

# LITERACY MATTERS

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Literacy Matters is a recurring publication of Literacy Nassau, Inc.



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## SHAPING OUR FUTURE

(submitted by Karen Micciche)

At the Tutor Conference, I presented my plans for Literacy Nassau's future. As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, one thing that has been troubling me is the fact that Literacy Nassau is still not a household name. I am fortunate to be working with a focus group of tutors who have shared their ideas and feedback with me, and they all agree: it's frustrating to have to explain "what Literacy Nassau is" to friends and family.

I'm a voracious reader, and at Kim's suggestion, I read the book The Promise of a Pencil by Adam Braun. (I highly recommend it!) In the book, Braun explains the tools he used to launch a hugely successful non-profit organization. One of the key elements was his ability to embrace and utilize social media to raise both money and awareness for his cause. Personally, I hate social media. I am one of the only people under 40 without a Facebook account, and I cringe at the term "hashtag." It's just not my thing. But being a leader is about knowing what you don't know, and since I don't know about social media, it's not fair to condemn it when there's plenty of research that suggests that brand marketing is tremendously leveraged by social media platforms. I (begrudgingly) realize that if I want to run an organization with a household name, I better get on the Instagram train. Thankfully, among my focus group of tutors is Jessica Merkel, and I am excited to welcome her to our team as our new PR/Social Media Coordinator. Below are a few words of introduction from Jessica:

"Upon obtaining my graduate degree in speech language pathology, I was eager to find a way to use my newly developed skills in the 'real world.' Noticing my enthusiasm for anything on the topic of language, literacy, or linguistics, a family member recommended Literacy Nassau. I became an ELL tutor in 2014, eager to connect what I studied in school with my requirements as a volunteer, but also excited to embrace a new learning opportunity by teaching English to ELL students. As a speech language pathologist working with children with disabilities, I help my students learn how to communicate effectively. I never realized that this skill could be transferable into the non-profit world by way of social media - but Karen expressed a need to effectively communicate the mission and vision of Literacy Nassau on a variety of new platforms, and I am excited to help her and the LN team build our brand in this landmark 50th year."

You will hear from Jessica soon regarding your work with our students! Feel free to e-mail her success stories, pictures, or just a note of welcome at [JMerkel@literacynassau.org](mailto:JMerkel@literacynassau.org).

## THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

Maybe it's just the weather, but it's hard for me to believe that the holiday season is already here. Many of us spend a lot of time during this season obsessing about gifts. I even have friends who start their holiday shopping before Halloween! Admittedly, I obsess too, mostly for my kids - but in our house, we firmly believe in quality over quantity, and for the past few years we've been limiting the gifts to no more than 5 per child. (Even that feels like a lot sometimes.) If you can only give a small amount, suddenly each gift becomes more important and more valuable. I also prefer handmade gifts for my kids. It takes time and love and thought for me to knit a baby doll or paint a wooden clock (yes, these are real gifts in my house), but these gifts will be cherished for years to come instead of strewn aside in a mountain of plastic toys.

The gift of time is just as meaningful. You may think it is small, but the time you spend planning lessons for your student or preparing for your NCBC meeting is among the greatest gifts you've ever given anyone. Keep that in mind when you're battling the lines on Black Friday: the very best gifts cannot be bought at Wal-Mart.



We try to simplify the holiday season as much as possible. Spending time together as a family is a better gift than whatever toy is hot on the market!

*Karen*

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW INTERNS

*(submitted by Kim Nau)*

We would like to welcome and introduce to you our interns. They were hand-picked from our Advanced ESL classes and are pictured in order below: Akriti from India, Fabiola from Peru, Joanne from China and Myrlenia from Haiti. These new interns are a representative of the kaleidoscope of cultures that exist within Literacy Nassau's English language classes. Thanks to the generosity of Mr. Mukund Padmanabhan of the Guru Krupa Foundation, Literacy Nassau's paid internship offers students the opportunity to immerse themselves into the American work culture and improve their literacy skills in a supportive office environment. Welcome to you all!



From L-R, meet Akriti, Fabiola, Joanne, and Myrlenia.

