

# The Lamplighter

January, February, March, 2007

A quarterly newsletter of the  
Literacy Council of Bonita Springs

## From The Council Director:

Wow! Another Breakfast is history and I am in awe of the generosity and dedication of our volunteers and the community. We had a record crowd of almost 400 persons at the Hyatt and surpassed our goal of \$175,000. It is truly heartwarming and humbling to see the level of support that our community gives to our program. Just think, for most of us, English is our native language. We don't think about it as we work, shop and go about our daily business. But that familiar language we use every day is a most precious gift for our students – a gift that is the key to a better future and the American Dream.

Our students are coming to us in greater numbers asking for the chance to learn our language. Children need to learn English to begin school at the same level as their classmates, mothers want to help their children in school, fathers want to get better jobs or start their own businesses to help support their families at a higher level. And all want the chance to improve their lives. We are so very grateful that we are here in the community and can offer the opportunity for a better life to our students. We couldn't accomplish this without our tutors, donors and volunteers.

To all of you who dedicate your time, energy and money to help our students learn English, I thank you on behalf of all of us here at the Literacy Council. Without you, thousands of lives wouldn't be changed. You are truly remarkable people making a difference in our community!

Teaming Up For Literacy!!  
Susan Acuña

## Students Paint Office

Council students volunteered their time, efforts and paint to repaint the interior of the main Council building on Saturday, April 21. Led by Rony Perez, Baltasar Elios Perez, Juan Rodriguez, and Ronald Diaz, the students transformed the walls with a fresh lemon chiffon tone.

### OFFICE SCHEDULE

Susan Acuña, Executive Director  
Diego Grisales, Program Director  
Kerty Rieterer-Crespo, Office Manager  
Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm  
Jeanne Sachs, Student/Tutor Coordinator  
Monday to Thurs., 4:00 to 9:00 pm  
Nora Martinez, Assistant Coordinator  
Monday to Friday, 5:00 to 9:00 pm

### STUDENT LAB OPEN

Mon. to Fri., 9:00 am to 9 pm

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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The Lamplighter is composed in InDesign CS on the Literacy Council computer. This issue was printed by Champ Printing. Bill Bond is editor.

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US POSTAGE PAID  
BONITA SPRINGS, FL  
PERMIT NO. 26

## Buy a Raffle Ticket

Our next raffle will be held in May and we are offering a beautiful bicycle to the winning ticket holder. Come in to the office and buy a ticket for only \$1 and get the chance to win this bike, or a clock radio, or a gift basket.

## Assistant Needed

Office assistant as receptionist, data entry, word processing, computer lab assistance, telephoning and other exciting tasks is needed in our Council office on Old 41. Please call Susan Acuña at 495-0999.

## Thanks, Joe

Many thanks to Joe Kirkup for his hard work setting up our new computer lab. Joe has been an integral part of our team who has helped us with our computer needs. While Joe gives many hours of volunteer time to help the Literacy Council, he also has his own computer business serving the needs of many of our volunteers and their neighbors. If you have computer issues and need service, we recommend you call Joe at 239 896-0276.

## Literacy Supporters Pledge \$180,000 at 4th Annual Fund-Raising Breakfast at Hyatt Regency Resort

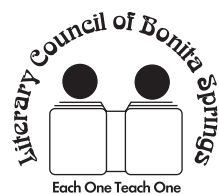
Pledges totalling \$180,000 to the Literacy Council were made by 368 enthusiastic supporters at the fourth annual Fund-Raising Breakfast March 15 at the beautiful Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort, Estero. The largest audience of the event's four-year history listened to testaments of Council students and tutors and viewed a video, "Sandra"—created about one of our own students, Sandra Flores, and the story of her journey to learn English.

Two surprise speakers also donated funds to the Council programs. John Elliff, president of the BS Lions Club, presented a check for \$1,000, in addition to a recent \$4,000 Club donation, and underscored the importance of early childhood education in English to adequately prepare our children for school. He complimented the work of the Literacy Council, especially in bringing the gift of English to over 80 moms and their children throughout the Bonita Springs and North Naples area.

