

Literacy Links

Fall
2009

a newsletter for volunteer tutors

editor, Kris Magaurn, PCC Tutor Coordinator, Tigard Senior Center

Local Adult Literacy Program Strives to Improve Lives

The journeys of these students have been made possible through a unique school for adults—Multnomah County's Londer Learning Center, run by the county's community corrections agency—the Department of Community Justice. For many people, the idea of finishing high school is not a big deal. But for Londer students—most of whom have struggled with criminal behaviors, addiction, learning challenges and negative school experiences—earning a GED or improving reading, writing and math is a life-changing event.

"I've struggled with drugs for 9 years. I always wanted to pursue my education, then I heard about the LLC. It changed my life."

"I have an 8th grade education. I've lived on the streets and been in jail. My chance at getting a GED will give me a lot of hope. That is why the Londer Center is important. For people like myself, it is hard to gain hope when you've felt like a failure most of your adult life."

At Londer, educators work in collaboration with corrections counselors, probation/parole officers, courts and drug/alcohol treatment centers to ensure ex-offenders gain the skills they need to stay crime-free, drug-free, and become more employable. Londer also works closely with Multnomah County Library through field trips, the Everybody Reads community reading program, and the new adult learning labs. Partnerships with Portland Community College ease transition from GED to college.

What began as a small drop-in learning lab created as an educational alternative to jail, Londer has become a thriving school with structured course work - three levels of reading, two levels of writing and math, GED testing, as well as ESOL courses. The center now serves more than 650 adults each year. Another 350 adults access employment skills programming.

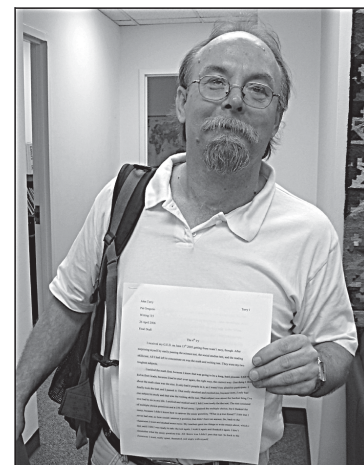
Does the center really work to reduce crime? Research shows that students attending Londer regularly are, indeed,

many of our students have learning challenges of some sort (learning disabilities, ADD, ADHD, memory issues), on Saturday, October 17, we will offer a free tutor training workshop specifically in working with adults who have learning disabilities.

The October 17 workshop will be co-sponsored by the adult literacy program at Multnomah County Library. Adult learners who need more learning time outside class, or who are unable to attend formal classes now have new learning pathways available at the library. Adult Literacy Coordinator

less likely to return to jail. The center addresses what are known as "prime criminogenic risk factors:" low education, lack of employment, weak problem solving and self-management skills. As such, the school has become an integral part of community corrections in Multnomah County.

Recently, we've seen an increase in enrollment, so we are making efforts to recruit more volunteers to help our students who are studying for a GED or who need to improve basic reading, writing and math skills. Because



A Londer graduate who battled homelessness, now studying at Portland Community College

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Recommendations from Multnomah County Library

By Melissa Medanski, Multnomah County Library Adult Literacy Coordinator



Did You Know?

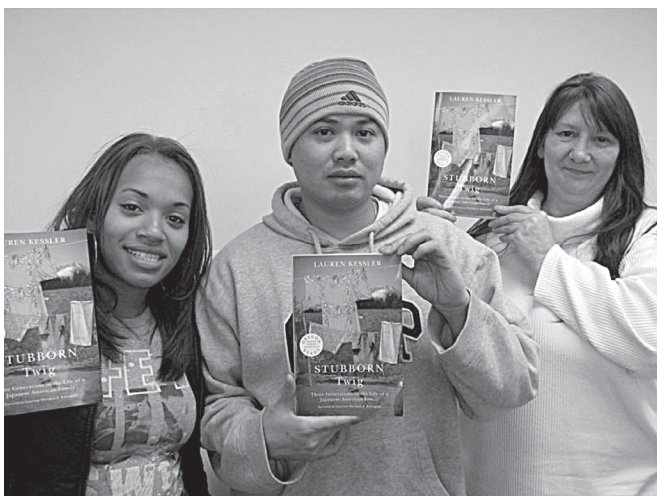
Supported by a generous grant from the Friends of the Library, Multnomah County Library is launching a program of learning labs. Beginning September 9th, Wednesday evenings from 6-7:45 p.m. at North Portland Library, "Learning Labs: Guide to GED Resources" will help patrons learn about what is available at neighborhood libraries and on websites to help them study for a GED certificate at home or on public computers. Six 2-hour sessions will highlight resources, offer practice tests and include an hour to study on library computers. Register by calling reference line: 503.988.5234. Questions - phone Melissa Madenski, Adult Literacy Coordinator, 503.988.6318.

