



LITERACY UPDATE

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Literacy Assistance Center

IN THIS ISSUE

- 4 Health Literacy Resources 5 Conferences and New Initiatives
6 Professional Development Opportunities 10 Family Literacy Project
11 Literacy News 12 NYSED Reorganization

Out of the Ivory Tower

College Students Get Involved in Adult Literacy

> by Paul Jurmo *Consultant, NYU Adjunct Professor*

Through a variety of programs—community service, service-learning classes, and federal work-study programs—college students nationwide are getting involved in literacy programs. This is good news for resource-strapped adult educators, since students can not only help out in the classroom or tutor adult learners but can also perform other services such as designing publications and websites, writing proposals, doing research, or organizing advocacy events.

It's also good news for the adult literacy field as a whole. As adult education professionals, we need to be building our field's future workforce; college students represent potential adult education teachers, administrators, and policymakers. Though

ours is in many ways not an easy calling, we know that adult basic education offers great rewards for those who believe in improving people's lives and building a healthy society.

We need to make these realities clear to college students and welcome them into our programs regardless of the professions they end up in. We need lawyers, healthcare providers, schoolteachers, public policymakers, employers, union leaders, and social service providers who understand the potential and needs of adult learners and are willing to advocate for adult learners and for our programs. Research on youth involvement suggests that a positive volunteer experience leads to greater community involvement and increased likelihood of philanthropic giving in adulthood.

National and local experience shows the potential benefits of well-planned partnerships between adult education programs and local colleges and universities.

SCALE: A National Network of College Students Involved in Adult Literacy

In 1989, two undergraduates at the University of North Carolina (UNC) created a national organization called SCALE: Student Coalition for Action in Literacy Education. SCALE's mission is to support the literacy work and leadership of college students and campus-based literacy programs.

continued on page 9

LITERACY UPDATE

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Getting the Word Out

> by Elyse Barbell Rudolph *Executive Director*

I recently asked a Madison Avenue executive what he thought the most important social service needs of the city were. His answer was predictable: education, health care, homelessness, and so on. Adult literacy was nowhere on his list. Then I told him that, according to the National Adult Literacy Survey, one in three New Yorkers can't read or write well enough to fill out a job application. As a man who makes his living with words, he was shocked. It did not take him long to realize that literacy is part of the solution to all the needs he thought most critical. I think this executive's initial response—and subsequent interest—is probably typical of New Yorkers outside the adult education community.

This tells me that we have not so far done a very good job of getting our message out to the general public. In this post-9/11 world, and given the current economy, ensuring that the public understands the economic and social benefits of our work is more crucial than ever. In fact, increasing public awareness is critical to our long-term survival.

The opportunity is here, if we seize it. This summer, the Ad Council took up family literacy, *USA Today* did a feature on TV411, the *New York Times* ran a front-page article (the first of two!) on high school push-outs and how adult education programs provide continuing education for these at-risk youth, and Tom Brokaw led a one-hour *Dateline* special highlighting Queens Borough Public Library's adult literacy programs.

If we are creative and active, this level of publicity can lead to increased awareness of literacy needs and how we meet them. Increasing awareness can in turn create new opportunities to partner with private funders. Verizon and IBM continue to be generous supporters of adult literacy programs. Other opportunities are emerging to raise both public awareness and funds. The Broadway show *A Year with Frog and Toad*, for example, donated a dollar for every ticket sold in May to NYC Reads. Romance Writers of America has selected literacy as its philanthropic cause, raising \$47,000 for a variety of literacy programs at its recent conference. Such celebrities as Tiki Barber, Al Jarreau, Keith Van Horn, and Sean Astin are raising awareness of literacy needs. Who knows? Maybe Tom Cruise is next!

We do important work every day, and we have great stories to tell. The media love to present issues through personal human interest accounts. Please take some time to figure out how you can inform the public about your students and what you do. Invite a community newspaper to send a reporter to your program. Host a luncheon for local businesses. Work with students to create a video that shows the work you do. If you have another idea, email it to us at info@lacnyc.org; we'll post it on our website for all to share. Let's seize this opportunity to get the word out.



2003 Literacy Recognition Award recipients, from left: Maura Donnelly, Sheila Krentz, André Gleaton, Martha Kamber, Bill Littlefield, Ida Sandler, Marsha Davis, Joan Manes

On June 12, the LAC honored nine outstanding New York literacy teachers, administrators, and volunteers at its 18th annual Literacy Recognition Award Ceremony, sponsored by the Bookbinders' Guild of New York. Recipients were nominated by their peers or supervisors and then selected by a committee of literacy practitioners in a competitive review process. In saluting these award recipients, the LAC also salutes the heroic efforts of the entire New York literacy community.

Marsha Davis has worked in the NYC Department of Education's Office of Adult and Continuing Education (OACE) for almost 30 years. As instructional facilitator for Region 1, she supports instructors by recommending and demonstrating effective instructional strategies, facilitating visits to other teachers' classrooms, and developing curricula.

Maura Donnelly has taught at LaGuardia Community College's Adult Learning Center since 1998. Known for providing her students with a dynamic learning environment, Maura has also developed several distance learning curricula.

André S. Gleaton, director of adult education for Thirteen/WNET, selects all of Thirteen's adult education programs, maintains fresh and relevant content on Thirteen's adult education website, and provides seminars for both students and adult education practitioners.

Martha Kamber is the director of family support services at Sunset Park Adult and Family Education Center. In her 22 years of direct social service, Martha has combined literacy programming with social supports to help underserved adults meet their basic life needs.

