

The Lamplighter

July, August, September, 2005

A quarterly newsletter of the
Literacy Council of Bonita Springs

Join The Celebration of The Americas Oct. 8

All Literacy Council tutors and students are invited to join in observing the first annual Celebration of the Americas (El Dia de La Raza) Saturday, October 8, from 6-8 p.m. at the Bonita Springs Community Hall, Old 41.

Everyone is invited to bring songs, dances and food from their native land.

Financial Stock Gifted To Council

An anonymous donor has given the Literacy Council a \$5,000 block of corporate stock, reports Director Katie Verna. The stock will be used to support the activities of the Literacy Council.

New Moms & Tots Program at Pueblo Bonito

The popular Moms & Tots program at Pueblo Bonito is swinging into high gear, reports Director Katie Verna. The weekly English language session, which began July 12, is held every Tuesday and Wednesday from 11am to 1pm at the Community Center.

The session includes ½-hour of reading by moms and tots together, plus a singalong. The children then have a pre-school activity in the English language while their mothers also study English. Moms tutors are Barbara Goff and Margie Henneberry and kids tutors are Nora Martinez, Edie Kubiak, Joan Moran, Paula Cohen, and Marge Wisniewski.

Once a month Bambi Fischer, of Even Start, arrives in her Big Blue Bus, leads a reading session and gives books to the children. She also attends the Manna Christian Moms & Tots program each month.

New Opinion Survey Reveals Students Overwhelmingly Satisfied With Their Literacy Council Tutoring

Students studying English in the Council's various programs are overwhelmingly satisfied with their experiences, according to results of a recently conducted survey and compiled by volunteer Liz DeAmicis, of INFO, Bonita Springs.

In an enthusiastic endorsement of their training under Council auspices, 100% of all students who participated in the survey said they were enjoying their time in the classes and 97% of them confirmed that they are learning what they hoped to learn.

"The results of the survey are extremely gratifying to those of us on staff," Katie Verna, program director, said. "But more importantly, they should make our wonderful volunteer tutors feel great that the time and effort they put into the program is appreciated and fruitful."

Some 119 students participated in the self-administered survey, which was conducted in June. Purpose of the survey was three-fold:

1. To learn the satisfaction level of current students with their classes;
2. To measure the usefulness of materials being used, and
3. To gauge the length and breadth of students' study habits.

An Executive Summary of the results, besides noting the unanimous satisfaction level, also included two other key findings:

1. Students work hard in and out of classes so they can achieve their dreams of a better future in which they can communicate and be integrated into work and country, and
2. Students report that the Council program is helping them succeed.

Students who get one-on-one instructions from tutors report slightly higher satisfaction and attendance levels than those who are a part of group classes. Some 99% who are working with tutors feel that they are meeting their goals, while 94% of those in classes also agree.

Why are they taking the classes? For two reasons, each of which drew 41% returns:

1. To get a better job/better future/opportunity, and
2. It is my dream/goal to learn English/write/read better/communicate in English.

Students were virtually unanimous (99%) in their support of the study books and other training aids being utilized. Only a few had any recommendations for improvements in the program, but the ones who did cited more classes (11%); more personal tutors (4%), and more bilingual tutors (4%). Providing baby sitters and expanding hours for classes each drew 2%.

With all of this outstanding playback, Verna talked about only one statistic that she said she would like to see increase to 100% from its current 73%. That is the percentage of students who study outside their classroom.

"It's understandable why it's not 100%," Verna says, "because of their work and family responsibilities, which sap them of their time and strength. But there is no question that those who can find the extra time to study at home or elsewhere have greater and faster success."

