and has been here for 6 years. She had about 12 years of education in

Ecuador. She has children in Ecuador who are in college or almost in college. She lives with her sister in the same home as her brother. Marlene had been working as a home health aide, but she hurt her back and goes to Brooklyn for therapy. She had some ESL help in her church. Marlene told Susan she had been waiting 6 months for a tutor; she is very eager to learn. In her home everyone speaks Spanish. Susan says Marlene speaks well but does not always understand. She tests at the low end of Level 3 on the ESLOA. She has difficulty with tenses. Susan gives Marlene homework, but she is not always able to do it. They have used audiotapes in their lessons and Susan has suggested that Marlene listen to TV and radio in English.

Niamh Fitzgerald also has a student from Ecuador—Rosa, who has a son named Dan, 8 or 10 years old. Dan goes to the RSHM Life Center's after-school program. Rosa has been here for 10 years. She has a daughter in Ecuador. Niamh says Rosa communicates well for "basics" and has learned enough English to be employed as a house cleaner. She is anxious to learn, speaks slowly, and scores a high Level 2 on the ESLOA. She has trouble pronouncing some words, such as "sentences." She wants to learn English to help her understand her employer's instructions. She has a driver's license and drives a car. Her husband is a welder. Rosa completed a homework assignment for Niamh about her apartment—what she would like to be different. Niamh has asked Rosa's son Dan to try to speak English to his mother.

Note: Mary Jane Driscoll and Sharon Hart were in charge of the follow-up workshop in which the above material was reported..

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