

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



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BOOKMARK\$ FOR CHARITY GROUP RAISES AWARENESS FOR LN

(submitted by Karen Micciche)

It wasn't all business as usual at Birch Elementary School in Merrick this winter. In fact, for a small group of sixth grade girls, the winter offered a prime chance to encourage reading while raising money for an important cause.

Bookmark\$ For Charity started with a group of four friends: Ava Nau (Kim's daughter) and classmates Paula, Claire, and Kate. The idea was to create bookmarks on an order-by-order basis, within a range of themes.

The group started selling bookmarks during *PARP* (Pick a Reading Partner, an annual event at the school). During this event, each child chooses a partner - either a sibling, friend, or family member - and either read to one another or play a game that involves reading. The theme for *PARP* was "emoji," so accordingly, Bookmark\$ For Charity included the theme as one of the customization choices. Other choices included Birch Spirit, animals, sports, quote, surprise, or blank.

The group worked after school, on

weekends, and during art class to create over 100 bookmarks. They started the group in December and put out flyers that the school circulated advertising custom made bookmarks for \$1 each.

Said Ava Nau, Founder, "The idea came to me in art class when I made a bookmark

and my friend liked it so much that he stole it from me. I realized that kids like bookmarks and my friends and I could customize them." Nau was correct, because she raised \$150 for Literacy Nassau through the charity. Their slogan, "Every book begins with a bookmark," led to dozens upon dozens of orders.

When asked why she decided to start a fundraiser for Literacy Nassau, Nau explained, "Bookmarks are related to the work my mom does with Next Chapter Book Clubs, and because

Literacy Nassau doesn't charge for their clubs, they need money to buy books for the participants in the Clubs to read."

We at Literacy Nassau are most grateful for this unexpected gift. The donation will enable us to purchase at least one full set of books for our Next Chapter Book Club program.



Ava Nau, Founder of Bookmark\$ For Charity, shows off her "Ava-cado" bookmark in the above photo.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

After the snowstorm we just had this week, I began to wonder if spring would ever come. But now, the sun is shining, the birds are singing, and my little Haley is preparing to turn 6. It's easy for me to get nostalgic this time of year because I started working at Literacy Nassau in April 2010 - 8 years ago! - so I look back and marvel at how much has changed, how much we've grown, and how different everything is now. The same thing happens with Haley, with our students, and with life in general. When you're so focused in on the day-to-day, you don't really realize how much has changed. But when a student gets a post-test, or you take a child for an annual physical, or you just stop and reflect, you can see that tremendous growth has occurred. It's lovely to pause for a moment in the spring and appreciate the evidence of new growth all around you. Here's to the season!

Karen 😊



The month of April always reminds me how long I've worked here. Haley turns 6 this year - hard to believe!

HIRED: AN INTERNSHIP SUCCESS STORY

(submitted by Joanne Wong-Lin)

I am so happy and excited that I got a job at the Hillside Public Library as a circulation clerk. When my internship supervisor, Kim Nau, told me about the job posting, she advised me to apply. When I told Kim I was so worried about my resume and the interview, she was very kind. She said she could help me by reviewing my application and we did a mock interview.

I am so appreciative that she spent her weekend helping me. I had more confidence to answer and ask questions during the interview. I was lucky and excited when I found out that I finally got a job.

On the first day of work, I entered the library and I was a little nervous. But after meeting my library co-workers, I wasn't nervous anymore. All of them are very nice and knowledgeable about computers and library systems.

I want to thank the Guru Krupa Foundation and Literacy Nassau for giving the interns a very good opportunity to learn English and jobs skills through the internship program.



Joanne Wong-Lin was a Literacy Nassau intern thanks to the generosity of the Guru Krupa Foundation. The skills she acquired and experience she gained through her internship led to a paying job at the Hillside Public Library.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Happy birthday to the following tutors, all born in April!

Kami-Leigh Agard - Mary Alibrandi - Zeba Ansari - Carol Aronin - Nancy Benchimol - Sheri Berkowitz - Nancy Bob - Deborah Broder - Eileen Capriotti - Judy Caputo - Arlene Cherry - Kathleen Coleman - Eileen D'Antonio - Margaret Dudley - Lisa Eichmann - Anita Faulding - Janet Geduldig - Jeanne Geib - Lauren Gilbert - George Greier - Kelsey Greene - Michele Haber - Florence Harff - Michael Hauser - Kathleen Jeacoma - Nilsa Jorge - Dolores Joseph - Keon Karimaby - Lorri Klonsky - Eleanor Krebs - Carmelinda Kurtzberg - Jean Lesser - Juan Manzano - Carol Markman - India McClain - Christian Mueller - Antonia Obara - Joanne Ortiz - Carol Padovani - Josephine Palazzolo - Terese Pizza - Linda Podhurst - Jane Quinton - Elisabeth Reilly - Chris Rochford - Susan Rosenberg - Stephen Salyk - Carol Schrafel - Vasu Shah - Linda Shine - James Tenney - Debbie Uckele - Rosemary Valenti - Donna Vibert - Virginia Walsh - Joan Whiteside

TUTOR SPOTLIGHT: SUE RISBERG

(submitted by Cindy Cabrera)

Sue Risberg has been tutoring with Literacy Nassau for the last few years. She's taught groups of ELLs at all different levels. She has devoted her time and effort to help our students achieve their goals. Here at Literacy Nassau, we are grateful to have passionate tutors who believe in our mission. Below are some questions we asked Sue so you may get to know her.

