

# LiteracyLinks

The Portland Literacy Council Newsletter for Volunteer Tutors

Peggy L. Murphy, Editor

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## Superman, Sherman and Me

By Cody Bauer (editing assistance by Troy Hickman)



**Peggy Gordon and Cody Bauer**

In his essay, "The Joy of Reading and Writing: Superman and Me," Sherman Alexie describes his journey to become an author, teacher, and lover of books. As a Native American boy, he grew up in a community that discriminated against his culture, a community that expected him to be stupid. His peers made fun of him for reading, but his father, an avid reader, inspired him. My journey is similar in many ways. Education was not easy for me, and I was inspired by working with caring teachers and tutors, who showed me that, I too, could help others.

My journey began in Tualatin Elementary where teachers inspired me to overcome my challenges. Because I had a speech impediment, the school director assigned me to a speech therapist who worked with me on breaking down words and practicing sounds. My speech impediment made math difficult too. So, I worked with a math tutor, Mrs. Wells. She helped me to decode and comprehend word problems. She made math exciting.

(See "Cody," page 2)

## **Cody (from page 1)**

Thanks to hard work and Mrs. Wells, I endeavored word problems and began to conquer my speech impediment, which led me to another tutor, a reading tutor named Ms. Helen. She read short stories with me and helped me sound out words. One of the things that I remember most was red licorice. When I excelled at reading, she rewarded me with it. As a result, I fell in love with reading.

While attending middle school and high school in Mollala, I struggled with epileptic seizures and with my eyesight. Doctors put me on epilepsy medication, which made it difficult to learn. I dropped out in the 9th grade when I broke my eyeglasses. Without eyeglasses, my "lazy eye" began to act up. It was then that my mother encouraged me to go to work. While working construction, I gained valuable real-life experience. From socializing with coworkers, I learned how important education is.

In 2010, I attended Portland Community College to get my GED. My teacher, Laurie Trybom, introduced me to Kay Talbot, the

coordinator of the Volunteer Literacy Tutoring program. Kay connected me with Peggy Gordon. We worked through a GED history book and a vocabulary building book. We talked about government and history. I enjoyed reading about history and talking about it with Peggy. We shared a lot of good times. She showed me how much influence a tutor can have on others.

As I finished my GED testing, I went to see my ex-teacher, Laurie Trybom. She asked me if I would read with a new student named Tim. I am currently tutoring Tim on basic reading skills. We focus on phonics and breaking down words. My main goal is to give back to Tim what other tutors have given to me.

Sherman Alexie's journey was inspired by his father's passion for reading. Today he inspires others to read and learn. My journey was inspired by tutors, teachers, and coworkers who passed down knowledge to make my future brighter. I, too, hope to pass that inspiration along to others.

***Portland Literacy Council congratulates Cody Bauer on earning his GED. May he have many more successes.***

## **Would your organization like a \$500 community grant?**

Portland Literacy Council will award a community grant of \$500 to a nonprofit in the Portland metro area. Applications are due October 17, and the grant will be announced in December.

Eligible organizations must provide literacy tutoring to adults and must agree to be highlighted in a *LiteracyLinks* article. To learn more about your program, we will want to interview someone at the program. We will also need permission for a photo to accompany the article.

To apply, provide the following information; submit by Email or postal mail (Portland Literacy Council, PO Box 2872, Portland OR 97208-2872). PLC must receive applications by October 17, 2011. Questions? Contact Portland Literacy Council.

1. Name of organization
2. Name of person submitting application
3. Applicant's title or role in the organization
4. Phone number
5. Email address
6. Mailing address
7. Verify nonprofit status; include Tax ID Number
8. In 500 words or less briefly describe your program and how it would use \$500.

For information about PLC.

We look forward to your submission.

## What's In Your Tutor Toolbox?

Sponsored by Kathleen Holloway

Volunteer Literacy Program Coordinator, PCC Southeast Center

*This monthly feature will focus on resources for tutors and learners. We will be checking in with VLT coordinators and other adult literacy practitioners and advocates each issue.*

Goodwill Community Foundation International (GCF)

This delightful website is a virtual gold mine. Learners can access interactive videos and other learning tools for everyday activities. They have access to Email, math, job development, money, careers, reading, Internet basics, and numerous other topics. The computer section includes the array of Microsoft Office products.

I looked at mixing a recipe, baking a cake, getting to a job interview, and matching vocabulary words with images. Learners can choose both video and written

instructions. I found that baking a cake required some precision with the mouse to select temperature and time; it was a good how-to exercise. Locating the bus route for the job interview required trial and error to choose a bus map. I recommend tutors preview lessons so they can help their students. The background music and narrative asides nicely complement the video.

Kathleen Holloway advises this site is suitable for ESOL Level 3 students.

*Reviewer: Peggy L. Murphy*

## See You at International Literacy Day—Wednesday, September 7

Join Multnomah County Library, Central Branch, September 7, for "Literacy is Power," to celebrate International Literacy Day. The Literacy fair runs from 1-3 p.m. Light refreshments will be served from 4-5 p.m., with entertainment from 5-7 p.m. provided by Colored Pencils Art and Culture Council.

Seating is limited for refreshments and entertainment; free tickets will be distributed after 3:30 p.m. For more details contact Melissa Madenski, phone 503-988-6318.

***Portland Literacy Council will be at International Literacy Day – come see us.***

## For Your Calendar

### Volunteer Literacy Tutor Training

September 24 and October 1, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Sylvania Campus PCC

### GED Scrabble Tournament

PLC is again sponsoring a Scrabble Tournament to benefit its GED Test Scholarship Fund. The tournament is Saturday, October 29, 2011, Gotham Tavern, 2240 N Interstate Avenue. Registration fees are donated to the Portland Literacy Council GED Test Scholarship Fund. See the October LiteracyLinks for more details.

## Opportunities

### Job Announcement

#### Site Supervisor for Volunteer Tutor Training

Set-up and take-down for training on two Saturdays, \$140 total pay for two days' work.

**For full information and to apply:** Submit resume, three references, and letter of introduction to Kathleen Holloway, Volunteer Literacy Tutoring Program Coordinator, Portland Community College, SE Center, T 123c, 2305 SE 82nd Ave., Portland, OR 97216. Phone (971) 722-6280.

### Library GED Labs

Multnomah County Library in September resumes Learning Labs: Guide to GED Resources. Registration and orientation are required. Candidates who complete the series of labs qualify for a testing scholarship at Londer Learning Center.