

The Lamplighter

July, August, September, 2006

A quarterly newsletter of the
Literacy Council of Bonita Springs

Amilcar Santos Becomes U.S. Citizen Sept. 28

Our popular English/Spanish teacher, Amilcar Santos, recently passed the examination for U.S. citizenship and will be sworn in September 28 in Tampa. Congratulations, Amilcar!

Spanish Class

Council program director Diego Grisales is currently teaching Spanish to six students, five of whom are company employees at The Splash Zone store on US 41 in Estero. The class began on July 6 and will end on September 28. Fees raised by the course will be donated to the Council for its language programs, reports executive director Susan Acuna.

English Class

Amilcar Santos and Linda Willis, ESOL teachers, began teaching English September 11 from 5-6:30 p.m. for eight weeks to 60 employees of Rice Insulation, Bonita Springs.

Spanish Language Taught; New Classes Start January 16

Amilcar Santos is teaching a course in Spanish to students at the Council Office. Started August 17, the class will be completed October 15. Classes in beginning and intermediate Spanish will be held for 12 weeks Tuesdays from January 16, 2007 through April 3, 2007. Beginning class will be held from noon to 2p.m. and the intermediate class from 2-4p.m. The cost per person is \$300, which will benefit the Council's literacy programs. Call the Council office at 495-0999 to register.

Gala Farewell Party for Katie Verna

More than 300 students, tutors, staff members and families attended a festive farewell party for departing Literacy Council executive director Katie Verna on Sunday, September 10 at the Bonita Springs Community Hall.

The festivities began with a banquet of ethnic dishes prepared by the guests. During the meal, music was provided by D.J. Cano and his wife Evelyn, who acted as master of ceremonies. Following the dining, a dance group taught by Maria Arias Hillyer performed a wide range of Hispanic and Hawaiian dances, including Folkloric Mexican dances. Highlight of the entertainment was a special castanet dance dedicated to Katie by Maria, who wore a native yellow Spanish dress.

After the dancing, testimonials to Katie were delivered by Damian Cruz, Ray Simon, Esmeralds Parra, Gladys Krause, Elizabeth Acosta, executive director of the Literacy Volunteers of Collier County, and several staff members. Katie was also given a painting by student Redy Alvarez depicting his native home and countryside in Honduras. George Shaffer, outgoing Board treasurer, then presented Katie with a plaque recognizing her years of dedicated service. The DJ then led the guests in singing Louis Armstrong's "It's A Wonderful World".

Final surprise of the evening was the appearance of the San Marcos Mariachi Band, of Miami, which played Mexican music until closing. As the gala affair drew to a close, guests took group photographs with Katie and gave her heartfelt personal farewells. Antonio Ixcot, a journalist from Guatemala, videotaped the testimonial event, which was given to Katie, and a copy of which will be available for viewing by interested guests. Ice cream was generously donated by the Royal Scoop ice cream parlor.

Among the many volunteers who helped to plan, conduct and clean up after the testimonial were Kertey Reiterer-Crespo, Jeanne Sachs, Nora Martinez and Carlos (name), Rosa Ruiz, Maureen Lorenz, Lynne Keenan, Ray Simon, Teresa O'Rourke, Marilyn Senton, David Rodriguez and many other tutors.

Diego Grisales Named New Program Director

The Literacy Council has appointed Diego Grisales director of all its English language teaching programs, announced outgoing director Katie Verna. The position was created by the Council Board to help supervise English language classes for Moms and Tots, groups and individual students. In his new position, Diego will report to new Council executive director Susan Acuna.

Diego moved to the United States in the fall of 2003 from Pereira, Colombia, where he

(Continued on page 2)

New Office Opening Honors International Literacy Day

A special ribbon-cutting ceremony Friday, September 8, signaled the official opening of the new Council executive/classroom office on Old 41 Road across the street from the current office building.

All the guests, including the English language students, first sang "America The Beautiful."

The opening ceremony also honored the second anniversary of the Moms and Tots program at Manna Christian RV Park. Martin Brito, a son of Maria Brito, is the first child to attend kindergarten who has learned how to speak English over the past two years. Other student-mothers were honored for their participation in the English classes at Manna Christian. Maria Brito was given a laptop computer and a Borders Bookstore \$50 gift certificate, and Demetria Gonzalez a dictionary and a Borders certificate. Receiving an Oxford personal dictionary were Ofelia Lopez, Rosalina Jose, Maria Jose, and Josefa Gabriel. Given a book on "English for Everyday Activities" were Floridalma Bamaca, Patricia Brito, Maria de la Ulloa, Erika Vazquez, and Carmen Castaneda.

Among the many speakers were Nancy Keefer, Bonita Springs Chamber of Commerce president, Dick Frederickson, president of AM Rotary, Ray Faubian, past Rotary president, and Sue Masters, a Rotarian and tutor. Also speaking were Clifford Smith, director of the United Way of Lee County, Greg Gardner, United Way vice president of allocations and planning, Karen Leonardi, principal of the Spring Creek Elementary School, and Board members Shelley Musto, Pat O'Donnell and Maryann Lochirco.