"Learning Labs: Guide to ELL Resources" will begin Sunday, October 4th at Rockwood Library from 2-4 p.m. The sessions will be taught in English and will guide patrons through the choices for English study on the "Lifeskills & Literacy" MCL website. An hour of practice is included in every session. Patrons may sign up with a tutor or translator. Sessions are free and registration is required as space is limited. (If a patron comes with a tutor, both need to register) Register by phoning reference line: 503.988.5234.

Talk Time Programs (drop-in English conversation practice) continue on a weekly basis at Rockwood, Midland, Holgate and Central Library. Intercambio language exchanges meet at the following neighborhood libraries: Fairview-Columbia, Gregory Heights, Gresham, Midland, North Portland, Rockwood and St. John's. Every two months, citizenship classes are started at various neighborhood library locations. Come join us!

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Local Adult Literacy Program Strives to Improve Lives



Londer students read *Stubborn Twig* during the library's 2009 Everybody Reads community reading event.

Melissa Madenski will showcase these new resources, and share how tutors can optimize learning and teaching opportunities for adult literacy students.

It's important to note that success at Londer isn't necessarily getting a GED, especially since 70% of students do not enter with skills to pass GED tests. We do measure skill gains on CASAS tests, but we achieve real success when students stay engaged, develop positive attitudes toward school, improve interpersonal skills and gain self-esteem. And that's what leads to profound changes in our students' lives.

For more information about Londer Learning Center and to register for the Saturday, Oct. 17 workshop, please call Carole Scholl, manager, 503-988-6828, or visit our website at: <http://www.co.multnomah.or.us/dcj/asdllcindex.shtml>

Board Member Visits School in Ukraine

by Penny Russman, PLC Board Member

In May, 2009, I accompanied eight professionals in various fields of medicine and education to Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine, an industrial city four hours south of Kiev. Sponsored by the Jewish Community Relations Council, the purpose of the visit was to help the burgeoning Jewish community there build up its infrastructure. Because of my background in teaching ESL I was asked to evaluate the English language program at the Jewish Day School, which includes children from kindergarten through tenth grade.

During my visit, I talked with teachers and administrators, observed classroom sessions and was able to wander about freely, poking my nose into all sorts of places. I participated in school assemblies and a memorial service, and felt very much an adopted member of the day school faculty. All this in one week!

I was impressed with the small classes and the opportunities for individual enrichment. The children study an English curriculum established by the Ukraine ministry of education. The students need to pass mastery tests based on this curriculum. Given the fact that the children must learn four languages, Russian, Ukrainian, Hebrew and English, it is no small task to give enough time to each.

I brought many books and materials to the school. They were especially interested in the postcards from Oregon - which they think of as a far away and magical place. While most of the teachers were fluent in English to some degree, there were relatively few opportunities for them to improve their conversational English skills since there are few native English speakers in the area.

Dnepropetrovsk is a somber city in a somber country, but it is opening up to new ideas with the help of organizations like the JCRC. We were treated royally, with lovely dinners, discussions and entertainments. We felt a part of the community, and made fast friends in a short amount of time. It was exciting to help a community come together. All of us came away with the intention to return to the city on the Dnep River, sharing our languages and cultures for good and goodwill.



Penny Russman with students and teachers at the Jewish Day School in Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine.

Portland Literacy Council Sends Books to China

By Kris Magaurn, PLC Board Member



State Librarian Jim Schepcke loading books for China.

During the summer, PLC participated in the Books-for-China Project sponsored by the Oregon State Library. This goodwill project between Oregon and its sister province of Fujian began last winter when libraries and other groups about the state were asked to help fill a shipping container with good condition, quality books that could be sent to Fujian for distribution to academic libraries there. When Oregon Literacy closed its doors last spring, PLC received many of the books from their store. After distributing some of these books to local agencies and tutors, PLC decided to send the remainder to the China project.

PLC board member Jay Morgensen made several trips to Salem with more than 30 boxes of books. He also spent several days with Dehong Xiao who is the Director of the Xiamen University Library, the largest and best university library in Oregon's sister province of Fujian. The Books-for-China Project was initiated by Dehong when he visited Oregon last fall to work out a sister library relationship between UO libraries and his library. During his stay, Jay spent quite a bit of time with Dehong, driving him around Portland and Eugene. Jay even attended a Blazer game with him and other library staff who described Dehong as the "coolest librarian in Fujian", and were inspired by his energy, humor and many ideas about how to strengthen Oregon ties with libraries in Fujian.

Announcements

Promoting literacy in our community.

Portland Literacy Council
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2009 - 2010
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Looking for Tools to Help Your Student?

Have you checked out the Learner Web? Create a free account and find tools to support your learner. Learnerweb.org

Save the Date

The next Tutor Conference is March 13, 2010 at Reed College.

Portland Literacy Council Website Expanded

Many additions have been made to the PLC website. Now you can find information about programs and resources for tutors and students, including websites and downloadable PCC packets. You can access current and back issues of the Literacy Link newsletter as well as information about the PLC scholarship program for GED. There is information about the Tutor Conference, and soon the conference registration form will be available there, too. Go to www.portlandliteracy.org to see the expanded website.

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