

LITERACY MATTERS

NOVEMBER 2021



Literacy Matters is a recurring publication of Literacy Nassau, Inc.

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 Renae Katz, Bookkeeper
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 Jessica D'Aprile, Program Assistant
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 Jane Hartigan, OG Tutor
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IN GRATITUDE TO GKF

(submitted by Karen Micciche)

The Guru Krupa Foundation is an amazing community partner of ours which has been supporting Literacy Nassau in a variety of ways since 2012. Its mission is derived from the pillars of Hinduism and includes the following:

1. *Help those who are less fortunate than yourself*
2. *Support causes related to the acquisition of knowledge (both materialistic and non-materialistic)*
3. *Preserve the heritage and knowledge that has already been acquired*

With these values at the heart of all they do, Guru Krupa Foundation and Literacy Nassau have partnered up yet again for the 2021-22 school year to continue building language programs and a safe learning environment for all of our patrons. This year, Guru Krupa Foundation has been so generous to offer us a grant of \$50,000 which will enable us to work on three important projects.

Our first project has been near and dear to my heart for quite some time, and stems from not only a request from our adult English Language Learners but also from an experience my husband has every year. He is a teacher of earth science and



biology in a local public school, and has been struck each year by how many children are in his classes who cannot speak the English language. These children are placed in his classes, are expected to take a Regents exam at the end of the year, yet they cannot even communicate meaningfully. How can they learn content-based vocabulary when they don't even have a strong command of the basics? With help from GKPF, Literacy Nassau is excited to announce that from January through June of 2022, we will be piloting an ESOL program for kids in this exact predicament. This Saturday program will incorporate sports, crafts, and traditional classroom-based learning to teach 15 children how to speak, read, and write in English, completely for free. If it is successful, we hope to grow the program in future years!

Our other two projects relate to buildings and grounds. We would like to winterize our outdoor space and run electricity to it so that it can be utilized during the colder months of the year, and we also intend to build a new structure up
(continued on next page)

THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

November marks the start of the holiday season. It's a time for gratitude, family, and friends. This past year and a half has given us a firm reminder of how important our loved ones are. I've got friends and colleagues who haven't seen their extended family in 18 months. In fact, my mentor in grad school recently told me that he's the grandfather to a child who is about to turn two years old - and they've never had the chance to meet.

While we still have to live with the ever-changing realities of COVID, I do think the holidays offer us a nice opportunity to connect in unique, safe ways. When was the last time you hand wrote a letter to someone? Or sent a care package? You never know how the simplest kindness can change someone's day. The gift of ten minutes hand-writing a note to a loved one can make all the difference in a person's life. If there's one thing I have learned from COVID, it's this: don't take things (or people) for granted. This holiday season, try to hold that kernel of advice in your heart. A little bit of care goes a long way!

Karen 😊

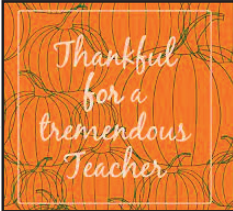


My girls take time to write to their relatives in other areas as well as their friends in Cape Cod. Not only is it fun to get mail, it's a great literacy activity!

WE ARE ALL THANKFUL!

From Karen: *This year, I am especially thankful to have signed with a literary agent! I look forward to seeing my novels in print soon!*

From Melissa: *Every year at Thanksgiving I am thankful for the health and happiness of my friends and family. In recent months, this has become more true as the world continues to fight through the pandemic. This year, I am also thankful to be a part of the Literacy Nassau family. In September I was hired as a full-time Orton-Gillingham tutor and have enjoyed being able to work with several new students in this position. I am thankful and privileged to be able to help these children learn and grow.*



From Renae: *I am thankful for my family and friends. I am especially thankful for my places of employment. The pandemic has not been easy for anyone. I was fortunate to work remotely the months of shutdown and continued to receive full pay. I am also very lucky to work with a friendly and fun staff. I am grateful for the concern and generosity my employer has towards the staff. I guess I am just thankful I wake up and enjoy going to work everyday!*



From Kate: *I am thankful for my family and our three new additions this year: my nephew, Jacob (8 months) and my two puppies, Milli (9 months) and Lucy (6 months). They have brought so much joy and laughter to our lives and I look forward to seeing them grow up together.*

From Jennifer: *This Thanksgiving, I can't help but feel grateful (and blessed) that I will be able to spend it with my niece and her family. While I got to spend some time last summer with them, since the pandemic began I have become more and more grateful for every hour, minute and second that I get to spend with my family and my friends!*

From Jane: *In the morning, I am grateful for the sun shining through the windows of my community pool as I go for an early swim. In the afternoon, I am grateful to see my students live and in person instead of on a screen.*



From Jessica: *This year I am thankful for the health and well being of my family and friends during such tumultuous times.*

From Mary: *As an elementary school teacher, I am so thankful for the opportunity to help both my second graders in school and my OG students from Literacy Nassau learn new things, strengthen their skills, and grow in confidence. I am proud of my students, and so grateful to see them experience success.*



From Anne-Marie: *I am thankful for all the guardian angels that have come our way during this pandemic.*

IN GRATITUDE TO GKF (CONTINUED FROM COVER)

on the hill to the right of our building where small groups can gather safely outdoors. We will share more information about our progress on all of these projects in a future newsletter. Thank you, Guru Krupa Foundation!

