



The Literacy Alliance

Literacy News

A quarterly publication of the Literacy Alliance

Spring 2005

Judith Stabelli
executive director
judith.stabelli@fwliteracyalliance.org

Brian Schlichtenmyer
editor
brian.schlichtenmyer@fwliteracyalliance.org

Phone: (260) 426-7323
Fax: (260) 424-0371

www.fwliteracyalliance.org

Literacy Alliance Helps ESL Student

Kim Diaz read to daughters, Ashley and Lilia, and sometimes, when Kim wasn't around, they'd ask Dad to read to them. But Freddie Diaz couldn't.

Last June, he entered the main branch of the Allen County Public Library for his first tutoring session with volunteer Barb Petroff. They met at the coffee shop then found a table near the Adult Literacy Resource area on the second floor. Freddie thought that he'd be ahead if he could just pick up 30% of what Barb taught him.

Initially Freddie didn't even know the ABC's. He recognized individual letters but didn't know how to sound them out or put them together to make words. He couldn't use the phone book.

In Mexico, twelve year old Freddie completed the fourth grade then went to work at a gas station. Years later in Fort Wayne, he worked two jobs so Kim could get through college. Freddie and others knew he had ability. He solved problems while on the production line at Fort Wayne Foundry. Supervisors recognizing his talent moved him into maintenance. He began to think about how much more he could do if he would learn to read and strengthen his English

Barb and Freddie started off with 10 sight words. He wrote them on 4 x 6 index cards. He carried these flash cards and practiced the words' spelling and pronunciation, and put them into sentences. At their weekly meetings, they added words. They worked on word families listed in *LITSTART: Strategies for Adult Literacy and ESL Tutors* which Barb received in tutor training. In this way, Freddie developed his vocabulary.



Freddie Diaz and Barb Petroff review his work during a one-on-one tutoring session at the main branch of Allen County Public Library.

They also worked on the ABC's and the English words for the months and days. As Barb explains, they worked on "really practical" things.

When she retired from teaching at Concordia Lutheran High School, Barb was determined to do volunteer work. A colleague had become a Literacy Alliance volunteer tutor and recommended it to Barb. Her dedication and success exemplify Literacy Alliance volunteers. Currently, over 100 share their patience and knowledge, tutoring one-on-one or in learning centers, reading to children, serving on the Board of Directors, and helping with special events and tasks.

Barb commends Freddie's motivation and persistence. "He really works at it," she says. His flash cards are on the table, and Barb points out that they are "kind of dog-eared and dirty," indicating how much he reads them and practices the words' spelling and pronunciation. He carries a dictionary, too.

"All of a sudden, it just came to my mind" is how Freddie describes his reading progress. He now reads newspapers. According to Barb, "Maybe he doesn't get every word, but he gets what it's about." He now reads to his daughters. He finds encouragement where he currently works in maintenance, at St. Joe Hospital. Kim is a nurse there, and Freddie helps with translations when needed.

He's no longer afraid to ask how to spell or pronounce words and continues to work on vocabulary and spelling. When it comes to improving his English, he points out, "The biggest thing is not to be ashamed of yourself."

Literacy Alliance Staff Serves Breakfast to Volunteers

Almost 40 volunteers attended The Literacy Alliance First Annual Volunteer Appreciation breakfast April 22. Board members, one-on-one tutors, learning center tutors, and Story Friends braved a wet chilly morning, gathering at Sears Pavilion in Indian Village Park on Bluffton Road.

The Literacy Alliance depends on more than 100 volunteers. Most help adult students strengthen basic skills, learn to read, prepare for the GED, and increase workplace skills for job placement and promotion. Story Friends read to preschool age children every week. Board members provide guidance for Literacy Alliance finances, planning, and operations.

The April 22 breakfast was a chance for Literacy Alliance staff members to serve the volunteers for a change. The menu included three kinds of quiche, fruit salad, an assortment of mini muffins, juice, and coffee. Once breakfast was finished and the tables cleared, Executive Director Judy Stabelli briefly spoke about the importance of volunteers. She pointed out that the payroll equivalent of Literacy Alliance volunteers is \$90,000 a year.



Literacy Alliance volunteers gather for breakfast and conversation at the First Annual Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast.

Concluding the hour and a half event, Volunteer Coordinator Kathleen Benson-Chaney presented award certificates to Ruth Lahr of the New Haven Learning Center, one-on-one tutor Sean Shryne, and Story Friend Mary Short. Marcia Giraldo received the Joe Truba Memorial Award.

The need for volunteers increases. With Adams Elementary becoming an ESL school, it will serve more immigrant families which means more one-on-one ESL tutors will be needed in Literacy Alliance's adult education classroom there. With greater reliance on technology to accomplish its mission, The Literacy Alliance needs "tech savvy" volunteers to set up peer-to-peer networks and help students with computer applications.

Locals Attend National Conference

In anticipation of the National Conference on Family Literacy in Louisville, Molly Pederson explains, they "envisioned sunny, warm weather" with spring colors along the highway. Instead, April 25 – 27 brought chilly temperatures and even a little snow.