Former BS AM Rotary President Gerry Myers also presented the Council with a check for \$1,000, in addition to a recent \$1,000 gift from the Club. These gifts funded the Rotary's book giveaway to our moms and tots to commemorate Rotary International's Literacy Month. Mr. Myers discussed the importance of our Moms and Tots Program for the community.

Among the many moving moments in the program was when Diego Grisales, a former student and currently our program director, spoke of his struggles as a newcomer to this country without any knowledge of English. His journey and those of Demetria Gonzales and Gladys Krause touched the hearts of the guests who happily heard their success stories. Executive Director, Susan Acuña spoke of her father's influence on her decision to work in the field of literacy. His struggle to learn English helped her to, as she put it, "See my father's eyes in our students."

Funds will be used to support the Council's programs including sustaining and expanding the Moms and Tots Family Literacy Program, Worksite Literacy Program, individual tutoring and group classes and our independent study computer lab.



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



## Muchas Gracias for the Money!

December/January

1. Gannett Foundation: \$5,000 grant award for Moms and Tots Books.
2. St. Mary's Episcopal Church: \$500 for Moms and Tots.
4. Work-A-Holics Landscaping: \$1,000.
5. BS Lions Club: \$4,000 grant award and at the Fourth Annual Fundraising Breakfast an additional \$1,000 contribution.
6. Pelican's Nest Golf Club: \$1,055 from the December dinner.
7. The Brooks Foundation: \$5,000.
8. St. Monica's Episcopal Church: \$300, thanks to one of our great tutors, Isley Hedger. Thanks, Isley!
10. Barnes and Noble Giftwrapping: Over \$500.
11. Champ Printing of Coraopolis, PA: Donated the entire cost of 2,000 bookmarks and flyers, thanks to one of our super volunteers, Channon Champ. Thanks so very much, Channon and Robert Champ!!

February, March

1. Mediterra Foundation: \$15,000 for Moms and Tots. A media event was held on Monday, April 9, with members of the Mediterra Foundation visiting one of our Moms and Tots Program at our office on Old 41.
2. A big thanks to one of our tutors who donated \$10,000 to the Literacy Council.
3. BS AM Rotary: \$1,000 in January and an additional \$1,000 given at the Breakfast. The Club sponsored a phonics book giveaway in late March for all of our Moms and Tots. Thanks so much, Rotary members!!
4. The Target Store awarded \$2,000.
5. Friends of Bentley Village: \$1,000, thanks to the efforts of Helen Bolton, our Literacy Coordinator at Bentley. Thanks, Helen!
6. Florida Gulf Coast University, through the SW Florida Community Foundation, donated 8 computers to outfit our new computer independent study lab! We now have 14 computers in one lab room. Please come in and take a look and...students: Come in and practice English at our new lab.
7. Bonita Charity Bingo has donated \$250 from their bingo proceeds this season.

## Director Describes United Way to Lee County Area Groups

Director Susan Acuña gave several United Way presentations to various groups throughout the Bonita Springs area during the first quarter to help garner support for the United Way and to introduce local businesses and communities to the great work of the Literacy Council, solicit volunteers and to show its gratitude for the tremendous support from the United Way of Lee County including the Lighthouse Bay Men's Club on January 8. She also made presentations to the Bonita Bay Group's management twice as the Group kicked off its United Way Campaign and to the United Way Board of Directors in December describing Council programs and the new partnership as the host of the United Way House at one of the Council buildings.

