

Literacy of Northern NY

St. Lawrence County
December 2010

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315-265-0194
www.proliteracynny.org



Greetings and Best Wishes for the Holidays

During this busy time of year, we want to say thanks for the work you do for the people in St. Lawrence County who have difficulties with reading, writing, speaking or understanding English. Those who receive the gift of your time when you volunteer to help them are so lucky that our community supports Literacy of Northern NY's programs. Thank you for being the foundation of that effort. May you and those close to you enjoy the holidays and may 2011 be a good and rewarding year for you.

Bobby Gordon



13 New Tutors in St. Lawrence!

We have recently added 13 new tutors to our volunteer tutor roster. In September and October, we trained these folks in Canton, and we were fortunate to recruit some from Massena, Ogdensburg and Norfolk as well as from Canton and Potsdam. We had a lively

group of enthusiastic trainees, and most of the new tutors are already working with students. As always, there are more students than tutors, so if you have time and inclination, do let us know if you would be willing to work with an additional student.



Materials



There are some great new books in the LNNY office. Some can be used to help with math tutoring, and others will give you new materials for your ESOL student. Of these latter, some are specifically for pronunciation improvement, while others help with conversation and idioms. If you think your student would benefit from any of these, please call the office at 265-0194

and let me know when you want to stop by to look over the new materials. We have made more copies of *Litstart* available for you to borrow from the libraries, due to a generous donation of 10 copies of that valuable resource. If you're "in a rut" and want some new ideas for tutoring, why not look for some in this very user-friendly and practical book?

Lost Materials?

Some of the books we used to have in the LNNY office are "out there" in your homes. If you have one (or more) of these books, and you're no longer using it, PLEASE bring it back, so someone else can use it. We'd really appreciate your cooperation, and when you do return the book, please let us know whether you thought the book was useful. Also,

did your student feel it was helpful, and specifically, for what did you use the book? If you have a book and you ARE still using it, that's fine, but we would like to hear a report on what you're doing with it, whether it is excellent or just OK, and what parts of the book are particularly well designed. Your input helps us decide what books to buy in the future.

Next tutor training starts in February, if you have any friends who are interested, please let them know.



Student Successes

Our students' successes, whether large or small, are our reward for what we do. Among the stories we've heard from you are the following. Student DA got a better job and is now working full time and making much better money. ESL students LA, SB, XL and LRA each increased their speaking and listening skills by 3 levels and reported that working with a tutor helped them feel more confident about using English. ESL student LH got a job, and she also volunteers. Getting a GED diploma has been CM's goal, and she is steadily improving her math and reading levels, working her way toward achieving her dream. JS is still

doing very well in her college courses, plus she got her driver's license and has retained her job. AR improved her reading level by more than a full grade level. If your student has achieved a goal or made some gains, we'd like to hear about it! We're always eager to boast about what our students are achieving, so if your student gets a job, gets a better job (a promotion or a raise), attends some kind of training, earns a driver's license, joins a community organization, does some volunteer work, reads a book to his child, visits with his child's teacher, learns a new skill, or does ANYTHING of which he feels proud, PLEASE tell US about it!



Tutor Tips



Here's a game to help your ESOL student practice grammar. Take an envelope and write verb tense on it. Write pronouns on a second envelope and positive/negative on the third envelope. For the verb tense envelope, write on slips of paper various tenses such as future, past, present. (Put one on each strip of paper) For the pronouns envelope, write I, you, he, she, they and we on strips of paper. The third envelope contains two slips of paper labeled positive and negative. The tutor should also write down a list of infinitive verbs such as to eat, to sleep, to visit, to see, to dance, to play, etc.

Have the student select one strip from each envelope. The tutor then says one of the infinitive verbs and asks the student to make a sentence using the verb tense, pronoun and positive/negative strips of paper they have selected. After the student says the sentence, ask him or her to write it down. (This tip is from Jennifer McDonnell, who posted it on Dave's ESL Café.)