Maria's Restaurant generously donated quesadillas and pico de gallo for the invited guests.

Six years ago the council taught 150 students with 130 tutors and a \$25,000 budget.

This year 490 tutors have taught 1,379 students on a budget of about \$300,000.

The 1700-square-foot facility has been leased for three years from the Bonita Estero Association of Realtors (BEAR). Jo Simon, a tutor and realtor, was instrumental in arranging the lease. The Irwin family Foundation has underwritten the rent for the first six months of the lease. The Council has been using the facility since mid-June for evening language classes. Individual tutor-student classes will be held in the office-sized classrooms and larger classes in the main classroom space. In the popular Moms and Tots program, mothers will attend classes in the main classroom space while their children will have pre-school activities in a smaller room

(Diego, continued from page 1)

was a professor of economics, marketing and merchandising at the Catholic university, the state university and the technological university. "I was dissatisfied with the diminishing personal liberties in my native country and so I decided to come to America to regain my freedom," he said.

Unable to speak English, he immediately enrolled in the Literacy Council English language program. At the same time he began work as a produce department clerk at Publix Foods in Bonita Springs. Eight months later he joined the Expo Design Center in Naples as a clerk in both the Oriental and domestic rugs department and the receiving department. Nine months later he began working as coordinator of volunteers in Lutheran Services of Florida in Immokalee and five months later also at the Amigos Center in Bonita Springs. In both groups, he assisted foreign immigrant workers in recovering from the impact of Hurricane Wilma. In July of this year, having completed his own English language studies, Diego started teaching English to Council students.

Diego lives in Bonita Springs with his wife Blanca, daughter Valentina, 15, a student in the ninth grade at Estero High School, and son Diego Felipe, 13, a student in the seventh grade at Bonita Springs Charter School. In his leisure time, Diego enjoys reading, playing tennis, playing soccer with his son, studying with his children and dining with his family.

Congratulations, Successful Students!

Damian Cruz, Level 4, Don Miller, tutor
Elsy Cruz, Level 1, Ali Smith, tutor
Erika Davila, Level 4, Dom Van Cleave, tutor
Sebastian Diaz, Level 3, Richard D. Ricketts, tutor
David Fregoso, Level 2, Alison Schmerler, tutor
Ana Nolasco, Level 1, Ron Hutton, tutor

Amilcar Santos' Classes

Level II July 06

Rafael Palomino
Herminia Ulloa
Ivan Islas
Eloy Santiago
Ana Vásquez
Rey Simón
David Benitez
Luis Mejia
José Manuel Barco
Julio Mendoza
Juvencio Larios
José Ríos
Ana Morales
Armando Montes
Jaime Encarnación

Level I July 06

José Flores
Erwin May Pérez
Rosa Rivera
Esteban Sebastian
René González
Jaime Vásquez

Paul Carr's Class September 06

Eliseo Ballagan
Merlin Arely Cruz
Guillermo Espinoza
Florencio Jimenez
Ronald Díaz

Mercedes Ballou's Class September 06

Level I: Karol Lima
Level II: Morena Fuentes

Judy & Peter's Class September 06

Level I
Ronald Díaz
Merlin Cruz
Juan Arriaga
Julian Rodríguez
Eugenio Domingo
Gilberto Hernández
Omar Rivas

United Way Starts 2007 Campaign

United Way of Lee County Campaign Chair Larry Hart will host the Annual Campaign Kick-off on Tuesday October 17, 2006. This will mark the beginning of the 2006-2007 Campaign for United Way with a goal this year of over \$6.6 million.

The Literacy Council of Bonita Springs is proud to be a United Way Partner Agency. Our center participates in our own agency campaign and Susan and Diego have already begun giving presentations on behalf of United Way and the Literacy Council at various businesses throughout the area. Last year, the Literacy Council raised \$2,100 for the campaign. Together, United Way agencies raised over \$172,000, surpassing the agencies' campaign goal for 2005-2006.

This year's campaign slogan, "Where there's a you, there's a way", focuses on the important contributions of every person and agency involved with United Way.

"The agencies funded by United Way improve the quality of life for everyone in our community," said campaign chair Larry Hart. "It is great to see how many lives are improved each and every day because of the United Way and the generosity of its supporters."

United Way funding helps support the Literacy Council's programs including three classrooms for English classes that are filled each evening; our Moms and Tots Family Literacy Program; and support for our literacy programs at worksites.

Our students are holding raffles to raise money for the Council's United Way campaign goal. Moms and Tots' participants are raffling two sewing machines per program and the evening students are holding a raffle for a 15-inch LCD TV/DVD combo.

All of the money raised in the United Way campaign stays here in our community and will help support 67 local human service partner agencies. These agencies helped more than 300,000 people in the community last year – thanks to the kindness of donors who give so generously during the campaign. For information about the campaign kick-off or to make a contribution to United Way, contact the United Way at 433-2000.



Volunteer Opportunities

Five Board Committees would welcome new members: Development, Finance, Marketing/Public Relations, Outreach and RRM Fundraising Committees. If the topics sound interesting, call Susan Acuna for details.

