



LITERACY FOR LIFE

“Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.” – Frederick Douglass

FALL 2006

Vol. 22, No.2

MOVING TOWARD A DREAM

Every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon, after a full day’s work, Jimmy Neal shows up at the Literacy Council to work a while longer. This additional work is toward realizing one of his dreams - “to be able to sit down and read a book, without any help”. This is the fourth try for Jimmy; he made efforts to master reading and writing skills in the past. But three years ago he lost a job he had held for 25 years; and now that loss seems a blessing. A blessing in that, first, it caused him to reenter the literacy program with determination to “go all the way” this time, and second, it opened the opportunity for the better job he now holds.

Susan Fitzgerald, Jimmy’s tutor, has been volunteering with the Literacy Council for eight years. A native of South Dakota, Susan moved here 13 years ago from Raleigh. At first she and her husband tutored inmates at the correctional facility, a job she found rewarding, but also frustrating because students left the program after a few months. When the Council began using the Wilson Reading System, a program designed especially for adults with dyslexia, Susan and her husband took the training.



Susan and Jimmy

Susan is no doubt one reason Jimmy is determined not to fail this time around. But it is also clear that he has a great deal of internal drive. In addition to his goal of reading a book unassisted, he has bigger goals. He wants to get a commercial license to drive big rigs. And, he wants to be able to write a book about his life. With a grin and a chuckle he is eager to tell you his experiences. For example, there is the story of the especially frisky young horse, a cement barn floor covered in sawdust, and Jimmy “skiing” over the floor at the end of a rope attached to the colt.



And Now To Work

Both Susan and Jimmy are optimistic. Susan says that Jimmy is tenacious and hardworking, always on time and always in good spirits. Jimmy takes pride in the fact that he sent out Christmas cards for the first time this past December, and he beams with joy at the pride his niece has taken in his accomplishments. (At the spelling bee this spring, niece Scarlett Goodman, Captain of the winning McNutt Service Group team, told the audience of her uncle’s progress, and how proud she was of him.) In talking with this student/ tutor pair one feels success in the air.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING CHRISTMAS EVE? THE RIGHT ANSWER IS: “WATCHING TV!”

Blue Ridge Literacy Council will be featured in a nationally broadcast ABC/PGA special to be aired on Christmas Eve.

We are one of five beneficiaries of PGA tournaments around the country to get a chance to tell our story. On June 29, the Literacy Council offices were transformed into a bustling TV Studio as a crew from PGA Productions filmed and interviewed students, volunteers and staff for the national special. John Henry Swygert and Sandra Reyes are the featured adult learners in the BRLC segment. We are very proud to have this opportunity to promote adult literacy around the nation.

At this writing, we do not know what time the special will be broadcast, but, rest assured, you will be hearing more from us about this.

Literacy For Life

the newsletter of:

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From The Director's Desk EACH ONE REACH ONE A BRLC Tutor Recruitment Campaign

"Be the change you want to see in the world" Gandhi

Do you believe that all adults should be able to read? Do you believe newcomers to our country should have the opportunity to learn to speak, read and write the English language? If the answer is yes, we're asking you to help make this a reality for the residents of Henderson County by becoming a tutor or recruiting a tutor (or both).

Right now BRLC has 83 adults waiting for a tutor. Some are Americans who need help learning to read and write, even more are immigrants who need to learn English. All are motivated and want to learn – and they want to start now! But the Literacy Council doesn't have tutors for them.

You can help! If you believe in providing an opportunity for adults to learn, we are asking you to take action. If you can, become a tutor. If tutoring isn't for you or you're already tutoring, talk to your relatives, friends, co-workers, church and club members. Invite at least one person to attend a Literacy Council Orientation to discover if this is a change they want to see.

Our next orientation will be held Monday evening, October 23 from 6:00 to 7:30. To refer someone to us, ask them to call and sign up for this orientation, or be put on the list to be notified of upcoming 2007 orientations. Or, give us a call with their name and phone number and we'll be happy to contact them with the information.

If you would like a member of our Speakers Bureau to talk to a large or small group of your friends or associates about tutoring, give me a call to schedule it.

As always, I thank you for all you do,

Diane

I Would Like To:

- Learn more about volunteering.
 Make a tax-deductible contribution of _____ (amount).

[If not using a credit card omit the first two items below.]

Credit card type and number _____

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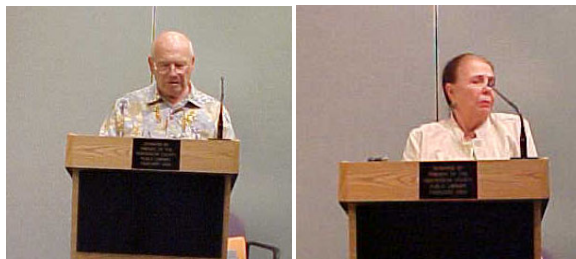
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Matching Gifts

Many businesses will match the charitable donations of their employees and retirees. G.E., Pfizer, Wal-Mart, Sam's and Bank of America are among those who have matched gifts to the Literacy Council. If your company will match your donation or make a donation based on your volunteer hours, please let us know. Thank you.

BRLC ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the BRLC opened on an emotional high note. Executive Director Diane Bowers spoke about outgoing president Bill Woerner. Bill's association with the council began when, after a round of golf, he saw a note in the clubhouse from one of the kitchen staff, asking if someone would teach her English. Bill immediately went to the kitchen, found the writer of the note, and said "I will." From that point he went on to serve the council in many ways and for the past 3½ years has been president of the Board. Bill will remain on the Board, and BRLC will continue to profit from his organizational and fund raising skills. Long time Board member and previous Vice President, Dene Hellman, is the council's newly elected President.



