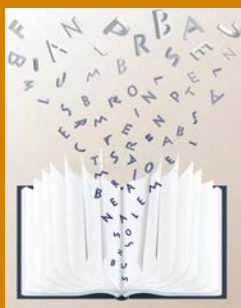


Literacy Matters

OPENING
THE
WORLD
THROUGH
WORDS!

FALL 2017



Graduates and Tutors celebrating the “fruits of their labor!”

Smiling faces and tears of joy were all on display at the Oakland Literacy Council’s most recent graduation ceremony held at the OLC office. Of the 37 graduates, 18 attended the festivities, which included a Venezuelan luncheon catered by José Arenas a current Oakland Literacy student, and the husband of one of our graduates.

With their proud families and tutors in attendance, the literacy grads gratefully accepted their certificates from the Council’s Board President, Judy Lindstrom.

Coming Soon.....Workforce Writing Workshops

Workforce writing workshops are coming soon! OLC will be holding workshops for students who test at the middle school level or higher and are looking to polish their workforce writing skills. The workshops target students already in the workforce, as well as those seeking employment. A task force of dedicated OLC supporters is working hard to develop the curriculum. These

include tutor trainer **A’Kena LongBenton** and longtime supporter **Ellie Robertson**. Also on the task force is tutor **Bonnie Manza**, a former instructor at OCC and the wife of OLC board member Harry Manza. Wrapping up the roster is board member **John Almstadt**, who is contributing his skills and valuable experience as a former Director at Oakland County Michigan Works. We hope to

begin student sessions in the fall and later offer tutor training workshops and an online e-course. The workshops likely also will be open to non-students, with referrals coming from Michigan Works! and other local agencies.



Oakland Literacy Council’s Mission Statement:

Oakland Literacy Council enables our adult students to achieve their individual literacy goals by building practical English language reading, conversation, and comprehension skills through a partnership with trained volunteer tutors.

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53 New Tutors and Counting

Since January 2017, 53 OLC tutors have been trained and most have been matched with a student. These wonderful individuals bring a wealth of ideas, energy and enthusiasm.

We applaud these "Literacy Luminaries" and, of course, extend that applause to all of our amazing long term tutors.

Anyone who thought volunteering was simply a way to occupy idle time never heard of the Oakland Literacy Council tutor corps!

Michael Larson, Miriam Leventhal, Patty Mallett, Christine Julian, Bonnie Khoury, Marcus LaPratt, Dorothy Martin, Janet McPartlin, Morgan McPartlin, Lynn Miller, J. Michael Mitchell, Sarah Montpas, Jaset Murray, Megan Mulvaney, Dianne Naggar, Nancy Penman, Mary Prieto, Nancy Rebar, Ann Rock, Andy Ross, Evamaria Ryan, Maya Sammane, Laurie Santavicca, Elaine Semanik, Karen Sharp, Mark Steckloff, Karen Stetson, Susan Watch, Cheryl Weyhing, Stacy Woodbury and Andy Ye

Three Cheers to: Renee Badder, Theresa Bechard, Mary Began, Gail Beron, Racquel Borey Kimberly Bradley, Sue Camilleri, Jeff Campbell, Paula Cutcher-Jackson, William Dearie, Susan Dill, Katherine Dowling, Michele Dragisity, Joe Evan, Beth Goldman, Ken Hartford, Talia Helfrick, Hannah Hilbert, Terry Holcomb, Ashton Hopkins, Rande Horn, Emily Hudak,

"To me, the greatest pleasure of writing is not what it's about, but the inner music that words make,"

Truman Capote

Back in the Fold!

After a two year hiatus, the OLC has rejoined Reading Works and its efforts to improve adult literacy in the Metro Detroit area.



In August, Hilarie Chambers was named the new director of Reading Works. Hilarie joined our September OLC Board of Directors meeting and shared her vision for Reading Works and how OLC, as an Impact Partner, will best serve the Reading Works community. We look forward to a fruitful partnership.

Did you know???

The longest sentence ever printed is 823 words. It can be found in *Les Miserables*, by Victor Hugo.

The first book ever printed using a typewriter was *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain.

Rising
Stars!

Winning combinations: Students and Tutors!