Sheila Krentz joined OACE 35 years ago as an ESOL and reading lab teacher. Today, as coordinator of Region 2, she is responsible for educational services for over one thousand adults.

Bill Littlefield has tutored at the New York Public Library's St. Agnes Center every Tuesday and Thursday evening for the past seven years. Beyond the many hours he spends tutoring, Bill also encourages students to call him at home and participates in staff development opportunities.

Joan Manes began her career in adult literacy at the LAC in 1986. She now serves as director of education programs at City Tech's Adult Learning Center, where she administers BE, ESOL, and GED programs serving a thousand students.

Eric Rosenbaum is BEGIN's director of staff development. Among his many innovations are specialized classes in office work, family day care, home health, and video production.

Ida Sandler emigrated to the U.S. from Russia seven years ago and almost immediately joined the staff of Shorefront YM-YWHA of Brighton-Manhattan Beach. She not only teaches English to fellow Russian immigrants but also helps them navigate the unfamiliar shoals of their new country. ●

RESOURCES >> Health Literacy

> by Winston Lawrence, Ed.D. *Coordinator of Adult Literacy Services*

This fall the LAC will establish a Health Literacy Resource Center to provide materials that will support teachers who seek to engage in a systematic approach to teaching health literacy. (See page 8 for details.)

Why should literacy practitioners be interested in health literacy? A number of factors are forcing health literacy to the top of the agenda for adult and family educators. One is the increasing evidence that health is related to educational level. In the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey, 26 percent of adults at Level I (low-level readers) reported physical, mental, or other health conditions that prevented them from participating fully in work, school, and other activities. The same survey showed that 75 percent of Americans who had a long-term illness of six months or more had limited literacy skills. In another study, emergency room patients with inadequate literacy were twice as likely to be hospitalized as those with adequate literacy. At the federal level, Healthy People 2010, a campaign of the Department of Health and Human Services, has as one of its goals improving health literacy. There is also increasing concern that a significant number of adults are being deprived of quality health care because of their inability to read and follow the directions of health care professionals.

Adult and family literacy practitioners make a difference in their students' health by helping students learn to navigate the health care system and to advocate for themselves and their families. These resources can help.

For Educators and Other Professionals

Health Literacy Studies

www.hsph.harvard.edu/healthliteracy/

This site explains NCSALL's health literacy program. The section on innovative materials includes examples of student-produced photonovels on health topics, plain-language materials for learners, and materials for seniors and for diverse populations. The site also lists health literacy curricula, research reports, annotated bibliographies on a variety of health issues, and suggestions on how to create and assess print and web-based materials for students.

Health and Literacy Compendium

www.worlded.org/us/health/docs/comp/

This downloadable annotated bibliography lists print and web-based health materials to use with students with limited English literacy, including curricula, curriculum guides, lessons, and bibliographies. The site also provides a listing of publishers and agencies involved in health literacy awareness.

Center For Health Care Strategies

www.chcs.org/resource/hl.html

This site provides a variety of fact sheets on health literacy research and trends, including such titles as "Who Has Health Literacy Problems?" and "Health Communication and Cultural Diversity." The information is clearly laid out and backed by research.

Health Literacy Favorite Links

www.aelweb.vcu.edu/favoritelinks_health.html

This compendium site provides links to articles and research, facts, and programs and organizations. Perhaps most interesting to literacy educators will be the section on Learner/Teacher Internet Resources.

Health and Literacy Special Collection:

Teacher/Tutor Resources

www.worlded.org/us/health/lincs/teacher.htm

Eastern LINCS's health resources are divided into four categories. Teaching Activities/Curricula includes complete curricula and ready-to-go classroom activities. Easy-to-Read Health Information and Dictionaries and Glossaries provide student resources (see For Students below). The Teacher Support section provides curriculum guides and other information on teaching health in literacy classrooms, creating collaborations, and more.

For Students

Health and Literacy Special Collection: Student/Learner Resources

www.worlded.org/us/health/lincs/learner.htm

At this Eastern LINCS site, students can investigate three categories of health-information websites. Health Information provides access to easy-to-read web-based materials from doctors, health educators, and health organizations. Stories and Activities allow learners to learn about health from fellow students. Dictionaries and Glossaries allow students to look up vocabulary related to health, disease, or medicine.

What to Do When Your Child Gets Sick

by Gloria Mayer and Ann Kuklierus.

Institute for Healthcare Advancement, 2003

This is one of six easy-to-read books published by the Institute for Healthcare Advancement (IHA) for low-level readers who are parents of young children. Topics include nosebleed, thrush, pinkeye, choking, shots, and more. Each topic is structured around five questions: 1) What is it? 2) What do I see? 3) What can I do at home? 4) When do I call the doctor or nurse? 5) What else should I know about [the topic]?

Nursing in a New Language

by Melanie Charles et al. Lynx Publishing, Vancouver, 2002

Programs with health career programs such as LPN or medical assistant training should investigate this book, which helps nursing and allied health students develop the English-language skills they need to communicate effectively with patients. Readings on such topics as influenza, psychiatric care, over-the-counter drugs, depression, and self care are accompanied by comprehension and oral skill exercises. Many topics have catchy titles such as "Sweetheart: Health Care for Diabetics."

Health Smarts Kit for Parents

This TV411 kit aims to help parents become active participants in their family's health care. Its five units cover making appointments, reading prescription labels, asking questions, well-baby visits, and knowing your body. Students in adult or family literacy programs can view the video segments and then work together to complete the kit's activities.

Print and video materials cited in this article are available in the LAC's Dan Rabideau Clearinghouse.