One way to get students talking is to brainstorm as many words on a topic as possible. Some topics you can try include: parenthood, marriage, the holidays or employment. Write down the words the student comes up with and then go through the list and have the student decide if the word is positive or negative. Then have the student write about the topic in class or for homework. This activity works for both reading and ESOL students. (This tip is from Talk Your Head Off.)

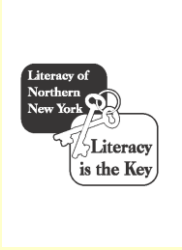
Does your student have difficulty visualizing what's going on when he or she is reading? Does it affect the student's comprehension of the material? One way to teach a student to read more actively is to demonstrate what you are thinking as you are reading. This is called the Think Aloud strategy. The tutor should pick a short story and read it out loud to the student. As the tutor is reading, he or she should pause periodically and reflect out loud about what he or she is thinking about while reading. Good readers make predictions, reflect on how their personal experience compares to what they are reading about, ask questions such as does this make sense or wonder why a character would act that way, etc.

To illustrate the Think Aloud strategy, here is a short story about a spunky cat named Katie. In parenthesis are some comments the tutor might say if reading this out loud to the student.

Katie was a plump, friendly cat who loved to eat so much, her belly almost hung to the ground. (Oh, I love cats but people shouldn't feed them so much. Such a large belly can't be healthy for a cat.) She had been abandoned as a kitten and spent a year on the streets and was always hungry. (Whoever abandons an animal should be shot! Poor cat! They should have taken her to the SPCA.) Katie hunted small rodents or raided garbage cans to find scraps of food to eat. (I wonder what will happen to the poor cat. I hope someone will take her in.) One day Katie heard children playing baseball in a small backyard and she wandered over to watch. She plopped down by the pitcher and the little boy started petting Katie, who purred loudly and rubbed up against his leg. The boy called out to his mother, who was nearby, and begged her to let him adopt the black cat with four white legs. The family didn't have any pets so the mother let her son keep the cat. Katie finally had a family! (I wonder how many people Katie approached before someone was finally nice to her. Thank goodness someone is going to take care of her. I can picture her with her black back and white legs, purring up a storm.)

Although she had been adopted 10 years ago and was fed regularly since then, Katie was known to eat odd things such as potato chips left on the ground, waffles with syrup and fettuccine alfredo. If food was left out, Katie was known to scarf it down. When the food level in her two large bowls became the least bit low, which to Katie meant they were not brimming with food, she would sit by them and meow pitifully until one of her owners filled it to near overflowing. (It sounds like Katie will always have food issues because of her year on the street, just like some people who lived through the Depression horde food.)

50/50 Hockey Raffle Event



On February 12, we will be at St Lawrence University's hockey arena doing our annual fund raiser. We sell raffle tickets, and one ticket is drawn; the person who bought that ticket receives ½ of the money we collect for the tickets sold. If any of you would be willing to spend a couple of hours helping us sell lots of tickets, we'd

really appreciate it. You will have plenty of time to watch the game, as we sell mainly before the game begins and during the intermissions, and you get in FREE. Just call the office at 265-0194 if you can join us that night.

Collection of Second Quarter Hours

At the end of December, we'll again be contacting you to ask how many hours you spent tutoring your student, how much time you spent preparing for the tutoring sessions and the time spent traveling to your meetings. You can report this information by calling the office (265-0194), sending an email to (lvastlaw@hotmail.com) or going online to our website (just "google" Literacy of Northern NY) and then click on the link to submit hours and notes. We are very

interested in hearing about what you and your student are doing together and what skills your student has improved or mastered. Also, do let us know if your student has gotten a job, gotten any training, or done anything you and he/she would like to boast about. We need to report this information to the government in order to continue to receive funding for our program, so it's very important that we hear from all of you. Thanks so much for your help.

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