



LITERACY MATTERS

FEBRUARY 2022



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

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INTRODUCING THE DAVID MILJONER LEGACY FUND

(submitted by Irv Miljoner, Board Member)

The Dalai Lama once said... "Our highest purpose in this life is to help others." People often ask about how they can make a positive difference, to improve the lives of those less fortunate, and be a force for good in our communities and the world. As a reader of this newsletter, and someone who has a connection to Literacy Nassau, you are likely one of those caring difference-makers. As such, you know that giving of oneself elevates the giver as much as the receiver. You reach out, you volunteer, you give and you contribute... because you care enough to make the world a better place.

Literacy Nassau is proud to introduce the "David Miljoner Legacy Fund" as a venue within the organization to support the programs which generally benefit recent immigrants and other vulnerable populations. Such programs include Adult Literacy Education, English Language Learning, Citizenship Preparation, and others including some new initiatives being developed, e.g. a program to benefit children of ESL families. The organization

will direct resources and raised funds to programs that have the greatest identified needs.

David Miljoner, a grandson of immigrants who were Holocaust survivors (and who themselves benefited from English literacy tutoring and Citizenship preparation), was also from a family with a 20+ year association with Literacy Nassau. A year 2000 graduate of Oceanside High School, David served as editor of the school's newspaper (The Sider Press), and did some volunteer English tutoring for fellow students, among his civic and community activities. David continued to volunteer and advocate for the less fortunate as a student at the State University at Albany, and then continued with graduate studies including International and Latin American affairs. He studied and volunteered in Chile for a year, and also fulfilled a graduate student fellowship with mission work for the U.S. Agency for International Development in Peru, and the Peruvian Congress. David was also selected for a NY State Senate fellowship which focused on immigrant

(continued on next page)

THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

This month's Corner Office shares some exciting news! Around this time next year, my debut novel, The Yearbook, will be released! I recently signed a three-book deal with Sourcebooks, and as you can imagine, the last few months have been a dream come true. In lieu of a typical photograph, I'm posting the deal announcement below.

Let this be a lesson that you can bring to all of your students: I am over forty. I got my Master's degree last summer. I worked hard and juggled parenting responsibilities, work responsibilities, and school responsibilities for two years while writing novels for the first time ever. Ever since I was a little girl, I dreamed about being an author, but never thought I would actually be able to do it. Yet, here we are.

As Walt Disney once said, "All of your dreams can come true, if you have the courage to pursue them." I look forward to sharing this journey with you!

Karin 😊

PublishersMarketplace Deal Report

Fiction: Debut

January 18, 2022

Fairfield University MFA graduate **KJ Micciche's** *THE YEARBOOK*, chronicling the aftermath of a down-on-her-luck romance author's drunken e-mail to an unrequited high-school crush, his surprising response, and a humorous warning about the perils of nicknames in literature and in life, to **Deb Werksman** at **Sourcebooks**, in a three-book deal, by **Elizabeth Copps** at **Copps Literary Services** (world English).



THE DAVID MILJONER LEGACY FUND (CONT'D)

issues, and advocacy for those with disabilities. After a year as a Graduate Teaching Assistant, David moved out west for a position with the U.S. Department of Labor, where he went on to develop programs to protect vulnerable immigrant workers.

David passed away in November 2016, after a long battle with Leukemia and Systemic Lupus, with which he was diagnosed as a teenager. His many medical challenges did not deter him from his studies, volunteer work, social justice activism and service to others. In fact his own struggles instilled in him the empathy that moved him toward a committed life of advocacy for others.

That legacy of advocacy inspired many people with whom David worked and interacted over the years. One high ranking Labor Department official said that it was David's commitment and work that was the impetus for a nationwide initiative to help exploited immigrant workers. He was the inspiration for an "attitude and gratitude" campaign in the agency's Long Island office. Many others have said that David inspired them to live "better and more purposeful" lives, similarly devoted to advocacy for those less fortunate.

Few things can help people attain "better and more purposeful" lives more than achieving literacy. The positive impact of literacy is crucial to so many life endeavors, from employment and financial security to social connections and overall contentment. For children, it's fundamental to education and beyond -- building self-esteem, social awareness and essential connections to the world around them, all of which will be a foundation for their life success and fulfillment.

Please consider designating donations of any amount you might think of making to Literacy Nassau, as being directed to the David Miljoner Legacy Fund. It would honor David's memory, spirit and legacy of service to vulnerable and underserved populations, consistent with the mission and work of Literacy Nassau – and more – it would so greatly benefit so many in need.

Donations can simply be made by going to the website www.literacynassau.org/david-miljoner-legacy-fund, or by choosing the category David Miljoner Legacy Fund under the Donate tab. If you'd prefer to mail in a check, please make it payable to "Literacy Nassau," write David Miljoner Legacy Fund on the memo line, and mail it to Literacy Nassau, 1 Ivy Lane, Wantagh, NY 11793.



FEBRUARY CELEBRATIONS



Tutors: The holidays and special days in **February** according to ESL Library are as follows:

- Black History Month
- Heart Month
- Lunar New Year
- Groundhog Day
- Pizza Day
- Valentines Day
- World Whale Day
- Presidents' Week
- Pink Shirt Day (anti-bullying)



Be sure to utilize your ESL Library this month for lesson plans and activities as we help everyone celebrate.