Family Literacy Resource Center

In order to gather the profusion of family literacy programs into a community that can share and develop the strengths of each program, the LAC has launched a new Family Literacy Resource Center. Last spring, with the help of a grant from the Altman Foundation, we surveyed NYC's family literacy programs to compile a directory, which will be available in print and as an online interactive map this fall. This year, we will expand the directory to include programs not identified in the initial survey, provide development resources to programs, and increase public awareness of the opportunities they provide. If your family literacy program did not receive or did not return a survey, please contact famlit@lacnyc.org in order to be included in the next version of the directory.

Rutgers Conference

Rutgers University's Graduate School of Education is holding its 20th Annual Invitational Symposium on Education Conference, "Defining and Improving Quality in Adult Basic Education Issues and Challenges," on Thursday, October 23, and Friday, October 24. Directed by Dr. Alisa Belzer and Dr. Harold Bede, the conference will be built around concurrent paper sessions featuring nationally recognized scholars discussing their work with a specific focus on issues of quality. An international panel of scholars will also be on hand to share their perspectives. The conference will take place at Embassy Suites Hotel, Piscataway, NJ. The registration fee is \$175; \$99 for graduate students. To register call 732.932.7496 x8202, or download a registration form at www.lacnyc.org/announcements.

CCNY and CWE Launch Language and Literacy MA Program

The English Department of the City College of New York (CCNY) and the Consortium for Worker Education (CWE) have teamed up to offer Master of Arts level course work in Language and Literacy. Originally introduced in the 1970s, the program has been dormant for three years. Under the tutelage of Barbara Gleason, an associate professor in CCNY's English department, the program is being re-launched with an emphasis on adult literacy education.

The fall courses, which begin on Friday, September 5, include Second Language Acquisition, and Theories and Models of Literacy. The classes will take place at the Consortium for Worker Education, 275 7th Avenue, on Friday evenings. Two more graduate courses will be offered in Spring 2004. For more information, contact Dr. Barbara Gleason, Associate Professor, City College, English Department, NAC, 6/219, 138th Street, Convent Avenue, New York, NY 10031, or call 212.650.6329 or 718.921.9463.

Thirteen/WNET New York Holds Adult Education Student Conference

Thirteen/WNET New York is holding its Second Annual Adult Education Student Conference on Tuesday, October 21. This year's conference will focus on technology resources, featuring Thirteen's on-air, online, and on-site literacy center services, as well as its distance learning tutorial projects. The conference is for adult learners enrolled in ESOL 5 and 6, ABE, Pre-GED, and GED programs or classes throughout the tri-state area. Because seats are limited, the conference can only accept up to five students per agency, school, or program, on a first-come, first-serve basis. RSVP is a must. For more information, email AdultEd@thirteen.org.

National Book Scholarship Grants

ProLiteracy Worldwide is currently accepting grant applications from qualified adult literacy providers for its National Book Scholarship Fund. The NBSF gives special emphasis to grant applications from family literacy programs. The deadline is December 4. Applications are currently available online at www.nbsf.org. For more information, contact Mara Roberts, Project Administrator, National Book Scholarship Fund, ProLiteracy Worldwide, 1320 Jamesville Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13210, phone 315.422.9121 x345, or email mroberts@proliteracy.org.

LAC/POV Partnership

In our continued partnership with P.O.V., the LAC is offering a series of media literacy professional development opportunities this fall. P.O.V., a cinematic term for "point of view," is the award-winning PBS series that features thought-provoking independent point-of-view

films. In order to help initiate dialogue, P.O.V. has developed discussion guides to accompany each of the films. The curricula are available online at www.pbs.org/pov. The P.O.V. films being featured at the workshops include *State of Denial*, a film about the AIDS epidemic in South Africa by Elaine Epstein; *What I Want My Words to Do to You*, a documentary about women inmates at New York's Bedford Hills Correctional Facility by Madeleine Gavin, Judith Katz, and Gary Sunshine; and *Lost Boys of Sudan*, a documentary that follows two Sudanese refugees through their first year in America, by Megan Mylan and Jon Shenk. See the Calendar on pages 6 and 7 for details.

LAC Plans New Employment Initiative

The LAC is launching a project to broaden the access of New Yorkers with limited literacy skills to online employment resources by creating partnerships between the not-for-profit and corporate communities. WAGE (Web Access to Generate Employment) will build on excellent, free, and readily available local employment programs, such as Career Zone and Workplace Essential Skills. To help youth literacy and employment programs adapt these resources for use with at-risk and marginalized youth workers, the LAC will provide these programs with assistance in developing transferable work skills. The LAC will also suggest ways in which these workers can use existing technology to obtain information about jobs in the industries most likely to hire from the adult and at-risk youth population, including home health care, construction day labor, and hospital and hotel housekeeping.

Symphony Space Hosts Annual Adult Literacy Reading

Symphony Space has announced that the acclaimed adult literacy program "Selected Shorts: ALL WRITE!" will run from December 2003 through May 2004. Professional actors will read poems and stories at the first performance and selected original student work at the second. Texts, study guides, and workshops are provided. The program is free, but space is limited. For an application, call Madeline Cohen at 212.864.1414 x221.

continued on page 8

9.10.03

Using Documentary Film in the Classroom Series

P.O.V. is the award-winning PBS series that features thought-provoking independent point-of-view films. In the series Using Documentary Film in the Classroom, participants will screen P.O.V. documentaries, be introduced to P.O.V. resources for the classroom, and discuss methods of integrating film and video into instruction.

