



The Literacy Alliance

# Literacy News

A quarterly publication of the Literacy Alliance

2007 Issue 2

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## The Rodriguez Family Learns Together

Having just seen their children safely to their classrooms, the parents enter the room brightened by the morning sun. They take turns signing in and take their seats. Their teacher Molly has already started the boom box which, on this particular morning, plays soothing guitar music. As always, site coordinator Sybel is there to greet them, too.

The parents are students of The Literacy Alliance's ESL family literacy program at Adams Elementary School. Meeting mornings, Monday through Friday, they begin by reviewing vocabulary words. On this particular morning, the focus is on prefixes and suffixes.

As she circulates among the the tables, Molly occasionally says, "In English, please. English."

For today, they are to bring a favorite recipe in English to share with the class. The subject they have been working on for a week or so is shopping for and preparing food. Previously they studied transportation. When studying health, they had to teach a health related activity in English to their classmates. For some, it was how to complete health forms. For others, it was first aid. After a few more days on food, they will study employment.

Two of the students are Juan Rodriguez and his wife Josefa. He looks a little sleepy, since he has come directly



*Juan and Josefa attend family literacy at Adams Elementary where their children, Luis and Laritza.*

from Target where he works all night on the cleaning crew. Their children, first grader Laritza and fourth grader Luis, attend Adams.

Originally from the city of Aguililla in Mexico, Juan and Josefa attend Adams Family Literacy to improve their English. For Josefa, the main thing is to be able to help their children in school. "Now, I can help Laritza with her ABC's." Ultimately, they want to get ahead in life.

The story is similar for most family literacy students. Parents want instruction to help them meet their academic goals, whether it's strengthening basic skills, improving their English, learning how to help with their children's education, or preparing for the GED exam. The Literacy Alliance collaborates with other agencies to provide family literacy sites at East Wayne Street Center, Hanna-Creighton Head Start, and Adams Elementary School. What all families receive at Literacy Alliance Family Literacy sites is adult instruction for the parents, education for the children, parent and child (PAC) time, and parenting guidance.

At Adams, PAC time is two to three times a week for a half-hour. The purpose is for parents and children to share in a learning experience. Adams teachers devise the activities which relate to what the children are learning. Parents observe and participate so they can continue the experience at

**Rodriguez Family, continued on page 2**

## Rodriguez Family, continued from page 1

home. A lot of the PAC activities at Adams cover basic language skills such as phonics, building words with letters, vocabulary, and building sentences.

It works for the Rodriguez family. Luis's fourth grade teacher has told Molly that she's seen a marked gain in his understanding of math. Molly explains that such a gain in understanding leads to gains in confidence, making learning easier. Luis mentions that every night the family talk about what they learned that day. In addition to helping Laritza with her ABC's, Josefa is helping her write a story in her first grade writer's workshop.

### Literacy Alliance Family Literacy Sites

Adams Elementary School, 3000 New Haven Avenue  
Enrolls ESL families attending Adams

CANI Head Start, 2107 S. Hanna Street  
Serves all languages  
Preference to Head Start families  
Childcare for infants - 10 during class

East Wayne Street Center, 801 E. Wayne Street  
Preference to Head Start families  
Infant and toddler care on-site

# Scores of Volunteers Enjoy an Afternoon at the Lincoln Museum



*Literacy Alliance volunteers share light hors d'oeuvres and pleasant conversation at the Third Annual Volunteer Appreciation event at the Lincoln Museum on April 22.*



*Literacy Alliance Volunteer Coordinator Kathleen Benson Chaney thanks volunteers in the Lincoln Museum auditorium. Afterwards, volunteers explored the museum.*

A strong turnout and a good time marked The Literacy Alliance's Third Annual Volunteer Appreciation event at the Lincoln Museum. Coinciding with National Volunteer Appreciation week, the event included hors d'oeuvres, punch, lemon cake, and years of service certificates for all. Literacy Alliance staff brought vases and filled them with carnations. As a personal gesture of appreciation, staff invited volunteers to take a carnation home.

After snacks and words of thanks, volunteers were free to explore the museum. Many enjoyed a guided tour. They saw the latest temporary and permanent exhibits. The temporary exhibit, "Bleeding Blue and Gray: Civil War Medicine," was a sometimes gruesome review of health care policies and procedures from the Civil War era.

The Literacy Alliance has a little over 100 active volunteers. Most are volunteer tutors who help adult students one-on-one and in learning centers. Some are Story Friends who read on a weekly basis to preschool age children at Fort Wayne area preschools. Others help count books, compile data, and prepare mailings.

