

# Literacy of Northern NY

Helping Adults to Read, Write and Speak  
English Better

200 Washington St., Watertown, NY, 13601  
7640 North State St., Lowville, NY, 13367

## Special Interest Articles:

- Accomplishments of our students 4-5
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- **New Course** – Computer Training 4

## Executive Director's Message

We are planning to create a photo display of some of our students and tutors that will be showcased at various libraries and businesses. We need both students and tutors to volunteer for this project. Our goal is to increase awareness about our program so we can

help more students who need to improve basic literacy skills and interest more people in volunteering.

The display will include some brief information about what the featured students are learning as well as statistics about our program. We will also include

information about the great need we have for more tutors.

Please discuss this project with your student and let us know if you are interested in helping us create more awareness about our program.

**Cecilia Brock**

## Tutor Training is Scheduled for Watertown

### Individual Highlights:

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Literacy of Northern New York is conducting a tutor training course for volunteers interested in learning how to teach basic reading and writing skills to adults. The course will be held from 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. Mondays, beginning Sept. 8 and ending Oct. 6.

The free course will be held at the third floor

conference room of the Key Bank Building, 200 Washington Street, Watertown.

We provide a textbook for the course. Participants spend a lot of time interacting with each other and practicing the reading techniques.

If you are interested in taking the training, please call Literacy of

Northern New York to register so we know how many people to expect.

After completing the course, tutors are matched with one student who needs help with literacy skills. Tutors typically meet their students once or twice a week for an hour in a public place.

Call 782-4270 to register.

## Why Does It Sound Like a U But Spelled with an A?



We donated a basket of books for United Way's fall campaign prizes. United Way supports many programs, including ours. Please consider making a donation to United Way this fall. Their website is [www.unitedwayofnorthernnewyork.org](http://www.unitedwayofnorthernnewyork.org)

Did you ever wonder why the letter A sounds like a short U sometimes, as in the words ago, adopt, and agree?

A syllable that ends in an A or just contains an A **and is not accented** will make that short U sound, which is also called the schwa sound.

How do you know what syllable is accented? Say the

word in a sentence and see where you put the most emphasis. When you put the word in a sentence, you will naturally say it correctly. It's harder to do that if you just say the word by itself. In two syllable words, usually the first syllable is accented. In three syllable words, usually the first or second syllable is accented, never the third.

A good spelling rule for students to remember is words in English very rarely end in the letter U. So if you hear that short U sound (uh) at the end of a word, spell it with an A.

Examples:

- Chi-na
- A-mer-i-ca
- Plas-ma
- Com-ma

## Wonderful Tutors Help Students in Many Ways!

We are very lucky to have some extremely dedicated tutors, who go above and beyond when it comes to helping out their students.

Karen Norton of Rodman is one of those tutors. She tutors a group of Spanish speakers who work long hours. Karen takes them out on field trips to restaurants, state parks, Alexandria Bay and shopping. She also enjoys baking them a special treat for their birthday.

Another special tutor is Carole Way. During the three years she has tutored, she has helped a number of students increase their basic math skills. It's rare for us to have a tutor who likes math enough to want to teach it so we really appreciate Carole's willingness to do this. Carole is moving out of the area soon and she will be missed!

Caryn Allen of Lowville helped

her Japanese student become a U.S. citizen by reviewing U.S. history with her. Her students always show a lot of improvement in their English speaking skills. Caryn is currently working with several ESOL students.

We'd like to thank all our tutors for their hard work and dedication! We appreciate all of you!



Tutor Carole Way reviews new materials at a recent tutor in-service program.

## Researching What Motivates Students to Persist

Adult students who work in literacy programs need a lot of support in order to succeed with their educational efforts, according to the Adult Student Persistence Study, conducted by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. One way tutors can help students remain in the program is to help them identify family members, friends, church members, etc., who support their goal of

increasing their literacy skills. It is important for the student to have someone to talk to when they are questioning whether they should continue with their studies. Often students consider their tutor as one of their important support people.

Helping a student set specific goals that are realistic and achievable is also very important. If a student is able to obtain a driver's

license or pass a test so they can make more money at work, the student is more likely to persist in the program.

Help a student realize she is progressing by presenting her with a certificate for completing a book or attending without absences for three months. Our staff can make the certificate for you.



Our ESOL students enjoy socializing with each other. Some of our students gave presents to their classmate, Doris, seated far right, because she was moving to Florida.

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*To find out more about the Adult Student Persistence Study, go to [www.ncsall.net](http://www.ncsall.net)*

## How Students Feel About Dropping Out

When a student drops out of our program, the tutor often blames herself and the staff views it as a program failure. The truth is many of our adult students have turbulent lives that interfere with their educational efforts.

According to *Stop Outs, Not Dropouts*, by A. Belzer, many students who drop

out of adult education programs plan to return in the future. Many of them continue to study on their own at home until they are able to come back to the program.

Last fall we had two students who had each dropped out of the program twice before who wanted another chance at being tutored. When they came back the

third time, we were a bit cynical about whether they were going to stick around but to our delight, both have been working on their reading skills with their tutors for more than six months.

