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A Newsletter for Literacy Volunteers of Roanoke Valley

May-June 2004 | 5002 Williamson Road, Roanoke, Virginia 24012 | (540) 265-9339 | FAX 265-4814 | www.lvarv.org

Training Schedule

New Volunteer Orientation

Wednesday, May 19
6-7 pm

This orientation will familiarize potential tutors with our program generally as well as provide specific information on both the Basic Literacy and English-for-Speakers-of-Other Languages Programs.

ESOL Tutor Training

Thursdays, May 27, June 3,
10, 17, and 24
6-9 pm

Basic Literacy Tutor Training

Tuesdays, May 25, June 1, 8,
15, and 22
6-9 pm

Basic Literacy Training Follow-up

Wednesday June 9
6-8 pm

For tutors who finish training on May 12th.

Next ESOL Brown Bag Luncheon

Friday, June 7
11:45 am

The May lunch is canceled. All ESOL tutors are encouraged to come and share their tutoring experiences. Bring your own lunch.

Email Addresses

Annette Loschert: annette@lvarv.org
Susie Boxley: susie@lvarv.org
Bill Van Velzer: bill@lvarv.org
Jack Spraker: jack@lvarv.org

The Learning Center
will be closed on
Monday, May 31st
for Memorial Day

Literacy Expands Reach in Community

The goals of employers today include higher productivity, lower employee turnover, less re-work and reduced accidents leading to lower worker compensation claims. Yet many entry-level employees are unprepared and lack a command of basic skills necessary to succeed on the job. This lack of preparation makes achieving these goals more difficult and expensive. Nationally, worker deficiencies in reading, writing, math, and communication skills keep 40 percent of manufacturers from implementing new productivity and technology improvements.

In Virginia, 40 percent of adult workers have basic skills deficiencies, work fewer hours and earn significantly less than those with higher skills. Half of all adults at the lowest level of reading are living in poverty!

Over the next several months, Literacy Volunteers of Roanoke Valley will lay the groundwork to expand our services into the business community. We look to identify the literacy challenges being faced by today's workforce that negatively impact workers and their families as well as local businesses and the community-at-large. Our plan is to develop a Workplace Literacy Outreach Plan that tailors the strengths of LVRV in the areas of Basic Literacy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) to the needs of businesses and develop a Workplace Literacy Service Delivery Plan that will reorganize and refocus delivery of our services to address the needs of businesses, which may include group sessions and/or task-specific programs. By partnering with the Western Virginia Workforce Development Board, we will provide access to a solution to one of the most pressing workforce productivity improvement needs.

Stay tuned! We'll keep you posted as plans unfold.

Dee Copenhaver Honored at Volunteer Award Celebration

On Thursday evening, April 22nd, the Council of Community Services recognized **Dee Copenhaver** for her volunteer commitment to LVRV and the community at large at the Spirit of America Volunteer Awards. Dee was among an impressive group of citizens who commit their time and talents to make our community a better place to live. The event was held at Raleigh Court Presbyterian Church in celebration of National Volunteer Week.

Dee has served as a member of the LVRV Board of Directors since August 2002. She currently co-chairs our Book Sale Committee, which consists of dedicated volunteers who work throughout the year to coordinate this annual fundraiser. She and the committee supervise the activities of more than 60 volunteers to make this event a success. This spring, Dee also coordinated the Incredible Reading Rally (IRR) that took place at Glen Cove and Crystal Spring Elementary Schools (See details inside).

Dee's presence is felt throughout the community through her volunteer involvement which includes tutoring in our schools and at the West End Center, contributing leadership for Delta Kappa Gamma, a sorority that provides educational mentoring to teachers and students in the schools, and volunteering at the Jefferson Center and RAM House. And this is all we know about!

Dee's positive attitude and winning personality are characteristics that motivate others to offer their very best. We are incredibly fortunate and proud to have Dee on the LVRV team!

