



# WALC TALK

WHITTIER AREA LITERACY COUNCIL

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A message from our president, Pat Almada.

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“It’s just an intermission,” reads the marquee at Whittier College’s Shannon Center for Performing Arts. As I assume the presidency of our magnificent organization, it is my hope that this health crisis is, indeed, just an intermission, and that we will soon be able to return to our face-to-face interaction with students.

During this “intermission”, our organization has remained cognizant of the ever growing needs of our students; we have sent over a hundred books home with them, we have continued to tutor virtually or on the phone, we have distributed instructional materials to tutors as needed, our board has met through ZOOM and we have begun planning for a safe reopening. I would like to commend our board and students for their persistence and fortitude in keeping in touch with their students under the most trying of circumstances. In this newsletter you can read some of our tutors’ stories in dealing with virtual tutoring.

Our goals for this fiscal/academic year are modest but crucial.

1. Maintain tutors and students actively engaged in the organization.
2. Maintain all fiscal and legal requirements of the organization.
3. Safely re-open to the public.
4. Use this opportunity to update/revise our delivery methods for training and tutoring to meet the needs of this time.

You can help us achieve our goals by continuing to support WALC as much as you are able. Every contribution will be used to replace the books given out during the pandemic and to pay for our operational costs. Our Scrabble tournament will be held virtually this year, you will find details in this newsletter. Visit our website to [donate online](#), if you wish.

In closing, I would like to thank past president Celia McCabe for her patience and determination during her term and the fantastic members of our board of directors and advisory board. I am proud to be a member of this group of dedicated and faithful literacy warriors! For more information visit <http://walcread.org/>

## WALC COVID-19 RESPONSE

Cel Carr and Teresa Price, board members, attended a webinar on June 23, 2020 regarding Covid-19 and safely returning to work. This was hosted by the State Compensation Insurance Fund, California's workplace safety expert and largest workers' compensation insurer.

The webinar was the first step in our creating a plan to safely open the center and to have all safety procedures and protocols in place. At this time, we do not have a date when we will return to onsite tutoring as we are following the state and county regulations. Cel and Teresa have volunteered to create our plan for when we do return.

The following steps were recommended during the webinar:

- What's required of employers in the Governor's resilience Roadmap for reopening businesses
- How to conduct a risk assessment and evaluate hazards related to Covid-19 at our site
- Tips for adjusting the work environment and processes to reduce the spread of the virus
- Workplace cleaning procedures for COVID-19
- Tips for training employees/tutors on new control measures and requirements
- How to create a written Pandemic Preparedness and Control Plan for the center

## TUTORING UPDATE

We are filled with gratitude and pride for all our tutors who have had to reinvent the delivery of our tutoring lessons over the phone. Our tutors and our WALC supporters have gone the extra mile to continue to promote our mission to help build literacy.

Phone tutoring has been a new and challenging way to work. Since we cannot meet face to face, we are required to really think on our feet and present lessons that we hope capture the students' interest and participation. We have had to listen very attentively and sensitively to what is said and what is not said.

Our school age and adult students have shown so much resiliency and trust. A great burden has been placed upon all of them. Our adult students, due to the pandemic, may have added responsibilities and worries for family, friends and work and may be limited in their participation even by phone. Our school age students must also adjust to a new way of learning that is especially difficult for them and yet may need to continue. Our support and regular communication with them is very important. Your efforts on their behalf are not only admirable but also very welcomed.

In the end, what is most important and always has been is that each conversation whether a "friendly check-in" or lesson, shows our students in a very tangible way that we care. If some lessons are not quite what we hoped, that is part of the up and down nature of tutoring. Our phone contact encourages and inspires our students by reminding them that they matter and that we are their *partners in learning*.

THANK YOU!

