



LiteracyLinks

The Newsletter for Volunteer Tutors

[Peggy L. Murphy, Editor](#)

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March 15, 2104

Annual Tutor Conference

See Preview on Page 3

Location: Reed College

Time: 9 am to 4 pm

Check-in starts at 8:30 am

Online registration will open
the first week of February
on our website:

www.portlandliteracy.org

PLC Reaches Out with Community Grants

Portland Literacy Council is pleased to announce that it recently awarded seven community grants to nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations in the Portland Metropolitan area. The grants are designed to support literacy programs that advance Adult Basic Education, including GED preparation, or to assist English-language learners through English-as-a-Second Language instruction. Grant funds are limited to supporting existing projects only, and may be used to meet program or operational expenses.

The Community Grants will benefit a wide range of needs throughout the metropolitan area. PLC last awarded community grants in 2012. Grantees include:

- **Street Books**, a bicycle-powered mobile library, that serves people who live outside in the city of Portland, received a \$500 grant. Established in 2011, Street Books provides weekly outdoor library shifts, lending books to those who might not be able to use the county library without an ID or proof of address. Books are carted by bicycle-trailer to various locations, and old-school pockets and cards track each book.

Spanish-speakers are avid patrons of Street Books, with interests ranging from poetry by Pablo Neruda and westerns by Louis L'Amour to early readers and dictionaries.

The PLC grant will create a fund dedicated to Spanish-language texts, specifically to meet patron requests. The collection will include early readers, adult basic education tools, dictionaries, language support, and many genres of literature.

- **Neighborhood House Women's ESL Health Class**, received a \$500 grant to provide mothers with books for reading to children during class with teacher support, and to take home to their families. The program is part of Neighborhood House's Parenting Program and serves female immigrants and refugees and their children up to 5 years old at Rosa Parks Elementary School in North Portland.

See "Community Grants" page 2.

Community Grants (from page 1)

The Women's ESL Health Class focuses on increasing family literacy, health literacy, fitness, and family involvement in the school community. Students are from the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Iraq, Mexico, and Somalia. The program introduces children and adults to books that both interest them and are accessible for their reading level, allowing the parents to participate in developing personal and family literacy.

The PLC grant will help purchase over 300 children's books, high-interest adult literacy books, and English books for the program.

- **Sunset Presbyterian Church ESL program** received a \$500 community grant. The Sunset ESL program includes six levels of adult classes ranging from basic to highly proficient literacy, and has operated for over 10 years. Fifteen volunteer teachers with backgrounds in education, business, and computing serve hundreds of students each year.

Free childcare for infants to fifth grade allows Sunset Presbyterian students to focus on English classes. Part of the childcare service is to offer a National Geographic youth lesson and a gym period.

The PLC grant to Sunset Presbyterian will help with the purchase of new textbooks and updated instruction materials.

- **Sisters of St. Mary of Beaverton ESOL/GED Program** was awarded a \$500 community grant. Serving over 150 students in ESOL and GED classes, St. Mary's program helps adult immigrants improve their reading, writing, and conversation skills.

Improved English skills enable parents to help their children with school assignments, participate more in parent-teacher conferences, and to model persistence and goal-setting to their families. Students also benefit from improved English skills in work settings.

St. Mary's will purchase books, periodicals, and other materials to support the ESOL/GED program.

- **SOAR, Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees**, a program of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, received a \$250 grant. SOAR has a comprehensive program to assist refugees and immigrants become U.S. citizens. Clients have free access to citizenship classes, legal services, and a Voter Education class once they have naturalized. The Citizenship classes serve about 260 students, the Naturalization classes serve about 250 immigrants, and Voter Education is provided for about 180 newly naturalized citizens. SOAR provides 20 citizenship classes each year, with 16 in the Portland metropolitan area.

The PLC grant will help defray copying costs and purchase project supplies, allowing SOAR to provide additional services to low-income immigrants.

- **Centro Cultural of Washington County**, received a \$250 grant. Centro provides English classes for non-native speakers, and each year provides over 400 students with classes including literacy to advanced skill levels in English, Adult Basic Skills, and GED classes. Their program supports adults with a variety of learning styles and literacy levels meet personal and professional goals.

The grant to Centro will help purchase various tools for the program.

- **SEWorks**, English Language Learners tutoring program, received a \$250 grant from PLC. The program typically serves middle-aged, low-income job seekers from around the world. Demand for the program continues to increase and serves clients who speak lesser-spoken languages including Amharic, Karen, and Burmese.

SEWorks will use its grant to help defray photocopying expenses for English language learners.

Did you know? Back issues of [LiteracyLinks](#) include reviews of resources for tutors.

What's in Your Tutor Toolbox?

How Do You Know They're Learning?

by [Patrik McDade](#), Founder and Program Director, [People*Places*Things](#)

You've been working with your language learner for 10 weeks, and she's totally engaged. She comes on time every time, and she's always done her homework. You're zipping through the grammar lessons in the book. But she still has trouble verbalizing, and almost shuts down completely when she tries to talk. It's getting frustrating for both of you. Has she learned anything at all? How will you know?

Learning is complex, but it's less mysterious if we look for acquired behaviors. Imagine you're in a room of 20 people and you'd like to memorize their names without writing them down. Many of us will give up after one go-round and say we're bad at names. But there's an erroneous belief about learning here: that once I hear your name I should "know" it, and if I don't, I'm bad at names. All you really need is a few more go-rounds.

If you never practice those names again, you'll forget them after a day or two. If you practice them every week for several weeks, you'll still remember most of them a few months later. Retention of individual lexical items is not the last word (ahem) in language learning. To produce observable improvements more quickly:

- Focus on visible behaviors (pointing, repeating or writing)
- Work with the similar examples multiple times, and add more as time goes on
- Keep track of what you've practiced, and recycle examples regularly
- Practice the same items in different ways – if you've been pointing to objects, have your learner repeat them. Mix up the order; throw in a twist.

It's like learning to dance - start with some basic steps, and repeat them until they become natural. Then move on to more complex moves from there.

Editor's Note: Patrik regularly presents at the Annual Tutor Conference. We thank him for sharing his expertise.

For Your Calendar Tutor Training

March 1 & 8
PCC Willow Creek
241 SW Edgeway Drive, Beaverton
More info at www.portlandliteracy.org

Annual Tutor Conference Preview

Kris Magaurn, PLC Chair, is busy putting together workshops for the Annual Tutor Conference, Saturday, March 15 at Reed College. These workshops have been confirmed:

- 10 Things to Improve Student Pronunciation
- Activities for Beginning Level Students
- Language Experience Activities for Low Literacy
- Using Rubrics and Essay Modeling for Higher Level Student Writing,
- Pronunciation Tools and Techniques from a Speech Therapist,
- Incorporating Authentic Materials into Tutoring

This is just a sample, look for our email announcing that registration has opened.

Awesome Tutor Workshop How Do I Know They Are Learning?

Saturday, February 8, 2014, 10 am to noon
PCC Sylvania, Room TCB 211
Workshop Leader Patrik McDade

This workshop is full; if you have questions, contact [Peggy Murphy](#), Portland Literacy Council.

Opportunities

Oregon & SW Washington Health Literacy Conference

Sponsored by Legacy Health and community partners, Friday, March 7, 2014
Governor Hotel, 614 SW 11th Avenue, Portland

Online [conference registration](#)