

Literacy of Northern New York Newsletter December 2016

50th Anniversary in 2017



Literacy of Northern New York will celebrate its **50th anniversary** in 2017. We are looking for volunteers to serve on a committee to help us plan how we are going to celebrate this milestone. If you would like to help out, please contact Cecilia at 782-4270 or email her at cbrock7@verizon.net

Welcome New Board Members.

We welcomed two new board members at our November meeting. The two new members are **Carla Haas**, a retired social worker, and **Erika Montandon**, an engineer from Brazil who works at the ATTAIN Lab. Carla has volunteered her time as an English as a Second Language tutor since 2013. She is in the office several days a week, working with a total of four students who were born in Burkina Faso, Africa; Vietnam, Thailand and Puerto Rico. Carla makes learning fun and her students enjoy her lessons immensely. One of her students frequently tells the staff to never take her tutor away. Carla also currently volunteers at the Urban Mission and has always been active in the community. She previously served as the president of United Way's Board of Directors and chaired their Community Allocations Committee. She is also a past president of Planned Parenthood and served on the board of Transitional Living Services.

Erika first came to LNNY in 2009 as an ESL student who wanted to improve her English language skills. A dedicated student, she attended our ESL classes and also worked with two tutors: Linda Blake and Julie Reed-Keegan. Erika gave back to the program by becoming a math tutor and an ESL tutor. She also spoke to funders such as United Way and accompanied Cecilia when she spoke to the staff at Samaritan Medical Center several years ago as part of their United Way campaign. She is the STEM chairwoman of the local chapter of the American Association of University Women, a church school teacher at St. Patrick's, and coaches children competing in the Odyssey of the Mind.

Scarlett Sharkey, relocation program manager at Fort Drum's Army Community Services, will join the board in January. She has been a wonderful partner to work with regarding the ESL classes at Fort Drum.

Student Demand Remains High

We have been inundated with new students recently. Currently, there is a growing waiting list for ESL, reading, and math tutors in Jefferson and Lewis Counties. The Watertown office is running a second in-house tutor training course in Watertown in November/December and a math training is scheduled for 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday, December 3rd.



If you know anyone who might be interested in becoming a tutor, please pass on the contact information for LNNY. We also have an **online tutor training option** available.

Children's Book Drive

Every December we give away children's books to needy families. **If you have some gently used children's books, please consider donating them to us.** We especially need hard-covered books for preschoolers. We don't need any college textbooks or National Geographic magazines.

Outreach Events Highlight the Need for LNNY Services in Lewis and Jefferson Counties

Sheree Vora, president of the Lowville Lions Club, invited Deborah to speak at their November meeting. The Lions Club has been a very generous donor to LNNY over the years. Some of the member lions were physicians and pointed out the difficulties low-level readers experience when trying to fill out medical forms.

At another outreach event, at the invitation of Paul Gugel and Sally Espinoza (Migrant Workers Education Program), Deborah gave a presentation in Spanish (with Paul and April's translation help) and English at the Universalist Church in Watertown, where there was a meeting for Spanish wives. Paul and April offer services, including ESL tutoring, to Spanish-speaking wives in the rural areas. The wives were very enthusiastic about learning English. Several wives signed up for tutors and a husband and wife are now attending the classes in Watertown. This is another area in which tutors are needed.

The **Fort Drum ESL classes** have become so popular that we are holding double classes. Intermediate students are coming during the beginner time slot and staying for the scheduled intermediate session. Likewise, beginner students are staying for the intermediate time slot. Consequently, there are two classes for both beginner and intermediate students on both Tuesdays and Thursdays. The instructors make sure to split the levels so content is relevant to the group's level. The volunteers, Jennifer, Jennifer Cave, Hiba, Hannah, Christine, and Jessica have been wonderful about ensuring that the needs of the students are met. Scarlett Sharkey, relocation program manager at Army Community Services is on the lookout for more volunteers.



Winter – How to Dress Warmly!

Diane Peebles, from the Relocation Readiness at Fort Drum's Army Community Services, gave a presentation and demonstration about dressing for winter in the North Country. Some of the students at Fort Drum did not even know the word "snow", and of course have never seen it. Diane brought in winter clothing and showed the group the proper way to stay warm in the winter. We are encouraging the students not to stay indoors and come out to class throughout the winter so they can avoid "cabin fever." Diane spoke of someone who asked what can someone take to cure cabin fever, one of those cute stories about learning what winter is like in the North Country.



Diane Peebles talking to Fort Drum ESL students about keeping warm in winter.



The **Fort Drum ESL classes** celebrated with a pre-Thanksgiving potluck event. Students brought in food from their countries to share and enjoyed tasting favorite dishes from around the world.



Congratulations to Students and Tutors!



Dong Han

Dong Han came from Korea with a goal of entering Jefferson Community College. After he failed to score high enough on their entry test, he came to our ESL classes in Watertown. Dong was warned that he would be given lots of homework because he wanted to retake the Accuplacer test at J.C.C. in a month's time. Dong retook the test and achieved high scores in reading and sentence skills. His scores far exceeded the requirements to enter J.C.C.

This past year, **Sally Brennan**, a Lewis County board member and tutor, worked with a military spouse from Germany. Her student, Josie Sabellico, was a nurse in Germany and needed to pass the TOEFL test (Test of English as a Foreign Language) so she could get her U.S. credentials to work as a nurse. Sally recently received the good news that her student passed the TOEFL test. The difficult test requires advanced skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. It is a challenge for both student and tutor. Sally embraced the challenge, which is not an easy task. Josie first found out about our program through our Facebook page.



Josie Sabellico and her daughter