

President's Message

As I sit to compose this message, our state is easing health guidelines to allow for a safe reopening of most activities. What a year this has been! Many of us have lost loved family and friends or faced health challenges ourselves. We have offered support to those in need and worked together to continue the mission of our organization.

Three words come to mind when I reflect on the past fifteen months for WALC: **flexibility, resilience and commitment**. Many tutors learned to use technology to continue tutoring while others switched to phone meetings. Educational materials were distributed to both tutors and students as requested, we even delivered materials to homes when needed. Our tutors became a lifeline to some students providing a safe space and a listening heart.

Our board continued to meet via ZOOM each month and encouraged the development of three pilots which engaged Whittier College students with new elementary school students. This project headed by advisory board member Roxanne Torosian had amazing results. Board members Cel Carr and Teresa Price led our re-opening purchases of table dividers, face shields, masks and sanitizing equipment. Our safety protocols were developed by board members Patti Baker and Lucy Alaniz.

We are delighted that our wonderful program coordinator, Maggie, has returned to our program to help with all of the reopening tasks from deep cleaning arrangements to tutor schedules.

As some of you know, my own family has faced serious health challenges. I want to personally thank Cel Carr and the entire board for your prayers and for stepping up to keep us moving forward.

Pat Almada, President

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WALC Responds to Pandemic with Pilot Programs

With our doors closed and the academic gap of students in our community growing, WALC volunteers set about developing a virtual literacy program that has supported 32 local students in learning reading skills through our model of *each one teach one*.

Though WALC generally begins services at third grade, this program targeted second and third graders with a focus on the reading and spelling of high frequency words, learning to read by word families (e.g. bat/cat/sat), reading stories aloud and being read stories for comprehension and vocabulary development.

At warp speed, thirteen Whittier College practicum and work-study students were hired and trained in three separated waves. The second and third cohorts were implemented as the success of the first and then second pilots became apparent. Schools were selected and connections with district and site administrators made. Target students were identified by school staff because they were struggling to participate effectively in the Zoom large-group instruction or because they were making limited academic progress.

And so it began! The college students were quick to acclimate to the Zoom instructional setting and students and tutors enjoyed learning together. Monitoring the program was no small feat but college tutors learned to implement basic instructional strategies and jumped through WALC and college hoops, often with ease and sometimes with prompting.

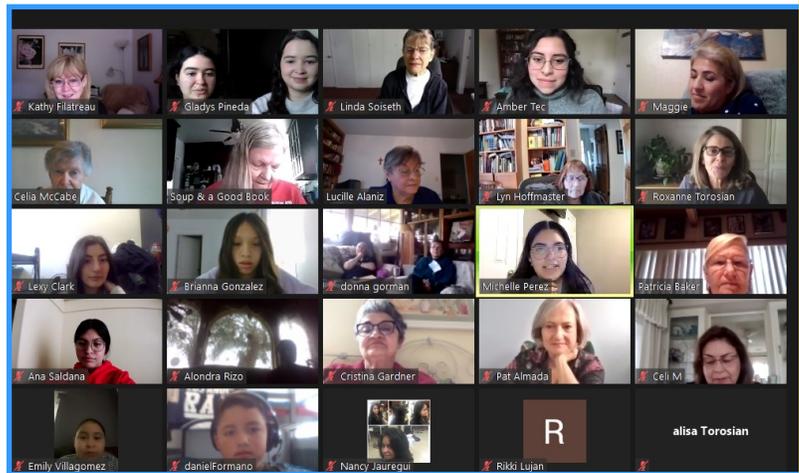
It is clear that when our community is in need, WALC responds.

We now have proof that a virtual option can be a viable addition to our site-based program. Results of data collection indicate positive improvement in literacy skills and EVERY student made progress, e.g., fourteen students can now read over 200 of the high frequency words while none did so at the start of program. Average word gain for Pilot 1 was 153.3, gain for Pilot 2 was 124.6 and for the shortest pilot, Pilot 3, the average word gain was 75.3. Attendance was good and school staff also noted improvements in the students. Evaluation by college students indicated that in typical WALC fashion, once you start, it's hard to leave. Though the pilot program has ended, several of the previously paid work-study students continue to volunteer with their students this summer. Others have requested to continue with WALC for the next school year.