## TUTOR CONFERENCE RECAP

*(submitted by Umama Pasha)*

On Saturday, October 14th, Literacy Nassau's third annual Tutor Conference took place at UUCSR. In addition to celebrating Janet Kornreich's birthday, highlights included an insightful keynote speech from P.K. Sanieski regarding the Orton Gillingham approach, an enlightening dyslexia simulation, and many other fabulous workshops presented by Literacy Nassau staff, volunteers, and community partners.

We are grateful to TD Bank, Stella Justice Center, NYS Department of Labor, USCIS, and Paul Nelson for the valuable resources they took the time to deliver at the conference. The day was full of information and networking opportunities!

Below are some pictures of some of the day's highlights.



## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: GABRIELE OLIVEIRA

*(submitted by Sara Izquierdo)*

Gabby is the type of student every teacher wants in their class. She is engaged and interested, asks lots of pertinent questions, and works hard at learning new skills. She comes to class with a positive attitude and a real passion for learning English.

Gabby started learning English as a schoolgirl in Brazil. Although she had been practicing for many years, when she was 16 she decided she wanted to take her English to the next level, so she started taking additional classes outside of school. When she learned about the opportunity to come to the United States as an Au Pair after college, she knew this was her chance to immerse herself in the language.

In order to be accepted as an Au Pair, applicants must pass an English test. Although she did so, when Gabby first arrived in the United States, she could not understand most of what was being said to her. She struggled with the speed and accents of American English. She recalled that in her first few weeks in her new job, her host mother asked her to put groceries away in the refrigerator. Gabby completed the tasks confidently, but when her host mom went to retrieve the groceries they were nowhere to be found. Gabby had misunderstood and put the food in the freezer! She looked on in dismay as her host mom threw out the ruined groceries. Moments like that serve as reminders of how far she has come since that time.

Au Pairs working the United States are required to attend English classes as part of their contract. Gabby found out about Literacy Nassau at a local library, and first attended Small Group Instruction for Intermediate Students at the Hicksville Library in the fall of 2016, just months after arriving in New York. Since then she has progressed into our advanced ESL class at the Jericho Library. Gabby has learned so much from her English classes at Literacy Nassau and has enjoyed learning from all of her teachers and classmates.

Gabby will return to Brazil in 2018. She will take with her knowledge, great friendships and experiences she has gained from English classes at Literacy Nassau. Gabby hopes to pursue a career in Marketing and knows that the time and energy she's invested in learning English will be a great asset to her future.

## COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

Hosted by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Nassau County, the following workshop is recommended for learners with an English level of 3 and up. Take a break from the library and come on down with your student(s). This session is offered free of charge and will provide interesting material to enhance your nutrition and overall well-being. This is a great way to practice English outside of your traditional 2-hour session while learning something new!

### **Blubber Burger for English Language Learners**

Wednesday, December 6th at 12pm at our office in Freeport  
To sign up contact, Cindy Cabrera at  
ccabrera@literacynassau.org or 516-867-3580, ext. 15

## TUTOR SPOTLIGHT: CHARLOTTE GABRIELLE

(submitted by Rebecca Figueras)

Charlotte has been a one-to-one tutor with Literacy Nassau since December 2014. She has passionately and diligently worked with all of her students in building their confidence while fostering their English speaking abilities. Charlotte finds meaningful ways to connect with each student. She is currently working with two students in a tiny group.

### **How did you get involved with Literacy Nassau?**

My husband Richard was a tutor with Literacy Nassau. He worked with the same student for nearly two years and I saw all the passion and connections he made with his student. I saw that there are many adults who are eager to learn English and gain more opportunities to create a better life. It inspired me and sparked my desire to start tutoring myself. Actually, my first student was the daughter of Richard's student.

### **What motivates you to keep tutoring with us?**

My husband and I are both very dedicated to our students and try to bring to the table the same amount of effort that they bring. My students are a wonderful source of inspiration. They are incredible and hard-working. Both Anabel and Elizabeth were working professionals in the Dominican Republic, and although they are both working and living full lives here, they make sure to come to class and are ready and active participants. Their desire to learn English is so strong and they bring great energy to each session. This causes classes to be a fun time filled with many learning experiences. It is interesting because this is the first time I have had two students at the same time, and it is nice to see how they help each other and balance one another.

