



LITERACY

Opening the World Through Words!

MATTERS

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER PRESENTED BY

OAKLAND LITERACY COUNCIL

SPRING 2016

From Strength to Strength

Executive
Director
Lisa Machesky



Oakland Literacy Council is stronger than it has ever been, thanks to the dedication and talent of our tutors, board, the generosity of our supporters, and the students who come to us ready to work hard and learn.

Today, nearly 230 tutors are doing an excellent job of serving about 250 students, giving them important skills that will improve their quality of life and help them contribute to their communities. About 80 more prospective students are eager to begin learning, and more tutors are being trained each month. We are so grateful to all the tutors who give so generously of their time, and who care so much about helping their students.

We also are delighted that generous donors, as well as government grants, have provided us with sufficient financial strength to support our important work.

It is tempting to keep riding this wave, continuing to do what we have been doing well. However, in order to provide the best service to our community, we must periodically stop and think about ways to improve the service we provide to our students and the support we give our tutors.

Against this backdrop: enter our new Executive Director, Lisa Machesky.

We are delighted to welcome Lisa. She brings with her an impressive history of experience in the non-profit sector, as well as a wealth of relationships in the community that will enable us to forge new partnerships and reach out to segments of the population that are in need of basic literacy skills. Equally, important, Lisa brings a fresh perspective and new ideas to our organization.

Lisa's background positions her well for her leadership role in the Council. She has more than a decade of experience leading, managing, and growing non-profit organizations. She recently spent time as acting CEO of Lighthouse of Oakland County, a human services and low-income housing agency. Prior to that, she served for five years as Executive Director of the Baldwin Center, a human services agency in Pontiac whose many programs include a 7-day-a-week soup kitchen and clothing closet.

Her time at these organizations has given her the opportunity to see the vast need for literacy services, particularly in the Pontiac area. As a past Oakland Literacy Council tutor, she also has a good understanding of the services we provide. Her

relationships with many social service agencies in Pontiac, as well as in other communities, may help to open doors that enable us to reach more students in need of basic literacy skills and form partnerships with employers who need more skilled workers.

Lisa's background will be a wonderful asset internally as well. She has many years of experience working with volunteers and providing strong support to them. Already, she has reached out to our tutors, collecting feedback on those areas in which we are doing well, as well as those in which we can improve. Lisa's strong background in procuring grants will help secure funding to support the services we provide and enable us to reach out in new directions. Lisa brings many fresh ideas that hopefully will enable us to respond to the needs expressed, providing even stronger support to the tutors who are the backbone of Oakland Literacy Council.

Many of you had the opportunity to meet Lisa at the open house on March 2nd. For those of you who were unable to make it, please stop by the office to welcome her. We are so pleased that Lisa has joined the Oakland Literacy Council family, and are excited about what the future will bring under her leadership.

A Few Words....

The following quote has become my mantra for 2016. It is by Alan Watts (who I've discovered was a British-born American philosopher) who said "The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance."

Those words and meaning catch the current spirit of the OLC as we welcome a whole host of new employees and board members. We are shifting responsibilities in order to better serve you, our tutors, students and volunteers, and become stakeholders in the community. We keep raising our profile, all while continuing to support our mission and vision.

As our front page article indicated, Executive Director Lisa Machesky is the spring board to our many changes. Lisa is only our third Executive Director in our 32 year history. The Board of Directors is confident she will make significant strides in our organization.

Kim McKnight started out as a tutor but joined our staff after she wrote a compelling letter offering her services when the Auxiliary said "so long" to the delightful Julie Hoensheid (more on that story in a minute). With her gentle demeanor and attention to detail, Kim has easily fit into her role as Student Coordinator.

Our newest addition has been with us a mere two weeks but has already demonstrated her sage people skills and keen sense of humor. She is Kathleen Gillespie, our new Office Manager.

Some of our dedicated volunteers have stepped up in many ways....Most of the articles in this issue of Literacy Matters have been carefully crafted by Board member Ann Manning. She has also taken up the reins of some of our store events like Barnes and Noble and Leon and Lulu.

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Meet Student Yasuyo Kamiya

To say that Yasuyo Kamiya has great determination would be quite an understatement.

Yasuyo had been a nurse in Japan for twenty years. Two years ago, she and her tutor, PJ Jones, set the goal of getting Yasuyo her Michigan nursing certification. Considering that this is a rigorous process for anyone, and that her English conversational skills at the time were quite limited, this was quite an ambitious target.