Thank you for your donations

American Electric Power
Anonymous
Nancy B. Cook
Domino's Pizza
Bouldin and Flo Frantz
Horace G. Fralin Charitable Trust
Imagination Station
Roslyn W. Katz
Heidi F. Krisch
Nancy H. Mahone in memory of
Anne Hull Willis Taylor
Mr. & Mrs. Lewis M. Nelson, Jr.
Pizza Hut
Public Relations Society of
America, Blue Ridge Chapter
in honor of Rex Bowman
Public Relations Society of
America, Blue Ridge Chapter
Ram's Head Book Store
Scholastic Book Fairs
The Ceres Foundation
The students, families and friends
of Crystal Spring Elementary
School
The students, families and friends
of Glen Cove Elementary School
United Way of Roanoke Valley
Verizon Foundation

Tutor Anniversaries in May-June 2004

Congratulations & Thanks
to All!

One-year anniversaries -
Basic Literacy: Donna
Conner & Elly McConnel
ESOL: Lois Carpenter &
Lynn Williamson.

Two-year anniversary -
ESOL: Tricia Traubert

Four-year anniversary -
ESOL: Al Brown.

Eight-year anniversaries -
Basic Literacy: Becky Bane
& Claire Blake.

Eleven-year anniversary -
Basic Literacy: Kathleen
Lautigar.



Annual Awards Ceremony June 27th; Nomination Forms for Tutors and Learners of the Year Out Soon

Our awards ceremony will be held at Second Presbyterian 3-5 pm on Sunday, June 27th. This year we'll bring the fun indoors, combining the awards with a potluck dinner. We invite tutors, learners, their families, and friends to attend this enjoyable and food filled event. We will distribute *Writing from the Heart* and announce the ESOL and Basic Literacy tutors and learners of the year. We mail nomination forms for these awards by May 12th. The deadline for nominations will be June 18th. All nominated learners and tutors will receive certificates of recognition at the cookout. Tutors should also be aware that nomination forms will be sent to their learners, so please explain the form if necessary and let learners know that we will be glad to help them fill it out. We know you're modest about all your hard work and achievements, but you won't be immodest at all if you simply help your learner understand what the mailing is all about.

A flyer about the awards ceremony and potluck, asking everyone to RSVP and let us know if you'll bring a dish by June 21st, will come in the mail to both tutors and learners. Please invite your learners, families, and friends to attend this great event.

Literacy Volunteers Has Prescription for Health Literacy

In April, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) released a report on the condition of health literacy in the United States, reporting that 90 million adults have "limited health literacy." In an Associated Press article, Dr. Carolyn Clancy, the director of this federal government agency, called this number "a shocking figure." However, to those of us who work in the field of adult literacy, this number isn't shocking at all. According to National Adult Literacy Survey of 1993, which doesn't reflect the huge increase in immigration reported in the 2000 Census, twenty-two percent of adults in the U.S. are functionally illiterate, meaning that their reading, writing, and English language skills are below fifth-grade level. Considering the scientific and technological complexities involved, it's no wonder this percentage nearly doubles when health is the issue.

In its report, the AHRQ defines "health literacy" as "a constellation of skills that constitute the ability to perform basic reading and numerical tasks for functioning in the health care environment and acting on health care information." A deficit in these skills plagues many in the Roanoke Valley. In fact, the National Adult Literacy Survey classifies one in four as functionally illiterate in the city of Roanoke, which is higher than the national average.

Obviously, we, as a community, need to do something about this problem. The medical community can take steps to make interventions that accommodate low literacy levels. In fact, the report suggests that such interventions have had success. For example, "Pregnant smokers and ex-smokers who received a specifically designed intervention with materials written at a third grade reading level were more likely to achieve abstinence during pregnancy and 6 weeks postpartum than those that received standard materials."

