



The Literacy Alliance

Literacy News

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One-on-One Student Wants to Help People

Rosi Miguel entered the conference room at The Literacy Alliance to help prepare children's books for a giveaway. As she greeted everyone, her smile and enthusiasm were contagious. She is a Literacy Alliance One-on-One student lending a hand.

From Sao Paulo, Brazil, Rosi came to Fort Wayne with her husband Ely who works for GE. It is their first assignment in the United States. The acceptance she and her family have received inspires her to volunteer wherever she can. "I have found a lot of love here in this country for myself," she explains. "I want to return what I've received."

She also wanted to find a school to help her with English. In Brazil, Rosi had always worked, as a Portuguese teacher and executive secretary. Her tutor, Cathy Scott-Slayback notes that Rosi was "already able to read, write and speak English. She most wanted to be able to understand spoken English better and faster, and also improve her pronunciation."

Initially, Rosi and Cathy worked on identifying American coins and talked about American holidays and travel destinations. Several sessions included Rosi reading short articles aloud and working on vocabulary and pronunciation. "She was very driven to do more and more," Cathy says, "so we started working on specific sounds, with her reading from lists of simple



As she works on her English listening and pronunciation, One-on-One student Rosi Miguel donates her time to help others in the community.

words, then simple sentences containing those words. She progressed very quickly."

For more practice in listening and understanding American English, Rosi volunteered at Lutheran Hospital and visited the The Literacy Alliance computer lab where she used KeyTrain.

With its auditory component, KeyTrain software helped tune her into the pace and pronunciation of English. It helped her to better listen to and understand the spoken language. According to Rosi, it "opened my ears." She could read the lesson on the computer screen and hear it read from the headphones. Lessons are based on workplace skills and experiences so, for Rosi, KeyTrain provided useful tools "focusing on important everyday things in a simple way."

Though her current visa doesn't permit Rosi to work in the United States, she would like to become a nurse. That would depend on how long the Miguels live here. As a nurse, she says, "I can help people who need help." Meanwhile, she'll continue to work on her English and volunteer wherever she can.

She "is a fun, energetic person to be around," Cathy says, summing up her experience with Rosi. "I know she'll achieve whatever she sets her mind to."

Over 50 TLA Volunteers Enjoy 2nd Annual Breakfast

Sunshine and pleasant temperatures along with plenty of coffee helped make the 2nd Annual Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast enjoyable. Over 50 Literacy Alliance volunteers attended the April 21 event at the Sears Pavilion in Foster Park.

While the volunteers dined and visited, Literacy Alliance staff served quiche, fruit salad, and mini muffins.

Later, all in attendance introduced themselves and stated where they volunteered. Then, Board President Casey Scheurich, Volunteer Coordinator Kathleen Benson-Chaney, and Executive Director Judy Stabelli spoke, expressing gratitude for the volunteers' dedication and hard work.

Volunteers help in every program area, tutoring adult students One-on-One and at Learning Centers, guiding the organization as board members, and reading to preschool age children.

All volunteers received years-of-service certificates and clip-on book lights. Judy presented the Joe Truba Memorial Award to William Ashman, Dolores Pawlisch, and John Pawlisch.

A Literacy Alliance volunteer from the beginning, Joe Truba's help included tutoring students, keeping financial records, recruiting and training tutors, recording their hours, and setting up the agency's first computer. Recipients of the Truba Award exemplify what all volunteers, past and present, do for those served by The Literacy Alliance.

Although William Ashman was unable to attend the breakfast, John and Dee Pawlisch were there. While presenting the award, Judy told their story, how both have been volunteers for more than a dozen years, and how The Literacy Alliance brought them together.

Site coordinators at all Learning Centers continually do things for their volunteer tutors, including lunches and gift certificates. At St. Hyacinth where John and Dee tutor, the volunteers had received Dairy Queen coupons. When John asked Dee if she wanted to go for a cone, she said yes to what became their first date.



Literacy Alliance staff prepare quiches for volunteers at the 2nd Annual Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast. More than 50 attended the April 21 event at Sears Pavilion in Foster Park.



Executive Director Judy Stabelli presents the Joe Truba Award to volunteers John and Dolores Pawlisch, long-standing tutors at St. Hyacinth Learning Center.



John and Dee display their Truba Award certificates. They were recognized along with volunteer William Ashman for their service to adult students.

Volunteer Corner

Literacy Alliance One-on-One tutor Susie Ashton has two daughters and four granddaughters. She is proud of her family's long and distinguished history. She emphasizes that the success her family has built was the direct result of a disciplined work ethic.

During the Korean War, Susie lived in Sioux City, Iowa. Her father, Dan Yingst, was deployed there with the original Indiana Air National Guard 122nd Fighter Wing. His employment with the 122nd continued when they returned to Fort Wayne.

Susie graduated from Arcola High School then pursued course work at IPFW. Her experiences included traveling to New York City where she assisted with the food trips sponsored by the Consumer and Family Sciences Department's Hospitality and Tourism Management. She was an active member in the philanthropic group Beta Sigma Phi. Her simple enjoyments include reading, crewel work, and gardening. She remains actively engaged in the community.