# Announcements

Readers responded generously to the most recent issue of *Literacy News*, 2007 Issue 1. The Literacy Alliance is deeply grateful, receiving almost double the amount of donations over the previous year's issue, Winter 2006. The donations from individuals give the agency tremendous strength to continue its mission.

Thanks to all Literacy Alliance supporters who collected and delivered Scott's ABC's receipts this year. Through the nearly \$30,000 worth of points collected, The Literacy Alliance received five \$25 Scott's gift cards. The gift cards will be used to purchase supplies for four learning centers and three family literacy site.

The contributions from Hall's Restaurants continue to come in. The many Literacy Alliance supporters who present the Hall's Community Partnership Card when they pay for their meals make that possible. When cardholders dine at any Hall's Restaurant, use Hall's catering service, order a cake from Hall's Takes a Cake, have an event at Lester's Banquet Hall, or stay at The Guesthouse 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. Results of the program average about \$200 in donations annually.

Mark your calendars! The literacy weekend returns on September 22 with the Rally to Read at the Hanna-Creighton campus, corner of Hanna and Creighton Streets. Similar to last year's which drew hundreds, the four hour event promotes reading and literacy with fun activities, entertainment, giveaways, and free food. More than a dozen local organizations will collaborate to create a meaningful event for all families. Then from 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, September 23, *The Wizard of Oz* will be shown on the big screen at the Embassy Theatre. It's The Literacy Alliance's Third Annual Movie Fundraiser, made possible through Comcast and Turner Classic Movies.



The next set of tutor training workshops will be held 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. on September 29 and October 6. For more information, call Kathleen at The Literacy Alliance, 426-7323.

Books for Kids received two generous donations of gently used preschool age children's books. As part of the United Way Youth Day of Caring, Maple Creek Middle School conducted a book drive, collecting almost 200. For their community service project, the St. Peter's Lutheran Church Brownies collected almost 300 children's books. Distributing books to medical clinic and social service waiting rooms, Books for Kids is one of The Literacy Alliance's Read to Me programs.

## TLA Board Hosts Informational Breakfast

For the first time, The Literacy Alliance Board of Directors has hosted an informational breakfast. In lieu of a regular meeting, the board invited personal and professional contacts to the Fort Wayne Marriott for a presentation and a continental breakfast.

While gathering in the Auburn Room, guests got acquainted and had breakfast while a slideshow about The Literacy Alliance played. Once all were settled, the presentation began.

Board President Casey Scheurich of Dulin, Ward & DeWald presided, welcoming guests and sharing his experience with the agency and why he's passionate about its mission. Literacy Alliance Executive Director Judy Stabelli spoke briefly about how the agency helps the community and plans to continue its mission.

Guest speakers included Mike Landram from the Greater Fort Wayne Area Chamber of Commerce and Teresa Blombach, Account Executive with Business People Magazine.

Mike talked about workforce literacy, noting the importance of equipping people to take advantage of emerging opportunities. A GED graduate, Teresa shared her experiences as an adult literacy student.

The informational breakfast grew out of strategic planning by The Literacy Alliance board. One of the planning's objectives is to broaden community connections and support. The board hopes to cultivate partnerships with organizations and businesses to better fulfill its mission.

# Thanks to Individuals & Organizations for Their Generous Support

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**To find out how you or your organization can sponsor *Literacy News*, call Brian at The Literacy Alliance, 426-7323.**

# From the Director's Desk

Can you imagine living in a place where you can't understand the television news, read the newspaper, understand the currency and read the product labels in the grocery store. Your income is limited because most well-paying positions require you to have a good knowledge of the local language. Then imagine trying to send your children to school and to understand everything that the school expects you to do.

Parents who choose to participate in family literacy while they are learning English as a New Language (sometimes shortened to ENL or ESL) also participate in a parent support component that helps parents learn and understand their important role in their children's education. As you learned in our front-page story, Juan and Josefa shared their learning experience at Adams Elementary School with their children Luis and Laritza.

At this writing, we have just learned that United Way has entrusted us with expanding our Family Literacy programming to include parents in ESL classes at Anthis Career Center. We will offer "support" services that will help parents become involved in the school that their children attend.

We have seen first hand the difference that family literacy services make in immigrant and refugee families. The opportunity to extend services to more families this year so that more children will have the support they need to be successful in school is exciting.

This is a new program for us. We are stepping beyond the familiar model that we have used for a number of years. We hope to be able to share success stories with you next summer after we have completed a year of services.



Judith Stabelli, Executive Director



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