Welcome Aboard, New Tutors!

The following tutors completed the July training class taught by Lorraine O'Connell and Don Miller.

Susan Abell	F. Pat Loughran
Sig Anderson	James Loughran
Evelyn Brosi	Ann McKeon
Juan Buitrago	Phyllis Meller
Ed Clark	Elizabeth Morris
Peggy Cobiglio	Mariette Orth
Deirdre Conner	Jeannie Pagano
Kenneth Costello	Michaela Puthon
Joyce Depigian	Mary Ann Shea
Henri Dyer	Jane Siegel
Peter Griffin	Angela Smith
Joyce Haddock	Jack Strange
Michele Hamilton	David Sullivan
Fran Hess	Nancy Sullivan
Tom Hess	Gene Tenbarge
Holden Higbee	Nancy Waters
Leslie LaNoce	
Valentina LaNoce	

Fall 2006 Tutor Training Workshops

September 16, 23, 30, 8:30-1 p.m., St. Mary's Episcopal Church. (Delores Brecker, Bert Bonner, trainers.)

October 14, 4-5:30 p.m., Spanish Wells. Refresher course for attendees of April Spanish Wells workshop. (Andrea Smith, trainer.)

October 23, 25, 30, November 1, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., (Location TBD) (Lorraine O'Connell, Don Miller, trainers.)

November 7, 9, 2-5 p.m., Mediterra Boardroom. (Andrea Smith, trainer)

Special Donations: Wedding Bells and Good-bye, Katie

Many celebrated the wedding of Bert and Patty Bonner by making donations to the Council in their honor: Patty's aunts, Virginia and Dee; the Lacroix family; neighbors Lyle and Gloria Rosenzweig; and Delphine Daft. Katie Verna, Doris Couture, Valerie Griffith, Clara Field, Brenda Cass, Kerty and Tony Crespo, Easy Crespo, Nora Martinez and Carlos Montiel, Jay Barclay, Evelyn Bickford, Rev. Catherine O'Connell also made donations in the Bonner's honor.

Many supporters have made donations to the Council to honor the work of Katie Verna: Bill and Jean Prokopow, Helen and John Bolton, Lorraine and Terry O'Connell, Jim and Judy Kahl, and Al and Sally Christenson.

Families Invited to Dr. Seuss Art Exhibit

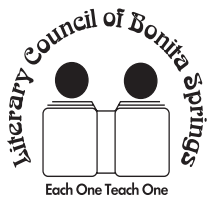
International Literacy Day was celebrated at the recent opening of the Dr. Seuss Art Introspective being held through September 30 at the Art League of Bonita Springs Center for the Arts at 26100 Old 41 Road. The exhibit displays many drawings by the famed child storyteller, including free Saturday programs of movies, reading and art projects from noon to 5 p.m. Free Dr. Seuss book giveaways will be held from 1-3 p.m. on Saturdays, September 9, 16, 23 and 30. The books were provided by a generous \$200 donation from the SWFL Federated Republican Women's group. For more information, call 495-8989 or w.w.artcenterbonita.org

City Proclaims International Literacy Day

WHEREAS, parents are a child's first teacher; and
WHEREAS, knowledge of English is the first indicator of a child's ability to succeed in school; and
WHEREAS, the Literacy Council offers Moms and Tots Family Literacy classes so that mothers and their children can learn English before the child attends school; and
WHEREAS, the Moms and Tots Family Literacy Program at Manna Christian RV Park has been in session for two years and the first child from the program has graduated to kindergarten speaking English; and
WHEREAS, the Council, through its volunteers, offers English classes to over 1300 adults a year and the numbers of adults requesting classes at the Literacy Council increases every year;
WHEREAS, for the adults, knowledge of English language will help lead them to better employment in the workplace and increased involvement in the community.
NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jay Arend, Mayor, on behalf of the City of Bonita Springs do hereby proclaim September 8, 2006 as International Literacy Day and encourage all citizens of the City of Bonita Springs to support and volunteer their time and efforts to promote Literacy among all our fellow residents who want to learn English.

'Meet&Greet' Day Planned for October 21

Come and join us for the next "Meet&Greet" Day on October 21 from 11a.m. to noon at the Council office on Old 41 Rd. Call 495-0999 for details.



Literacy Council of Bonita Springs
PO Box 2703
Bonita Springs, FL 34133



Buy a T-Shirt!!

Students are selling custom-designed T-shirts for \$10 each to raise money for the Literacy Council Building Fund. Designed by student Ruben Figueroa, the shirts are printed by "Sleeves". Financial support has also been provided by local businesses, including Conditioned Air, Workaholics Landscaping, O'Donnell Landscaping, and Rice Insulation. You may also call the Council office (495-0999) to purchase a shirt.

OFFICE SCHEDULE

Susan Acuña, Executive Director
Diego Grisales, Program Director
Gerty Rietterer Crespo, Office Manager
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

CONTACT INFORMATION

Address: 27308 Old 41 Road
Phone: (239) 495-0999
Fax: (239) 495-0071
Email: bonitaliteracy@comcast.net
Website: www.bonitaliteracy.org

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