Pictured below are Mr. Mukund Padmanabhan and Karen in front of our outdoor pods and indoor training room.



Warm Birthday Wishes to our Tutors Celebrating in November!

Susan Anton – Lorraine Bak – Patricia Ballard – Nupur Banerjee
 Gail Bauer – Gail Carlin – Erica Davis – Kathleen Dendy
 Diane Dwyer – Stefanie Edwards – Janice Haber-Horn
 Sandra Heiman – Charles Jencius – Joni Jones
 Joanne Kassnove – Susan Kimmel – Madia Lamontagne
 Jean Lavelle – Angela Luo – Kathy Mahony
 Karen McDonough – Deirdre McElhatton
 Mary Ann Neber – Kevin O'Keefe – Teresa Rienzie
 Martha Salzberg – Helen Schmidt – Adarsh Singla
 Diane Ugelow – Cathy Zwilling

HOW TO VOLUNTEER

(submitted by Kate Quijano)

As we think about what we are thankful for this season, I am reminded yet again of how thankful we at Literacy Nassau are for all of our volunteer tutors. We are able to provide free English and reading classes to our adult students because of the commitment and dedication of our volunteers.

We have tutors who have been working with us continuously for many years, tutors who volunteer on and off depending on the season, and tutors who work with us briefly to gain experience before applying for a full-time paid teaching position elsewhere. We are happy to have tutors for whatever amount of time they are able to give us and are glad that we can offer these flexible options since we do have so many people interested in volunteering. We are always looking for new tutors to join us so that we can continue offering free services to our students.

Throughout the month of November, we will be recruiting new volunteers and providing training for these new potential tutors. We advertise on our website and on social media, but many come to us through word of mouth. Our current tutors, who love what they do, often refer friends to us. There are several steps involved in becoming a new tutor with Literacy Nassau:



Step 1: Attend orientation (advanced registration required through our website). Our one-hour orientation is virtual so that potential tutors don't have to travel and so that we can have people from all different parts of Nassau County come together to the same meeting. We offer day and evening options for orientations.

Orientation familiarizes volunteers with our mission, our history, and the different opportunities we have for volunteers. We focus on helping volunteers to understand the differences in our programs and to choose the one program that speaks to them the most to choose to move forward in.

Step 2: Tutor Training Workshop (TTW) (advanced registration required; must have completed orientation first) Once the volunteer decides which program they want to participate in, they attend a TTW specifically designed to train them for that program and that population of participants.

The ELL TTW prepares tutors to work with adult students who are learning English. It explains how we test and group students into 4 ability level classes and what to expect from each level. We also review the curriculum, supplementary resources, and expectations for teaching a class.

The BL TTW prepares you to work with adults who want to improve their reading skills. Many students in this program either didn't complete school or have learning disabilities. Tutors are given a brief introduction to the Orton-Gillingham methodology and multisensory instruction and review our phonics-based curriculum to teach basic reading skills.

The Citizenship TTW prepares tutors to work with intermediate/advanced level ELL students who are studying for their citizenship exam. This is a test-prep course and tutors learn

about the naturalization process.

The NCBC TTW prepares facilitators to lead book clubs for adult participants who have developmental disabilities. It reviews our procedures and best practices and the book sets that we have available for the groups to read and discuss in their weekly meetings.

Step 3: The potential tutor completes a workshop matching application with all pertinent contact, location, and scheduling information for us to keep on file as we book our classes for the next session.

Step 4: When we have an opening that looks like a good fit, we reach out to the tutor to confirm dates and location. Then we begin registering students for the class.

Step 5: Rosters are mailed out, the tutor contacts their students to provide an introduction, then they begin meeting at their scheduled location. Once a tutor begins working with us, they continue to receive support from Literacy Nassau in various ways- email, phone calls, and in-service trainings. The ELL tutors even decided to have bi-weekly Zoom meetings to discuss their groups and share ideas. I enjoy the opportunity to hear about all the great things happening in their sessions and to watch the mentoring that occurs between seasoned tutors and those that are joining us for the first time.

So, if you have any friends that would be interested in volunteering with us (please note that we are in need of tutors for in-person classes at various libraries throughout Nassau County) please direct them to the volunteer section of our website where they can sign up for an orientation.

<https://www.literacynassau.org/volunteer-orientation->

**ORIENTATION MEETINGS
(NEW VOLUNTEER)**

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4
7:00 - 8:00PM

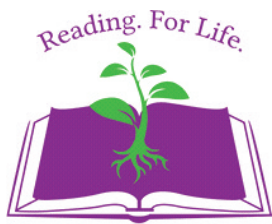
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10
11:00AM - 12:00PM

**TUTOR TRAINING
WORKSHOPS (TTW)**

ELL: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13
10:00 - 12:00PM

ELL: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17
10:00 - 1:00PM

BL: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 22
11:00 - 1:00PM



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