



# Literacy Matters

*Opening the World Through Words!*

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER BY **OAKLAND LITERACY COUNCIL** SPRING 2017

## Something for Everyone!

We dusted off the winter blahs and got our creative juices flowing to find different ways to spread the word about OLC and involve our already amazing tutors, students friends and business associates.

We think--- and hope--- we found the winning formula.  
Please, JOIN US!



### Bookstock

Mark your calendars for Friday April 28 and Saturday, April 29, and volunteer to work a shift or two as we support the efforts of Bookstock, Michigan's largest used book and media sale, supporting the "need to read". Three cheers to Board Member **Candy Geeter** serving as chair of this event!

### Leon & Lulu

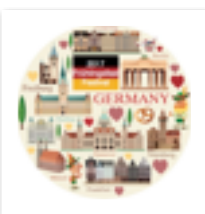
How about this for timing---the next day (Sunday, April 30), volunteers from the OLC will be front and center (thanks to Board Member **Ann Manning**) greeting customers as they meet local authors. We receive 10% from every sale. So, stop in, say "hi", meet the authors, and shop.



### *Exceptional Doll House Could be Yours!*

For only \$10 you can buy a chance to win this amazing doll house (with a value of \$4000). Board Member **Mary Rosenbusch** and her friend Pat Peretto spent hundreds of hours painstakingly designing, building and creating this treasure.

Help us spread the word---take a poster or flyer to hang, and buy a series of tickets (three for \$25) for friends and family. The more tickets you buy, the greater the chance you can take this home. Please call our office at 248-253-1617 to purchase your ticket/s. The drawing will be held on June 4th



### *The Motor City Wine and Food Festival*

committee, under the guidance of OLC Founder **Robert Gaylor** and co-chair **Russell Moore**, bring another magical event for your consideration.

### **Frühlingsfest 2017**

is sure to be a "must attend event":

Think springfest, foodfest, musicfest, carfest and funfest all tied up in a fancy bow! What makes this event special is that we share a portion of the proceeds with other adult literacy organizations in the tri county area. Tickets are \$150 each and can be purchased by going to

<https://motorcitywineandfoodfestival2017.eventbrite.com>

Please call the office if you would like to receive an invitation.

## A Few Words.....by Judy Lindstrom



Ever since humans first noticed the regular movement of the sun and the stars, we have wondered about the passage of time. Whether it's seconds, minutes, hours, days, months or years, time is one thing that doesn't stop. What we do with it often is a mystery. It can also be exhilarating, challenging and simply magical.

The Oakland Literacy Council "clock" started in 1984. As we enter our 33rd year, we mark time and those

years by the many faces who have passed through our doors--by the many accomplishments and stories told. We also mark time by the knowledge collected. As we enter our 33rd year, I am thrilled to report that our amazing staff is one who acknowledges our past and looks towards the future with the mantra, "How can I/we best serve our students, tutors, friends, donors, and business associates"?

We are committed to finding ways to communicate better (see our article on OLC finances requested by one of our tutors), raising needed funds, bringing people together, and embracing the mission of the Oakland Literacy Council.

Our 33rd year (over 12,000 days) will mark time by offering each of us an opportunity to make each day count!

*A History Question,  
Submitted by long time tutor  
Frank W. Wilson*

Who was the only US president who grew up speaking English as a Second Language?

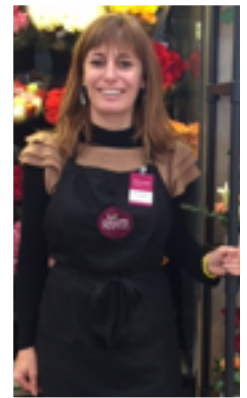
Answer found on page 7



*Celebrating our  
students many  
milestones!*

### KUDOS!!!

**Christelle Urbain** has achieved her goal of finding a job! In November, she received a permit to work in the U.S. Seeking a position as a floral designer, she applied to several locations and did two interviews in English. Her hard work, along with the support of her tutor **Diane Ruffino**, paid off when she was hired by Plum Market.



After working for nearly two years with her tutor, **Gregory Bailey, Chizu Tanigawa** wanted to take her conversational skills to the next level – and she certainly has! She has spoken three times to groups at a senior residence in Novi, giving presentations about different aspects of Japanese culture.

**Mizuho Kuro** delivered a beautiful baby girl on January 17. Although the staff spoke only English, she was able to effectively communicate thanks to her tutoring sessions with **Allison Bliss**. Congratulations, Mizuho!

If reading a book opens the world, then student **Irina Vertiagina** needs to pack her bags! According to her tutor, **Eric Nagler**, Irina has just finished reading all eight books of the Harry Potter series.

# Your DoLLars at Work for Literacy

“Yet another fundraiser?”

OLC asks tutors and students to earn Kroger and Amazon Smile rewards, shop at Barnes and Noble book fairs and Leon and Lulu events, and directly donate money. We report on the success of various fundraising events. But where does all the money go? Let's take a look at where Oakland Literacy Council gets funds and how they are spent.

We are so thankful to all the tutors and volunteers who give freely of their time and talent to support our mission of helping adults achieve their literacy goals. It might seem that little money is needed, when so much work is done by volunteers. In fact, an organization that coordinates and supports the efforts of 300 volunteer tutors, and has outreach programs throughout Oakland County, needs considerable financial resources to operate effectively.

Public and private grants account for about half of our funds, while the other half comes from private donations and fundraising programs. Thirty percent of the total, our largest single source of funds, comes from the federal government, through a grant by the state of Michigan. Another 30% is the result of our many fundraising initiatives, including the Motor City Wine and Food program and our annual Ex-Libris dinner. Last, but most certainly not least, 20% of OLC funds are private donations. These generous gifts are critical to our mission of making literacy dreams a reality.

Where do these dollars go? In 2016, OLC spent \$171,110 in support of our mission. These expenses include funding our staff of five part time employees

who deal with administrative objectives including fundraising and the overall management of employee activities and operations, supporting our students, including testing and matching them with tutors, supporting our tutors' needs along with recruiting and providing training, supporting our office volunteers, and creating initiatives that will emphasize and expand services to basic or native English speakers.

Office rental and utilities accounts for about 20% of our total. Approximately 8% of spending directly supported our fundraising expenses such as printing and postage. Another 7% paid for program necessities such as test materials and the wonderful reading and teaching resources in our library. The balance, about 16%, funds tutor training and a variety of general office expenses.

This is but one snapshot of an organization that is like “family” to so many. Our success comes in the stories we hear day in and day out. In the milestones reached not only by our students but also our tutors. And yes, by the financial gains we make from friends in the community, grants and private donors. Generosity has no bounds!

*Every dollar donated to Oakland Literacy Council, leverages the equivalent of over \$1.7 million in volunteer labor!*



## Testing A, B, C

As winter ebbs and spring arrives, the Oakland Literacy Council transforms into “Test Central”. Our Student Coordinator, Kim McKnight captured the importance of our testing when she said, “Tutors and students should think of the review test as a tool to measure student progress over time. It is only one way to measure progress, but is valuable in finding out where students need to focus future learning efforts. The assessment also helps us all to stay accountable to the learning goals that we set.”

Some students, and even tutors, can become nervous, anxious and downright scared. Rest assured, the purpose of our tests is not to evoke those feelings--though we have all had them. We give these tests primarily to measure how well our students are learning and how well we are teaching. We hope that this focus on progress will help keep both students and tutors motivated.

Another important reason for our spring testing push is that the money we receive from our education grant depends on the progress made by our students. These necessary funds support our all important operational expenses including rent and salaries.

So, before the stress of test taking overwhelms you, please consider applying some



of these scientifically backed ways to de-stress:

1. Go for a ten minute walk--it clears your head and boosts endorphins, which in turn reduce stress hormones.
2. Breathe deeply--that extra boost of oxygen helps reduce tension.
3. Eat a snack/or one chocolate--nothing is more stressful to the brain than the feeling of hunger.
4. Turn off your phone--stress builds up if you feel you must respond to messages all the time.
5. Finally, quiet your mind--try to focus on the present only.

Don't forget, you've laid the groundwork, you are motivated, and you are willing to work hard.

## Grants 1, 2, 3

The WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) grant we get from the State of Michigan is a federal pass-through grant. It provides nearly 30% of OLC's revenue. Among the requirements is that we pre and post - test students after at least 40 hours of instruction. The federal government expects students to have significant educational gains each year. The testing season is almost upon us. Tutors, please encourage your student to test when they are contacted by our office. Getting all of our students tested in a timely manner is critical to our qualifying for grant monies.



# Stacey Peper Takes Tutoring to the Next Level



**Lilian Faranso and Stacey Peper**

*Without literacy,  
all other learning  
is a challenge, if  
not impossible.*

*Theodore  
Roosevelt*

Tutor Stacey Peper went “above and beyond” to help her student, Lilian Faranso. After they had worked together for three years, Stacey worried that her student just wasn’t progressing with reading and writing. She decided that Lilian needed a different kind of help.

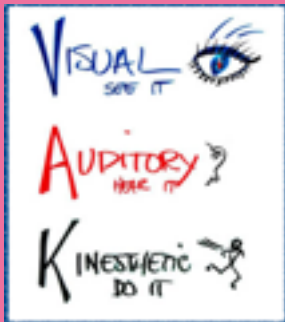
While searching the internet for methods to help improve Lilian’s grasp on letter sounds and word construction, Stacey found IMSE, the Institute for Multi-Sensory Education. In August 2015, Stacey took the Comprehensive Orton-Gillingham 30-hour training. “I was a little overwhelmed [with the

comprehensive training], to be honest. I’m not an educator in the traditional sense,” Stacey says.

After completing the training, Stacey went on to apply her new skills. Over the course of 45 lessons, Stacey worked with IMSE trainer Helen Brandon. Helen would review the lessons Stacey filmed with Lilian and offer advice and tips for improvement. IMSE’s approach helped Lilian tackle vowels, an element of English with which she had struggled. The multi-sensory aspect of their lessons also helped Lilian better retain the information she was taking in. “Listening, seeing letters on the cards and then writing on sand...all of that has been helpful for Lilian,” said Stacey.

Looking ahead, Lilian plans to continue her work with Stacey learning to read and write English fluently. “I want to keep going and learn all that I can,” Lilian says. “A lot of people say, ‘but we’re too old, we’re forty, fifty.’ I say everyone should try.”

*This article is based largely on an interview published in the IMSE (Institute for Multi-Sensory Education) Journal Magazine. Photo credit also goes to that journal.*



## What is Orton-Gillingham?

The Orton-Gillingham program was designed to help struggling readers by explicitly teaching the connections between letters and sounds. It involves breaking reading and spelling down into smaller skills involving letters and sounds, and then building on these skills over time. The program pioneered the “multisensory” approach to teaching reading. This means that instructors use sight, hearing, touch, and movement to help students connect language with letters and words. For example, students might learn the letter “s” by seeing it,

saying its name and sounding it out, all while writing it with their fingers in shaving cream. Connections are created through multiple pathways in the brain, and the more senses are involved, the better.

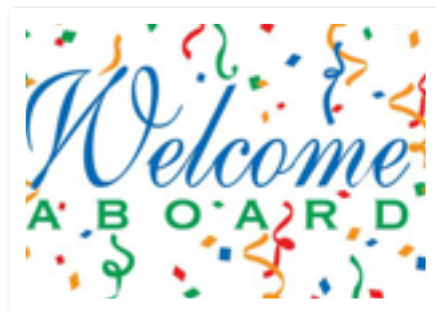
Originally designed for children, this program also is good for ESL or basic students who are having great difficulty in learning. Challenges might include being unable to retain what they have been taught, or confusing their letters and the sounds they make.

# Office Notes

from our

Executive Director

Lisa Machesky



Mid March was a busy time at the Oakland Literacy Council office—we were doing the office shuffle, adding new desks in and rearranging our space. We were making space for office volunteers (HINT HINT—we need more) and for our two new staff members who began work in February and have been without a permanent office space. I encourage you to stop by and say hello to our new digs and new staff.



I am so excited about welcoming our new part-time staff members. Nadia Wieczorkowski is our new tutor coordinator. Nadia will be recruiting and supporting our tutors. She comes to the OLC with a background in human resources. She has worked in several nonprofits and has experience working with the government workforce development agency. She is excited to meet all the wonderful tutors and provide them with additional training opportunities and a kind ear. Nadia, her husband, and new baby live in Royal Oak.

Our second part-time staff person is Herman Proby. Herman is the new adult basic student coordinator. Funding his position came from the fall fundraising campaign *Back to Basics*. The Oakland Literacy Council has made a commitment to increase the number of basic students that we serve. Herman will work to recruit more students and support them during their learning process. Herman has extensive experience working in low-income communities and has most recently worked as a substitute teacher in Pontiac Public Schools and as the adult services coordinator for the Baldwin Center. Herman and his wife are life-long Pontiac residents and active grandparents.



The Oakland Literacy Council is now poised to grow both our student and tutor populations. We are fortunate to have some wonderful staff additions to help make that growth happen.

*What is the recipe for successful achievement?  
To my mind there are just four essential ingredients:  
choose a career you love, give it the best there is in you,  
seize your opportunities, and be a member of a team.*

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

*Hodge Podge*  
A little something  
for everyone!



*International  
Potluck Dinner!*



←  
*A recent Graduating Class  
along with their tutors!*

*Our February  
Tutor Training  
Class*



From page 2

Answer-- Martin Van Buren!

Martin Van Buren was the eighth President of the United States (1837-1841). He was born in 1782 in Kinderhook, New York, an isolated village on the Hudson River where everyone spoke Dutch.

Marin Van Buren was the first US president who was born (1782) after the American colonies declared their independence from Great Britain.

Martin Van Buren was the first US president not of British or Irish ancestry.