## TUTORING IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

### Board Member and Tutor, Yolanda Carillo

Yes, I've been tutoring one student via phone calls only. Until recently we've been reading a book (he's read 95% of the time) together Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for an average of about 2 hours per week. I place the call at a set time but he's called me if I forget and am more than 10 minutes late! He's also studying "Fry" sight words. I have definitely noticed improvement with his reading and I think our sessions have gone well, but he has told me that he preferred our in-person tutoring at the WALC center. I asked "why?" and he answered "I don't know, I just like it there." He is a 7th grader at East Whittier Middle and started online classes this week, so we are back to a 2 days per week schedule. We miss the WALC center but he is working hard and is making progress.



### Tutor and Whittier College Senior, Amanda Molina

Tutoring remotely has been a challenge for everyone, but as a tutor I try my best to overcome these difficulties for the sake of my students. I tutor two students and have found that during these difficult times it is extremely important to not just focus on our reading lessons, but to also spend some time checking in with them about how they are feeling. I have also tried to express to them the importance of reading for joy, especially as they deal with some of the disappointment that comes with their school semester being done online. If reading a book that they truly enjoy can add some brightness to their day, that is a success.

"...as a tutor I try my best to overcome these difficulties for the sake of my students"

### Tutor and Whittier College Sophomore, Nayeli Trejo

I tutor two students. Virtual tutoring has been going great so far. It has its challenges, but we always find a way to overcome them. It is not the same as face to face tutoring, but it is still a way that helps make a difference in our students' lives. One program we use is Myon. Some of our favorite books have been, Batman and Robin, The Prints of the Man Behind the Mask, and the Octopus Army. I am happy to be a part of WALC.



## SOUP AND A GOOD BOOK



Though our spring Soup and a Good Book event was cancelled due to Covid-19, many excellent stories were submitted. Please enjoy these two stories, maybe while eating a bowl of delicious soup. We look forward to a time when we can enjoy our stories together.

### **Making a New Friend** **By Sixth Grader Ignacio Quintero**

At first I did not have a lot of friends so my teacher said to go around the classroom and make a new friend. I went around the classroom and found someone named Daymien. He seemed nice so we talked and became close friends. After a while he gave me his phone number so we talked on the phone and became best friends. We became best friends because we played together and had a lot of fun. Making a new best friend is hard but it's worth it.



### **My First Day of English Class** **By Veronica Rodriguez**

I arrived to my class ten minutes early even though I felt nervous. My hands and feet were shaking, I had a stomach ache. I started to sweat and I almost cried in the classroom. The room was dark like a scary cave. I felt panicky because I did not know any English and I felt I could not learn. When my teacher started class, I said, "I don't know anything." My teacher said, "Don't worry, you will learn with time." At that moment, I felt very encouraged and with a great desire to learn. After four years, I feel happy with my progress but I have not yet achieved my goal. I will keep trying even more with the help of my teacher.

**WHITTIER COLLEGE CONNECTION**

*Kudos to three WALC tutors  
who recently graduated from Whittier  
College.*

**Jenna Gilb** has volunteered with us for her entire college career. She started as a practicum student as part of a college reading course in her freshman year. Jenna then joined us as a volunteer tutor. Having had great success with her students, we know she will make a fabulous teacher. She plans on beginning her teaching credential work at Whittier College in the spring. She will also continue to be a volunteer tutor with us at WALC.

**Adela Lopez** has been both a work-study student and a volunteer tutor helping us at WALC for three years. She is a first-generation college student and plans to begin her teaching credential work at Whittier College in the spring. Adela has successfully worked with adults and school-age students, making a difference in each of their lives.

**Aileen Figueroa** is taking no time from her graduation as a biology major. She is busy studying for her Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) which she is set to take in September. Aileen tutored several students over the last 3 years and helped us rollout the A-Z Reading program. Even with her busy schedule, Aileen will continue to volunteer with us.

We wish these three stars much success in the future and know they take with them many positive memories of their time with WALC. We are grateful for all they have given to our students.