State of Denial

Wednesday, September 10, 1–4:30 pm

Facilitator: Mariann Fedele

State of Denial by Elaine Epstein reveals the human experience behind one of the world's greatest tragedies—the AIDS epidemic in South Africa. With five million people infected and nearly two thousand new infections occurring daily, South Africa has the highest number of people living with HIV in the world. The film takes viewers into the lives of six people struggling to survive with HIV in the face of social stigma, a severe lack of access to life-saving treatments, and President Mbeki's controversial denial of the connection between HIV and AIDS. A film of quiet outrage, *State of Denial* weaves the personal with the political in an uplifting portrait of ordinary people struggling to survive.

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323 or rsvp@lacnyc.org.

9.11/12/19.03

Pre-Service Institute

Thursday, September 11, 9 am–5 pm

Friday, September 12, 9 am–5 pm

Friday, September 19, 9 am–5 pm

Facilitator: Ira Yankwitt

Designed for instructors, program managers, and counselors new to the field, the Pre-Service Institute offers an introduction to key concepts and exemplary practices in adult literacy education. Issues explored will include characteristics of adult learners; classroom strategies in adult education; foundations of reading, writing, and English language instruction; goal setting and intake; federal and state policy and reporting requirements; integration of technology into instruction; NYS adult learning standards; and instructional planning. **Participants are required to attend all three days.** Registration is limited to 20 participants. RSVP is essential.

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323 or rsvp@lacnyc.org.

9.17.03

Nuts and Bolts of TABE

Wednesday, September 17, 9 am–1 pm

Facilitator: Ira Yankwitt

This workshop introduces participants to the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), forms 7 and 8—the main test used by adult literacy programs funded by the State Education Department to place students in ABE classes and to measure educational gain. Participants will familiarize themselves with the test, learn about effective test administration, and discuss the relationship between TABE test scores, class placement, and outcome reporting.

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323 or rsvp@lacnyc.org.

9.18/19.03

ALIES Data Entry Training

Thursday, September 18, 10 am–4 pm

Friday, September 19, 10 am–4 pm

Presenter: Olga Gazman

From ALIES installation through ALIES reporting, this training provides a step-by-step, in-depth introduction to the ALIES software and the data entry process. Highlights include installing and upgrading ALIES, inputting data, updating data, generating data management reports, using the Ad-Hoc Reporting tool, and running the NRS Data Check Reports. New data entry users, as well as those in need of a refresher, are invited to attend this event. **Please attend both days.**

RSVP: Don Campbell at 212.803.3319 or donc@lacnyc.org.

9.24.03

ALIES for Program Managers

Wednesday, September 24, 9:30 am–1 pm

Presenter: Megan Whalen

Designed for program managers who have never attended an ALIES training, this session discusses effective procedures for managing ALIES, from setup and implementation through reporting and data analysis. The workshop will feature a plan for ALIES implementation including staff and technology resource preparation, management tactics for programs using ALIES, the ALIES support system and website, and hands-on experience with high-level data entry and reporting.

RSVP: Don Campbell at 212.803.3319 or donc@lacnyc.org.

10.3.03

Using Documentary Film in the Classroom Series

What I Want My Words to Do to You

Friday, October 3, 9:30 am–3:30 pm

Facilitator: Mariann Fedele

What I Want My Words to Do to You by Madeleine Gavin, Judith Katz, and Gary Sunshine offers an unprecedented look into the minds and hearts of the women inmates of New York's Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. The film goes inside a writing workshop, led by playwright Eve Ensler, consisting of 15 women, most of whom were convicted of murder. Through a series of exercises and discussions, the women delve into and expose the most terrifying places in themselves as they grapple with the nature of their crimes and their own culpability. The film culminates with an emotionally charged prison performance of the women's writings by acclaimed actresses including Glenn Close and Marisa Tomei. This screening will be followed by a working session on student writing projects for the classroom.

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323 or rsvp@lacnyc.org.

10.8.03

La Familia Technology Week Open House

Wednesday, October 8, 9:30 am–4 pm

Facilitator: Mariann Fedele

La Familia Technology Week is a nationwide effort, sponsored by Career Communications Group (CCG) and IBM, to address and bridge the digital divide. For the second year, the LAC will offer an introduction, during this open house in our Computer Learning Center, to the wealth of free web-based applications and multimedia resources available to Spanish-speaking ESOL students. The open house will include hands-on exploration of numerous technologies and resources. Support will be available for every participant, from novice computer users to technology experts. For more information about La Familia Technology Week, visit www.lafamilianet.net.

Special Presentation 10:30 am: Ellen Quish from LaGuardia Community College Adult Learning Center will discuss her instructor's guide "A Practitioners's Guide to Narrowing the Digital Divide between ESOL Adult Learners and Their Children."

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323 or rsvp@lacnyc.org.

10.9/10/17.03

Pre-Service Institute

Thursday, October 9, 9 am–5 pm
Friday, October 10, 9 am–5 pm
Friday, October 17, 9 am–5 pm

Facilitator: Ira Yankwitt
See September 11 for description.

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323
or rsvp@lacnyc.org.

10.15.03

**Distance Learning Forum:
Issues and Answers**

Wednesday, October 15, 9:30 am–4 pm

Facilitator: Marguerite Lukes

This day-long forum aims to forge clarity about the role of distance learning for adult literacy, ESOL, and professional development in New York city and state. Who does distance learning best serve? What are some promising distance learning models? What are reasonable expectations—from students, teachers, and support staff? How should we think about distance learning differently from regular classroom instruction? These questions will be addressed through panel discussions, model program presentations, and group interaction at the distance learning forum, which will include practitioners, researchers, and developers in the field of distance learning.

