

# LiteracyLinks

The Newsletter for Volunteer Tutors

Peggy L. Murphy, Editor  
September 2015

## In This Issue

Student as Role Model  
Community Grants  
Let Every Adult Read Now  
Tutor Toolbox: Songs and Learning  
Events  
Donating to PLC

## Board of Directors

Kris Magaurn, President  
Emilia Gilroy-Sander, Secretary  
Sue Murray, Treasurer  
Penny Russman  
Peggy L. Murphy  
Cheryl Thoen  
Kay Talbot  
Arlene Matusow

## Portland Literacy Council

PO Box 2872  
Portland, OR 97208-2872  
[www.portlandliteracy.org](http://www.portlandliteracy.org)

## [Online Literacy Links Subscription](#)

## Newsletter Editor:

[peggy.portlandliteracy@gmail.com](mailto:peggy.portlandliteracy@gmail.com)

## New Website Search Feature

We have added an **ad-free Search feature** to improve access to [PLC's website](http://www.portlandliteracy.org).

Christopher Looney, from St. Charles, MO, provided the HTML code for the Search feature. Christopher is a recent high-school graduate, looking forward to a career in computer technology.

## This Student is Her Tutor's Role Model



**Shaayma (center) and Micaela (right) with Shaayma's brother, Ghaith.**

Although they met only last January, tutor Micaela Rubenstein and learner Shaayma Alquiriqchee are masterminding a series of hands-on conversational workshops targeted at English learners.

Their focus will be on practical uses of English. One workshop will cover conversing in restaurants, grocery stores, hair and nail salons, and using transportation. A workshop on resumes and applications will

discuss health insurance, job applications, vocabulary, resumes, and practice interviews. A unit on activities with kids looks at finding out cost and availability of activities. A fourth workshop will look at common expressions, useful phrases, and how to sound like a native speaker in everyday situations.

Micaela and Shaymaa traveled three continents before their paths crossed: Asia, and South and North America. Micaela, an American, tutored in Santiago, Chile, before returning to the U.S. Shaayma, an Iraqi, immigrated to the U.S. via Turkey. She works in her brother Ghaith's restaurant, and has found her tutoring sessions with Micaela have helped her English skills to the point that she's ready to tackle speaking on the phone with customers.

During tutoring sessions, the pair have focused on speaking and practical uses of English. Shaayma, like many of us learning a new language, finds homophones and past-tense verbs tricky. Shaayma has school-age children and she hopes to improve her ability to converse with her children's teachers. When asked what she's learned from tutoring, Micaela said that Shaayma is a good role model for her and has taught her not to be afraid of mistakes.

Anyone interested in these workshops may email Micaela Rubenstein at [micaelarubenstein@gmail.com](mailto:micaelarubenstein@gmail.com). (Details were not available at the time of interview.)

## It's Community Grant Time: 500 Bucks for 500 Words

**Apply by November 9, 2015**

**Grant awards: early December, 2015**

The Portland Literacy Council announces its fourth annual Community Grants program. We invite community non-profit organizations to apply for grants to support Adult Basic Education, GED preparation, or English-as-a-Second Language instruction.

PLC's 2015 Community Grants are limited to \$500. Grant funds are available to support existing projects and may be used to meet the program or operational expenses of the sponsoring agency. Past recipients are invited to apply.

### To apply:

Authorized representatives of interested agencies may submit a letter describing, in 500 words or fewer, the literacy project for which funding is requested, the students served, the project's goals, and how a community grant will advance the project mission. Submissions must include acceptable evidence of non-profit status.

In 2014, Portland Literacy Council awarded nine \$500 community grants:

- Julia West House (Southwest Portland) – ABE and GED materials and courses
- Neighborhood House (Northwest Portland) – Books for students' use at home and in class
- Northwest Housing Alternatives (Portland) – Materials for on-site ESL classes
- Portland Meet Portland (North Portland) – Home-based ESL classes at New Columbia
- Sunset Presbyterian Church (Southwest Portland) – New textbooks for their ESL program
- St. Anthony's Catholic Church (Tigard) – Supplies for ESL students
- St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church (Beaverton) – Supplies for ESL students
- St. Mary's of the Valley (Beaverton) – Books and other operating expenses
- Street Books (Portland) – New bicycle to deliver books to homeless clients

For more details on grant program guidelines and eligibility criteria, visit the [Portland Literacy Council website](#).

