

# LiteracyLinks

The Newsletter for Volunteer Tutors

Peggy L. Murphy, Editor  
May-June 2015

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## Newsletter Editor:

## Hats Off to Derene & Bob Meurisse for 40 Years of Community Service



**Derene and Bob Meurisse** have devoted over 40 years to the Tigard community. Both are highly respected by the thousands of immigrants who have taken part in the St. Anthony ESL program. In 1998 the program won the JC Penney Golden Rule Award. Teachers, students, and families at St. Anthony honored the four decades of

community service the Meurisses have given to the St. Anthony ESOL program at their annual international buffet and recognition ceremony, May 28. The Meurisses are retiring and handing the reins of the program off to others.

The St. Anthony ESOL program is one of the largest in the Portland Metropolitan Area, and is offered free of charge. Derene has managed the program, and Kris Magaurn, PCC VLT Coordinator says, "There is no obstacle she has not been able to surmount. Her dedication and skills are key factors in the program's success. Derene is an inspirational leader who creates enthusiasm among teachers."

A strong indicator of the success of St. Anthony ESOL is that former students now participate as teachers in the program. Eva Garcia, Cookie Ritter, and Filiberto Santos extolled Derene and Bob at the celebration, commenting on the feelings of family and love that emanate from the Meurisses.

Bob Meurisse has also been a mainstay of St. Anthony ESOL, teaching Intermediate English classes. Both Bob and Derene are loved by the students, families, and teachers in the program. Their shoes will be hard to fill. Their efforts and service to the community have been invaluable.

**Portland Literacy Council** is featured in an article in the Summer 2015 issue of [ORTESOL News](#). Find out how a small group of volunteers can make a big difference to English language learners.

## Joe's First Library Book: A Guide to Adult Literacy

by Barbi Smith, Volunteer Literacy Tutor, PCC Cascade



**Joe (left) and tutor Barbi Smith have made impressive strides since December.**

My student's name is Joe, and we met for the first time in December of 2014. I was fresh out of my tutor training session and on fire to help someone learn. I'm a firm believer in the power of literacy, and as a dyslexic person, I know there is also power in getting a little help.

Joe is a 68-year old man who attended school through third grade. He reached out for tutoring because he wants to be able to read recipes, read to his granddaughter, and participate in Bible study readings at his church. Joe has coped with his low reading level with ingenious methods of getting information without revealing he can't read. As a result, he often gives the appearance of reading as long as he has memorized the word. If the word is new or must be sounded-out, Joe can't read it. I'm consistently surprised at his adeptness at "reading" words when he can't break down the sounds that the letters make.

I'm so inspired by Joe. He brings his own reading material to our weekly sessions and asks for longer sessions. One of my favorite moments was when, a couple weeks into working together, he pulled out his new library card: the first library card he had ever had. The first item he checked out? A guide to adult literacy. There's an indescribable magic to helping a student read a section about how to help their tutor help them.

Our progress is slow, sometimes slower than either one of us would like. But there are also a million tiny victories. We celebrate it all, and we also celebrate the motivation that led us both to do what we're doing.

## Free GED® Test Resources

The 2014 version of the GED® test covers more difficult material and testing is online. The GED® Testing Service website has comprehensive links that cover a wide range of topics and interests. Teachers, tutors, and students can access free online resources for study and improving computer skills.

The link for "[Resources to help test-takers get ready](#)," includes the skills GED® test takers are missing, links to videos on operating the TI30XS Calculator (Spanish and English). Also included are an AE Symbol Tool Explanation, and tutorials for mathematical reasoning, science, reasoning through language arts, or social studies. Free practice tests are available.

The "[Instructor Guide: Computer Skills for the 2014 GED® Test](#)," includes five modules with lesson plans for using the mouse, navigating, keyboarding, using word processing programs, and Online Tools of the 2014 GED® Test. Each module is 60-90 minutes long. The Guide includes lesson plans, instructions for teacher and student demonstration of skills, and individual practice of skills. Two appendices list additional resources and a matrix that connects test question types with computer skills.

These are just samples of the resources available on the GED® website. They are free, and available in both English and Spanish.