### **What are some other passions and hobbies you have outside of tutoring?**

I enjoy being outside. Biking and hiking are some of my favorite activities. I also have a small sail boat and like to go out on the water. I am an artist though and as the weather gets a little cooler, I work on my art. I really enjoy doing graphic designs in art.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Warm wishes to the following tutors, born in December:

Anita Achkhanian – Nickie Bernhardt – Linda Bernstein – Laura Blanc de Silva – Marcy Carbonell-Scudero – Marie Gruen Jackie Cooper Fran Dowling – Arline Ellison – Lauri Sacco – Helene Fleisig Lawrence Fong – Patricia Goldberg – Julie Goldstein – Kathleen Gynes – Georgene Harrison – Georgine Hartenfels – Maryann Harvey – Donna Heit-Katz – Nancy Keegan – Austin Khorasanchi – Paul Konigstein – Lynda Lax – Leslie Leber – Joyce Levine – Janice Mazzari – Susan Molinelli – Salvatore Morici Kathie Novack – Robert Palleschi – Saumil Patel – Amanda Persico – Sue Rachell – Melissa Ross – Valquiria Soares-Cruz – Barbara Spun



## RESOURCE CORNER: NEWSLA.COM

(submitted by Kate Quijano)

One of my favorite resources is [www.newsela.com](http://www.newsela.com). I use it with both my child and adult learners. Students can search for articles on a variety of topics. It offers both current events articles as well as informational pieces that are not time sensitive.

My favorite feature of this site is that after you choose your article, you can adjust the reading level to match the needs of your reader! Grade levels 2 through 12+ are available (levels are listed on the top-right of the article with a lexile number- the higher the number, the more challenging it is). When changing between levels, the content and the pictures of the article remain exactly the same, but the vocabulary and sentence structure changes to become easier or harder.

Students can begin reading and adjust based on how challenged they feel. They can even start at an easy level, get the basic idea, then reread at a more challenging level for practice. It is a great site to use with a small group of students who are at different reading levels. They can each read the article at a level appropriate for them, and then engage in a group discussion because they all were able to gain the same information! There are also multiple choice questions available to work on reading comprehension.

The basic version is free - however, you do need to create an account and login each time you use it. Just click "Join" and be sure to choose "I'm a Learner" when creating your free account. If you choose "I'm an educator" it will send you to costly accounts meant for school districts with large enrollments. I hope you enjoy using this resource as much as I do!



**We all tend to feel like one person cannot make a difference.**

**At Literacy Nassau, the culmination of all the people who make contributions to our organization allows us to continue to grow and serve the community.**

**Enclosed is a list of 50 gift ideas in honor of our 50th Anniversary.**

**Please make a difference this season by making a donation, big or small. You may mail it or place your donation in our "holiday corner" at our office in Freeport. Happy Holidays and a Healthy 2018!**



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## GET YOUR NEW LITERACY NASSAU GEAR!

*(submitted by Kim Nau)*

Just in time for the holiday giving season, we are pleased to announce that we now have an online store available for volunteers and students to purchase Literacy Nassau merchandise. The items were recently debuted at our 3rd Annual Tutor Conference with great response.

As a Literacy Nassau staff member, I have a deep loyalty to the organization and I have been wearing my gear proudly since I purchased it. I hope that you too have built strong a connection with us and will consider purchasing a gift for yourself for the holidays. You truly deserve it! Help us reinforce Literacy Nassau's brand and build awareness in the community as you become easily recognizable as a Literacy Nassau volunteer while you are out tutoring your student.

We have a limited supply of polo shirts, fleeces and canvas tote bags manufactured for us by Lands' End as well as t-shirts, car magnets and lapel pins.

Please make your purchase soon on our website at [www.literacynassau.org/shop](http://www.literacynassau.org/shop).

**Available only while supplies last!**

		
Polo Shirts \$25	Fleece \$32	T-Shirt \$15
		
Pin \$5	Car/Fridge Magnet \$5	Tote Bag \$28