(continued on page 3)

Meet New Council Board Members

In the past year, nine new Bonita Springs residents have stepped forward to take their places on the Board of Directors of the Literacy Council. They come from business, education, the legal community and other arenas and bring an impressive variety of talents and experience, not to mention a bundle of energy and drive, to the Council and its programs and projects. We will be introducing you to your board members over the next couple of newsletters, beginning with a look at a few of the newer ones:

Marve Ann M. Alaimo is an associate of the law firm Cummings & Lockwood. An honors graduate of the University of Florida at Gainesville, she received her J.D. with honors from the University of Florida College of Law. She earned her LL.M. degree in estate planning from the University of Miami School of Law. Marve Ann is member of the Collier County Bar Association and the SW Florida Chapter of the National Association of Asian American Professionals. A member of the University of Florida Extension Service Council, she is also Naples Chapter Education Chairman of the Kidney Foundation and is co-editor for the Estate Planning Council of Naples, Inc.

Richard S. Annunziata, a native of New York City, is an associate at the law firm of Henderson, Franklin, Starnes & Holt, P.A. He concentrates on civil and commercial litigation, with an emphasis on real estate contract and real property disputes, collections and foreclosures litigation, construction and lien law litigation, business torts and contract disputes. An Honors Graduate of the University of Tampa, Richard earned his J.D. from Nova Southeastern University Shepard Broad Law Center. He started with the Felden & Felden law firm before joining Siesky, Pilon & Wood, P.A., which later merged with his current firm. Richard is very active in local organizations; he is a founding member of the Estero Rotary, a member of the Bonita Springs Chamber of Commerce, a member of the Young Lawyers Section of the Collier Bar Association and of the Thomas S. Biggs American Inns of Court.

Kim M. Hastings is a partner with the law firm Hahn Loeser & Parks, with offices in Bonita Springs and Naples and three offices in Ohio. A 19-year veteran of the legal community, Kim's specialty is Labor & Employment Law and Human Resources Counseling. She holds a JD from Cleveland Marshall College of Law and a Masters in Science in Organizational Development from Case Western Reserve University. A Certified Senior Professional of Human Resources, Kim is a member of the 2004-05 Class of Leadership Bonita.

Mary Anne Lochirco, a Chicagoan, earned a BS degree from Loyola. After moving to Florida in 1969, she fulfilled her dream of becoming a professional vocalist, eventually forming her own production company. Mary Anne directed, produced, booked and performed in shows throughout the country and on TV and cruise ships. In her "off time", she owned and operated a fudge company, Dutchland Fudge. Mary Anne was District Director of the Muscular Dystrophy Association for three years, served as Director of Communications for the Mental Health Association and Southwest Florida Public Relations Association and was very active in the Bonita Chamber of Commerce. She also has owned a PR business and has sold real estate. Since marrying the president and owner of Happy Apples, she lives part time in Florida and the rest of the time in Missouri.

Congratulations, Successful Students!

Roberto Agustin, Level 1, Jan Taylor, tutor
Almedina Bajraktarevic, Level 3, V. Carosella, tutor
Maria Brito, Level 1, Katie Verna, tutor
Sylvia Cordova, Level 1, Harry J. Paul, tutor
Damian Cruz, Level 3, Don Miller, tutor
Dorian De Leon Jr., Level 2, Tom Roy, tutor
Luz Elonachica, Level 2, Tom Roy, tutor
Silvestre Flores, Level 2, Tom Roy, tutor
Edith Galindo, Level 1, Jan Taylor, tutor
Ortencia Gallegos, Level 1, Katie Verna, tutor
Mauricio Gomez, Level 3, Paula Cohen, tutor
Monica Gonzalez, Level 2, Shirley Sheffer, tutor
Esteban Guzman, Level 2, Tom Roy, tutor
Damiana Hernandez, Level 3, Jean Stokes, tutor
Fabiola Justiniano, Level 2, Tom Roy, tutor
Ivan Lezlaño, Level 2, M. Evers, tutor
Ricardo Lopez, Level 2, Tom Roy, tutor
Jose Medrano, Level 3, Mary Johnson, tutor
Fabiola Misas, Level 2, Vincent Carosella, tutor
Astrid Moscoso, Level 3, Paula Cohen, tutor
Danny Ochoa, Level 3, Don Miller, tutor
Maria Pomacosi, Level 2, Shirly Sheffer, tutor
Mario Toledo, Level 1, Anthony Cantele, tutor
Sary Vivas, Level 1, Jan Taylor, tutor
Jaqueline Zamarripa, Level 1, Gloria Wilkie, tutor

Nancy Jo Powers, a New Englander, brings a rich background in marketing to the Board, having been a product manager, marketing services development manager and sales representative for Dennison Mfg. and Wright Line, Inc. Most recently, she was a consultant to small business in marketing, human resources and organizational development. A Cum Laude graduate in English, Clark University, she has contributed to community causes in Massachusetts and this area, such as serving as chair of the annual golf outing for Greyhound Friends, Hopkinton, MA., and as Executive Director of the Spring Run Board.