Community-based literacy organizations, like Literacy Volunteers of Roanoke Valley, have played a significant role in combating this problem in the past. We need to make people aware that improved literacy in general is improved health literacy, family literacy, workplace literacy, etc. We strive to serve adults, free of charge, through volunteer efforts, focusing on the immediate needs, like healthcare, of people who lack the skills they need to be fully functional in life. While literacy organizations around the country seek support from their entire communities, we need to make the case to the medical community, both corporate entities and practitioners, that our help is available and necessary to the people they serve. We'd like doctors, nurses, and other healthcare providers to refer their patients who need help. In return, literacy organizations need both volunteer and financial support to advance our mission. The health of individuals and our community is at stake.

Incredible Reading Rally an Incredible Success

This spring, students at Glen Cove and Crystal Spring Elementary Schools participated in the Incredible Reading Rally, raising \$1,032 and \$1,027, respectively. Special thanks to **Debbie Bauer** at Glen Cove and **Melissa Shorten** at Crystal Spring, parents, and board member **Dee Copenhaver** for organizing and promoting the events. This marks the fifth year of participation for Glen Cove and the fourth year for Crystal Spring. The purpose of these events is to raise awareness of the problem of adult illiteracy, to promote the importance of reading, and to raise funds for LVRV.

LVRV Publicity Abounds

You'll soon notice new posters around town promoting Literacy Volunteers of Roanoke Valley. These posters, designed by the local chapter of the Public Relations Society of America, specifically target volunteer tutors. A companion bookmark will be distributed at events sponsored by Literacy, such as our Book Sale, and will be available in our libraries and at locations around town. Great thanks to board member **Todd Burns** and his committee who made all of this possible. And, remember, encourage your friends to call us to find out more about volunteering as a literacy tutor.

Board Transitions

We welcome new board member **Maria Spencer-Etienne**, Development Coordinator of Roanoke City Public Libraries. Maria's energy and creativity will be great assets to Literacy Volunteers of Roanoke Valley. At the same time we offer our heartfelt thanks to **Barbara Landon** and **Wlodek Zaryczyny** for their past work as they leave the board.

Local Colors

Literacy Volunteers will have an information table at this year's Local Colors festival. The festival will take place in Roanoke's downtown market area, on Saturday May 15 at 7 pm and Sunday, May 16, from noon until 5 pm. The event is a festive day of sharing and learning through music, arts, crafts, food, attire, language, and goodwill. Over 70 countries and 30 cultural groups participate in Local Colors with an attendance between 25,000 to 30,000 people. This year our friend and former office volunteer **Nuria Crowe** will host the first ever Costa Rican exhibit. She has goods from her homeland – ecological shirts, special Costa Rican salsa, coffee, and more. Drop by the exhibit and say "hola." And if you would like to help represent the Literacy Volunteers' ESOL Program at the information table, please call **Susie** at 265-9339.

17th Annual Literacy Fair

The Literacy Fair of Virginia will be held on Thursday, May 20nd from 8 am until 3:30 pm at Southside Virginia Community College in Keysville. The fair offers workshops for ESOL and Basic Literacy tutors and learners. If you'd like to attend and share a ride, please call 265-9339.

Last Call – Got Books? Pass the on!

We are gearing up for our annual book sale to be held at Tanglewood Mall on June 5th and 6th. Literacy Volunteers will gladly accept paperback, hardcover books, and children's books in good condition. In addition we will accept donations of videotapes, books on tape, language tapes, and CDs. We cannot accept encyclopedias, textbooks, magazines, Reader's Digest condensed books, harlequin-type romances, or books in poor condition. Look for collection boxes at participating Kroger and Bank of America locations through May 15th. Call 265-9339 for the collection box closest to you.

We are also in need of people who will help sort books prior to the sale. If you are willing to help, please contact us at 265-9339. We will connect you with our Book Sale folks.

An Evening with Lee Smith

Keep Friday, July 16th from 5-10pm open and plan to be at Lock Haven Lake Club for this Literacy Volunteers fundraiser. It's shaping up to be a great night. Lee Smith will read from her latest novel, *The Last Girls*. There will be a BBQ dinner and music. Tickets are \$25 per person. Tell your friends and plan for a fun-filled evening.