As a result of the research, we are planning to change our student policy to emphasize to clients that we will welcome them back if they have to drop out of the program for whatever reason.



ESOL students, Sabrina and Hui, use the computer in class to show classmates about their countries.

## Student Success Stories

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*"She's not just my teacher,  
she's my friend."  
Words of an ESOL  
student"*



**Students, Gloria & Sarai.** Many students have husbands in the military who are deployed. The friends they make in class help them through this difficult time.

**Vera**, one of our reading students from Watertown, has recently read five annotated classics. Her tutor, **Pam Gagnon**, was so impressed with this accomplishment that she presented Vera with a certificate to encourage her to keep up the great work!

**Tammie**, a non-reader when she came to our program, enjoys working on our computer reading software. She completed one of the Laubach books and has been studying to get a

driver's license. Tammie recently got a job selling Avon. She is working on her writing skills by filling out the order forms and her math skills by adding up the purchases and calculating sales tax. Way to go, Tammie!

One of our English as second language students, **Melba**, and her teenage children, helped Jefferson/Lewis County Program Manager Deborah Tate staff a booth when a local church gave out free school supplies on Aug. 16<sup>th</sup>. Melba and her family helped the children

do a craft project while Deborah talked to the parents about our program.

**Lourdes**, one of our ESOL students, hosted a fun lunch for her teacher and eight classmates. Lourdes had a complete buffet featuring Spanish food. Everyone had a good time socializing with each other.

Some of our **Lewis County Spanish students** regularly get together to play soccer. Their tutor recently acquired a used computer from our office and is teaching them computer skills.

## Computer Training for students

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We are offering free classes for our students who want to learn more about computers. These classes are only open to our students, not the general public.

Students will learn how to e-mail, use the Internet and learn basic word

processing skills. Using the computer is a great way for students to work on their reading and writing skills.

We also have a lot of software to help students learn to read or speak English better. Some popular items are books students can listen to

on the computer. Students can read the book themselves and just point at the words they need help with. The computer will read those words to the student. They can also listen to the entire book.

To sign up for computer classes call Deborah at 782-4270.

## In Their Own Words

Recently some of our ESOL students sent in e-mails to their teacher, Deborah Tate, as a homework assignment. The students like to use e-mail and need practice with writing in English.

Here are some excerpts Deborah received:

"I hope that all is well with you and God blesses you for me. The class that you teach is very important because I learn something new

every day ... It is good that we write in English. Thank you very much for being a special person and (for) helping us learn English. "

Here's another letter:

"I'm happy ... to receive the card to me. Thank you very much. I like much (how) you give classes. Thank you for your attention ..."



Albert has put a lot of effort into working with his tutor, getting a job, and making positive changes in his life. Here is a picture of Albert working on writing an essay. He worked on it over 3 lessons. This past week his tutor, Pat Dietrich, took him to the library to use the computer online so he could see his picture and stories on the LNNY web page.

## Ways Students Can Help Out

Students who help out our staff with projects or events enjoy the fact that they can give back to the program.

We need students to help us by writing brief letters to United Way. Students can write down what they have learned and how it has helped them with their everyday life. Please send us the letters by Oct. 31.

We also need students and tutors who are willing to meet and tell their story to the person who will be visiting our program as part of our accreditation site visit. Students will be asked about what they are learning and how it has helped them.

When we staff booths at various events, we like to bring along a

student or two to help out. This is a good way for our English as a second language students to practice their English speaking skills.

We also need help at our Scrabble fund-raiser in the spring. Students can help set up the refreshments, greet people or put out fliers before the event so more people will attend.

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*We appreciate students who give back to the program by writing letters, talking to funders or helping at an event.*



Students Dalia and Efrain helping out at the recent "Back to School" Fair.

## Ways to Encourage Students to Persist

200 Washington St. Suite 303  
Watertown NY 13601

315-782-4270

FAX:  
315-782-1394

7640 North State Street  
Lowville NY 13367  
315-376-8188

2 Park Street  
Potsdam NY 13676

We are an accredited agency



United Way  
Of Northern New York, Inc.

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We are on the Web!  
[www.proliteracynny.org](http://www.proliteracynny.org)

Students feel discouraged from time to time about the progress they are making toward reaching their goals. Here are some tips for helping your student get through those tough times.

Give your student a certificate for completing a textbook, reading five short books or attending for three months without any absences. Students like to frame these certificates and hang

them on their wall at home. Our staff can make the certificate for you!

Nominate your student for Student of the Month. This is a feature on our website, [www.proliteracynny.org](http://www.proliteracynny.org) Students feel a great deal of pride when their accomplishments are recognized.

Orally praise your student when you notice their handwriting is neater, their spelling is improving or they are reading longer words easier.

Keep a portfolio of your student's work. When your student is feeling low, pull out the portfolio and show them how much they have improved since they first started working with you.

Send us a copy of a letter your student wrote so we can print it in our newsletter or on our website. Everyone is proud when something they write is "published."

### *About LNNY...*

LNNY provides free tutoring to adults in Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence Counties who need help with reading,

writing or English as a second language. We also have a computer lab in Watertown where we teach students computer

skills. We train volunteers to work with our clients. We are a United Way partner agency.

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