Molly is the Adult ESL Teacher at The Literacy Alliance Adams Family Literacy site. She joined Adams Site Coordinator Sandra Pacheco and six others from the East Wayne Street Center and Hanna-Creighton sites. They included Site Coordinator Aura Cuevas, Adult ESL Teacher Christine Milakovic, and Head Start Teacher Maggie Kneip from Hanna-Creighton and Site Coordinator Diane Swayze, Adult ABE/GED Teacher Melissa Hale, and Head Start Teacher Cher Jackson from East Wayne Street Center.

According to the National Center for Family Literacy web site, "nearly two thousand professionals from the literacy, research and policy fields" attend the conference every spring, offering "more than 100 special and general sessions highlighting cutting-edge strategies and initiatives that promote literacy and language development" for families.

Aura, Molly, and Sandra noticed an increased focus on ESL. As Aura states, there has been a "whole shift from two or three years ago to immigrants, ESL." She found "a lot of information in Spanish." Molly observes that Adams' "shift from a GED emphasis to an ESL emphasis seems to reflect a national trend."

Aura cites "Crossing Borders, Changing Lives" as a useful session which talked about using relational skills to build confidence and make students feel comfortable. For Molly, it was the session called "Project-Based Learning" which involves children and adults learning from each other.

"We learned that we're doing really good locally," says Aura, by providing "transportation, [education for] 3-5 yr olds, and adult-sibling support." And by "meeting family needs, teaching job skills, and teaching basic English." Participants also learned about resources. For example, as a service to Spanish speaking immigrants, the Mexican government provides books in Spanish for all Spanish speakers in the U.S. regardless of what country they're from. Those interested can simply request the books from the Mexican Consulate.

Garage Sale Raises \$2,000

Hundreds of shoppers spent their money at this year's Literacy Alliance Garage Sale Fundraiser on April 16. Scheduled to open at 8:00 a.m., the event got started by 7:30 a.m. as customers streamed into the New Haven Plaza space.

This year's event was sponsored by Target, CB Richard Ellis/Sturges, and Summit City Radio Group. Commercial realtor CB Richard Ellis/Sturges loaned the space. Target volunteers merchandised and priced everything the day before and provided customer service on the day of the sale. Summit City Radio Group ran promotional ads on 102.9 The River and Fox Sports Radio 1250.

In all, 80 volunteers and donors made the event possible.



Shoppers browse the merchandise at The Literacy Alliance Garage Sale Fundraiser in New Haven Plaza.

Volunteer Corner

The Literacy Alliance is delighted to introduce one-on-one tutor, Mrs. Marcella Burtch. Ten years ago, a very successful advertising campaign featured the catch phrase "when E.F. Hutton talks, people listen." Those of the staff who interact with Marcella are inclined to ascribe this description to her as well.

Looking at this petite nattily dressed woman, one would never suspect that she possesses a powerful voice underscored with a mischievous sense of humor. Born in southern Indiana, she moved with her family on a semi-regular basis, eventually settling into the Fort Wayne community. She earned her high school diploma at Central Catholic then graduated from the Studio-School of Fashion Art in Cincinnati. She finished her academics some time later at Pasadena City College.

Among her many adventures, Marcella served as advertising manager for Fishman's, a clothing store in Fort Wayne. She then relocated to Los Angeles where she was employed as advertising manager for two Resident Buying Offices. She also designed suits for a small manufacturer. These suits were purchased and prominently advertised by a number of upscale stores including Neiman Marcus and Lord & Taylor. Other "jobs" were teaching advertising at a proprietary school and revising a display textbook for Mi-Lady Publishing Co. Also, she did free-lance fashion art for some of Los Angeles' top manufacturers.

Along the way, Marcella met her future husband, David, who was from Paulding, Ohio. Although they met in Fort Wayne, it was only some months later in Los Angeles that they married. Their children, David and Emily, opted to develop their careers and families, in the more temperate climate of southern California. David is a vice-president at Lake Industries. Emily is executive director of Modular Solutions, an office furniture company.

Marcella's interest in adult readers stems from watching her own children master the written word at very early ages. She comments that David could read just about any type of material, with the exception of technical writing, by the age of three. Emily taught herself to read by the age of four. It is within this context that Marcella has become fascinated with the world of adult learners.

With The Literacy Alliance since September 1995, Marcella has worked with a diverse group of adults over the years. When asked about her most memorable student, she talks about a 60 plus year-old gentleman who was learning how to read so that he could give sermons at his church. Her advice to new tutors is "Don't get discouraged. Try to remember that your students' lives were never on a really even keel, and they really do need you."

Thank you for your constancy, Marcella. The Literacy Alliance is indebted to you and other volunteers for helping adults succeed at work, at home, and in the community.

Thank You!

The Literacy Alliance Thanks Individuals and Organizations for Their Generous Support.