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323
or rsvp@lacnyc.org.

10.16.03

**Data Gathering
with Turnaround Documents**

Thursday, October 16, 9:30 am–1:30 pm

Presenter: Olga Gazman

Designed for teachers and others who participate in data collection, participants will learn the nuances of completing the turnaround documents, including the rationale for every column. Highlights include documentation of student activity, demographics, test scores, contact hours and outcomes, rules for gathering data, and discussion of the importance of accurate data collection.

RSVP: Don Campbell at 212.803.3319
or donc@lacnyc.org.

10.21.03

ALIES Reports

Tuesday, October 21, 9:30 am–1:30 pm

Presenter: Megan Whalen

This hands-on training features an overview of the different types of ALIES reports and applications of these reports in real-world scenarios. The training also includes discussions on how to better use ALIES reports for program management and improvement. Highlights include Data Management Reports, Ad-Hoc Reports, Data Check Reports, and Funding Reports such as EPE and NRS. This training is for experienced ALIES users who want to learn more about reports.

RSVP: Don Campbell at 212.803.3319
or donc@lacnyc.org.

10.22.03

Mapping Technologies

Creating and Using Maps

Wednesday, October 22, 9:30 am–3:30 pm

Presenters: Tom Beller, Mapsites.net
Steven Romalewski, NYPIRG

In this daylong session, participants will be introduced to two technology resources that use maps to forward student learning goals: Mapsites.net and NYPIRG's Community Mapping Assistance Project (CMAP). Mapsites is a web-based teaching tool to inspire and motivate student writing; it allows students to post historical presentations, personal essays, and creative writing onto an interactive map of their neighborhood. CMAP uses mapping technology to assist programs in collecting and visually displaying data for community building, civic participation, and advocacy. Both resources can be used in learning projects that engage students with their community and help them participate in civic life.

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323
or rsvp@lacnyc.org.

10.23/24.03

ALIES Data Entry Training

Thursday, October 23, 10 am–4 pm
Friday, October 24, 10 am–4 pm

Presenter: Olga Gazman

See September 18 for description.

RSVP: Don Campbell at 212.803.3319
or donc@lacnyc.org.

**LAC Professional
Development
Center Open Hours**

Every Monday, 1–5 pm,
beginning September 8

Computer Learning Center

Visit our 16-station Internet-connected computer lab to explore ways to use computers to enhance instruction. Try out instructional software, browse the web for sites that lend themselves to your lessons, or build a project that uses common office software to enhance communication skills.

For information, contact Mariann Fedele,
212.803.3325 or mariannf@lacnyc.org.

Dan Rabideau Clearinghouse

Explore the city's largest collection of materials for adult literacy education. The collection of books, journals, and audiovisual materials encompasses professional development materials as well as curriculum and reading materials for ESOL, ABE, and GED learners.

For information, contact Dr. Winston
Lawrence, 212.803.3326 or
winstonl@lacnyc.org.

Health Literacy Launch

On Tuesday, October 21, 8:30 am–12:30 pm, the LAC and ALMA (Adult Literacy Media Alliance) will host a breakfast to introduce health and literacy providers to a new and exciting partnership, the NYC Health Literacy Resource Center, which was created in collaboration with the NYC Mayor's Office. The breakfast will feature Dr. David W. Baker, a leader in the field of health literacy, who will present on the current trends in health literacy research, as well as promising practices for the field. ALMA will also preview TV411's new season of adult literacy video- and web-based materials that have been specifically designed for health literacy instruction. Health practitioners, literacy providers, funders, and policymakers are encouraged to attend. The location of the breakfast and additional information will be available on the LAC website at www.lacnyc.org/announcements.

TV411 Enters Third Season

The third season of TV411 kicks off on Monday, September 8, on WNET Channel 13 and CUNY-TV Channel 75. Developed by ALMA (Adult Literacy Media Alliance), TV411 is an educational television series designed to help adults strengthen their basic reading, writing, and math skills. The series has earned back-to-back Emmys from the New York Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. The telecast schedule, effective September 8, is as follows:

- > Mondays, 1 pm, WNET Channel 13
- > Mondays, 7:30 am, 1:30 pm, and 7:30 pm, CUNY-TV Channel 75
- > Saturdays, 7 am, CUNY-TV Channel 75

For more information visit www.tv411.org.

EL/Civics Featured in City Limits

An article written by Debbie Nathan in the July/August 2003 issue of *City Limits* magazine features participatory approaches to teaching English Language/Civics. Entitled "Making Changes: Civics as a Second Language," the article details the history of participatory education, as well as its current applications. Nathan highlights programs that have adopted the pedagogy, including the Center for Immigration Education Training at LaGuardia Community College, where students develop language and literacy skills through exercises that are also designed to encourage individual and community advocacy. Civics education is not just "about field trips to the bank," Ira Yankwitt, the LAC's director of adult literacy services, explains in the article. "It's about critiquing the banking system."

International Literacy Day

The International Literacy Day conference will take place on Monday, September 9, from 9 am–5 pm, at the National Education Association Building, 1201 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC. Sponsored by the UNESCO and the International Literacy Network, this year's conference, entitled "Bridging the Gender Gap," will offer a day-long advocacy and networking discussion on the critical need to realize every individual's right to learn in a bias-free, gender-sensitive, rights-based learning environment. For more information, contact Jennifer Bowser, International Reading Association, at jbowser@reading.org.