1. *Tell us a little about yourself.*

I taught French and Spanish in the Bellmore-Merrick High School District for 35 years and travelled widely in French and Spanish-speaking countries during that time.

2. *When did you start volunteering with Literacy Nassau?*

I really love teaching, and I love language. I started volunteering with Literacy Nassau when I retired many years ago. Their office was on Front Street in Hempstead and they were very understaffed and rather disorganized, so getting matched with a willing learner was a dicey situation. Small group instruction didn't exist yet. Rather frustrated with that situation, I volunteered elsewhere and found people who needed reading help and English lessons and helped them on my own. I was very interested in reading difficulties and took many Orton Gillingham courses.

3. *Why did you volunteer with Literacy Nassau when there are many other volunteer opportunities you could have pursued?*

There was a blurb in Newsday about Literacy Nassau looking for tutors. A friend passed it to me and I re-enlisted. What a marvelous organization it had become in those years! The staff is excellent and very efficient. The workshops are quite enlightening.

4. *Describe your experience throughout past few years with us.*

I love teaching small groups. The first group was beginners. Some had only just arrived in the United States. It is very rewarding to see them gain a measure of self confidence and some basic control of the language in situations related to the course material.

5. *Working with people from different cultural backgrounds, what have you learned from your students?*

Because I had been a teacher, I have small groups of learners, mostly Hispanics and Haitians. They are all highly motivated to learn English, although some may have more time to devote to the tasks than others. It is important to consider that English may not be at the top of their list of things to do each day. Some students are working more than one job, taking care of their family, and facing transportation complications. Some have learning difficulties. One of my best students is a musician who travels all over the east coast performing in various types of gigs. Another has lived here for many years and as a grandmother feels that it is urgent that she speak English with her youngest grandson. Some students have family members who speak English as their native language but feel a disincentive to assisting the English learner.

6. *Tell us about your current students. How things are going?*

All of the students have been extremely cooperative and gracious. It is a joy to hear them say thank you at the end of each class.

7. *What motivates you to keep on tutoring with us?*

I have been very happy with the workshops offered by Literacy Nassau. The information they provide is invaluable. It is also rewarding to network with other tutors who attend these sessions. They often have excellent ideas they are eager to share.

(UN)SCRABBLE 2018 IN REVIEW!

On March 15, 2018, Chateau Briand in Carle Place was abuzz with action. It wasn't your typical Thursday night, catering hall, wedding showcase-type frenzy, but rather a group of approximately 200 corporate and individual Literacy Nassau supporters who gathered to play three intense rounds of our signature game, (un)SCRABBLE. The evening's honoree was MSC Industrial Supply Co., a company whose support for this event dates back 20 years, and whose tag line, "Built to make you better," extends beyond the employees and the investors to include the community as well. MSC gives to over two dozen non-profit organizations on Long Island every year as a testament to their founder, Sid Jacobson, who believed that philanthropy is one of the most important parts of doing good business.

The event, which marked Literacy Nassau's 50th anniversary, was celebrated with a tremendous selection of raffle prizes, auction items, a photo booth courtesy of All That Glitz, LLC, and as usual, a feast for the taste buds thanks to Chateau Briand. Below are some photographs, taken by Paul Nelson (tutor) and Kelly Siry (staff).



As always, we were happy to have MSC's (un)Spellers team join in the evening's festivities! They have won several times and came to defend their title!



Veteran judge Irv Miljoner posed for a photo with first-timer daughter Lisa Miljoner after winning one of our fabulous raffle prizes!



(From L-R) Board President Stephen Bendernagel, Executive Director Karen Micciche, and MSC Director of Community Relations Alessandra Cavalluzzi.



The team from Berkman, Henoch, Petersen, Peddy, and Fenchel came ready to take on opponents new and old!



Team Friendly wore handmade t-shirts to reflect their team spirit! (Board Secretary Jordan Freundlich pictured center.)



The team from Certilman Balin eagerly awaits for Karen to score their Bingo Bonus Round board. They won 250 bonus points for the round.

BEHOLD THE DREAMERS

(submitted by Sara Izquierdo)

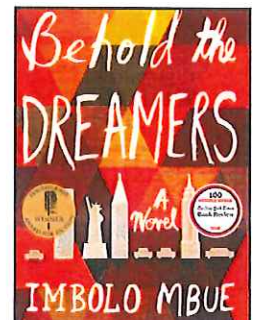
I had no expectations when I picked up Behold the Dreamers, by Imbolo Mbue, at the library. It simply looked like a good story to listen to during my commute. Little did I know it would have me sitting in my driveway after I returned from work, just to hear one more page before turning it off for the night!

