



Central Coast Literacy Council

Newsletter - Fall 2011



Editor's message: To paraphrase rock music icon Bob Dylan: the CCLC, it is "a-changing." In this newsletter issue, we'll tell you what's new with CCLC, its literacy programs, projects and people.

NEWS FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CCLC to hold annual members meeting November 15, 2011! Although the Board of Directors always welcomes members and prospective directors to its meetings, we dedicate our November meeting to members. Plan to attend CCLC's annual members' meeting at 4:00 p.m. on November 15, 2011 at the Santa Maria Main Library, Dorothea Nelson Room.

CCLC launches film stars to promote literacy! Board members Margaret Cooper and Kathryn Felix recently joined Executive Director Dr. Isa Ponce-Jimenez in the community TV studio. The budding starlets went on location to promote CCLC in a short talk-show-style program.

In her starring role as moderator, Margaret reprises CCLC's mission (literacy for adults) and tells about current CCLC programs. Dr. Ponce-Jimenez adds human interest by relating individual CCLC success stories. Margaret and Kathryn round out the program by describing tutoring experiences and the process of becoming a CCLC tutor.

This seminal program will surely challenge Oprah's long-running record when it hits daytime TV. In the meantime, you can watch it periodically on Local Channel 22. Contact the Literacy Council Office at 925-0951, x236, to arrange a private showing for your organization.

Mayor Pro Tem presents a proclamation to CCLC



The Board celebrated Literacy Month in September. Members attended a Santa Maria City Council meeting on September 6, 2011 to receive a special proclamation. Councilmember Alice Patino presented the proclamation, which also commended CCLC's efforts to bring literacy to adults in the Northern Santa Barbara County area. Dr. Isa Ponce-Jimenez, CCLC's Executive Director, accepted the proclamation and spoke to the City Council, audience and viewers about CCLC's work and upcoming spelling bee. Mayor Larry Lavagnino delivered his application and dues to become a CCLC member on the spot!

And now that the Mayor has joined CCLC...is your membership current?

The CCLC Board and staff will team up in November to thank you for your support. Did you know that the \$15 you spend for individual membership pays for a student workbook. Did you know that the \$50 you invest for a business



membership pays for the teacher's book, textbook, and other materials for a particular class.

During November, you'll receive a card or call from CCLC. We'll ask you to continue your support, and ask you (and lots of potential new members) to give a few dollars more. Thank you in advance for your consideration. CCLC cannot continue its good work bringing literacy to local adults without your help.

A NEW WAY YOU CAN SUPPORT LITERACY

Do you need to eat? Sure; we all do. Literacy learner/Board member Eduardo Leyva and Coco's Restaurant have given new meaning to that happy pastime. With your help, CCLC benefited financially when you ate your fill at Coco's.

Eduardo arranged for Coco's to make a generous (15%) donation to CCLC when our supporters ate there and used a FREE coupon during the whole month of September.

We are \$105.75 richer as a result. Please **watch our website**, <http://www.centralcoastliteracy.org/index.html>, **for an announcement of the next month-long eating donation event.** Then...pick up your coupons at the CCLC office, and let's do lunch!...(or breakfast or dinner) ...it's all delicious, and benefits literacy.

NEW WRITER CORRESPONDS WITH ESTABLISHED AUTHOR



In our Spring-Summer 2011 issue, we published the second of three "writer to writer" letters. In these letters, our literacy learners respond to authors about books the learners have read. Avelina Rodriguez wrote the third response letter, which we reproduce below. Nice job, Avelina! She is the woman in the picture receiving her certificate.

August 11, 2010

Avelina Rodriguez
Central Coast Literacy Council

Dear Mr. Coelho:

I enjoyed reading the book, *The Alchemist*. This book helped me overcome tremendous odds. I was always scared to do things. I was afraid of failure. I was afraid to try something and fail at it because my parents never encouraged me when I was young. I just settled doing what they told me to do.

When I was a child in Mexico my parents were not able to show me how important it was to follow my dreams. They never encouraged me to learn new things that will help me to live a better life. I always wanted to be a designer, but because the way I was raised my dreams were always in a little bottle. Now because of your book I feel like I can break that bottle and let my dreams become reality.

Santiago showed me how to follow my dreams. My personal legend is to learn how to speak and write English better. I know that learning English will allow me to communicate more efficiently. I would also be able to help others that need help in communicating in that language.

It is not always easy to do things that are hard. I wanted to quit meeting with my tutor because I was frustrated due to the obligations and chores that I need to do for my family, but I took a pause to think about what was the best for me and I decided to continue and pursue my dreams.