November Conferences

Surviving the 21st Century Workforce

National Dissemination Center for Career and Technical Education, Ohio State University
November 13, 3–5 pm, Live Webcast
www.nccte.org or call 800.678.6011

ProLiteracy Worldwide

Annual National Conference

November 14–17, Washington, DC
www.proliteracy.org or call 888.528.2224

52nd National Adult and Continuing Education Conference

American Association for Adult and Continuing Education
November 19–22, Detroit, MI
www.maace.org/aaace.htm

A more extensive and up-to-date list of employment ads is available online at www.lacnyc.org/jobs.

Literacy Hotline volunteers

The LAC operates a Literacy Hotline that refers over 24,000 students annually to appropriate education & employment programs. To assist us in effectively meeting student needs & responding to caller requests, we seek volunteers who can provide efficient customer service via telephone contact; dedicate a minimum of 4 hrs a day, 1 or more times a wk (M–F, 10 am–2 pm and/or noon–4 pm); commit to volunteering for a period of at least 3 months; speak English, Spanish, French, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, or Russian. The LAC assures a secure & comfortable working environment for each volunteer. Volunteers will be trained to clarify caller needs & to use a computerized database to identify appropriate programs to meet those needs. Contact Dianne Powell, Director of Outreach & Referral, at 212.803.3355.

Forest Hills Community House seeks to fill 3 positions.

ESOL Instructor

Teach afternoon & Sat. am adult group. Attend staff meetings & orientations. Complete daily time sheets. Submit brief program reports every 2 wks. Exp. developing curriculum & teaching adults req. MA in related field pref.

Computer Instructor

Teach afternoon & Sat. am adult group. Teach MS applications & Internet research. Attend staff meetings & orientations. Complete daily time sheets. Submit brief program reports every 2 wks. Exp. developing curriculum & teaching adults req.

Senior Activity Specialist

Assist site director for grade K–2 after-school program at PS 182. Supervise program activities while the site director is off-site. Fill in for absent activity specialists. Participate in developing & implementing parent programs & workshops. Collect attendance & reporting data from activity specialists & instructors. Conduct outreach to recruit young people & adults for programs. College degree pref.

Résumé & letter to Angelie Singla, Site Director/Parent Organizer, Hillcrest High School 160-05 Highland Avenue, Jamaica, NY 11432, or fax 718.523.9705.

ESOL Teachers (PT)

7–13 hrs/wk. Degree in ed., English, or related; 3 yrs exp. in ESOL instruction; MA pref.

Résumé to Emily Rubenstein, Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation, fax 718.647.8510, or email emilyr@cypresshills.org.

To place a free employment ad, email publications@lacnyc.org or fax 212.785.3685.

Please indicate whether you would like your ad to appear in the November/December issue of the *Literacy Update* (due date October 3) or on the web only.

Out of the Ivory Tower *continued*

SCALE's network has grown to include close to 75 college-based literacy programs, including NYU's Gallatin School and Columbia University, described below. For example, the New Writers' Voices Program in New Orleans, a partnership between Tulane University and YMCA Educational Services, enables university creative writing students to teach adult learners using creative writing exercises; the university students simultaneously gain knowledge, experience, and understanding of adult education issues.

SCALE intentionally promotes a participatory, social-change approach to literacy education in the belief that adult illiteracy is a social justice issue requiring an educational approach that helps learners develop the skills they need to understand and change the world. SCALE sponsors an annual conference, usually in October at UNC Chapel Hill; it also provides many levels of training and technical support to its college-based program members via its website, www.readwriteact.org; on-site training; and publications.

What's Happening in NYC

In New York City, college students are getting involved in local adult literacy efforts in several ways.

At NYU's Gallatin School of Individualized Study, undergraduates are involved through two courses. I teach Literacy in Action, a semester-long course that introduces undergraduates to adult literacy. Students make a minimum of eight site visits to one of four local adult basic skills programs, where they work as classroom helpers or tutors. They log their observations and write a semester project consisting of a program profile and interviews with a learner and teacher. Students also participate in classes at the university in which they discuss readings on adult literacy education and share observations about their field experience. Some course participants have gone on to do further volunteer or paid work in local programs.

Gallatin students also gain academic credit by doing semester-long tutorials in teaching writing to adult ESOL learners at University Settlement. Supervised by Professor June Foley, writing program director, the students read, discuss, and write about issues of adult literacy, as well as observing her weekly University Settlement writing class and eventually co-teaching it. In Spring 2003, a SCALE grant enabled five Gallatin students and Professor Foley to edit and publish the first *Literacy Review*, an annual journal of writing by NYC adult learners.

At Columbia University, the Jobs and Education Empowerment Project (J.E.E.P.) helps adult residents of the Harlem Empowerment Zone achieve independence through jobs and further education. Programs are run on campus and at the Graham Windham Beacon Center. Columbia students volunteer in GED, ESOL, citizenship, computer, college readiness, and job preparation classes. J.E.E.P. is part of Columbia's Community Impact program, an umbrella for 25 community service initiatives in which almost 1000 Columbia students volunteer each year.

One NYU student summarized her experience in a literacy program:

The adult learners I worked with surpassed many unconscious stereotypes I may have previously had. . . . My students illuminated for me the hardships people face and their ability to overcome circumstance. I think my work at the program this semester allowed me to come to terms with my own good luck and my own prejudices, and gave me more compassion.