Wal-Mart Awards \$500 To Council

The Literacy Council is grateful to Wal-Mart for the \$500 Literacy Grant recently awarded in support of the Council's programs.

Welcome Aboard, New Tutors!

The following volunteers were certified as tutors at the June workshop that took place at the First Presbyterian Church on Bonita Beach Road. Bert Bonner and Delores Brecker were the trainers.

Mark B. Caudill
Marge Cervenak
Isidro Crespo
Marilyn Ebbert
Carmen Fernandez
CJ Fess
Barb Goff
Trudy Graham
Jean Hutton
Edie Kubiak
Patricia McIntyre
Burton Meisner
Dené Pellicci
Tripta Sarin
Mary Schell
Christin Schuckert
Jean Starr
Jerry Starr
Carol Tindall
Sandy Umlor
Ann Wentz
Gloria Wilkie
Edwin Zerrer

Fall Tutor-Training Workshop

September 17, 24, October 1, Saturdays, 8:30 to 12:30pm at the First Presbyterian Church. Bert, Lorraine and Delores are the trainers.

October 18, 20, 25, 27, Tuesdays, Thursdays, 9 to 1pm. First Presbyterian Church, Lorraine and Don.

Call the Council to register. Training materials, \$40 (scholarships or used books available).

August Workshop--the following volunteers and students were certified as tutors by trainer Andrea Smith. The group met at the Council offices.

Rosa Ruis Gertrudis Reiterer-Crespo
Donna Sandler Joan Moran

Reporting Hours Is Important!

For tutors a copy of the form for reporting hours and goals and achievements is enclosed. Tutors are gently asked to turn in their volunteer hours because their commitments to their students are valuable as in-kind donations that assist the Council when applying for funding.

A message for tutors--

The Lamplighter Too is written by and for students. Please give a copy to your student. Extra copies are available in the office.

A Fond Farewell

It is with regret, but wishes for an excellent future that the Council says good-bye to Ed and Judy Anderson. They moved to Oklahoma last month to be closer to their families. Both Ed and Judy were excellent tutors and helped many students learn English. In addition, Judy was a Board member and was very active and successful in helping secure new funding for the Council. Judy was also active in several local clubs including Newcomers and AAUW (American Association of University Women). The loss to Bonita of the talent, expertise and energy of this couple is a huge gain for Oklahoma.

Gertrudis Crespo Joins Council Staff

Gertrudis Crespo (Kerty) has joined the Literacy Council staff as office assistant. A native of Margarita Island, Venezuela, she studied business administration at the University of Caracas. For 15 years she worked in the administrative office of an electric power company, followed by five years in classified advertising at a newspaper. In 2000 she and her husband Antonio moved to Michigan, where he worked for a home construction firm and Kerty designed and made draperies for the next four years until the Crespos came to Bonita Springs in April of this year. Kerty replaces Sonia Heredia who now works for a Naples mortgage firm.

Council to Have Full-Time Services Of VISTA Volunteer for One Year

A program sponsored by the Florida Literacy Coalition throughout the state, in conjunction with AmeriCorps VISTA, included an offer to sponsor a full-time employee for an entire year to any Literacy Council that could qualify. After the Bonita Springs Council was given approval by AmeriCorps VISTA, an extensive search was undertaken and a qualified candidate found.

Mayra Alvarado, who has both business and non-profit experience, begins her term at the Council on September 12.