## Resource for Free & Low-Cost Math Apps; Teaching Interjections

The [ProLiteracy Notebook Spring Issue](#) includes ten free, or low-cost, real-life math and basic math facts apps. These include games to help learn math, flash cards, telling time, calculating tips, discounts, and sales tax. They use addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and algebraic functions.

The Spring **Notebook** also includes advice on teaching the use of interjections. What would we do without "er" and "aw" in our everyday conversations? How would we understand the Simpsons and the subtleties of "doh" and "duh"?

*Editor's Note: We thank Kathleen Holloway, VLT Coordinator, Southeast Campus for the reminder about **Notebook** and its valuable resources for tutors and learners.*

# What's in Your Tutor Toolbox?

## Literacy or Fluency?

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

### lit•er•a•cy

- The condition or quality of being literate, especially the ability to read and write.
- The condition or quality of being knowledgeable in a particular subject or field: cultural literacy; biblical literacy.

We talk a lot about literacy. And literacy, the ability to read and write, is incredibly important for being able to access the world around us, especially in the US. This is a legacy of the education movements around the world to end illiteracy. The thinking comes from concern about people being able to read and write in their own native language. At that time, though, people's ability to speak another language was not factored in.

### flu•en•cy

- The quality of smoothness of flow.
- The quality of being fluent in a language; A person's command of a particular language.
- The quality of consistently applying skill correctly in the manner of one well-practiced at it, requiring little deliberate thought to perform without mistakes.

### Here are some ways to practice fluency:

- Say a sentence at natural speed and have the learner try to repeat it — repeat it until they get close — this helps develop the muscle memory to say things fluidly.
- Say a sentence at natural speed and have the learner try to write it (repeat many times until they are close) — this will help break in their ear.
- Say a sentence, and have the learner try to confirm by changing the subject ("I love avocados!" — "You love avocados?"). This is a very natural way to practice!

Literacy and fluency are not the same. They can and do support and influence each other, but focusing on one will not get you the other. Fluency in language literally determines your capacity to interact with other people.

May-Jun 2015

# For Your Calendar

## 2016-17 Tutor Training Workshops

Dates and locations have been set for the Tutor Training workshops for the upcoming academic year. Online registration will open one month prior to each workshop. See the PLC website [Tutors](#) page for a registration link. Room numbers will be assigned after the beginning of each term.

- September 19 & 26, Portland Community College, Southeast Campus
- November 7 & 14, Portland Community College, Sylvania Campus
- January 16 & 23, Portland Community College, Willow Creek Center
- February 27 & March 5, Portland Community College Cascade Campus
- May 7 & 14, Clackamas Community College, Harmony Community Campus

## Opportunities

### International Literacy Day

Multnomah County Library, Midland Branch  
805 SE 122nd Ave  
Saturday, September 12, 2015, 1-4 pm

This is a great networking opportunity. Learn about non-profits and community-based organizations who serve people preparing for the GED, applying for US Citizenship, learning English and working to improve their reading skills.

### Citizenship Classes at Multnomah County Library

Holgate Branch, 7905 SE Holgate Blvd  
Six Mondays, start date July 13 at 5:45 pm  
[Registration](#) opens June 22

### [Tri-TESOL 2015](#)

#### *Transcending Boundaries and Interweaving Perspectives*

Presented by ORTESOL, BC TEAL, and WAESOL  
October 2-3, 2015

Highline College, Des Moines, WA

Registration is open at [Tri-TESOL 2015](#)

Save money with early bird registration through September 5, 10 pm. Open registration September 8 through October 26, 10 pm.

Portland Literacy Council  
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## **You can help support adult literacy**

Portland Literacy Council is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. We support volunteer tutors and students in the Portland Metro area.

Portland Literacy Council accepts donations [online](#) and by check to our mailing address, PO Box 2872, Portland, OR 97208.

Portland Literacy Council is enrolled in [AmazonSmile](#) and the [Fred Meyer Community Rewards](#) programs; Sign up at one or both websites, designate Portland Literacy Council as the charity of choice, and your purchases will pay it forward for adult literacy in the metropolitan area.