Almost four years ago, Susie decided to pursue tutoring with The Literacy Alliance. She knew instinctively she could do it because she was already working with younger students who struggled with reading in the East Allen County School system.

The staff at the Literacy Alliance knows when Susie has arrived at the office. Blessed with an infectious laugh, she graces her surroundings with bountiful energy and good nature.

When asked about what thoughts she might share with a potential tutor, without hesitation she responded that it's helpful to keep an open mind. She explains that many individuals have simply not had opportunities for education. In addition, she says each volunteer should know that individual effort will make a difference.

Susie has had the pleasure of working with three different One-on-One students, and all three have moved on with their lives. When asked which stands out, she mentioned her latest student who had to move to another part of the country to care for an elderly parent. The student called Susie recently to let her know that she had enrolled in a learning center in her new city. The student also wanted to declare that, though she may pass the GED exam in her new city, she was determined to go through graduation in Fort Wayne. That student, Susie notes, is a good definition of determination in action.

To Susie, and all of the dedicated, hard working volunteers serving in so many capacities, The Literacy Alliance is successful because of you! Thank you!

Hall's Partnership Continues to Raise Funds for TLA

Participation in the Hall's Community Partnership Card Program continues.

Since October 2005, when The Literacy Alliance and Hall's Restaurants and Specialty Services joined forces to fight low literacy in Allen County, staff, volunteers, and board members have used the card 135 times, raising \$215 for The Literacy Alliance.

When cardholders dine at any Hall's Restaurant, use Hall's catering service, order a cake from Hall's Takes the Cake, have an event at Lester's Banquet Hall, or stay at The Guesthouse Hotel and present the card when paying their bill, Hall's donates 10% of the bill from a Guesthouse stay and 5% from any other dining or service experience.

Everyone is eligible to use the card which only works when it is used. Cards are available from Brian at The Literacy Alliance, 426-7323.



Thanks to Individuals & Organizations for Their Generous Support

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Announcements

The Literacy Alliance welcomes new tutors Sheri Davis, Mickey Kamphues, Terri Maucher, Shari Pentecost, and Amanda Staight.

If you are interested in volunteering at The Literacy Alliance, please contact Kathleen at 426-7323.

Do you have children's books to donate? The Literacy Alliance's Books for Kids program distributes books for children from six months to six years at local medical clinic and social service waiting rooms. Children who visit Books for Kids sites can choose a book to take home free of charge. To donate books for children from six months to six years, you can drop them off at Village Books in St. Joe Village, Village Books in Northcrest Shopping Center, or Village Books in Dupont Village.

Mark your calendar! Two literacy events are coming up.

On Saturday, September 23, The Literacy Alliance joins Allen County Education Partnership, Allen County Public Library, CANI Head Start, Citilink, Fort Wayne Urban League, and other local organizations for the Second Annual Rally to Read. The fun begins at 11:00 a.m. at the corner of Hanna and Creighton Streets.

On Sunday, September 24, the Second Annual Movie Event fundraiser will be held at The Embassy Theater. Made possible with support from Comcast, the show starts at 2:00 p.m. Bring the whole family for great, big-screen dancing and singing!



What a glorious feeling!

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

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**Only about 50%
of all patients
take medications
as directed.**

People with low literacy skills have a higher rate of hospitalization and increased incidents of medication and treatment errors than the general public.

From the Director's Desk

As most everyone in our country weighs in on the heated discussion about illegal immigrants and their impact on our national way of life, we thought we'd tell you about the impact of New Hoosier immigrants and refugees on Literacy Alliance programs.

Many, including Rosi whose story is on the cover page, turn to The Literacy Alliance to learn English. Their stories are as varied as their countries of origin. A handful have had professional careers but had to flee war-torn homelands and start afresh in a country where they didn't know the language and their credentials couldn't be documented. A Family Literacy parent came from farming villages in Somalia where there is not a written language.

Literacy Alliance instruction is part of a spectrum of services for immigrants and refugees in Allen County. We wish that the spectrum were fully populated with enough services of every kind to meet the need. Unfortunately that is not the case. With the resources available to us, the Literacy Alliance has identified three specific areas where we can best serve adults learning English as a New Language.

Fifty-seven families were learning English as a New Language at two **Family Literacy** sites during this last school year. Twelve adults whose native languages included Spanish, Portuguese, Amish Dutch, Burmese, Urdu, Hindi and Russian, were matched with **One-on-One Tutors**. Five used the **Computer Lab**.

Because Literacy Alliance resources are limited, we try to keep abreast of other available classes, especially those offered by local churches. As we learn of new ESL classes we add them to our list so that we can refer inquiring adults. As part of our partnership with FWCS, we train and place tutors in Fort Wayne Community Schools' ESL classes at Anthis Career Center.

Volunteers are an important part of the system of services for New Hoosiers. Please consider giving your time so that others, like Rosi, can gain the skills needed to become participating members of our community.



Judith Stabelli, Executive Director



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The Literacy Alliance



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