Student **José Arenas** used his English skills and perseverance to take a big step toward realizing his dream of someday owning his own restaurant. He wanted to host a food booth at the Buy Michigan Now festival in Northville. His employer, Maria's Italian

Bakery, provided him with the resources, provided that he did all the work himself. With the support of his tutor, **George Zak**, José learned about food licensing regulations, health codes, insurance, and more. He had to estimate how much food to prepare in advance and learn where to purchase the ingredients. Finally, José put his English conversation skills to the test when he greeted his customers and explained his products. In addition to this achievement, José also catered the delicious lunch at the OLC graduation ceremony in July.



Tutor **Jean Pursell** and her student, **Miki Kupel**, took on a fun joint project. Instead of their usual tutoring sessions this summer, they grew vegetables together. Miki and Jean worked together on everything from planning the garden and reading about seed varieties to harvesting spaghetti squash, tomatoes, and much more. It was a fun learning project for both of them and gave them lots to talk about.



Learning can work both ways! Tutor **Ann Manning** has been helping her student, **Yesenia Licea**, work on her English skills for nearly a year. This relationship has turned into a two-way language learning experience because every other week they meet (in addition to their regular tutoring session) so Yesenia can help Ann improve her Spanish.



Tutor **Sue Abbey** introduced her student, **Meg Negumi**, to community service by taking her to homeless shelters. Meg undertook her own volunteering initiative after Sue and OLC Director Lisa Machesky connected her with Pontiac schools. Ten 8th grade students will be going to Japan this fall, and Meg has been helping them to improve their Japanese conversation skills.



Recent graduate **Irina Vertyagina** also has been giving back to the community. She recently joined tutor **Ann Manning** in volunteering for several hours at Humble Design in Pontiac, an organization that furnishes homes for families moving into their first house or apartment after years of being homeless. Irina worked to assemble kits of bathroom items for these homes.



And Finally...



Twenty-four tutors attended the Intermediate ESL Workshop on Saturday, September 23rd, at the OLC office. While enjoying a light breakfast, tutors shared teaching strategies and listened to veteran ESL tutors **Sue Abbey** and **Irene Sinclair** present ideas for lesson planning and conversation activities. This workshop included detailed lesson plans for Intermediate ESL students.

Sue Abbey started a pilot ESL conversation group for business professionals, at Troy First United Methodist Church. Eleven students are a part of this program. Referrals for the program will come from the Michigan Office of New Americans.

Kudos to OLC Board Member **Mary Rosenbusch** and her friend **Pat Peretto** of Dearborn for creating a one-of-a-kind doll house that helped raise over \$2,200! The winning ticket was ticket number one!



Leon & Lulu once again has selected Oakland Literacy Council as the beneficiary of their Books and Authors event. Please plan to visit their Clawson store on October 22 to browse their whimsical offerings and get a head start on your holiday shopping. Ten percent of all sale proceeds that day will be donated to us by this generous retailer.



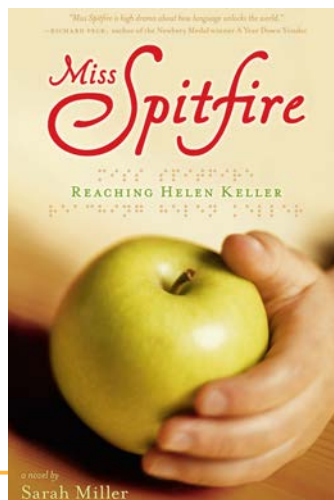
Bookstock

preparations already are under way! This event, Michigan's biggest used book and media sale, will take place on April 22-29, 2018. Funds raised through this sale support many literacy organizations, including Oakland Literacy Council. Applause, Applause to OLC Board Member **Candy Geeter** for once again leading the charge.

Your help is needed to sort the nearly 200,000 books donated throughout the year. Sorting takes place almost every Wednesday, from 10:00 to 2:00, at the Jewish Community Center. For more details, visit www.bookstockmi.org/events.

A big THANK YOU to **Ann Manning** for her writing and editing skills. She continues to keep us informed with this newsletter. We are reminded of the following: *"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart."* – Elizabeth Andrew

Mark your calendars for **Ex Libris**, a fabulous evening that serves as a key fundraiser for Oakland Literacy Council. The November 9 event, which includes a delicious dinner at the Village Club in Bloomfield Hills, features a talk by Sarah Miller, the author of many historical fiction novels for children. Her book, Miss Spitfire: Reaching Helen Keller, was named an ALA Best Book for Young Adults and nominated for numerous state awards. Please plan to join us for this magical evening.



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