



LITERACY CONNECTOR

Spring/Summer 2015

Literacy Connections

is dedicated to developing and offering programs and services to support a literate society. We recruit and train volunteers to provide no-cost student-centered tutoring primarily for adults, and we offer programs and services for children and families that promote independence and enrichment through literacy.



Programs:

Adult & Family Literacy
One-to-One Adult Basic
Literacy Tutoring
Certified Tutor Training
English as a Second
Language
Book Buddies &
Classroom Book Buddies
Corrections Education
Workplace Literacy Skills
Computer Aided Literacy

"Toto, I have a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore."



Ever walked into a place and thought it was not the same? I have. Twice in the past three years. When our Executive Director relocated to be near family, and just recently one Friday morning as I walked into the office and noticed Marian Thompson's desk was empty. Did she tidy up? Was she late? No. Marian has retired!

After twenty years of loyal, dedicated service to Literacy Connections our good friend Marian has moved on to that wonderful land we call retirement. The place where, I've been told, you do "whatever and whenever" you feel like it. So it sunk in, a valued member of our staff will no longer walk through our doors in the morning, sit with us for lunch, and so passionately advocate for her students and volunteers. Yes, suddenly the landscape has changed. We're no longer in Kansas!

As with any good story, there is excitement and adventure outside Kansas and, Marian is entering that new world. We would be selfish not to be happy for her and wish her the very best.

Thanks to Marian's many talents and

hard work, our office in Columbia-Greene County exists, the Tutor Training workshops are well established, and our ESL Drop-in centers are successfully running.

We will miss Marian. The contributions she's made to LC and the impact she's had on our volunteers and students are immeasurable.

It's been a true pleasure working with Marian. Her generous spirit, gentle demeanor and sense of duty, and hard work have been an inspiration.

Marian, from the entire LC family: best of luck, good health and abundant happiness in your retirement. **We will all miss you!**

We would be remiss if we did not take this opportunity to also THANK Gleed, Marian's husband. Gleed has helped, volunteered, moved things and supported Marian (and LC) every step of the way. We'll miss you too Gleed.



Gleed & Marian Thompson



SUCCESS

Linda came to this country when she was 12 years old. Although she felt a deep sense of culture shock and confusion, her sunny personality and quick wit helped her to adapt to this new world and learn English as a second language. She never felt super successful in school; she always struggled with her reading and found creative ways to get by and fit in academically. After graduating High School, she breathed a sigh of relief and set about creating a life for herself. She experienced some hard times, but will be the first to say that her life has been very blessed. Linda has beautiful and intelligent children, a loving husband and a steady job with Metro North as a Janitorial Supervisor of the Cars, or, as she calls it, "The Train Cleaning Lady".

Although Linda earns decent wages and is well liked and respected by co-workers, she aspired for more and knew she was capable of more.

When a conductor job opened up, her immediate supervisor offered her the job. In fact, he could think of no one better or more qualified. However, there was a catch, one that made Linda's stomach sink to her toes. She would have to pass the Conductor's Exam, which is quite intense and includes a whole lot of reading comprehension.

Understanding the challenge before her, she pushed back her fears and arranged to take the test. She failed it. So she tried again. And failed it again. After two more tries and her self esteem in tatters, she struggled with what to do.

One night, while cruising the internet, she came upon Literacy Connections website and bravely walked into our office the very next day unsure of how to ask for help and telling her story punctuated with misty eyes and a bowed head.

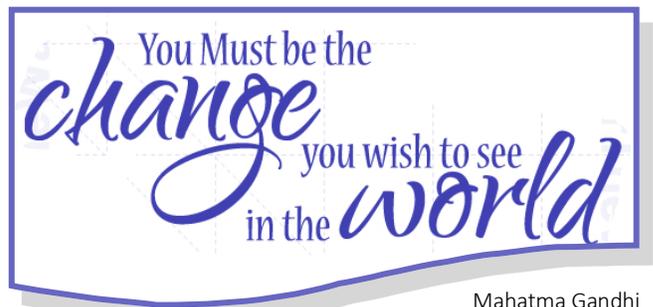
With the help of a Literacy Connections tutor, Linda

learned reading comprehension and testing techniques, and gained the self-confidence needed to try again. On the fifth try, Linda passed the conductor's test with flying colors!

