

LiteracyLinks

The Portland Literacy Council Newsletter for Volunteer Tutors

Peggy L. Murphy, Editor

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**LiteracyLinks
will return in
September!**

Don't They Look Happy!

By Sr. Catherine Hertel, Sisters of St. Mary, Beaverton and Peggy L. Murphy, Portland Literacy Council



These happy faces belong to the students and teachers in ESOL/GED classes, at Sisters of St. Mary, Beaverton.

Thursday, May 16th, was a day of celebration for the families of ESOL/GED students at Sisters of St. Mary, Beaverton, who have completed their spring term classes. Before feasting on tasty cultural cuisine, each class demonstrated their accomplishments of the year. These students are to be admired for their persistent determination to learn English, even after long days of work and family duties. Also to be admired are the twenty plus volunteers who have dedicated many hours of service to our immigrants.

Several students in the GED classes have received the GED certificates: Eliuth Ayala, Hilda Campos, Analondy Cordova, Irma Guardarama, Maribel Lua Barragan, Eduardo Ramirez, Yadira Rodriquez, Israel Santiago, Gabriel Segura, Irma Vazquez, and Rosa Villavicencio are looking forward to the benefits of GED certification. Some have even decided to become teachers or assistants in classes for those still aspiring to pass their GED tests before the new 2014 standards are put into effect.

Please see GED, page 2.

LiteracyLinks

Put on Your Thinking Caps and Sharpen Your Pencils

Portland Literacy Council to Award Community Grants to Local Literacy Programs

This Fall, PLC will seek requests for community grant proposals from local literacy programs. We last awarded community grants in 2011.

We know that program managers are very busy and we will keep the process simple. Applications will be limited to a one-page letter, 500 words or less, along with verification of a program's nonprofit status and a contact person. The September 2013 **LiteracyLinks** will have details on the format.

Grants issued in 2011 include:

- Julia West House, ABE program. Awarded \$500 to purchase testing materials, program supplies, and official GED calculators.
- St. Anthony ESL program. Awarded \$500 to help defray costs for utilities, photocopying, and free English instruction.
- Pamoja House. Awarded \$250 to help defray photocopying costs.

The Portland Literacy Council board looks forward to hearing from local literacy organizations interested in the community grants. The requests for proposal will be announced in September.

GED (continued from page 1.)

The GED classes are a new addition to the St. Mary program. The students all had at least 9 years of school in their native country. They have worked with persistence and have continued to pursue their GED goals even if faced with challenges. Support from families and the program teachers have proved important in attaining their GEDs.

The Sisters of St. Mary are aware of the challenges facing immigrants today. In the beginnings of their community in 1886, they too were immigrants. Now, they are committed to assisting today's immigrants through their ESOL, GED and citizenship programs.

Update: An additional student, Veronica Jiminez passed her GED test May 17.

Editor's Note: *Portland Literacy Council awarded GED test scholarships to several students in the St. Mary program.*

Pacific Power Foundation Donates to Volunteer Tutor Fund

Tutor Roxann Pottratz volunteers weekly in a GED classroom at PCC's Willow Creek campus. Her volunteer service led to a Pacific Power Foundation donation of \$397 to the PCC Foundation, Volunteer Tutor Fund, on behalf of Roxann's contribution to its Global Days of Service Program.

A classroom volunteer since summer 2010, Roxann reports that she "helps students with math, mainly fractions and decimals though every once in a while I get to help with geometry."

How did Roxann become involved in volunteer tutoring? Roxann tells us that:

"Back in April 2010 I attended a reader's luncheon with the Rose City Romance Writers, the literacy group was the charity that year. Kay brought in someone who had recently passed their GED and spoke about the process and how it changed his life. After that our keynote speaker, Lucy Monroe, challenged everyone to help out and that she would match any contributions of \$100 (at that time the cost of the GED test). I looked into contributing my time and have been helping ever since."

What is the Volunteer Tutor Fund and how is the money used? Kay Talbot tells us that:

"The PCC Foundation - Volunteer Tutor Fund accepts donations for VLT. VLT Coordinators list its website under our email signatures. The money is used for books, printing expenses for Tutor Trainings and ESL Packets. It is also used for special projects like supplies for PowerPath workshops and maintenance of the PowerPath audiometer."

Would you like to know more about the Volunteer Tutor Fund? Kay Talbot's link to the Fund:

Become a Friend of Literacy
Give online:

www.pcc.edu/foundation/ways-to-give/
PCC Foundation – Volunteer Tutor Fund

Thanks for your support!

Opening Doors to Opportunity

by Megan Kelly, Catholic Charities

I recently brought a family who had been in the United States for almost a year to their public library for the first time, and helped them find books, music, classes and English conversation practice. The next day, I received an email from one of the student's teachers, telling me: "He was so proud to show off the graphic novel he checked out."

As a School Assistance for Refugee Newcomers employee at Catholic Charities, one of the three refugee resettlement agencies in town, I work with students in their first year here. While these kids face a number of challenges, including culture shock and English language acquisition, a typical focus of tutors, the biggest struggle I see is families who aren't able to access their communities on their own. Tutors with a weekly presence in these people's lives and often homes can get the families they work with to their local library, help them get registered for cards, explain the classes and opportunities available, and introduce the family to the on-staff resource librarian.

Libraries are often the jumping off point for academic success, job searches, GED and English classes, as well as fun activities for adults and children alike. The programming can help to fill in gaps from schools or job training programs, and can provide an atmosphere that allows for ongoing learning and self-advocacy.

The families who learn how to use the resources available to them are better able to gain self-sufficiency, a feeling inherently lacking in the early refugee experience, and instrumental to success in the United States.

A graphic novel was more than a book to the student I brought to the library—it was a source of pride and excitement, and a doorway into opportunity.

Free resources for tutors and students are available on the [Portland Literacy Council website.](#)

For Your Calendar

Tutor Discussion Group

The next Tutor Discussion Group meeting will be Fall Term. Look for details in the September *LiteracyLinks*.

Volunteer Literacy Tutor Training

Scheduled tutor training sessions for academic year 2012-13 have been completed. New sessions will begin Fall Term 2013.

Opportunities

Summer ESL Classes

You can find [summertime ESL classes](#) on the Portland ESL Network website.

LESLLA (for Adults)

Low Education Second Language and Literacy Acquisition

LESLLA 2013: Expanding Emergent Literacy Practices
August 7- August 9, 2013
City College of San Francisco, Mission Campus
1125 Valencia Street, San Francisco, CA 94110

Tutor Toolbox Roundup

Find back issues of *LiteracyLinks* and the Tutor Toolbox on the PLC [website](#). Favorite toolbox items include:

April 2013

- Resources for Tutors of Pre-Literate Students

February 2013

- ESL Basics

January 2013

- Portland ESL Network
- ESL Cell Phone Apps

December 2012

- "The Great Big BINGO Book" December 2012

November 2012

- The Times in Plain English

May 2012

- ORTESOL

April 2012

- KhanAcademy global classroom
- Margaret Carter Skill Center