It is clear that when our community is in need, WALC responds. Special thanks to Pat Almada, Roxanne Torosian, Cristina Gardner, Linda Soiseth, Laurie Baccus, the staffs of West Whittier, Evergreen and Longfellow schools, Whittier College tutors, and a few friends and family members who joined in as tutors to help serve more students.

16th Annual Soup and a Good Book

On Saturday, April 24th, our 16th Soup and a Good Book event was presented as an online read-a-thon. This annual occasion allows us the opportunity to showcase student writing with our whole WALC community. Although, our required sheltering at home altered our presentation, our WALC Board did not allow this to be an obstacle. As a result, our students were invited to write and read aloud at a read-a-thon. Our students wrote on the theme of “Hope For the New Year”.



We were very pleased that so many of our students were able to participate. The writing submissions included serious, thoughtful and amusing poems, short essays and stories. Each writing piece demonstrated the author’s hard work and heartfelt ideas in original and entertaining ways. The supportive work of our highly dedicated tutors was evident through their students’ outstanding writing efforts.

Volunteer WALC Board members, tutors, Whittier College students and many students themselves read aloud the original works for the read-a-thon. The time passed quickly and pleasantly as the presenters and audience enjoyed the writing of our amazing WALC students.

We gratefully thank all who made this event possible. “Hope For the New Year” was clearly demonstrated by everyone’s enthusiastic participation.



Participants of Soup and a Good Book

Soup and a Good Book Writings

My Hope

By Brianna Gonzalez, Grade 7

Tutor: Lucy Alaniz

I have so many hopes for this year because last year I had to do all my schoolwork, for the first time, on a computer from home and that was very challenging. I feel like this year everything might come back to normal because good things are happening this year because we found a covid vaccine.

My first hope is that I want everybody to be able to go back to school in person. I'm sure almost every student would agree with me. It would be great to see our teachers in person instead of on the computer. This would bring teachers and students more happiness.

Another reason is that I would be able to go to theme parks again. One theme park I would enjoy visiting is Universal Studios. A ride I really want to visit is the Harry Potter roller coaster, which I enjoy. There are also other fun rides I would like to visit again.

Finally, I'm looking forward to going on a trip. One place I am going to enjoy visiting is Mexico because I was suppose to go in December to celebrate Christmas with my family in Mexico but didn't get to go. I am hoping to go to Mexico this year to visit my family.

I hope my wishes come true. Also, I hope your wishes come true as well.

Hope in the New Year

By Alfredo Nolasco, Grade 5

Tutor: Ms. Hoffmaster

To start with I can go outside and play softball with my friends. Also, I can now go to the beach and the mountains to see snow.

In addition now I can go to real school. I will see some of my friends and get to do hands-on activities.

In conclusion, now that the pandemics is finally over, I can do what I want and go where I want. Everyone also can go out and play.

Soup and a Good Book Writings

Hope in the New Year

By Rikki Lujan, Grade 9

Tutor: Celia McCabe

H is for having **HAPPINESS** again
O is for **OFTEN** feeling sad last year
P is for **PRACTICING** social distancing
E is for **EVERYTHING** going back to normal

I is for staying **INDOORS** for so long
N is for **NOT** wanting to get Covid

T is for being **TOGETHER** with the family
H is for staying **HEALTHY**
E is for **ENJOYING** being with friends again

N is for our **NATION** being well again
E is for helping **EACH** other
W is for a **WONDERFUL** future

Y is for the **YEAR 2021** being better
E is for this **EMOTIONAL** time
A is for **ACHIEVING** our goals
R is for **RESPECTING** health rules

The Mirror

By Robert Spindola, Senior Student

Tutor: Linda Soiseth

If you are lonely and sad,
Just look in the mirror.
You will see an angel like you,
Smiling back at you.
Thank God for you!