## Bonita Bay Art Show and Sale Donates \$14,000

Literacy Council Tutor artists Kathy O'Flinn and Helen Shulman along with artist Jim Plesh displayed their beautiful work for members of the community to admire and purchase in an art show held February 14 at the home of Dorota and Max Harris in Bonita Bay. Guests sipped wine and were served delicious appetizers compliments of Duval Street Seafood Company. The event was underwritten by sponsors DuFrane Jewelers, Interiors by Decorating Den, and Bob McMullen Insurance Agency. The artists very graciously donated \$14,000, half of their proceeds from the sale to the Literacy Council. Deepest thanks to Kathy, Helen and Jim along with gracious hosts Dorota and Max for a wonderful event benefiting the Literacy Council.

## Welcome Back, Amilcar!

Our popular tutor, Amilcar Santos, has returned to teaching English and Spanish to students following his recuperation from a heart attack.

## Teach Where You Live!

Our Worksite Literacy Programs have grown to include 12 local golf communities. We have thriving programs with wonderful Literacy coordinators at:

- Bentley Village with Helen Bolton
- Collier's Reserve with Patty Lister
- Copperleaf in The Brooks with Bob and Rae McCall
- Imperial Golf Club with Alan Christenson
- Pelican's Nest with Susan Nicoletti
- Spring Run in The Brooks with Candy Dunn
- Worthington Golf Club with Bob Tunstall
- Verandah with Mindy Roberts
- Spanish Wells with Carol Varady
- Mediterra with John Costigan
- and our newest at Sterling Oaks with Pat DelGiorno and Larry Cohen.

If you live at any of these communities and would like to teach the employees there and make a difference in someone's life, give us a call and we will arrange for tutor training. Teach where you live!

## Meet and Greet Your Neighbors!

If you would like to introduce the Literacy Council and its programs to friends and neighbors in your community (around 12-15 persons), give us a call and we can arrange a one-hour Meet and Greet where we will describe our mission, programs and introduce guests to students and tutors who will talk about their experiences with the Council. We will show our latest DVD, "Sandra", which follows one of our students in her journey to improve her life by learning English. The event is free, and no one will be asked for donations. It's simply a method to introduce us to folks in the community. These programs, when held in various communities, really help get the word out about us and especially our need for volunteers.

We want to have a Meet and Greet in each of the twelve worksite literacy locations this year (one per month). We will supply all invitations and other assistance. Who will be the first to join us in arranging one?

## 2007 Tutor Workshop Schedule

May 8, 10, 15; June 2, 9, 16; July 7, 14, 21; Sept. 8, 15, 22; Oct. 13, 20, 27. Please call the Council at 495-0999 to register for a workshop.

## Can You Join the Council Tutor Team This Summer?

The Council sorely needs more tutors to staff for our growing literacy programs. We have Moms and Tots programs in six different locations and need tutors and children's teachers. Many of our very special volunteers are leaving for their northern homes and we want to keep all of our programs running throughout the summer. We have plans to expand our Moms and Tots program to meet the needs of our communities' families and we really need your help.

We also need tutors and teachers for our adult classes. Our numbers are growing and we need volunteers to teach classes and tutor individuals. Remember, you don't need to be a teacher or speak another language. Your natural ability in English is all you need to change a life.

## See You Next Season!

Many of our wonderful tutors and volunteers are packing up and heading north for the summer. We wish you a wonderful summer back with friends and family in your northern abode. And we will miss you here at the Literacy Council. We want you to know that we appreciate your hard work and dedication to our students and your commitment to the mission of the Council. We will look forward to seeing your happy faces and beautiful smiles when you return in the fall. Take care and enjoy!

## Good Wheels Fetes Tutor Bob Sorenson For Volunteer Work

Volunteer Tutor Bob Sorenson was honored at Good Wheels, Inc.'s annual Volunteer Recognition luncheon held at Colonial Country Club on March 19. Bob has volunteered at the Literacy Council for 2½ years and is a full time volunteer. He has a special heart for the Moms and Tots program and teaches at the Manna Christian RV Park program. He also coordinates rides with Good Wheels to transport our moms and their children to the YMCA to swim in the summer. Bob was treated to a delicious lunch and a plaque honoring him for his work. Congratulations, Bob!