



Central Coast Literacy Council

Newsletter - Spring 2010

From the Board of Directors

At the January meeting, the Board of Directors welcomed members to new terms and installed officers. We said "good-bye with great thanks" to hardworking Sharon Henning. Sharon has served with distinction as Board secretary for many years. Energetic Theresa Binney has agreed to fill the secretary spot. Longtime literacy supporter/tutor Margaret Cooper has agreed to head a re-focused Board Development Committee. Margaret will spearhead an effort to educate Board members in all of the lore of the Central Coast Literacy Council.

Margaret's efforts tie directly into two projects the Board of Directors will pursue with Dr. Ponce-Jimenez in 2010: community outreach and fund development. A Central Coast Literacy Council promotional packet will be cre-

ated. The materials will showcase literacy programs and invite participation. The materials will also include an invitation to donate to the Council and/or to participate in the Council's annual spelling bee.



Members of the Board of Directors will deliver the promotional packets directly to area businesses along with a promotional theme still to be determined! Please contact the Literacy Council if you have a great idea for a Literacy-theme.

The Board of Directors meets monthly. Guests, especially those considering Board membership, are always welcome. Recently we have changed our meeting time to the fourth Tuesday of the month. We meet at 3:30 p.m. in the Dorothea Nelson Conference Room of the new Santa Maria Library.

February's meeting featured newly minted tutor Bob Reeser, who is working at the Central Plaza Center.



Annual Spelling Bee Chair Needs Your Help!



Hardworking Heather Weare hasn't hesitated to head the Literacy Council's annual spelling bee. But she needs **lots of help** from sponsors and volunteers!

Spelling Bee 2010 will debut September 18, 2010 in a new location, Shepard Hall in the Santa Maria Library. The format hasn't changed: spellers in teams of two face off against each other for an afternoon of spirited competition to raise community consciousness of the need for literacy. To the victors belong the coveted Literacy Council Spelling Bee trophies.

To "bee" a 2010 Spelling Bee sponsor, download the brochure from our website, http://centralcoastliteracy.org/pdf_download.html and send it in to the Literacy Council office. To volunteer, contact Call 925-0951, extension 836 or 837.



Classes Celebrate Kathryn Felix at Faith Literacy Center

Happy Birthday!





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Promoting the Central Coast Literacy Council

I had a phone call last week from a colleague that was trying to send the CCLC a donation. The check he had sent had been returned in the mail, and calls to the only phone number he could find went to an out of service number. His question "Is the CCLC still around?"




The conversation made it startling clear to me that we do not do enough to promote our organiza-

tion. Sure, those of you reading this newsletter know that we are here and continuing to do our important work of teaching people to read and write English, but what about the rest of the members of our community?

Our organization has recently looked into ideas for promoting the CCLC. The promotion will hopefully encourage membership, secure individual and corporate donations, promote our Spelling Bee, and bring in enthusiastic tutors and volunteers.

The Board has approved the development of a presentation packet filled with valuable information about CCLC. During the summer months we will be distributing the packets widely throughout the local business community.

So remember, there is nothing wrong with name-dropping. When a friend asks about volunteer opportunities, or is looking for a worthwhile organization for donation purposes remind them that the CCLC is going strong. If your friends don't ask you, introduce CCLC into the conversation or share with them the wonderful experiences you have had in your work with the CCLC. Most importantly remind people that the CCLC is working hard to build a better and stronger community through the gift of literacy.

Heather Weare, President 


There's a New Website for Tutors!

Tutor911 is now available. Sharon Hushka, Bethel-Daytime Center Director, recently created a website with a variety of resources and information available for tutors to use as they endeavor to enhance the learning process for their students. Some highlights are posted below.

The Tutor Workshop Handbook is available on-line, including the Table of Contents. The Life Skills page offers links to different subjects about the community, financial, and employment issues.

On the Tutor Aids page, resources offered include Dialogue: Common Student Goals. Starting with a list of more than a dozen broad topics, there are at least ten different questions (and answers) posted. These questions allow the students to discuss the different subjects. The interaction can be on a one-to-one basis or as part of a regular group discussion.

As a way to stay organized and to monitor a student's process, the tutor can use the Student Literacy Placement & Progress Record. This form provides links to resources found in the Tutor Workshop Handbook and entries for some of the materials used in teaching, i.e. English, No Problem! and Rosetta Stone.

On-going changes and additions will continue to be made. Plans are also underway to create a page for tutors who would like to contribute their teaching ideas. Your suggestions can be sent to Tutor911@earthlink.net . 

Website: Tutor911: <http://home.earthlink.net/~tutor911/>





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How People Acquire a Second Language

There are many different ideas about what actually occurs when people learn another language. There are even more ways of judging just when someone has acquired that second language. For students who live and function



in an English-speaking environment, their ability to get their ideas across in English is the only reasonable way to determine whether they have adequately learned the new language.