Here, in brief, are a few other local examples:

- > For the last three years, freshmen at Wagner College on Staten Island have volunteered at the St. George Center for Reading and Writing for three or four hours per week for one full semester as part of the college's Experiential Learning community service program.
- > At Henry Street Settlement, students from PACE University and Hunter College work one-on-one with basic skills learners to help them transition into jobs, providing pre-employment guidance, advice on the learners' workplace internships, and help in the computer lab.
- > In the Peer Tutoring Workshop course taught by Professor Barbara Gleason at CUNY's Center for Worker Education, students do a 10-hour practicum as basic skills tutors and write a report about their experience.
- > As part of their methods class, students in New School University's adult ESOL certificate program teach in local adult education programs two hours a week for at least 10 weeks. This teaching serves as a "laboratory" that allows them to try out and reflect on the practices taught in the methods class.

Getting More College Students Involved

Here are some steps that the adult literacy community in New York City, and elsewhere in the U.S., might take to tap into the valuable resources represented in local college students.

- > Poll local adult education programs and colleges to identify ways that college students are—or might be—helping adult education programs. Summarize the findings and circulate them to the adult education community and to the community service programs of local colleges.
- > Organize a meeting that brings together adult education providers and college representatives to identify ways to get college students involved in adult education programs.
- > Create an ongoing network of these kinds of partnerships, perhaps in the form of a local affiliate of SCALE, staffed by college students who have worked in a local literacy program.
- > Publicize these collaborations via adult education websites and press coverage.
- > Provide ongoing training and job opportunities—internships, volunteer work, and paid positions—to college students interested in getting and staying involved in the field. Explore the possibility of hiring undergraduate and graduate students who qualify for federal work-study to work in community-based programs. Colleges and universities are required to spend 7 percent of their work-study funds on community service jobs—and this percentage is likely to increase.
- > Generate resources for these programs by reaching out to funders who support volunteerism, community service, leadership development, and adult literacy. ●

Feel free to contact me at 732.254.2235 or pjurm@comcast.net for more information. Special thanks to Kathy Sikes, SCALE's national director (919.962.1542, ksikes@email.unc.edu), for input for this article.

Making Children's Books

A Family Literacy ESOL Project

> by Caryn Davis *Carroll Gardens Neighborhood Women*



“What would you like to write next?” I asked my beginning ESOL class at PS 169 in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. This group of Spanish, Urdu, and Mandarin-speaking mothers had recently completed a book of autobiographies, *Our Stories*. PS 169’s principal and staff and the students’ children and grandchildren attended the reading celebration. Recent images of proud children watching their moms and grandmas read were fresh in my mind.

When the administration of PS 169 and District 15 wanted to start a beginning ESOL program for parents in September 2002, Carroll Gardens Neighborhood Women (CGNW) was chosen to offer the class due to our long-term commitment to literacy and our excellent track record with the district. In this program, parents drop their children off at school and head to the PTA room for instruction.

Parents are motivated to learn to speak, read, and write English because they are deeply committed to their children’s education. They want to help their children with their homework, speak with their children’s teachers, and communicate with people in the community, particularly medical professionals. Therefore, the response to the program was tremendous, and recruitment was easy. If funding and classroom space had been available, we could easily have filled two classes.

Planning for Our Book Project

After discussing our options for the next writing project, the class voted. In a unanimous vote, a children’s book writing project emerged on our horizon. Although the class was conceived as a beginning ESOL class rather than a family literacy class, engaging students on behalf of their children was a natural fit. Everyone was interested, yet nervous, about learning how to write and illustrate their own children’s book.

I knew we would learn a lot from each other. In addition to my literacy skills, I would need to enlist my skills as a visual artist, arts educator, peer counselor, and community organizer to make this work.

Despite working in uncharted territory, I was confident we would complete the project successfully, since writing had become an important anchor for our class. I also recognized that our reading celebrations helped my students—all immigrants—become more visible and integrated into the school community. In addition, completed children’s books could be shared in classrooms. I was excited that this project could affect people’s lives on many levels and demonstrate the importance of adult ESOL instruction in public schools.

Getting Started

The question at hand was, What should I first present to the students to get the project off the ground? I consulted with LAC staff members and with my coworkers at CGNW. My first step was to read a variety of children’s books to the students. I read aloud picture books written for very beginning adult readers or for K–1 children. We discussed themes, content, and writing styles as well as visual styles.

The first activity we embarked on to get ready to write the books was inspired by Dr. Seuss’ *The Cat in the Hat*. We discussed that languages have rhythm. We examined how rhymes can work to tell a humorous story. Since I wanted the students to try to express their thoughts using humor, too, I asked them to write their own rhymes.

When the rhymes were completed, we were closer to picking themes and writing first drafts. We narrowed our theme choices down to three: *Mama, Do You Love Me?* about unconditional love between a mother and her child; *Myths and Legends From Around the World*; and *Grandfather’s Journey*, about the love of one man for his country of origin, as well as his country of choice. Each student chose one theme—one of these three or a loosely related theme—that resonated with her life and for which she felt enough passion to be able to live with it through many revisions.

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Verizon Literacy University Launched

In partnership with ProLiteracy Worldwide and the National Center for Family Literacy, Verizon Communications this spring launched Verizon Literacy University (VLU, www.vluonline.org) to provide online resources in support of literacy volunteers and programs. The LAC is supporting this initiative in a variety of ways.

Dubbed a *university* because of the breadth of information it contains, VLU connects literacy organizations, volunteers, and people who want to learn more about supporting literacy, as well as providing online information to these audiences. VLU does not endorse a specific approach, method, or material; rather, the site encourages multiple approaches to meeting literacy challenges. There is no actual VLU campus, nor is there an admissions process. VLU is simply available for anyone who wants to learn more about supporting literacy through courses, tools, advice, and links to organizations in need of volunteers.