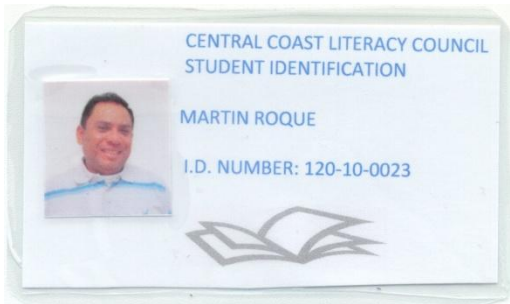
Sincerely,

Avelina Rodriguez

NEWS FROM CENTERS OF LITERACY

St. John: St. John Neumann Center started this school year with 4 tutors: Bennie Anaya (Literacy), Dolores Seguí (Book 1), Laura Rocha (Book 2) and Kay Bauer (Book 3). We have 30 registered students (although only 80% attend classes).

[Editor's note: Laura and Kay are tutoring for CCLC for the first time. I hoped to be able to interview each of them for this issue of the newsletter, but could not follow through in time. In the meantime, thank you to all of our tutors, and special thanks to those of you who are new.



Center Director Dolores Segui has begun producing identification cards for CCLC student learners. The students like the sense of belonging they receive from carrying and showing the cards.

Dolores says, "We are very lucky to have child care at St. John! Our

caregiver is a former student. Her name is Marcela Sandoval and she is very good at entertaining the children. She brings a blanket, puts it on the floor and they all sit and play and watch cartoons, while the parents are learning in the classrooms.



Success Story from Lompoc:



Beverly Wildish, CCLC's tutor in Lompoc, submitted this heartwarming literacy success story, written by her longtime student, Norma Valadez.

"My name is Norma Valadez and my husband and I are naturalized citizens of the United States. We have two children ages 8 and 16 who attend the Lompoc schools. We have lived in the United States for 14 years and are now buying our own home. I am studying to become bilingual in order to facilitate a day care center that I will open shortly.

"I have studied with my current tutor, Beverly Wildish, through the Central Coast Literacy program since November, 2009. We meet twice a week for two hours and study things like current headlines, stories, and basic English construction.

“Through this program, I have learned many things about my community and country and am able to conduct interviews, conversations, and telephone calls in English.”

WHAT'S NEW AT THE CCLC OFFICE?



A better question might ask: *Who's* new at the CCLC office?

Say “hello” to a much-valued friend and new employee: Kathryn Felix. Kathryn has just hopped into the Administrative Assistant chair for CCLC. Kathryn, a petite blonde powerhouse, has already terrified the office computer system into complying with her every command. She calls the process “befriending the machine.” Ordinary folks just get out of the way.

Recently--while the computer collapsed for a well-deserved nap--I asked Kathryn to disclose some interesting personal info to share with CCLC newsletter readers. It turns out that Kathryn left her native Canada years ago for the land of sales and print-production opportunity: Sherman Oaks, California. After a successful career cut short by a health setback, she and husband Mel (a talented photographic artist) moved to the Central Coast. One day, while surfing the Internet, one of those irritating, blinking ads we all hate caught her eye.

The ad invited those with print-production experience to apply for a job with Den-Mat. Kathryn answered the ad and Den-Mat scooped her up immediately. During the five years before her second retirement, Kathryn ran Den-Mat's print-production department and did a whole lot of proofreading. That's why six of her co-workers told her in 2009 that she **MUST** tutor for CCLC during retirement.

Since then, our highly organized, people-loving Kathryn hasn't paused. She trained as a tutor, she got certified as a tutor trainer, she assumed the Center Director role at Faith Korean Center, and she drafted herself into service on the Board of Directors for CCLC. Whew. Now she's really enjoying herself!

Kathryn would love to wave at you from her front-row desk at CCLC as you pass through the Main Library. If you can spare a few moments in pleasant conversation with her, the office equipment may finally be able to catch up!

BIG NEW CHANGES AHEAD FOR CCLC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Weaving the New With the Old
By Isa Ponce-Jiménez, Ph.D.

My journey with CCLC started more than eight years ago. I had just returned from an overseas adventure that transformed my life. Mentally, I was still in a desert-like movie set where ethereal-looking women and their young girls walked selling their handcrafted items along the beach and around town. You see, these women and their daughters were the core of my doctoral dissertation. The Wayúu people, weavers by nature, inhabit the arid lands of La Guajira, the most northeastern point of the Colombian topography. They are an indigenous matrilineal society. That means that a mother's child not only takes her name instead of the father's but that there are also legal implications such as inheritance and other legal matters. It also

means that women play a significant role in the cultural and academic education of their daughters. Men, meanwhile, are expected to guide their sons through typical male occupations in their tribes – to keep up the infrastructure of their houses, take care of their animals (goats, cows, horses and so forth), or to become good fishermen. Most of the males do not appear to have much ambition beyond learning to do manual labor.