Native English speakers will believe your students speak English if they can give and receive information in English that communicates what they intend. That is not to say that grammar and vocabulary are not important. They are. But they are merely tools we use to accomplish communication goals:

- Students are primarily concerned with communication, not correctness. They may ask, "Were my needs met?" rather than "Was I correct?"
- There is a natural series of language development stages, from imprecise (bad) to accurate (good), referred to as interlanguage. These are necessary to acquiring a new language.
- Think of children and their ways of communicating or making their wants known long before speaking correctly. Students must feel a low level of anxiety and a high level of success. They must feel it is okay to make mistakes.
- Students may have a feeling of social and psychological distance between themselves and people who speak the new language.
- They may use their own language to discuss what they really care about: family, politics, future hopes and their feelings about life.

- They may use English for only superficial things: the cost of eggs, the weather or the location of a tool on the job. This may cause the student's English ability to fossilize or reach a plateau from which they never need to budge. The answer lies in knowing the student's goals.
- The tutor needs to be constantly looking for ways to help the student see a connection between what is happening in the classroom and what is done in everyday life.

THE GREATEST NEED FOR THE ESL STUDENT IS TO UNDERSTAND SPOKEN ENGLISH AND TO SPEAK. 🐸

This article is from Tutor 911, be sure to visit this helpful site.

Call for Volunteers for Family Literacy Program

If you want to feel good about what is happening in Santa Maria, visit the Council's Family Literacy program. They meet three Mondays in each month from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. in Shepard Hall at the City of Santa Maria library. This program is staffed by three dedicated adults.

Each session has a theme and includes games designed to reinforce family bonds and encourage parent participation in children's learning through literacy. The room is full of positive energy and excitement, families are learning together and having a great deal of fun.

The teen mentors do a wonderful job of making adults and children comfortable. They provide an excellent learning environment for the families.



We need three more adult volunteers to help with the program on a rotating basis. We also need periodic help from adults who would like to supervise during training of the teenaged mentors who assist with the program. To find out more or to volunteer, contact Isa at 925-0951, x836/837. 🐸



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CASAS EVALUATIONS

Central Coast Literacy Council's mission begins with teaching literacy to adults in northern Santa Barbara County. We do this through tutoring in seven literacy centers and some workplaces. We also have one-on-one literacy training at the library.

But how do we know—and how do we tell others—when we accomplish our mission?

We have anecdotal evidence of success from the pens of our learners. You read a story from one of the learners at St. John's Center in the Spring, 2009 newsletter. In the Winter, 2009 issue we published a thank-you note from a very successful learner who has turned new literacy skills into job advancement. But how do we know—and how do we tell others—when Literacy Council learners are achieving competency in life skills?

We need more standardized measures of literacy success. That is when we look to resources provided by Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems, otherwise known as "CASAS." CASAS has more than 180 different standardized test forms available to the Literacy Council. The tests assess various levels of competency in a variety of areas. Some examples are life skills, writing, workplace speaking, and government and history for citizenship. Central Coast Literacy Council uses CASAS reading tests.

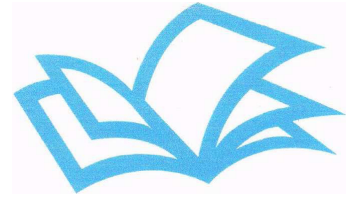


CASAS' assessment tools are used nationwide because many educational organizations respect their validity. The results are used to demonstrate the students growth.

One of the Council's newest volunteers, Bonnie Royster, is helping us to maximize our learners' competencies from a statistical standpoint. Bonnie has reviewed all of the CASAS reading exams the Council currently uses. During that review, Bonnie extracted the vocabulary and developed teaching aides for the tutors.

Tutors now have convenient access to the vocabulary to be incorporated into teaching sessions. We predict higher scores from Literacy students as a result of this important tool. Thank you, Bonnie!

Several times a year students are given the CASAS evaluation. This evaluation provides a student performance report which is very helpful to students and tutors in achieving higher levels of competency.



Sometimes students are intimidated by the word "test" so it is best to describe it as an evaluation of life skills taught to the students. Tell them it is very valuable to the tutors so we know what areas we need to focus on during the upcoming sessions.

It is also important to let the students know that by giving these evaluations CCLC meets requirements for receiving some of our funding. This is one of the reasons we are able to provide tutoring free to the students.

We cannot expect our students to do well on the CASAS if they have not been exposed to the vocabulary used in the evaluations.

The CCLC office has this tool so tutors can make sure that during the year we include these words in our tutoring sessions. For a copy of the list for your students' level call Marj or Isa.



A BIG THANK YOU!

CCLC wants to thank the planning committee members of the Family Literacy Program for their hard and diligent work: Kathy Telleria, Jeni Newell, Becky Bendele, Tatianna Kufferath, and Isa Ponce-Jiménez.