Bill Woerner

Dene Hellman

Terry Houck was elected to a three year term on the Board of Directors. Terry is not new to the Board as he has been serving a partial term created by the resignation of a previous board member.



Barbara Taylor receives Outstanding Student Award

After brief remarks from President Hellman, 11 of the 24 BRLC students who had 100 or more hours of instruction in the year came to receive their awards.

Then began the individual awards for the year. Amanda Yendall, Program Director, introduced Barbara Taylor who received the Chris Edwards Outstanding Student Award. Amanda struggled to remain dry-eyed as she told of Barbara's remarkable progress. Barbara came from level zero, but now she loves to read so much that she will not pass a sign without reading it - simply because she can. The award was presented to Barbara by Chris Edwards.



Evelyn Bowman received the Outstanding Tutor Award

The G'Anne Sparks Outstanding Tutor Award went to Evelyn Bowman. Evelyn, a long time tutor, was the first to conduct an ESL Group. She currently tutors three one-to-one students.



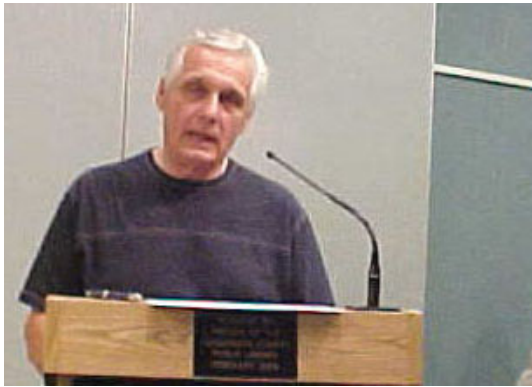
Lee Johnson is presented the Outstanding Volunteer Award

The Lisa Morrill Outstanding Volunteer Award was given to Lee Johnson. Lee serves as a data base administrator. But that's just the "tip of the iceberg." Lee is the "go to guy". He does it all, from tutoring to moving furniture. He is recognized as being virtually irreplaceable.



The Extra Mile Award presented to G'Anne Sparks

G'Anne Sparks received the Hugh Lowery Extra Mile Award from Diane Bowers. G'Anne received the first Outstanding Tutor Award. Clearly she has not rested on her laurels. The Extra Mile Award recognizes her long and continuing service to the council's Learning Disabilities Program.



Student Speaker John Henry Swygert

Student speakers at this year’s meeting were Rosa Martha Paniagua, Barbara Taylor, and John Henry Swygert. Rosa Martha, a native speaker of Spanish, spoke of learning English. She has been so successful that she is now a Head Start teacher. Barbara spoke of the pure joy she feels that she can now read. And, last but by no means least, John Henry brought a tear to everyone’s eye as he spoke of his gratitude to his tutor and the council at large. Among other moving comments he remarked that at age 59 he could finally write his mother a letter.

As the meeting concluded a board member commented that tissues should have been made available. And it was that sort of “lump in the throat” meeting. All present were powerfully reminded that the literacy council opens new worlds and changes lives.

BRLC LEARNERS SET NEW RECORDS FOR LEARNING

Two hundred and twenty-four of the 268 BRLC students who received instruction this year had enough hours for us to conduct a follow up of their progress. These 224 adult learners achieved a whopping 4,104 literacy and life goals (an average of over 18 per student).

A record ninety-three students (41.5%) advanced one or more Federal Literacy Levels. This is a remarkable achievement, especially in light of the fact that a Federal Literacy level is the approximate equivalent of two grade levels in reading!

Congratulations to all our learners and their tutors for these remarkable achievements.

SEPTEMBER IS LITERACY MONTH

You can celebrate by checking out our great display in the Hendersonville Library created by volunteer Jack Williams in honor of Literacy Month and BRLC tutors. It will give you lots of ideas to help you talk to others about what a great volunteer job tutoring is!

STUDENT COMPOSITIONS

WHAT I LOVE

I love dreaming about my future, it is waiting for me.
I love asking this question to myself; who am I going to be?
I love remembering about my past, which I was.
I love thinking about this so I can find out who I am.
I love people who are dreaming, asking and remembering all of this.
I love people who found out all this about themselves.
I love people, who recognize who they are inside,
I love knowing who I was, who I am, and I look forward to who I am going to be.

Jorge Moreno

MY SON MICHAEL

My son Michael was the boy we were waiting for.
He was born on March 27, 2006
in Fletcher NC at Park Ridge Hospital.
We were very excited to have a son.
We already have two girls.
Cenorina, my wife, has two helpers.
Now I will have one.
The day Michael was born was a very hard day.
He came a day early, on moving day.
Michael was lucky.
He came straight to our new mobile home.
Jessica and Daisy, my daughters, fought over who got hold the baby.
Michael likes to be held all of the time.
He refuses to drink his formula, unless it is very warm.
I want Michael to be a baseball player.
I will teach him to play. I also want him to be an architect. I will support him and help him reach his goals, whatever they are.

Angel Salas

BRLC OFFERS CITIZENSHIP CLASS

For years our one-to-one tutors have helped prepare their students to become US Citizens. Now, for the first time, we are bringing our small group concept to Citizenship. BRLC began our first Citizenship Class on August 26. Seven students are enrolled in the 12 week class which focuses on U.S. history and civics and will prepare the students with the oral and writing skills they need to pass their test. Thanks to tutor Jean Terry who teaches the class (while tutoring two other one-to-one students)!

Don Bailey, has been the volunteer Editor of *Literacy for Life* since 2003. With this issue, Don is “retiring”. The staff and Board of the Blue Ridge Literacy Council extend their thanks to Don for doing such a wonderful job with our newsletter and wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors.

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