Individuals

Dan & Dawn Amstutz
Nila Armstrong
Elizabeth Barry
Martha Beugnot
Cheryl & Andrew Birkmire
Ralph & Clara Pauline Bracht
Kevin & Lillie Cantrell
May Rose Ceccanese
Harvey Cocks, Jr.
John & Marjorie Coe
William & Doreen Crunk
Mark & Cynthia Day
Mary Day
Sharon & Michael Day
M. Ann Dirkes
Robert & Sessa Lian Divelbiss
Vera Dulin
Dennis & Christine Fawcett
Brian & Karen Francisco
Rev. & Mrs. Robert Gevers
Kim & Wanda Goneau
Jesse & Londa Graber
James Griffith
Yvonne & Joseph Haney
Robert & Linda Hensley
William & Marva Herx
James & Deb Hetrick

Sandra & Michael Hockaday
Kevin & Vicki Lee Johnson
Scott & Jodi LaFlash
Reynardo & Jill Leal
George & Doris Mather
Patsy Matthews
Sandra McMurtie
David & Bettina Miller
Neva Nill
Julie & Gregory Orendorff
Joseph & Pamela Paris
Alin Pridon
Larry Ramey
The Siebers
Jean & William Vrabel
Stephen & Patricia Walker
Phyllis Zahn

Corporations & Foundations

A.S.K. Consulting
Charles Kuhne Foundation
Comcast
Delta Gamma Chapter, Psi Iota Xi
Don R. Fruchey, Inc.
Embassy Theatre Foundation
Just Give
Lutheran Hospital
Pi Chapter, Psi Iota Xi

Special thanks to the following for supporting
the April 16 Garage Sale fundraiser



and 80 volunteers and donors.

Announcements

The Literacy Alliance welcomes new volunteers David Beatty, Mary Bosserman, John Cantey, Jean Daeger, Mark Harris, Jane Roth, and Alexandra Zannis.

You may recall Robin Zion, Trinity Learning Center student featured in the Literacy News (Winter 2005). As reported, she took her GED examination April 27. We are pleased to announce that she passed and received her diploma May 26.

A tutor training workshop will be held two Saturdays in a row, June 18 and June 25, 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM. Call Kathleen at 426-7323 for more information.

Choice.

Many people, even highly literate people, often have trouble understanding their healthcare coverage.

Keep it simple. Choose the best.



Ask your employer about PHP group healthcare insurance.

8101 West Jefferson Blvd., Fort Wayne, IN 46804
(260) 432-6690 or (800) 982-6257
www.phpni.com

Your name & logo could appear here.

Buy Ad Space

Support The Literacy Alliance

Here is a chance for your organization to support The Literacy Alliance. You can publish your logo and catch phrase along with other important information in the *Literacy News*. The *Literacy News* reaches 3,500 homes and business four times a year.

For more information, contact Brian at The Literacy Alliance, 260-426-7323.

Ad Size	Ad Price	
	1 - 2 Issues	3 or More Issues
5.00" x 4"	\$300	\$240
3.25" x 5"	\$250	\$200
3.25" x 4"	\$200	\$160
3.25" x 3"	\$150	\$120
3.25" x 2"	\$100	\$80



tournaments

at **Mitchell Books**

In Covington Plaza, 6360 W. Jefferson Blvd.

Register today!

Stop by Mitchell Books

Call 260-432-2665 or

Visit www.mitchellbooks.net

Single eliminations:

9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, June 18

2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 19

Playoffs (best 2 out of 3 games) begin:

9:30 a.m. on Saturday, June 25

Final (best 2 out of 3 games) begins:

2:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 26

\$10 of your \$15 registration fee goes to The Literacy Alliance, a nonprofit organization striving to end illiteracy at work, at home, and in the community



From the Director's Desk

The Literacy Alliance provides instruction both for native English speakers who need better skills to succeed in life and for non-native English speakers, like Freddie Diaz whom you met in our cover story, who are learning English as a new language.

Freddie's story highlights the bottom line benefits of Literacy Alliance instruction. He understands the significance of his role as a parent in helping his daughters succeed in school, and he takes time out of his busy life to read to them. In addition, learning English makes Freddie a more valuable employee, not only because he is better able to understand his work responsibilities, but also because he can now translate for others.

Immigrants and refugees study English in several Literacy Alliance programs. Two family literacy sites are dedicated to parents and children learning English as a new language. At those sites, not only do we see parents growing in their English skills, we see their children rapidly gaining age-appropriate knowledge of the language. Adams Elementary, where one of our Family Literacy classes is located, will become an English as a Second Language (ESL) school this fall. We are excited about the opportunity to work with even more parents who have children in class at the school.

A number of ESL learners are matched with tutors. The Literacy Alliance also trains and places volunteers in adult ESL classes at Fort Wayne Community Schools' Anthis Career Center and several church ESL sites. ESL tutors are always in high demand. For example, right now we have two students waiting and several church programs with adults needing individual assistance.

As the numbers of new Hoosiers who want to learn English grows, the demands on local programs increase. On behalf of Freddie, and all of our students, we are grateful for your support as we respond to these needs.



Judith Stabelli, Executive Director



709 Clay Street, Suite 100 • Fort Wayne, Indiana 46802

The Literacy Alliance



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Fort Wayne, IN
Permit no. 124