Even though Whittier College has decided to begin its fall semester completely online, we are determined to keep our WALC- College relationship going strong. Current work-study students and volunteer tutors are committed to staying on and continuing to provide services virtually. New students are applying for positions through the college Handshake application. There will be more stories to come.

**SAFE AT HOME SCRABBLE FUNDRAISER**

We invite you to relax, play scrabble at home with your family, and remember all the fun times you've enjoyed Scrabble at WALC. **Stay home and be safe.**

For over 58 years, WALC has continued to provide free of cost reading, and English as a second language tutoring to children and adults in our community.

Your generous donation during this global pandemic will allow our mission to continue, as we have had to cancel our fundraisers for this year. To encourage our students during this time, WALC has distributed hundreds of books and educational materials from our inventory. Many of our tutors have continued their tutoring services online, or over the phone since March without interruption.

We are looking forward to the day we can once again welcome our students, and do face-to-face tutoring instead of virtual tutoring. Thank you for your continued support of our organization.

Gratefully,

The WALC Board

**Location:**  
*Here, there, anywhere*

**Date:**  
*Today, tomorrow, any day*

**Time:**  
*Morning, afternoon, evening*

**Dress:**  
*At your discretion*

**RESPONSE FORM**

Name:

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Address:

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I'd like to send a donation to help support WALC, please accept my gift of:

\$25 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please send your donation to: WALC, PO Box 917 Whittier, CA 90601

**Paypal donations can be made [here!](#)**

**Tax ID# 95 - 4769694**



**WHITTIER AREA LITERACY COUNCIL  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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1st Vice President and Treasurer	Cel Carr
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**SHOP AND SUPPORT THE WHITTIER AREA LITERACY COUNCIL WITH AMAZON SMILE!**



AmazonSmile has donated over \$89 million dollars to over 1 million nonprofit organizations since 2014. For every purchase, [AmazonSmile](#) will donate \$.5% to WALC.

These are the simple steps:

1. Visit [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)
2. Login or set up your account
3. Select the Whittier Area Literacy Council as your designated charity
4. Start Shopping!

Amazon  
Smile

**WALC WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR GRANT FUNDERS, WHOSE GENEROSITY AND COMMITMENT SUSTAINS WALC IN OUR MISSION TO PROVIDE LITERACY SKILLS TO OUR STUDENTS.**

**Whittier Area  
Literacy  
Council Grant  
Funders**

- |                                     |                              |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| BCM Foundation                      | East Whittier Lions Club     |
| City of Whittier                    | Oltman’s Construction        |
| Credit Union of Southern California | Smart and Final              |
| LA County Supervisor Janice Hahn    | Weingart Foundation          |
| Keller Williams                     | Whittier Sunrise Rotary Club |
| Whittier Host Lions                 | Whittier Rotary Club         |
| Whittier Marketplace                |                              |



## MISSION STATEMENT

WALC is a non-profit volunteer organization dedicated to teaching people to read, write, and speak the English language (for free). WALC has served Whittier and adjacent communities since 1962. WALC's mission is to build a stronger, more literate community by connecting those who can help with those who need it the most. Through your generous donation, you can help WALC achieve its mission.

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**Phone:** 562-698-6598

**Email:** walcread@gmail.com

Visit us on the web at walcread.org

### Follow us on Social Media!



Be sure to "[Like](#)",  
Whittier Area  
Literacy Council



Follow us on [Twitter!](#)

## WHAT LEGACY WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEAVE THE WORLD?

WALC cherishes the support you have afforded us through the years as a tutor, donor or volunteer. You know us well and understand the importance of the work we do. You might consider extending your support for generations to come by making a planned or legacy gift to the Whittier Area Literacy Council, Inc.

**(ID: 95-4769694)**

A legacy gift can be a simple bequest in a will or trust, a beneficiary designation in a retirement fund or life insurance policy or a contribution in honor of a family member or event. If a legacy gift is something you would like to consider, please consult with your tax or legal advisor as to the benefits you may be entitled with respect to this or any other charitable gift.