Welcome Aboard New Tutors

March saw two new groups of tutors, one Basic Literacy, one ESOL, begin their work with learners. The new ESOL tutors are **Tim Clower, Susan Crim, Ray Hill, Brooke Johnston, Leslie Jordan**. The new Basic Literacy tutors are **Emmy Baker, Anna Cork, Sallie Garst, Pat Nervo, Ellen Prillaman, Michelle Scarfe**, and **Karen Williams**. Thanks and congratulations to all the new tutors!

ESOL Miscellany from Susie Boxley

Brown Bag Lunch News: May Tutor Lunch will be canceled due to a conference in Virginia Beach that I will be attending. I hope to see you all in June. Let me know how we can make the lunches more informative and interesting to keep the attendance and fellowship strong. I really like the sharing of ideas and stories.

Have we got May planned with you and your learner in mind! Bill Van Velzer and I have several in-services planned to increase your knowledge and comfort in teaching the basics of grammar through advanced levels of grammar. We have a determining objectives and lesson planning in-service planned, along with a multi-level lesson planning in-service.

What we need from you is a response to my tutor letter, ASAP, as to when and what you are interested in. This is for you and your learner, please respond and participate.

Literacy Volunteers of Roanoke Valley
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From the Director, Annette Loschert

I've been spending a lot of time in my garden lately. I love to watch the beauty of the season unfold. Flowers flourish and birds and animals emerge from their winter retreats. The sights and sounds of summer abound with the promise of new life.

This May marks my first anniversary with Literacy Volunteers of Roanoke Valley. Thanks to a great staff and Board of Directors and the dedicated support of our volunteers, this has been a very good year! I look forward to our pot luck Awards Ceremony in June to honor our tutors and learners and to thank you all personally for your hard work. I also look toward the promise of the exciting new things we will be doing together in the coming months.

Happy spring!

From the ESOL Program Coordinator, Susie Boxley

As my first year quickly is drawing to a close, I realize how much I have learned. I feel privileged to have met some of the greatest people in town. You all amaze me with your diligence and persistence in working to help another individual. Sometimes the learners do not show, some are late, some make little progress due to life and its barriers, and yet you still plan, still smile, still meet and give your all. Thank you, I am proud to tell people of my job, the people I assist, and the stories I hear. Take advantage of the in-services Bill and I am offering, improve your skills, and in turn, improve your learner's skills.

From the Basic Literacy Program Coordinator, Jack Spraker

On April 27th, I had one of those bitter-sweet moments we have in life sometimes. Long-time tutor **Claire Blake** dropped by for a visit and told me that after seven years she and her friend and learner, **Travis Crowe**, were calling it quits. You may remember that Travis and Claire were the Learner and Tutor of the Year last year. You may also remember that in spring 2003 Travis got his GED. Although their accomplishments were great and many would think that their work was done, the pair stuck together another year, working nearly every week. For Travis, the GED was never his ultimate goal. He wanted to improve himself; he wanted an education, which he realized is a life-long endeavor. So he and Claire continued their work. However, now things have changed. Travis doesn't have time for his tutoring anymore. He works a full-time job, he and his wife take care of two kids, and he's taking three classes toward his Business Administration degree at the National College of Business and Technology. So the pair decided that if they couldn't get together, they might as well call it quits.

Well, a little bitter for me because it seems like one of those end of an era type things. Sweet as well because it's wonderful to see this young man fulfilling his dreams. Claire and I talked about the years and all that they had done. She told me how Travis's family had become part of hers and how she and her husband Jerry were part of theirs. After we reminisced for a bit, I gave Claire the paper work on her new learner. Yes, after tutoring eight years, she's taking on another learner. I wish I had been wearing a hat because I would have tipped it to her. I also wish I could tell who her new learner is. Our vow of confidentiality denies me this pleasure. I can just say it makes the sweet even sweeter.