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Spring Training – It’s Not Just About Baseball

On January 30 and February 6, 2010, the Literacy Council welcomed a large group (16) of new tutor trainees to spring training.

Dr. Isa Ponce-Jimenez, served as head coach for the new tutor hopefuls. She was backed up by a strong team of experienced trainers: Dolores Segui, Marj Lambe, Bonnie Royster, Carol Maulhardt and Sharon Hushka.



Spring training took place in the beautiful and spacious Shepard Hall of the new library. The room’s perimeter displayed a variety of tutor aids: maps, cards showing the states, play money, a clock, and a chart of the human body. A table in back held student workbooks, handbooks for tutors, dictionaries, grammar and spelling books. Tutor trainees gathered in the center of the room where they worked with computers, written materials, and viewed screen presentations with Dr. Ponce-Jimenez.

Thank you to everyone who participated to make this training event a success. 🍌



Congratulations and welcome to each of the new tutors!

Literacy Council Website and Annual Report

Check out our Central Coast Literacy Council website, it has received a face lift. Go to <http://centralcoastliteracy.org/index.html> and enjoy.

Make sure to spend some time with the Council’s annual report. We have kicked it up a notch with fun graphics provided by Bonnie Royster. Thank you again, Bonnie! 🍌

Earth Day is a Day for Literacy

Ever wonder exactly what happens at a Central Coast Literacy Council Center?



On Earth Day, two Literacy Council Board members visited Sharon Hushka’s Center at Bethel Church to find out. When we arrived, students were working individually or with tutors. Many of the

students filled out pages of their workbooks; one student was completing an application for a grocery store club card. Computers were fired up and ready to assist at a separate table. Children played with building blocks in a side room. The surrounding walls contained charts of words to learn and matching pictures

Midway in the session, students and tutors came together for group activities. Each person said her name and favorite flower, then led a short activity like a song with motions.



Next, the group gathered at a table to read questions and discuss answers about Earth Day. 🍌



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Discussion ranged from Earth Day's origins to recycling and using earth-friendly cleaning products. Several of the students are helping to re-use resources by taking cloth bags to the store to hold groceries.

After group activities, the students returned to their individual literacy work. Just before saying "good-bye," we peeked into the side room. A preschool-aged child was "teaching" her friend to read!



Executive Director's Message

School will be over before we know it. The long summer days, when so many of us wish we could just go to the beach for a long walk instead of laboring in the office, are around the corner. During the summer months,

CCLC's centers are closed and only the one-on-one tutoring continues depending on the individual arrangements between tutors and learners. CCLC's office, however, will be busy making preparations for our new school year. In fact, please save the dates for the following activities:



Late June (exact date to be announced): Planning meeting for the 2010-2011 Family Literacy Program. We are looking for volunteers and teen mentors to continue this

successful and needed activity.

August 28, 2010, 9 am – 12 pm: Tutor Inservice at the Shepard Hall in the Santa Maria City Library. Look for an invitation late July.

October 16 and 23, 2010, 9 am – 3:30 pm: Tutor Training Workshop at the Shepard Hall. Tell a friend about the joy of tutoring!

End of October (exact date to be announced): the Writer to Writer Challenge is the annual regional writing competition for adult learners in public library literacy programs throughout California. Adult learners are invited to read a book of their choice and then write a personal letter to the author of the book, sharing with the author their thoughts and opinions as to how the book affected them. Tutors, get your learners involved!

I would like to express my deep gratitude to all the tutors and volunteers who help us deliver our literacy services. You are the heart of our program and without you... we would not exist!

Dr. Isa Ponce-Jimenez, Executive Director



Bethel-Santa Cruz Evening Literacy Center

Susan Nielsen, Center Director at Bethel Santa Cruz reports "This year we have had a continuous flow of new students wanting to learn English skills. It seems that word of mouth spreads about opportunities to learn - especially such helpful skills as language and literacy.

At the evening center, we have 4 tutors who have groups from 3 to 7 students. The range of abilities is broad, which makes it so helpful to have four different study groups. I am especially grateful for a set of tutors who have been so willing to be flexible about including and adapting to the "migration" of students

in and out. They have shown hearts willing to serve and committed to helping people learn. What a blessing that has been!"



St. John Neumann Center

Center Director Dolores Segui has been very busy. St. John Center began its 2009-2010 school year with 5 tutors: Bennie Anaya in Literacy, Dolores Segui in Book 1, Barbara Spenser in Book 2, Wilma Sukrad in Book 3, and Bob Meldau giving the Rosetta Stone classes.



For health reasons we lost Barbara and Bob, and Wilma also left since she is looking for a job. We have been very lucky to get Bonnie Royster (a new tutor) for Book 2.





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