Armed with the security of a better job and increased earnings, Linda is on her way to provide more for her family, including a college education for her son, the first person in her family to go to college. She can now think of things like vacation, paying off the mortgage and saving for retirement.

For Linda, the best part is getting past thinking of herself as an outcast in America, a semi-literate woman who would always be marked as half-in and half-out of two cultures. She now holds her head high and feels as though the deep wound of shame is finally starting to heal.

Linda represents the fighting spirit that we see in so many of our students; the hunger to be able to live and not just survive, the longing to see words on a page and be able to understand them. Although not all of our successes are quite so dramatically delineated, Literacy Connections has helped people like Linda to read, write and reach their potential for 40 years. Every lesson is an opportunity to give people the ability to move out of the twilight and into the sun of society.



Mahatma Gandhi



Congratulations Avis!

Avis passed her citizenship test with help from her tutor Candy Pasterzi.

Hudson Area News...



This spring we bid farewell to Terez Limer, our Hudson Area Coordinator, and welcomed back Heather Martin (our previous coordinator).

Terez has retired and is in pursuit of her hobbies and traveling, but will continue to volunteer and contribute to LC. We wish her the very best and are fortunate to continue to have her on our team.

Heather took off running attending the Volunteer Fair at the Roeliff Jansen Community Library in April, and the Agency Awareness Day in May at Columbia Greene Community College joined by none other than Terez!

Terez has done a wonderful job in Hudson and we are confident that Heather will continue the success of the program - already evident by the wonderful stories we are getting from the students:

- Mohammed, Mojahid, and Shuhel have recently found employment.
- Afroz and her husband recently purchased a home.
- Shanto got her driver's license.



Barbara Green-Flood, Program Coordinator for the Corrections Education Program, has done a fantastic job fostering partnerships and community support for the program. Barbara's hard work, dedication and persistence to bring literacy behind bars has paid off. We have reached our goal of enrolling over 80 inmates into the program.

If you believe in second chances and want to be part of this exciting and growing program, please email Barbara at Bflood@literacyconnections.org.

We have made great progress again this year and more children are being helped than ever before!



There are currently 85 Book Buddies volunteers helping over 120 children! We now have volunteers in 7 schools across 5 school districts including our newest addition—GAMS in Newburgh.

The teachers and principals see the value of having the program in their schools. We have received feedback from the teachers, students and administrators:

- Student: *"I'm going to bring these sight words home and study...just wait until you see how many words I know next week!"*
- Teacher: *"The progress I see in this student is great, and you are a huge contributor to that."*
- Poughkeepsie District Administrator: *"We would like to continue the Book Buddies partnership this summer."*

Book Buddies EXPANDS to Orange County!



Thanks to funds provided by United Way (and a private donation), we were able to expand the Book Buddies program to the Newburgh Enlarged School District and welcome Dottie Patriot as the Book Buddies Coordinator for Orange County.

Dottie has 34 years experience in education and is an adjunct professor at SUNY New Paltz teaching literacy to aspiring teachers. We could not be happier with the new addition to the staff.



"Helping people to read, write, and reach their potential."

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Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much! -Helen Keller



Tutor Training Workshop

For Adult Basic Education
July 18 & 25
Call 452-8670 to register



Get the word out...

We have a new **ESL Class**
Thursday 9:30 – 11 AM
LC office



TUTORS:

1. Schedule your students for testing
2. Submit your progress report
3. Return all unused books

Celebrating
40
Years

Join us

in celebrating our 40th Anniversary helping people in our community achieve the basic literacy skills needed to succeed in society.

**Saturday
September 19, 2015**

Special Silent Auction Reception
11:30 AM — 12:30 PM

Brunch

12:30 PM — 3:30 PM
Villa Borghese
Wappingers Falls, NY

Programs funded by: Dutchess County Agency Partnership Grant * Dutchess Community College * Dyson Foundation * Literacy New York * NYS Education Dept. * United Way of Columbia & Greene Counties * United Way of Dutchess-Orange Region