

*Literacy of Northern NY  
December 2024 Newsletter*

*Happy Holidays to LNNY  
tutors, students, and Board members*



**Healthy Communication Grant**

Excellus BlueCross BlueShield has awarded a \$3,500 grant to Literacy of Northern NY to teach our English as a Second Language about health topics so they can communicate their needs when visiting a medical professional. Students who do not speak English well are more likely to skip preventative care and not understand follow-up treatment plans, leading to poor health outcomes. When a student first enters our program, we ask if they have medical insurance and if they do not, we help sign them up for health care.

We are deeply grateful to Excellus BlueCross BlueShield for this wonderful grant!



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**Fort Drum News**

Silvia Melcher, our Program Assistant for two years, left in October to take a new career path. Silvia was popular with the students and knew how to throw a great party. She always went above and beyond to help her students. We also said goodbye to Tanya Walls, a native of Australia, who was a wonderful, dedicated volunteer at our Fort Drum classes. Tanya is pictured at the far left.



*A farewell party for Silvia at Fort Drum and also painting pumpkins.*

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Barbara Zembiec, at left, pictured with Binh, one of her students, is subbing in as our Fort Drum ESL teacher while we search for a permanent replacement. Barb also subbed in all summer at Fort Drum. Barb is a retired teacher who worked for many years for the Watertown City School District.

### ***New Tutors***

LNNY welcomes new ESL teacher Elizabeth Scott-Mc Grath. Liz has taught for many years, including in the Syracuse City school system. She teaches the Monday evening Zoom class for high beginner ESL students.

Jefferson County has two new tutors. Maggie Keefe is working with a Ukrainian teenager who also attends the Watertown classes. Next year, Maggie will study speech therapy.

Danielle Ruppe is another new Jefferson County tutor. Danielle has a Master's Degree in Literacy and has taught at different schools. She took the online ESL tutor training to be trained in ESL as well as Literacy. She is matched with a Haitian student who also needs help with reading and writing English.

### ***Literacy of NNY also welcomes two new tutors in Lewis County.***

Jeanne Mc Laughlin brings many years of experience teaching English at Lowville Academy. She will work with two Haitian ESL students.

Beate Kinzel, also from the Lowville area, taught German at Jefferson Community College. She currently teaches Information Management online.

### ***Watertown Updates***

LNNY has increased the number of hours offered for our ESL classes. The classes now meet Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday mornings. The Intermediate class meets first, for two hours, followed by the Beginner class, also two hours. Some students in the classes also meet with a tutor.

### ***LNNY Faces -***

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*Ursula, from the Dominican Republic, attends the Watertown Beginner ESL class. She helped Deborah staff a booth at Calcium Primary School's English as a New Language multicultural celebration.*



*From the left - Guli, Gabby (who helped the others), and Nagely at the Fort Drum class.*



### Some Great Student Outcomes Our students have been busy! Here are their stories –

Yevhen and Valerii both passed the road test to get their driver's license.

Ursula received her certificates in Cosmetology and Infection Control.

Avis received a promotion at his job at Alteri.

Albina has a part-time job at Shorty's restaurant.

Ruslan has a part-time job doing maintenance at the complex where he lives. He has been attending training in December to drive commercial vehicles.

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Lan, pictured at left, a former student at Fort Drum, passed the ASVAB military exam this past spring and has completed basic training. She is now a soldier posted at Fort Drum, where her husband, Sunyoung, is also stationed. Sunyoung attends our Intermediate ESL class.

### Resource for ESL Tutors

Here is a teaching resource you may find useful from an organization called Pathway to Literacy:

<https://www.pathwaytoliteracy.org/theme-based-vocab-photo-banks>

The pictures are organized thematically, and available in slide show format. There are lesson suggestions included. The slides cover a number of topics that may be of interest to your learners.

**The slides are especially helpful for beginner students.**

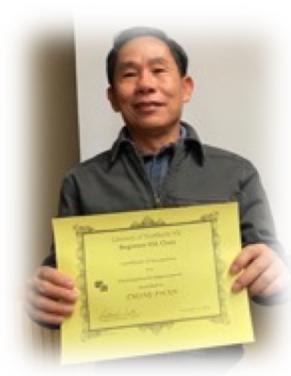
The site has a lot of other resources, most in slide show format-- check it out!



*Our Watertown Beginner Class says good bye to Binh, center, who is moving to Texas with his son, who is in the military. Binh took the bus to class and attended faithfully. We wish him well in his future endeavors!*

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It is holiday time, the time of year when students share food from their countries at the potluck lunches. Watertown ESL classes are pictured below enjoying their lunch on December 11. ESL Teacher Deborah Tate gave the students certificates of achievement for working so hard to learn English. Pictured at left is Andriy, a native of Ukraine, and Thong, far right, a native of Vietnam.



Fort Drum classes not only brought food to their lunch on December 19, they also made gingerbread houses provided by their teacher, Barbara Zembiec.

The winner of the gingerbread house contest was Joanna, one of our newer students at our Fort Drum classes. She is a native of Mexico.



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Gabby and Jhoana working on their gingerbread houses. These two soldiers have had great attendance at our ESL classes and always participate in class.

Anastasiia, a native of Russia, shows off her creation. Anastasiia says it's colder in the North Country than in southern Russia. Go figure!



Jose, a native of Ecuador, shows off his gingerbread house. Besides working full-time, he is going to start attending college in 2025.