How determined was she to attain this goal? On the day of her first meeting with PJ, Yasuyo ran the Free Press marathon. She came directly to her first tutoring session after running 26 miles!

It took almost 8 months for Yasuyo to pass her TOIC, the English proficiency test. She had to accomplish this before she could take the Michigan certification test for foreign medical professionals. After that, Yasuyo worked hard for another year before she passed the certification test in September 2015. This was very difficult because it included many English medical and pharmacological terms. Luckily for her, PJ had a lot of knowledge in this area and was able to help. But that wasn't all! Still ahead of her was the Michigan nursing exam, which she passed in January of this year. Whew!

And the frosting on the cake?

On March 8, Yasuyo began her new job at Wellbridge, a rehabilitation center in Novi for patients released from the hospital but not yet ready to go home. Congratulations, Yasuyo!

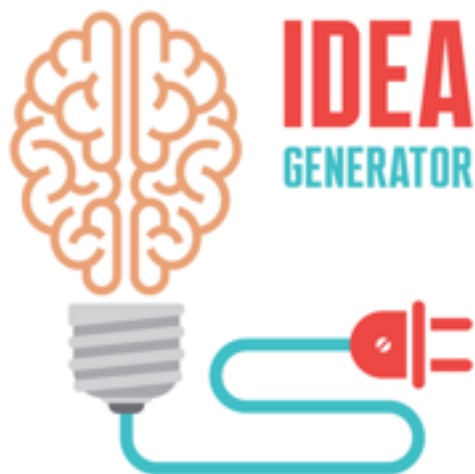
Hard work was the key to attaining her goal. She and PJ worked together every week for two years, Yasuyo was a very diligent student, studying for at least one hour every day.



Tutor PJ Jones with her student Yasuyo Kamiya

Soon, Yasuyo's husband will return to Japan, but she will stay here to be near her twin daughters while they attend college in Michigan. She and PJ will keep working together so she can continue to improve her English conversation skills.

Yasuyo is very grateful for the help she has received. She says, "PJ is a very important person in my life because she helped a lot many times. I appreciate her kindness and appreciate Oakland Literacy Council. Thank you for giving me a great tutor! I couldn't have had this success without PJ."



Food for Thought!

On Saturday, March 5, 13 tutors, collectively representing more than 100 years of tutoring experience, met at the OLC office to share their knowledge and experience at our newly and aptly titled “Tutor to Tutor” (formerly “Breakfast Club”) gathering. Following a delicious breakfast of quiche, fruit, and cookies, and with the helpful guidance of Suann Darmody, the tutors enthusiastically shared tips and strategies that hopefully will help others in working with their students.

Executive Director, Lisa Machesky’s question, “How can we support you?”, also led to a helpful discussion. Suggestions included offering

more classes on technology, and additional sessions in the evenings and on weekends. When Lisa asked what the tutors would think of a Tutor Coach, all seemed to like the idea of having someone to “go to”.

Here are some of the wonderful tips that were shared.

Technology Tools

- Online: Learn American English
- App: Learn English by Listening
- App or online: Google Translate



All of these enable listening, so students can hear words spoken by someone other than you, and practice pronunciation.

Reading Materials

- News For You – newspaper for ESL students (available in libraries, but usually cannot be checked out)
- “Rapid Read” books in ESL section of library (approx. 4th grade level)
- Low level biography books in OLC resource room
- Children’s books with pictures – if the student is the parent of young children, they can read the book to their children at bedtime
- Tongue twisters to help with pronunciation

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Student Goal Achievements

December 2015~--January 2016

December 2015	L. understands words with multiple meanings.
December 2015	MH completed the written test and road test for receiving a Michigan driver's license.
December 2015	LF is sounding out words phonetically.
December 2015	EJ worked on US citizenship naturalization test questions
December 2015	KP moved up one level in comprehension of assigned stories reading independently.
January 2016	YK able to have conversation for clearly requesting and negotiating needed home repairs.
January 2016	AK able to have all conversations for leading the parents at child's school for multicultural event.
January 2016	SNY made excellent independent progress on reading and writing goals.
January 2016	WS successfully placed calls to the State of Michigan regarding getting a Drivers License.
January 2016	MH has learned enough conversational English to enroll in ESL courses at the community college.
February 2016	HM is advancing in goals for conversational and listening skills.
February 2016	RB is progressing on speed & pronunciation goals.
February 2016	JC is reading the first "Harry Potter" novel.
February 2016	RI is progressing with pronunciation, conversation skills and is clearly understood in daily English.
February 2016	YL impressive accomplishments in reading.
February 2016	VL is dedicated to making focused progress on parts of speech – subjects, verbs, and nouns.