Whittier College Connection



The WALC connection with Whittier College has brought us many shining stars over the last six years. It is a joy, in this newsletter, to highlight Maha Altuwaijri who has been a volunteer tutor at WALC since 2019. As a biology major on a pre-med track, she plans for a future as a physician specializing in neurology. She is really into the brain! Along with her studies and volunteer tutoring, she works as a neurofeedback technician using micro current neurofeedback (MCN), a technique used for treating conditions such as ADHD, anxiety and trauma. She became interested in the role of the brain in behavior as a teenager, while studying strategies to improve discipline and school performance.

Maha wants us to know that she is passionate about young people knowing that they are limitless in potential, saying, "No one can stop them but themselves." Her student started with poor reading and spelling skills and a "closed" mindset in which he felt like a failure for being behind in literacy skills. Changing to an "open" mindset, for example shifting from saying "I don't know" to "I don't know this yet," has resulted in "astronomical improvements". He has become more resilient and persistent in his studies, works hard and is improving in reading. He approaches tutoring sessions with a positive attitude.

Though nothing beats being right next to your student for tutoring, Maha has persevered during the pandemic, working to find common interests with her student; they found commonality in their love of Boba drinks and Takis! Maha has also sought out new and interesting materials with which to engage and motivate her student, including utilizing a free app, Kahoots, that makes learning fun and engaging.

Maha looks forward to a return to the Whittier College campus for her senior year, and will be a Residential Advisor in a dorm. The students will be lucky to have her and will undoubtedly benefit from one of her favorite books, Mindset by Carol Dweck, PhD. Maha has words of advice for any prospective tutor, "If you're considering joining WALC, I urge you to do it! Not only will you be working with the most caring and genuine individuals, but you will also make a significant impact on your student's life. Being responsible for someone's future success, and seeing the progress they make week by week, is the most rewarding experience." Maha is a gem and we look forward to her continuing with WALC and sharing her talents, knowledge and time with us!

"If you're considering joining WALC, I urge you to do it! Not only will you be working with the most caring and genuine individuals, but you will also make a significant impact on your student's life."

Welcome Amber!



Welcome to our newest WALC Board member, Amber Tec. As a third year biology major and pre-med student at Whittier College, she plans on pursuing a career in medicine. She tells us that she has always been passionate about the sciences and about helping others in need and that she joined WALC because of the unique experience it offers for students who require some help in developing literacy skills. She appreciates the opportunity to form long lasting connections with students through learning.

Amber has unique skills in seeing a problem and finding a solution, which was highlighted when College work-study rules changed and a new system of timesheet approval was needed. She figured out an easy answer to the problem and everyone was happy with their timely pay. Of course, since WALC looks for hard-working solution seekers, she was invited to become an at-large board member; we are glad she accepted. Amber says, "When the opportunity arose to become part of the board at WALC, I decided to take it, as it was not only a way to connect with my community, but also a way for me to meet new and wonderful people who all want to give back to others. By becoming part of the board I am hoping to help create a strong connection between WALC and Whittier College. I am also excited to be able to bring new ideas to the table that can benefit both our students and our community. I very much enjoy leadership oriented roles and hope to be able to lead and encourage others to get involved in WALC as well. WALC is a wonderful organization that can put a smile on the faces of so many people and I feel truly blessed to be able to be a part of such an impactful organization of people!"

Welcome Amber!

Board of Directors

President	Pat Almada
1st Vice President and Treasurer	Cel Carr
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Tutor Trainer and Corresponding Secretary	Barbara Walters
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Parent Rep	Red Ortega
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Student/Tutor Representative	Amber Tec

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Donna Smith	Dan McMillan
Martha Morales	Paul Gardner

****Board of Directors through 6/30/2021**

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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:

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WALC would like to thank you grant funders, who generosity and commitment to sustain WALC in our mission to provide literacy skills to our students.

BCM Foundation	Whittier Host Lions
East Whittier Lions Club	Sunrise Rotary Club
City of Whittier	Smart and Final
Oltman's Construction	LA County Supervisor Janice Hahn
Weingart Foundation	Keller Williams Whittier
Whittier Rotary Club	Whittier Marketplace

**Whittier
Area
Literacy
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Whittier Area Literacy Council

Address:

6548 Newlin Avenue
Whittier, CA 90601

Phone:

562-698-6598

Email:

walcread@gmail.com

Visit us on the web at

walcread.org

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.

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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