**Contact:** Cheryl Thoen, PLC Board of Directors

**Email:** [grants@portlandliteracy.org](mailto:grants@portlandliteracy.org)

## Let Every Adult Read Now

by Lisa Regimbal, Adult Literacy Coordinator  
Multnomah County Library

Are you looking for an opportunity to help an adult learn to read?

LEARN (Let Every Adult Read Now) is Multnomah County Library's reading program that matches tutors to adults with very low reading levels.

The LEARN program is looking for volunteer tutors, who would like to work in a one-on-one tutoring program to help adults who are reading at levels that cause barriers in daily living. LEARN serves adults who want to be able to do things like sound out words, read a book to a grandchild, or sign up for an email account. Learners in our program have passed the citizenship test, learned to communicate with family and friends on social media, and mastered new TriMet routes.

LEARN began as a pilot in October 2010. It is a very small program and tutors stay with their LEARN partners, sometimes for more than a year. Tutors and LEARN partners set goals during the first few sessions. Some goals may be achieved with structured learning programs and some will require flexibility on the part of the tutor. Training and mentoring from other tutors provide tools for both situations.

### Recruitment Information

**Contact:** Lisa Regimbal, 503-988-6381,

**Deadline:** October 15, 2015; Applications accepted on an ongoing basis.

**Location:** Most LEARN adults live and prefer to meet in East County or North Portland.

Characteristics for our "literacy partnership" include:

- Patience from both literacy partners. It takes a long time to learn to read.
- Ability not to take things personally.
- Ability to work at least one hour a week, meeting in a public place.
- Ability to commit for 9-12 months (with breaks by mutual agreement).
- Ability to write monthly reports and meet monthly with the volunteer coordinator

Preferred experience includes working with adults and tutoring reading or other literacy skills.

The LEARN Program will provide a 14-hour training with 2-4 hours of home preparation for each session and two in-class sessions of 4 hours each, and ongoing support.

Please contact Lisa Regimbal at 503-988-6381 for more information.

## What's in Your Tutor Toolbox?

### Can Songs Help Learning?

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

Many people say they learned a language by listening to music. That's very unlikely because the language used in songs is not the same as the language people use to talk to each other – BUT – there are many advantages of using songs to improve one's fluency:

- People like music! It's motivational.
- Songs contain a lot of cultural content – so it's a good way of exploring culture without directly talking about it.
- Songs are highly repeatable – and if you choose something contemporary, you can unlock language and culture keys and also create an opportunity to practice every time that song comes on.
- It allows the learner to focus on rhythm rather than meaning, so it's good for listening and pronunciation.

#### What's a good song?

Under three minutes is ideal – that way you can play it over and over again within a practice session (save Bohemian Rhapsody for independent study).

- Something that the learner is likely to encounter (or has encountered).
- Relatively clear, straightforward lyrics (“Ebony & Ivory”).
- Pop music today has a lot of envelope-pushing content that may alienate or confuse learners. Listen to the entire song and read the lyrics first.
- It's great when there's an engaging video of the song performed live.

#### How do you work with a song for language practice?

Even a two minute song can take a full hour for thorough exploration. Play the whole song, then transcribe line by line. Practice the pronunciation, then replay that part of the song. Learners will experience an unintelligible mass of words suddenly becoming clear. This is the process of learning to hear another language.

## For Your Calendar

### 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.

- September 19 & 26, Portland Community College, Southeast Campus. Registration opens August 19.
- November 7 & 14, Portland Community College, Sylvania Campus. Registration opens October 7.

## 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

- Sept. 20 for eight 1.5-hour sessions: Gresham Branch, 385 NW Miller
- Sept. 20 for six 2-hour sessions : Midland Branch, 805 SE 122nd.

#### [Registration Information](#)

### [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  
PO Box 2872  
Portland, OR 97208

## **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.