Congratulations on your Accomplishments!



For more than eleven years, the Oakland Literacy Council has partnered with Bookstock, Used Book & Media Sale to assist before and during "Detroit's biggest used book sale". Proceeds from the sale support education and literacy projects, including the OLC. This year's sale will be **held May 15 -22** at the Laurel Park Place Mall in Livonia.

Each year, the Oakland Literacy Council staffs and runs the sale Friday evening, May 20 (one shift from 5pm to 9pm) and all day Saturday, May 21 (four shifts starting at 9:30am). Volunteers replenish books on tables, assist customers and sort books. This is a "your help is needed and appreciated" event, as it assists in raising needed funds for the OLC. It is NOT limited to members of the Oakland Literacy Council. You may invite family, friends, neighbors, and teens can get community service hours.

Please consider giving three hours (or more) to assist us in this endeavor. To sign up or for more information please contact us at 248.253.1617

We extend our heartfelt sympathy to Board member Judy Bryce on the loss of her husband Dennis. Dennis will be remembered for his quick wit and generosity. He will be missed.

Applause, Applause

Congratulations to our newest tutors! On March 2nd, you joined a team of talented and dedicated volunteers, without whom there would be no Oakland Literacy Council. Thank you for giving your time to helping others experience the joys of literacy.



Our Tutors include: Norma Anderson, Angie Brunke, Nancy Dougan, Ashley Elliott, Johanna Ganzinga, Joe Giuliani, Karen Henry, Marilyn Jacobson, Peter Jacobson, Thomas King, Julie Molnar, Blair Munro, Gerry Parfitt, Linda Plunkett, Pat Steffes, Holly Tylenda, Daud Yar

A Few Words continued—

Suann Darmody is familiar to our Tuesday and Thursday conversation group participants, but she has outdone herself in saying “yes” to our continued requests. Su has taken the lead in our newly named “Tutor to Tutor” program (read the article on page three) and has amassed critical information on the OLC and our role in the county.

We were thrilled when Vivian Boyd and John Randle joined the OLC Board of Directors. They have already proven invaluable stalwarts as we navigated the many layers of the hiring process.

Finally, back to Julie Hoensheid. Julie was asked if she would serve on the Board of Directors in an advisory role. She graciously accepted and has proven, once again, invaluable.

I am thrilled that you are all along to enjoy this new chapter in our illustrious heritage.

Judy Lindstrom

It's Time to Re-enroll for Kroger Community Rewards!

This program pays money to approved non-profits when registered customers shop at Kroger. So each time you go buy milk and eggs, Kroger will give credits to Oakland Literacy Council and include that amount in a check sent quarterly.

To help OLC raise money through this program, you simply need to enroll once a year and list OLC as your charity of choice. For those of you who already are signed up, please go online and re-enroll for the next 12 months.

Registration is at
www.krogercommunityrewards.com.

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Homework Ideas

- Choose a movie together, then ask the student to watch it with subtitles.
- Journaling: Ask the student to write something every day.
- During lessons, make a list of all the words that are challenging your student. For homework, have them practice the pronunciation and use each word in a sentence.

Conversation Starters

- Bring a world map and ask your student to tell you about someplace they have been. You might also read recent articles about his/her country.
- Read Metroparent magazine with parents of young children. You can discuss upcoming child-friendly events and discuss places the family can visit together.
- Watch PBS travel shows together. Anthony Bourdain “Parts Unknown” can lead to conversations about other countries. “Under the Radar Michigan” can trigger dialogue about interesting places in Michigan. You can even assign the student to visit nearby locations.
- Discuss holidays in the current month. Your student may not know about Groundhog Day or Tax Day. You also could talk about the hundreds of national “something” days. For example, January 3 is National Chocolate Covered Cherry Day and January 11 is National Clean Off Your Desk Day. (see www.nationaldaycalendar.com)
- For those with students who enjoy cooking, ask about the preparation of national dishes or their favorite recipes.
- Go to the window and ask, “What do you see?”
- To facilitate conversation, connect with another student/tutor pair (same country of origin) that meets at the same location as you.

Field Trip Ideas

- Go grocery shopping. (don’t forget to order from the deli counter)
- Attend a fun class together in an area that interests the student (e.g. art, cooking, yoga)
- Visit a restaurant. Study the menu in advance, and then have your student do the ordering. For advanced students, go to Subway or Qdoba to practice making multiple choices on the “assembly line,” after studying the options in advance.