Mayra will concentrate on marketing, development and public relations issues, working alongside Development Director Bob Dimond and reporting to Program Director Katie Verna.

"We feel very fortunate to have found someone with Mayra's background and experience," Verna says. "She can contribute immediately to our day-to-day programs and projects and has the opportunity to make a significant impact on our accomplishments over the next year."

Fluent in Spanish, Mayra also has knowledge of French, Italian and Portuguese. A pre-med graduate of Inter-American University of Puerto Rico, she also is a Magna Cum Laude graduate of the State University of New York with an Associate in Applied Sciences in International Marketing and Merchandising.

Mayra most recently worked with The Alliance for Human Services in Miami. Her co-workers and officials in allied organizations all give her very high marks for her professionalism, her instincts for social work and her ability to understand and cope with problems.

Prior to that, she worked as a consultant to businesses and in a number of responsible sales and marketing positions. She has also been an instructor in Business Administration and Fashion Art & Design.

Opinion Survey (continued from page 1)

When asked what they liked least about the program, students had a hard time coming up with anything. So 69% said "nothing". But there were a few minor requests, such as stay open longer, have more locations, offer more computer time, etc.

"As long as there are any shortfalls in our service," Verna says, "we have something to shoot for. So as great as the kudos are, we'll look at the drawbacks mentioned and see if there are some things we can do to address them."

Annual Literacy Council Appeal Reaches \$5000

The ongoing letter of appeal for financial support recently launched among tutors and friends of the Literacy Council has already raised over \$5000, reports Director Katie Verna. Thanks to everyone who has contributed and we urge everyone else to seriously consider making a contribution.

Student Stars in United Way Video

Elisabeth Alonso, a Literacy Council student, is a leading personality in the new Lee County United Way video designed to help raise funds for the organization's many community programs. She describes her personal need to learn the English language so that she can help her two boys to also learn the language and progress well in school. The seven-minute video is being shown at fundraising meetings this fall throughout Lee County.

Buy the New Entertainment 2006 Guide Now

The annual entertainment guide for Lee and Collier Counties is now available at the Literacy Council Office. Each book covers a wide range of restaurants, recreation and sports events available to users at discount rates. The guides are also available from the Bonita Banner, which is selling them for the Council. Cost is \$30 and profits are given to help support Literacy Council activities.

Council Discount Phone Cards For Sale

Tutors and students are being offered special discount rate telephone cards by the Literacy Council. Each card costs \$10 and will provide 250 minutes of telephone time. Cards are available at the Council Office.

Thanks To Newsletter Folders

The June issue of the Literacy Council of Bonita Springs newsletter was folded by an energetic group of workers, including Dora Sandoval, Kelly de Bravo, Alfonso Zamudio, Nora Martinez, Miriam Arce, Martin del Tierro, Tutor Bernadette Marks, Rita Villalobos, Guillermo Torres, Alejandra Ruiz, Maria Ruiz, and Katherine Sandoval.

Student Thanks Council

Elizabeth Rodriguez, a Council student, wrote: "I give thanks to the Literacy Council, as well as to the teacher, for the support to the people to learn English."

Passes Real Estate Exam

Maria Bisogno, a student of Hestor Lindberg for the past year, recently passed the official English Real Estate exam. Congratulations, Maria!

Passes Massage Exam

Council Student Veronica Valdez recently passed the English qualifying exam to become a massage therapist. Her tutor is Donna Garrison. Congratulations, Veronica!

New US Citizens

Student Juan Carlos Flores recently became a citizen of the United States when he gave the oath of citizenship in June. Elva Hernandez has passed the citizenship exam and is awaiting her turn to give the oath of citizenship.

OFFICE SCHEDULE

Katie Verna, Program Director
Gerty Rieterer Crespo, Office Assistant
Monday through Friday
9:00 to 5:00

Jeanne Sachs, Student/Tutor Coordinator
Monday to Thurs., 4:00 to 9:00 pm
Nora Martinez, Assistant Coordinator
Monday through Friday, 5:00 to 9:00pm

STUDENT LAB OPEN

Mon. to Fri., 9am to 9pm

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