Warm Birthday Wishes to our Tutors!

- Jacqui Alves – Linda Antin – Ruth Babicz – Margaret Barton
 Jodi Batan-Seegull – Linda Bleck – Joan Capello
 Lynne Ferraro – Deanna Glassman – Karen Grimes
 Ellen Gross – Bob Hanna – Bernie Hirschhorn
 Judy Hoffman – Pamela Jackson-Ware – Sylvia Jorisch
 Christina Kachinoski – Delia King – Susan Laufer
 Nicole Maas – Terri Mangum – Jessica Merkel
 Carolyn Miller – Debbie Mincer – Ephifany Morillo
 Doreen Pechman – Cathy Perini – Anand Persaud
 Sandra Pesce – Joan Ratty – Anita Schwartz
 Pamela Shampam – Margaret Sherman – Ethell Smith
 Mary-Rose Waldron – Steve Young – Monika Yu



WELCOME OUR NEW SATURDAY ENGLISH IMMERSION PROGRAM TEACHERS FOR CHILDREN

(Submitted by Carina Sanchez)

My name is Carina Sanchez and I am the new ENL tutor for Literacy Nassau. I am currently an ENL teacher for grades K-6 in Huntington. Becoming an ENL teacher has been an amazing experience. I have worked with college students, starting my career as a teacher for high school students and now at the primary and intermediate levels.

As a former ENL student myself, I always knew a career teaching English to students of other languages was the right path. My parents emigrated from the Dominican Republic only speaking Spanish. It was the first language I learned and later on I learned English. I was very fortunate that my parents always instilled their cultural values and traditions but allowed us to also assimilate to the American culture. One of the reasons why I chose to become an ENL teacher is to show our students the benefits of being bilingual or multilingual. I also like to encourage them to continue their cultural traditions, while learning about American traditions. I am very excited to be teaching for the English Immersion program at Literacy Nassau because it will help students receive that extra support in learning the English language. Students will be taught in a culturally accepting environment with peers who are learning English as well. Students will learn skills and build their confidence in the English language. Students will be able to use these skills in school, social settings, and day-to-day activities. Most importantly we want our students to have fun learning English and meet new peers.

When I am not teaching I love to travel to different countries and learn about new cultures. I like to spend time with my family and close friends. During the summer months, you will find me at the beach relaxing, enjoying the outdoors, and eating my favorite ice cream. I look forward to meeting and working with everyone at Literacy Nassau.

(Submitted by Jennifer Perper)

My name is Jennifer Perper and I have taught Spanish and English as a Second Language for over 20 years at a middle school in Queens. I recently retired from the NYC Department of Education and am looking forward to teaching the Saturday program here at Literacy Nassau. We have designed a daily agenda to help our students improve their proficiency in English through a plethora of creative activities like role-playing, arts and crafts, songs and games. We are hoping to instill a sense of community and create a safe environment for the students to practice and improve their English skills while having a good time. I am really excited about this program and am sure that the kids will enjoy making new friends while exploring different cultures and traditions.



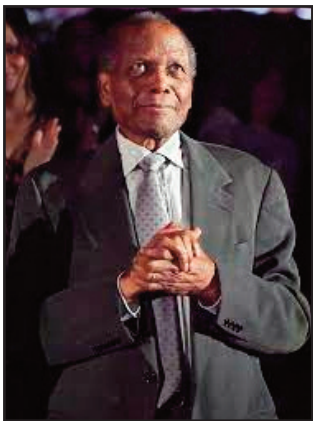
Our teachers: Carina (left) and Jennifer (right).



THE JEWISH MENTOR SIDNEY POITIER NEVER GOT TO THANK

(Reprinted with permission from the FORWARD; written by PJ Grisar)

Sidney Poitier, the Oscar-winning actor, director and civil rights icon who died today at 94, often credited a more obscure figure for his success: an old Jewish waiter.



When Poitier was a newly-arrived Bahamian in Queens, N.Y., washing dishes at a restaurant, and hoping to make it as an actor, he would bring newspapers to his shifts. Poitier, who would soon need to memorize scripts, was still learning how to read.

"I sit there, and I'm reading one of the papers," Poitier recalled on an episode of the podcast "What it Takes." "And there was a Jewish waiter sitting at the table, elderly man, and he saw me there. He got up, and he walked over, and he stood by the table that's next to the kitchen, and he said, 'Hi. What's new in the papers?' And I said to him, 'I can't tell you what's new in the papers because I don't read very well. I didn't have very much of an education.'"

The waiter, whom Poitier also spoke of in interviews with Oprah and on "60 Minutes" and mentioned in award acceptance speeches, offered to read with him.

"Every night after that he would come over and sit with me, and he would teach me what a comma is and why it exists, what periods are, what colons are, what dashes are," Poitier continued. "He would teach me that there are syllables and how to differentiate them in a single word and consequently, learn how to pronounce them. Every night.

"One of my great regrets in life is that I went on to be a very successful actor, and one day I tried to find him, but it was too late, and I regret that I never had the opportunity to really thank him."





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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT :)