

OPENING THE WORLD THROUGH WORDS

# Literacy Matters



A Quarterly Newsletter

Winter 2013/2014

## *Oakland Literacy Council turns*



The celebration starts January 1, 2014 as we look back on all our successes and look forward to years of heartwarming and life changing stories.

Please join us in this year long

## CELEBRATION

We promise to keep you posted on all the events we have planned.

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Our goal is simple....Reach 200 "Friends" on our Facebook page before the clock strikes midnight on December 31. Do your part come visit us at Oakland Literacy Council. Talk us up!

## Strong Roots Yield Strong Growth

Over thirty years ago **Bob Gaylor** went to the American Library Convention and learned that there were adults in this country who couldn't read – even in Oakland County. "It was shocking!" Bob said. He came back to Oakland University where he was a professor in the library, and began to talk about this discovery. Barbara Bush, the second lady at the time, was also talking about the problem. It became her mission nationwide and Bob's mission in Oakland County to try to fix this problem.



Finally representatives from Oakland University, Oakland Schools Intermediate School District, the Oakland County Library Board and Oakland Community College gathered to officially start the Oakland Literacy Council in 1984.

Then, as they say, "It takes a Village..." to start a literacy program! Cathryn Weiss Hallisy was hired as the executive director and at her side was volunteer Rosemary Dickerson. The two were a powerhouse who gathered and trained tutors, began to assemble donors who would help support the effort, purchased materials, and then began teaching adults to read.

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## A few words...

Dear Literacy Friends-



No doubt it is "tis the season" time, but one doesn't have to rely on the calendar to know that this is the season of thanks and reflections. The first nip in the air, the familiar songs on the radio and of course the decorations all put us in that frame of mind.

What am I grateful for as we rush towards 2014? Well when it comes to our "literacy family" I'm grateful for, and give thanks to, our tremendous staff and the extraordinary efforts they made this year to streamline all of our information, and the creative opportunities they provided to our tutors and students. I'm grateful for our Literacy Board who bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise. I'm thankful our office volunteers continue to come back always with a smile and a "can do attitude". I'm forever grateful to the hundreds of volunteer tutors who take time each week to make a difference and to their students-- I'm thankful for your continued drive and determination. And finally, thanks and applause to all the businesses, foundations, and donors who keep us going by supporting our many efforts.

As for reflections--open the flood gates! You'll hear this bandied throughout 2014; we are celebrating 30 YEARS. What does that mean? It means well over 12,000 students are now readers and guess what... they are passing that knowledge on to the next generation. What was a mere pipe dream has transformed a community. My heartfelt thanks to all of you for taking this journey.

My sincere wish for a happy, healthy and joyous 2014. And, if you will indulge me, just a few "life's little instructions".

\*Compliment three people every day. \*Sing in the Shower. \*Never waste an opportunity to tell someone you love them. \*Think big thoughts but relish small pleasures. \*Learn CPR. \*Buy whatever kids are selling on card tables in their front yards. \*Have a firm handshake. \*Wave at kids on school buses. And my favorite, \* Become someone's hero.

Judy Lindstrom @Judy

## Change is Certain

The year was 1984, an auspicious team of Literacy Advocates formed the Oakland Literacy Council (see related article). Jump some 12 years later to 1996, and Oakland Literacy Council creates our first website. At the time, it was the 'new kid on the block', as other literacy organizations had yet to see the power and help a website could add to their organization. But time, as always, marched forward. And our once shiny proud website started to look dated, lacked oomph and was well, let's face it, yawn inducing. Long aware that it needed updates-- but realizing our financial responsibilities were better served elsewhere, the website lingered in website limbo.

Now jump to current day....our organization is thriving like never before. Individuals, foundations and businesses have discovered the importance of literacy and are supporting us with an abundance of volunteers and financial support. It was finally time we could approach the redesign of our website. Enter some amazing donors, Ellie and Bernard Robertson and Rita Lindstrom followed by the design team from *Group ex* and presto, we were on our way. After seven months of research, study, design and information gathering our new website will launch **January 1, 2014**. What a special gift to give our organization as we kick off our 30th year.

We hope you will find our new site informative and heartwarming. It will provide tutors with ample information regarding tutoring tips, materials and "how to" knowledge. For our students, all we can say is WOW. We are the first literacy organization (that we could find) to offer an interactive program to engage students regardless of reading levels. You'll have to wait and discover it on your own. Better yet, when you meet your student after the first of the year introduce him or her to our website. After January 1, the new website will be reached at [www.oaklandliteracy.com](http://www.oaklandliteracy.com).

It will be a constant work in progress, so please visit it often!

## On Stage with Off the Page!

The Oakland Literacy Council was excited to offer tutors and students a unique activity that combined reading and the arts this past Fall.

Our *Off the Page Reading Club* presented an American classic: *Little Women* ~ the book and the musical.

For a special package price, tutor and student pairs received a beginning level *Little Women* book, (which included a CD-ROM and support materials) and two reserved tickets for *Little Women- The Musical* at Avon Players Community Theater in Rochester Hills.

More than 20 tutors and students took advantage of this incredible offer. They read and studied the book during their tutoring sessions, and then gathered to watch the story unfold before their eyes.

A wonderful time was had by all! Here are some of their comments:

- “(My student) loves the book, and I think seeing the words come to life was helpful to her.”
- “It was awesome! We enjoyed ourselves the whole time and we were very impressed, didn’t expect such a great performance.”
- “Even as ESL students we could understand the majority, because it was spoken so clearly.”
- “...the event was a wonderful experience.”
- “I thought it was a wonderful idea to have the ‘Little Women’ musical as part of the package. Thanks for a lovely afternoon...we both enjoyed the play.”
- “All in all, it was an enjoyable Sunday afternoon- we viewed a great performance while making connections with one another!”
- “My student enjoyed the book very much and especially liked the CD, which enabled her to hear the words as she read them.”





## Oakland Literacy Council

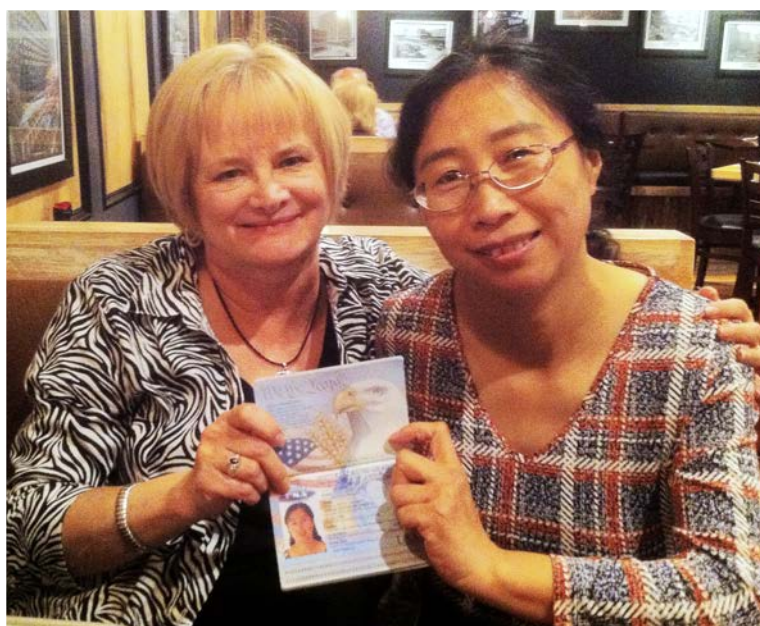
### Student Goal Achievements

July 2013 –  
October 2013

Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome.

Booker T. Washington

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| July 2013      | MA passed the US citizenship test.  |
| July 2013      | JL obtained a library card.   |
| August 2013    | NK wrote a letter to her son's preschool about tuition payments.                    |
| August 2013    | SH ordered breakfast at a restaurant.   |
| August 2013    | <b>NA GRADUATED FROM OLC!</b>   |
| September 2013 | IM read a Harry Potter book.  |
| September 2013 | WC passed the US citizenship test.  |
| September 2013 | MA found full time employment.  |
| September 2013 | JQ got a job.   |
| September 2013 | OD read Miss Spider's Tea Party to her granddaughter.                               |
| October 2013   | AW passed the US citizenship test.  |
| October 2013   | AD spoke to a group of 40 people at Toastmasters Public Speaking Club.              |
| October 2013   | EK prepared for and met with her daughter's teacher at a parent-teacher conference. |
| October 2013   | LF ordered from a restaurant menu by herself.                                       |
| October 2013   | MA wrote letter to her tutor, addressed the envelope and secured postage.           |
| October 2013   | YH enrolled at OCC for a regular college course.                                    |



Kathy Calhoun and Anna Wang celebrating Anna's U.S. citizenship--an enormous achievement!

## ***Reach for the Stars – A Night to Celebrate!***

Tutors, students, volunteers and friends of the Oakland Literacy Council are invited to join us for our annual thank you reception and recognition event, *Reach for the Stars!* This heart-warming evening provides an opportunity for our OLC family to celebrate the past year's accomplishments and recognize those individuals who have gone over and above.

The event will take place on Wednesday, January 29, 2014 at the First United Methodist Church in Birmingham. Enjoy light refreshments from 6:00 to 6:30 p.m. and the recognition program from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Awards will spotlight a tutor, a Basic student, an ESL student, and a volunteer of the year. The microphone will then be opened to anyone who wishes to share a personal story of success, triumph or thanks.

Invitations will be coming soon and reservations will be required. Meanwhile, for more details call the OLC office at 248.253.1617.



## **Reach for the Stars**

### Recognition Event

#### **Tutor Training**

January 21 and 23  
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Rochester Public Library

#### **Tutor Training**

February 3 and 5  
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Orchard United Methodist Church,  
in Farmington Hills

#### **Reach for the Stars, Recognition Event**

January 29, 2014  
United Methodist Church, Birmingham  
(See related article on this page.)

**Upcoming  
Events**

Please note that **registration is required** for all events. Call the OLC office at 248.253.1617

## Country Spotlight: Taiwan

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Country:          | Taiwan   |
| Location:         | 100 miles east of mainland China   |
| Capital:          | Taipei   |
| Population:       | 22.9 million   |
| Size:             | 13,892 square miles (about the size of Maryland)   |
| Primary Language: | Mandarin Chinese   |
| Climate:          | Warm, humid summers and cold, rainy winters in the north. Southern Taiwan is warmer. Typhoons are possible from June to October. The island is subject to numerous small earthquakes every year and larger quakes on a less frequent basis.  |
| Greetings:        | Asking others if they have eaten is a common Chinese greeting that stems from the tradition to never let anyone go hungry; it was always polite to ask if others had eaten and offer them a meal. Today it is used simply as a "How are you?"  |
| Eating:           | Breakfast is usually light. For lunch, working people eat at cafeterias or restaurants. Dinner, the main meal, includes soup, rice, and meat and/or vegetable dishes. Each person has a personal bowl of rice. Leaving rice in the bowl is impolite. Children are taught to finish all of their food out of respect for farmers and parents. |
| Holidays:         | Official holidays include the ROC's Founding Day (January 1), Memorial Day (February 28), Tomb Sweeping Day (April 5) and Double Ten National Day (October 10). The New Year (in spring) is celebrated with fireworks, feasts, worship at temples, and ancestor veneration (respect).  |



- Student Winnie Chang adds that the other important holidays determined by the lunar calendar and celebrated by eating a special food are The Lantern Festival (sticky rice balls), The Dragon Boat Festival (bamboo dumplings) and the Mid-Autumn Festival (moon cakes). Winnie treated the ESL Conversation Group a sampling of sticky rice cooked in bamboo leaves.
- Student Christine Lee misses the weather in Taiwan where there is no snow and it is not cold. There are just three seasons: Spring, Summer and Fall. She said "Michigan is too cold for me."
- Student Mandy Hung explains that Taiwan is often confused either as part of China or as Thailand. Taiwan is a totally independent country. Taiwan has the same language as China but not the same as Thailand.

"Taiwan." *CultureGrams 2009 World Edition*. Provo, Utah: ProQuest. (2009)

***Our Cookbook, "Sharing our Best", contains many recipes from Taiwan including Diced Chicken with Hot and Spicy Sauce and Stir-Fried Mushrooms with Garlic and Basil Makes a terrific hostess gift or stocking stuffer. Call our office for details on how to purchase a copy.***

*"Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember,  
involve me and I learn."*

*Benjamin Franklin*

## 30 Things to Think About

As we ready ourselves for our 30th anniversary and a year full of accolades we thought we'd kick it off with something we call our "30 List". Each Literacy Matters for 2014 will include a list of 30 highlights. This first list coincides with our newest office decoration better known as the wall of Proverbidioms. Proverbidioms is an oil painting by American artist T. E. Breitenbach depicting over 300 common idioms, catchphrases and cliches. So without further ado we present "The 30 List of our favorite Idioms"

- All in the same boat ● As easy as pie ● Birds of a feather flock together ● The cat's meow ●
- Clear as a bell ● Dog-eat-dog ● Every cloud has a silver lining ● Fit as a fiddle ●
- Footloose and fancy free ● Go fly a kite ● Green with envy ● Head over heels ●
- Hook, line and sinker ● Horse of a different color ● If looks could kill ● If the shoe fits ●
- Jump on the bandwagon ● Knee-high to a grasshopper ● Lay an egg ● No walk in the park ●
- On cloud nine ● Paint the town red ● Piece of cake ● Raining cats and dogs ●
- Read between the lines ● Shaking like a leaf ● Till the cows come home ●
- Up the creek without a paddle ● Walking on eggshells ●
- You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink! ●

**Let's Talk!** ESL Conversation Groups are a new favorite with our students and tutors. Each week students of all levels join in lively discussions on topics ranging from shopping to gestures, grocery shopping to Fall fun and activities. Group leaders invite students to practice their speaking and listening skills while building vocabulary and friendships.

Many students come on their own, while others attend with their tutors. Hearing different voices and getting a chance to use the language in a safe and comfortable environment is an excellent way to help students reach their goals of communicating and understanding the world around them. **Please join us!**

### My How We've Grown Continued from page one

Cathryn served in her position for 23 years before retiring in 2007, grooming many volunteers to be tutors, office volunteers, and to take leadership roles. Judy Bryce became president of the Friends group and later Judy Lindstrom became president of the combined Board and Friends. Today Julie Hoensheid and Shari Barrick manage all office and administrative duties and Bob Bechler tests incoming students for placement. Many others have pitched in over the years, but Bob G., Cathryn, Judy B. and Judy L. still remain in various volunteer positions.

Bob Gaylor has served on the board for all of the 30 years of our existence. And he's still going

strong, having taken hold of a major fundraising project with Mary Rosenbusch. This event, **Motor City Food Wine & Food Festival** will take place over a period of two weeks in May 2014. Of course the first goal is to raise money for adult literacy in the tri-county area. But, explaining the title for the event, Bob said they also want to introduce participants to places that are unique in the area. Places like the Packard Proving Grounds, the Players Club, and a cooking extravaganza at Simply Good in Birmingham are on the list. He and Mary have undertaken a monumental job to pull it all together. Volunteers helping to plan these events include: Nina Macri, Russell Moore, Debbie Castelli, Judy Bryce and Cathryn Hallisy.





## Tutor Tips

### New Language, New Country

Tutor Vesta DeRiso purchased a sticker book map of the United States and a book on fun facts about the states. Vesta says, “We started with Michigan and do one new state every session.” Her student, Arjana Laci, is learning about capitals, trees, flowers, state birds, insects, cities, rivers, etc.

### Who are you?

Thanks to a grant from the North Woodward Foundation, the literacy council has purchased some of the books from the **Who Was** series. The **Who Was?** and **What Was?** series, published by Penguin, makes history fun and interesting. According to the publisher, “Each book offers a detailed account of an important historical event or famous figure’s life.” Some of the books that we have purchased include, *Queen Elizabeth*, *Steve Jobs*, *Amelia Earhart*, *John F. Kennedy*, *Daniel Boone* and *Harry Houdini*.

One of our tutors said that her student was so inspired by the series that she decided to write a **Who Was** story about herself. Her tutor thought that if some other students did a similar thing that we could have a collection of **Who Was** stories of our students. If your student writes such a story, give a copy to Shari or Julie in the office and we’ll start the collection. Many of our students have very interesting stories to tell!

### Authentic Listening Practice

Many of our ESL students need practice hearing and interpreting the English language. A great way to give them that experience (while also giving them the opportunity to hear a variety of people speaking) is by using National Public Radio’s **This I Believe** series.

This series features the unique voices of individuals from all walks of life who share their personal philosophies and core values that guide their daily lives. Using these stories provides *authentic* listening practice for students. Here is one way tutors can incorporate this practical experience into their lessons:

- Go to <http://www.npr.org/series/4538138/this-i-believe>
- Choose a story.
- Print it. (Or read it directly from the website.)
- Read it with your student.
- Discuss vocabulary and content to ensure comprehension.
- Listen to the story online as you follow along on the printed version.



# GOOD SPORTS

By Shari Barrick

Hat trick. Double Hit. Three Point Shot. Field Goal. Safety. What do these phrases have in common you wonder. They are all sports terms that refer to plays above the norm resulting in scoring for the team.

At the Oakland Literacy Council we also have “players” hitting above the norm. These are tutors who have two or three assigned students. We are fortunate to have over a dozen tutors with multiple students. These tutors seem to have found their niche in tutoring. We routinely hear from them that they like the differences in working with students from different countries, ages and backgrounds. A few tutors like the challenge of a Basic and an ESL student simultaneously.

One such tutor is **Mariano Cadiz** who usually has two and sometimes three students at a time. Mariano has had students from seven different countries and three continents. When asking for a new student, we try to find one from a new area for him. Mariano has been around the world without the cost of air fare!

Mariano credits his passion for tutoring ESL students to being able to empathize with those new to American culture. He was a former exchange student. He “loves this country and the opportunity it gave him and his family.” In tutoring, he finds the other cultures and customs very interesting and fascinating. He strives to be the first good American Ambassador the new students meet.

Tutor **Carol Brichford** has been working with two students for quite a while. In the beginning she questioned whether she would be able to tutor but has found great joy in the students she has tutored. She has experienced the rewards of seeing a Basic student go from not being able to read to one that now devours books. Then on the other hand, Carol tutored a Korean student and learned so much about their culture. She feels that “you should never stop learning” and tutoring different students has given her opportunity to do so.



Scheduling does not present a problem for these tutors either. Some prefer to have their different sessions back to back while others spread their individual sessions over the course of the week.

So next time, you are watching a sports event and the home team scores know there are players at Oakland Literacy Council not named Miguel Cabrera, Calvin Johnson or Henrik Zetterburg making extra points.