The girls, on the other hand, undergo a traditional “confinement” once they start their first menstrual period. The confinement is not symbolic. Away from any distraction, and depending on the family’s social status, the training is arduous and as intensive and sophisticated as possible (hiring highly professional weavers is not uncommon). The art of weaving for the Wayúu women is so essential that it is not surprising to see how they have been able to weave the threads of modernity into their own traditional practices and believes. A vivid example can be seen in the education field. The percentage of Wayúu girls graduating from high school is four times that of boys. The numbers become more disproportionate when we compare them in post secondary education. Also, since the latter part of the 20th century when they were finally able to put their spoken language into a written form, educated Wayúu women have become more respected not only as professionals, but in the political realms at the city and state levels.

Wayúu women represent a good example of how lives change when education is integrated into what we already know. Their daughters are the future of their society, and the Wayúu women make every effort to protect their right not to be obliterated or forgotten. Like those women, I decided to take the challenge of something new when CCLC allowed me to weave adult literacy into the fabric of my life experience.

I will be leaving my position with CCLC in December of this year and want all of you reading these lines to know that I am very grateful for the opportunity you gave me to step into the world of the nonprofits, and to work closely with so many wonderful volunteers. It has been quite an adventure and I am glad to have been part of the process of changing lives through literacy. I encourage and invite those who are not involved in literacy tutoring, to become active participants in making a difference in someone’s life. That experience might change your life, too.

CCLC STAGES RE-INVENTED SPELLING BEE



CCLC staged its 19th Annual Adult Spelling Bee Saturday, September 17, 2011. With CCLC board member/tutor/volunteer extraordinaire Bonnie Royster at the helm, the event sailed into exciting, uncharted waters.

Spacious new quarters at the Town Center Mall showcased the event. Just outside, silent auction items spread across the Mall concourse to entice guests and passers-by.

The spelling bee suite featured private rooms for assembling the spellers and displaying refreshments (some donated generously by Mall merchants). The main event went forward in a ballroom-style mirrored hall.

Photographer Mel Felix, who also contributed a gorgeous flower portrait to the silent auction, captured the crucial moments with camera candids. Since we’d like you to be able to see all of them, please [click here](#) to view the collection:





Competitors from 22 teams spelled fearlessly, but newly minted Judge Jenny (Newell) showed no mercy during the competition. Those who stumbled over their letter utterings faced immediate elimination. Many high-powered spellers fell under the judge's axe. Three teams survived to the closing rounds: Altrusa's Savanna Hinkle

and Morgan Nelson (3rd), Marian Medical Center's Rev. Herbert Burch and Eugene Rzyski (2nd) and Breakfast Rotary's Jacqueline Carroll and Judy Walsh (1st).



Congratulations to all the spelling worker bees, sponsors and team members. Your support has added thousands of dollars to CCLC's coffers to help spread literacy on the central coast!

GOOD WISHES

Our very best wishes and thoughts go out to CCLC friend and board member Sasha Silva. Sasha has spent many of her days recently in the hospital at Stanford, doing battle with a challenging illness. We hope to welcome her back to the central coast fulltime, very soon.



Tutor Kim Kearns has also faced some tough medical challenges lately. She came by the CCLC office to say she's slowly on the mend. Our thoughts and best wishes go out to Kim.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Tutor Training: As the newsletter goes to "press," CCLC's biennial tutor training program also draws to a close. Dr. Ponce-Jimenez describes the new crop of tutor recruits as "very energetic and excited about tutoring." Here's a photo of the whole new crew.



2. Tutor alert! Would you and your literacy learner like books of your own to read together? Check in at the CCLC office (in the Santa Maria Main Library). We have donated books for you.



3. Tutor thanks:

Meet Mar Pines, a third-year tutor--and her literacy learner, Martha Medrano. Thank you, Mar, for your service!

4. Tutor recognition –Save the Date: CCLC's annual tutor recognition luncheon will happen January 21, 2012 beginning at 11:30 a.m. in Shepard Hall at the Santa Maria Library Main Branch. Mark your calendar now for this important event. Note: Shop now for best selection of 2012 calendars.

5. Library hours alert! Due to budget constraints, the Santa Maria Main Library has reduced its operating hours. Current hours: Monday-Wednesday, Noon-8:00 p.m.; Thursday-Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Library doors also close due to mandatory employee furlough the third Friday of the month and November 11.

6. Family Literacy Program continues:



Our Spring, 2011 issue told you how teens get involved in CCLC's literacy-through-the-family-unit effort. See the article: <http://www.centralcoastliteracy.org/newsletters.html> We're happy to report that—even though the library closes earlier now—the program continues, stronger than ever! Here's a picture from family literacy night:

7. An Invitation to CCLC Members: One Woman's Struggle with Reading



Joan Esposito, from the Dyslexia Awareness and Resource Center in Santa Barbara, will be presenting her own story as part of the Dyslexia Awareness Event on November 17, at 7 p.m. at the Shepard Hall in the Santa Maria Library. We cordially invite you to join us and learn more about dyslexia and other visual impairments. Seating will be on a first come, first served basis.

We wish all our friends and supporters Happy Holidays.