

Literacy of Northern New York October 2020 Newsletter

Garage Sale is a Success!

Thank you to Watertown Savings Bank for sponsoring our Sept. 26 garage sale. We made \$1,506 and it was a beautiful day for the outdoor event. Thank you to Board Members Denise Brownell and Denise Randall for organizing and working all day at the event, and to the Watertown Savings Bank employees who helped us set up the event. Thanks too to Board Members Allen Goudie and Carla Haas for working at the event, along with our staff, Deborah, Annie, Cecilia and her husband, Chris Brock.



Dress Down Day Fundraiser Benefits Literacy



The employees of Watertown Savings Bank donated \$500 to Literacy of Northern NY as part of their Dress Down Days in September. WSB does so much to help nonprofits in the community. We appreciate their generosity and support of Literacy of Northern NY. Brandi Phillips, left, presented LNNY Director M. Cecilia Brock with the check.

Zoom Meetings with Senator Patty Ritchie and Assemblyman Mark Walczyk

We would like to thank Senator Patty Ritchie, Assemblyman Mark Walczyk, and Logan Eddie, Deputy Chief of Staff for Patty Ritchie, for meeting on Zoom with us on Sept. 23. Executive Director M. Cecilia Brock spoke about our program services and some of our success stories. She also mentioned how New York State was delaying paying out on its state contracts, which was adversely affecting LNNY. Board Members Denise Brownell and Allen Goudie participated in the meeting. Denise spoke about her student, Shari, and how she passed a Civil Service exam she had to take to keep her job. LNNY Program Assistant Annie Siamwala and two ESL students, Walter and Selene, spoke about how our ESL classes help students. Kathy Houghton, director of Literacy NY, Danielle Grassi, Literacy NY and Lisa Lee from Literacy West also participated in the meetings. Literacy NY organized the Zoom meetings as part of a week-long effort to communicate with state legislators about delayed state funding. Senator Patty Ritchie volunteered to write a letter to Gov. Mario Cuomo about the delayed funding and Assemblyman Walczyk agreed to sign it. Other state legislators also signed the letter. We appreciate the support from our local state representatives. Thanks to them, LNNY received

reimbursement from the state on Oct. 2 for work we did during April – June. We continue to wait for our new state contract for the time period that began July 1 to be signed by state officials and for that funding to start flowing.

Zoom Classes Now Offered to Supplement the Watertown Monday/Wednesday ESL Classes

Program Manager Deborah Tate is going to offer hybrid classes to provide both online Zoom classes and in-person English as a Second Language classes. Some students from last fiscal year are reluctant to attend in-person classes because of Covid-19. We hate to lose these students so we are restarting Zoom classes on Oct. 15.

Heading Back Home to Cameroon

Jacqueline, from Cameroon, came to Watertown several months ago to visit her daughter, Christiane, a military spouse. Christiane is a friend of one of the Fort Drum ESL students and brought Jacqueline to LNNY to register for the classes. Jacqueline attended Deborah's class twice per week for four hours each class. She has now returned to her family and told us how much she appreciated the classes. Sarah Waldroff, our Utica College intern, has joined the class to help with the teaching. Sarah and Jacqueline, are pictured at right.



Fort Drum News from Annie Siamwala, Program Assistant



The children are back to school and so are our fantastic ESL adult learners! Our dedicated students have been working hard on their reading, writing, listening comprehension and English speaking skills. ESL classes are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Family Resource Center. The Beginner class meets from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and the intermediate class meets from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Looking forward to seeing all of our students (old and new) in the classroom again!

Selene, pictured at right, has attended both Fort Drum and Watertown ESL classes since January, 2017.

Scarlett Sharkey, Relocation Program Manager, Soldier & Family Readiness Division, facilitated the ordering of new textbooks for High Beginner and Low Intermediate ESL students. Scarlett and her assistant, Dan, have been very helpful moving all of the materials to the new location and setting up the classroom. Annie and her volunteer, Paige, have been working hard to help their students learn English so they can thrive in the North Country.