Jende Jonga is an immigrant from Cameroon. In 2007, he lands a job as a chauffeur for Clark Edwards, a Lehman Brothers executive. Once Jende is established, he brings his wife, Neni, and young son, Liomi, to live with him in America. The worlds that Jende and Clark inhabit overlap only in the car where Jende drives Clark to business meetings, dinners, and questionable hotels.

Clark and his wife, Cindy, enjoy all the luxuries of the upper class in America. They spend summers at their house in the Hamptons, throw elaborate parties replete with staffers to cook and clean up afterward, cater to every need of their children, and yet feel like their life is not enough. By contrast, Jende and Neni are struggling to afford a one-bedroom apartment in Harlem, anxiously waiting to hear from the lawyer about whether or not they will be deported, but grateful for the opportunity to create a better life for their children in America.

When Lehman Brothers collapses, it threatens the stability of both families. Jende clings to his job and remains loyal to his boss, even as it becomes clear that to save both his marriage and his career, Clark might need to let Jende go. Neni finds strength she never knew she possessed, as Cindy crumbles under the weight of the American Dream. As individuals, their similarities and differences become more apparent as they face challenges, but it is their status in American society that defines the choices they face when things go wrong.

Although a work of fiction, I recommend Behold the Dreamers to anyone who wants to gain insight into one family's journey as immigrants in New York.



April 15-22 is National Volunteer Week

By Kelly Siry

Every day I hear stories about how our volunteers have gone over and beyond the call of duty to make our students' experiences with us positive and enriching.

One such instance happened recently with our Great Neck Next Chapter Book Club facilitator, Rachel Dicker.

Rachel has been volunteering as a Next Chapter Book Club facilitator since 2016. She treats each one of the members of her book club as a friend. She organizes parties to celebrate the club's "anniversary" every six months. At their gatherings Rachel gives each member of the club a framed group photo. The members treasure this keepsake as a reminder that



they are part of a group that has formed a true friendship. Recently, Rachel had to be absent for her weekly book club meeting. She took the initiative to find a substitute



facilitator, train her, make the club members names tags so she would know their names, and let each member know about the change for the week. I am constantly receiving calls praising Rachel for her enthusiasm and dedication. The following is a quote from Jackie Shenkman, "Rachel has created a remarkable book club. With Rachel's encouragement, this group enjoys a unique rhythm; they read and talk and most

importantly they all laugh together. The members have a wonderful connection to Rachel and to each other. In the afternoon, before book club, Rachel takes the time to send a text about the book or its characters.... "What do you think happens next?" Mandy smiles and giggles and answers the text. She's reading and writing and being happy!!"





David Leibenhaut, Small Group Instruction for Intermediate Students, Valley Stream

Thanks to volunteers like Rachel the students in our program feel fulfilled and encouraged to embrace literacy!



Carl Borruso, Small Group Instruction for Beginner Students, Valley Stream



Anna Leibenhaut, Next Chapter Book Club Facilitator, New Hyde Park



Alison Kohler, Small Group Instruction for Beginner Students, Valley Stream



Gail Bauer, 1:1 tutor, New Hyde Park





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RESOURCE CORNER

Microsoft word does a great job correcting spelling and grammar, but what can you do when you are writing an email or text or while posting on social media? Are you doomed to make an inaccurate post or to look up every word in a dictionary? Of course not! Grammarly solves this problem for you. With a FREE download to your computer or smartphone, Grammarly supports your writing EVERYWHERE by offering corrections and explaining the reason why. This is especially helpful for students who are learning English since it actually teaches while it corrects. With Grammarly, you can "be confident that everything you write is flawless." This great resource was actually introduced to me by one of my ONA students, Kavita Shah. Thanks for the great recommendation, Kavita! Download Grammarly for free today at <https://www.grammarly.com/>

WINTER INTERNS

We are happy to welcome our new interns from our winter ONA classes. Richlie Bermingham is from Haiti and is enjoying her first job in the United States. She hopes to secure an office position and take Accounting courses once the internship is complete. Roxana Lezama is from Peru and has worked as a housekeeper. She wants to gain office experience and improve her computer skills, so she can pursue a less physically-demanding job. Julia Zhang has a PhD from Beijing University and hopes to improve her English skills on the job. We are grateful to the Guru Krupa Foundation for helping us employ this diverse group of students/interns at Literacy Nassau this season.

Because of a recent computer issue, all submissions to Open Door prior to March 8th need to be re-submitted.

Please reach out to your Literacy Specialist to ensure that your student's writing will be included in this year's student anthology.

We apologize for the inconvenience and appreciate your patience and cooperation.