

LiteracyLinks

The Newsletter for Volunteer Tutors

Peggy L. Murphy, Editor
November 2015

In This Issue

Looking Forward to Bogotá
SE Works Needs Tutors
Easy Readers at the Library
Tutor Toolbox
Calendar
Opportunities

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[Online Literacy Links Subscription](#)

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Annual Tutor Conference

PLC is looking for ideas for workshops for the 2016 conference (March 19 at Reed College).

Got an idea? We'd like to hear from you: Email your suggestion to:

peggy@portlandliteracy.org

Looking Forward to Bogotá

by Sarah Keeney
as told to LiteracyLinks

Sarah Keeney, pictured below, has taught ESOL classes at PCC, and until recently was a VLT Coordinator at Cascade Campus. She received a Fulbright Grant and will be spending this academic year in Colombia. Sarah is a big fan of Volunteer Literacy Tutors, and Portland Literacy Council wants to share her accomplishments with the adult literacy community.



Sarah's Story

I will be living and working in Bogotá, Colombia. I will be doing an English Teaching Assistantship at the *Universidad Libre*. The program I'll be working with is a *licenciatura* program which is a language teaching program — so I'll be helping and supporting prospective Colombian English teachers learn and practice the language.

Initially, I will be living in *La Candelaria* (the old, colonial historic neighborhood in Bogotá where the university is located) in a guesthouse while I get my bearings. I'm hoping to find an apartment with Colombian roommates when I get down there. I'll be leaving on July 26 and working for the university and Fulbright from August 1 through May of next year.

I'm most excited about the fact that I get to live and work in Colombia, doing something I love in a place I'm thrilled to learn more about. Hopefully, my Spanish will improve immensely (fingers crossed!) and I can bring the skills and experience back to Portland and PCC. I can't wait for my family to come down and visit me to get a bit of international experience.

Editor's Note:

The Fulbright Program, since its establishment in 1946 has awarded 360,000 grants (approximately 8,000 annually). Applicant criteria include a having bachelor's degree or equivalent, good health, and host-country language proficiency.

SE Works Needs Tutors!

by Blair Orfall, SE Works

The English Language Learner (ELL) Volunteer Tutoring Program at [SE Works](#) provides individualized English assistance to adult immigrants and refugees. We're based in a Worksource center located in Southeast Portland. Worksource centers offer free classes, workshops, vocational case management, and other resources for all types of job seekers, including services designed specifically for the ELL job seeker.

ELL Tutoring sessions are student-driven and not restricted to our curriculum. Our students come from all over the world — 26 different countries were represented this last program year. Our students tend to be lower-income, middle-aged parents, unemployed or looking for work and living in extended families. Some students have earned degrees in their home countries, while others are learning to read and write for the first time. Tutors' assistance with job applications and interview skills helped dozens of students to get jobs last year.

SE Works' ELL Tutoring team is a vibrant group of internationally-interested people with diverse backgrounds. Tutors are trained in activity-based learning and supported by a professional ELL coordinator. SE Works provides a quiet tutoring lab, textbooks, games, dictionaries, computer access, printing and photocopying, while tutors contribute their time and dedication. SE Works also offers nine ELL classes a week including conversation classes, citizenship test prep, and basic computer skills taught in Vietnamese and basic English. The rewards of the program are heard in the laughter that comes from the tutoring lab and are seen in the successes of students and tutors alike.

Tutoring hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. If you would like more information about SE Works' ELL Volunteer Tutoring Program, please contact Blair Orfall at 503-772-2341 or email at borfall@seworks.org

MultCo Library Features Easy Readers in Many Genres

by Lisa Regimbal, Adult Literacy Coordinator
Multnomah County Library

Are you looking for easy reading for adult new readers or English language learners? Multnomah County Library has a variety of titles to borrow and several options for finding more. You can access the catalog by going to www.multcolib.org or typing "Multnomah County Library" in a search engine like Google.

If you search the catalog using the phrase "readers for new literates," you'll get a long list of books at different reading levels. If you're looking for levels, choose a title. For instance, if you click on the title **The Long Road**, and look for "Series that include this title" and link to all the books in the Penguin active reading series.

You can find versions of English and American classics or modern fiction. You can find biographies, true crime, horror stories and romance. The books also come in different formats including, graphic novels, books on CD, and titles for your e-reader or iPad.

If you would like a customized list of books, type the phrase "My Librarian" at the main library page or call 503-988-5234 to start the process. We're happy to help you find good reading with easier text or at a more challenging level.

For more information about adult literacy materials available from Multnomah County Library, please contact Lisa Regimbal at lisar@multco.us or 503-988-6318.

What's in Your Tutor Toolbox?

Reimagining Alphabet Practice

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

Can the alphabet provide us more? Frequently, tutors and teachers see the alphabet as “easy” — 26 symbols and accompanying sound names, memorized in order to help children sing them.

Usually we stop alphabet practice when learners accurately say the name of the letter or point to the correct letter. We think it's a matter of knowing the name. But once you start to spell a word for someone, and they write it down, we'll see that they're still confusing I and E or B and P. Even relatively skilled language learners will benefit from continued practice, retraining the ear and tongue. For example:

Materials:

- A sheet of paper with the alphabet clearly written. <http://www.lifeprint.com/asl101/fingerspelling/images/abc1280x960.png>
- A pointer.

Method:

- Speak the names of letters, focusing on letter names that are difficult to distinguish by ear for a given language. For example, Spanish speakers have difficulty with B and V and C and Z. Almost every language has difficulty distinguishing between A, E, and I.
- Learner points to the letter named. Speed up naming of letters, faster and faster, as the learner points. Increase speed and add a third or fourth confusable letter if it seems too easy. Slow down and focus on fewer letters if a learner gets confused.

Other confusable sound-letter combinations:

- Arabic: B and P
- Vietnamese: G and Z, X and S, and H and 8
- Japanese: R and L

Many facilitators who focus on a phonics reading and pronunciation approach urge minimizing using letter names because they are unreliable pronunciation guides. It's critical to remember that language learners, especially adults, need to spell their name and hear/understand when people spell words or say individual letters.

For Your Calendar

March 19, 2016 - Save the Date!

Volunteer Literacy Tutor Conference
Reed College. More details coming in the February [LiteracyLinks](#)

Upcoming Tutor Training Workshops

Learn more about tutoring on the [Tutors](#) page of the Portland Literacy Council website. Access online registration via the Tutors Page.

- January 16 & 23, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
PCC Willow Creek Center, Beaverton
Online registration opens December 16
- February 27 & March 3, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
PCC Cascade Campus, Portland
Online registration opens January 27

Opportunities

Citizenship Classes at Multnomah County Library

- Rockwood Library, 17917 SE Stark St
Jan 24 - Mar 13 (Sundays), 1-2:30 p.m.
8 sessions taught by Mission: Citizen
- Midland Library, 805 SE 122nd Ave
Feb 14 - Mar 20 (Sundays), 1-3 p.m.
6 sessions taught by library volunteers

More details at

<https://multcolib.org/events/citizenship>

Oregon and SW Washington Health Literacy Conference

“Better Communication, Greater Understanding”

Friday, March 4, 2016

Sentinel Hotel, 614 SW 11th Ave, Portland, OR

Hosted by Legacy Health

Registration is open at: <http://www.legacyhealth.org/healthliteracyconference>

Reminder: Ad-Free Search Feature

Have you tried the PLC **ad-free Search feature** to improve access to [PLC's website???](#)

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.