Education vs. Poverty: Local Law 23

>by Ilana Berger

Families United for Racial and Economic Equality

On April 9, the New York City Council voted 46–5 to override Mayor Bloomberg’s veto of the New York City Access to Training and Education (CATE) bill, thus creating Local Law 23. This legislation allows people receiving public assistance (PA) much greater access to training and education than in the past. This is a historic victory because New York City has been one of the few places in the country that has gone to such extreme lengths to create a “work-first” welfare program. The CATE law radically changes the city’s approach, emphasizing a more visionary and progressive anti-poverty welfare reform plan.

Local Law 23, which was to take effect on July 9, requires the city’s welfare department, the Human Resources Administration (HRA), to allow PA recipients to count a broad range of education

activities—including ABE, GED, ESOL, vocational training, and two- and four-year college programs—as work activity in order to meet their state, local, and federal welfare-to-work requirements. The law also requires HRA to give people information about this right, as well as a listing of all HRA-approved programs. People then have 15 business days to find both the right program and appropriate child care. In other words, Local Law 23 allows low-income parents to get the education that allows them to get out of poverty permanently.

At press time, HRA is refusing to implement Local Law 23. Families United for Racial and Economic Equality (FUREE) is one of many groups working to force its implementation. For more information about these efforts, call 718.857.2990 x37. For information on enrolling PA recipients in educational programs, call Shina Majeed at 646.602.5641.

Many students picked up on the theme *Grandfather’s Journey* to write about their childhood memories from their country of origin or about their own migration and immigration. Other students chose *Mama, Do You Love Me?* One student wanted to write an ancient Chinese legend with a moral lesson, a form she called an “idiom.” A couple of students were unsure how to proceed. I employed my counseling skills with these students; each talked with me privately about their difficult parenting situations. I listened to them as they talked and cried; eventually they were able to think freshly about their situations and land on a theme for their children’s books.

Writing and Producing the Children’s Books

I asked everyone to write their first drafts. Since my home office is equipped to handle scanning and color printing, I encouraged students to use photographs, collages, computer art, or drawings in their future books. Some eager students offered well-developed first drafts that included computer art because they had enlisted the help of their children. Although I hadn’t expected or encouraged this partnership, I went along with it since these students were fully engaged and excited.

The students supported each other tremendously during the writing process. As we moved forward, I would read a work in progress to the class. I asked everyone what they liked about the story. Students made such encouraging remarks as, “I like the story. It is funny.” However, their tone of voice and facial expressions communicated much more. During the writing of the Chinese idiom, I used a Chinese/English dictionary to help me probe the writer so she could write her story more clearly. Some students reported they were staying up until 2 am to work on their books. Yet the tremendous encouragement students provided each other allowed each woman to complete her book.

Nine books were completed. Some are in English and Spanish; the rest are in English. One woman’s cousin contributed delicate pencil drawings, another woman drew black-and-white cartoons, another illustrated her story with black-and-white drawings reminiscent of ancient Chinese drawings, and another used vibrant color drawings. In some cases, I scanned family photographs; one woman used Internet cartoons of *The Simpsons* for a humorous effect. We all contributed to the cost of color printing cartridges, and my husband and I scanned and printed the 8½-by-11 books in my home office and bound them in a plastic cover. Later, the principal copied the books in black and white for us at the school; those books were simply stapled together.

Finally, the principal supported us to read the books to over 100 kindergarten and first-grade students. The stories were well received by the young people and teachers. All the young people, including the students’ own children, were absorbed and respectful. I especially remember the smiles of appreciation and the hugs many of the children showered on their mothers that day. ●

Excerpt from *The Teasing Sisters* by Teresa Tejada

Once there were two sisters. . . . The big one liked to read scary stories like *Goosebumps*. And the small one liked to read picture books like *Amelia Bedelia*. The small one liked listening to children’s songs. The big one liked listening to rock ‘n’ roll. They liked to play the teasing game. (Mami! She called me a pumpkin head!) The two sisters also enjoyed many of the same things. Playing board games, video games and watching scary movies. How could the two sisters, who were so different, yet so much alike, get along?

BECAUSE THEY LOVED EACH OTHER!

NYS Education Department Reorganized

When the NYC Mayor's Office of Adult Literacy reorganized to become part of the Department of Youth and Community Development, it was the first in a series of reorganizations at all levels. At the city level, sweeping changes are not yet finalized as we go to press. At the federal level, WIA Title II is working its way through the House and Senate as the literacy field watches closely.

At the state level, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) has completely restructured its organizational teams. Local adult literacy programs will not feel the changes acutely. Jean Stevens remains in her role as the Assistant Commissioner overseeing the newly named Curriculum and Instructional Support (CIS) team. Tom Orsini, team leader for CIS, will guide the area into which our programs fall—Workforce and Continuing Education Policy and Program Development (Including WIA)—as well as GED Administration. The three other areas include CTE Policy and Program Development, under Konrad Raup; Curriculum and Research Specialists, under Ann

Schianno; and Virtual Learning Space/Technology Policy/Best Practices. NYSED's regional representatives for NYC are Bob Purga (lead), Constance Carroll, and Sandy Vasquez.

Besides CIS, the other teams in the reorganized Deputy Commissioner's area for Elementary, Middle, Secondary, and Continuing Education are:

- > Deputy Commissioner/District Superintendents/Administrative Support
- > Standards, Assessment, and Reporting
- > School Operations and Management
- > School Improvement (Upstate)
- > School Improvement (NYC)

In the midst of institutional change, what remains constant is the dedication New York's literacy practitioners bring to their work and to their students. As long as we keep the quality of education we provide as our priority, we will weather this storm of change.



Visit us on the web at www.lacnyc.org



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