



LITERACY MATTERS

MAY 2022



LITERACY
N A S S A U

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

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POLISH LITERACY FOUNDATION LEADS RELIEF EFFORTS FOR UKRANIAN KIDS

*(By Joanne O'Sullivan, Publisher's Weekly)
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A child alone, afraid, far from home. With a mother, maybe. Maybe without a father. In a time like this, research shows, a book can offer "a moment of peace, a way to forget," said Maria Deskur, CEO of Poland's Fundacja Powszechnego Czytania (Universal Reading Foundation). The Foundation—a collective of more than 20 Polish publishers and distributors—is leading an effort to supply books to Ukrainian refugee children in Poland and funds to Ukrainian publishers.

In the days since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it's estimated that more than half a million refugees have poured into Poland. About 100,000 are believed to be children. In addition to families, Ukrainian orphanages have been evacuated, and children have been newly orphaned by the war. Deskur—also managing director of children's publisher Wydawnictwo Słowne—says that virtually everyone in Poland has sprung into action to help—taking refugees into their homes, volunteering at the border or in shelters, supplying material and financial support. Within the publishing

industry, the response was almost immediate.

Initial efforts centered on collecting donations of picture books and coloring books from Polish publishers—"books you don't have to read," Deskur said. The Foundation is uniquely positioned to help. Formed in 2018 to promote early childhood literacy in Poland, its members are at the heart of the Polish publishing industry, and include Dwie Siostry, publisher of the international bestseller *Maps* by Aleksandra and Daniel Mizieliński. With its established distributor connections and warehouse and transportation resources, member organizations were able to quickly deliver books to relief groups.

Within days, though, the effort had expanded. Foundation members collected contact information for close to 40 Ukrainian publishers of children's and adult books. Ukrainian publishers began to email book files to Polish printers who volunteered to print them for free. Eight books—with print runs of 1,000 each—are expected to be delivered on March 8. The books are "warm stories," Deskur said, a mix of picture books and story books for the

(continued on the next page)

THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

Every now and then, I have a solid moment where I feel like a really good mom. Parents often have to act like superheroes, swooping in and saving the day when their kids need them the most. For my girls, just me being their mom is a superpower in itself.

I'm sure you sometimes feel that way about your students. When they have a great moment of understanding, or a big milestone attributed to something you've taught them, you can feel amazing! Here is a chance for you to harness your inner awesomeness at a free training being offered by Literacy NY: **Your Identity as a Superpower: Join author and speaker Betty Ng, founder and CEO of Inspiring Diversity, as she leads participants on a journey that will inspire you to see your identity as a superpower, and will provide you with a framework you can use to propel yourself, your learners, and others to success. This program will be held on Zoom, Thursday, May 12, 12pm-1:30pm. To register, contact apoliviou@literacynassau.org by May 9th.**



Fourth grade hasn't been the easiest for Haley, but she feels instantly better when she confides in me. Together, we can work through just about anything!

Karen



POLISH LITERACY FOUNDATION (CONTINUED)

youngest children. Foundation member Nowa Era—Poland’s largest educational publisher—offered its network of representatives (connected to virtually every Polish preschool) as well as its distribution channels to get books to schools where Ukrainian refugee students are expected to enroll. To reach kids who won’t yet be in schools, Deskur has relied on her contacts with Poland’s union of municipalities, whose member organizations are in charge of local shelters. The Foundation is also responding to direct requests for books from individuals. Deskur said she heard from a man who had taken in 12 refugee children and wanted a book for each. “We will try to answer all requests,” she added.

Deskur expects the Foundation’s efforts to be ongoing, emphasizing that in addition to supplying books to kids, financial support for Ukrainian publishers is critical. During World War II, the destruction of Polish books and libraries was widespread and the country’s publishing industry was decimated, she said. After the war, publishing had to begin again from scratch. That rebuilding had effects on the country’s literacy rates that are still felt today. According to the Foundation’s research, Poland lags behind its European neighbors in childhood literacy. Financial support for Ukrainian publishers now can help reduce harm to the sector so that kind of intergenerational impact can be avoided. But there’s an even bigger picture issue at play, Deskur said, since books are essential to democracy.

Depending on the success of fundraising efforts, the Foundation hopes to be able to pay Ukrainian publisher between one and three euros per book for each printed. All printing,

distribution, and coordination efforts by Polish companies have been donated, meaning there’s no overhead and 100% of donated funds can go to Ukrainian publishers, Deskur said. While the Foundation aims to prioritize children’s books, its efforts include all publishers.

For the people of Poland, Deskur said, the war is “very near.” While urgent needs for food, shelter, and medical attention are being addressed by aid organizations, Deskur said the Foundation can offer children emotional support through books. As Foundation member publishers have reached out to their international partners, support is beginning to come in from outside Poland. Caldecott Medalist Sophie Blackall has donated an illustration to help the effort. “I heard about the Fundacja Powszechnego Czytania from Christopher Franceschelli, a pillar of the children’s book community,” Blackall said. “I think there were many of us who wanted to help but didn’t know how. Fundacja Powszechnego Czytania are doing all the hard work on the ground, and those of us who make books and work with children, who know how comforting a book can be, are eager to help them reach their goals.”

Publishing has always been about making connections and reaching out beyond the bounds of language and nationality. “Action is the antidote to despair,” Joan Baez once famously said, and it’s a philosophy that Deskur and her colleagues endorse. In these distressing times, “We have to take care of each other,” Deskur said.

To donate to help supply books to Ukrainian refugee children and funds to Ukrainian publishers, visit fpc.org.pl. For more information or to partner with the Foundation, email ukraine-funds@fpc.org.pl.

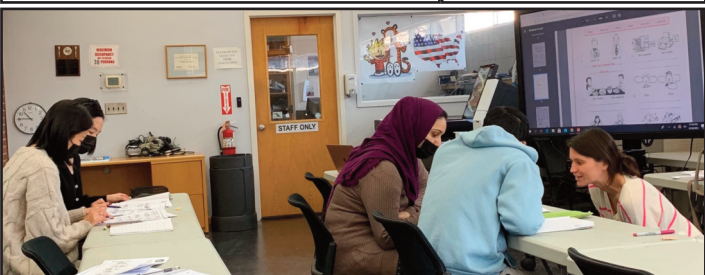
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ELL CLASSES IN ACTION



Esther Solario’s Levittown Library class.

“Today I held class at Panera Bread. My students did an awesome job ordering their meal and beverage. We had a great time and the conversation flowed. They are an incredible group of women. I’m very proud of them.”



Kristen Johnson’s Hicksville Library class:

“Our class this term worked incredibly hard! We began virtually and eventually got to meet in-person. Each week, I was so impressed with the class and their willingness and openness to try new activities, the amazing effort they poured into their learning, and the encouragement they always offered one another. It was an absolute pleasure and honor to be part of their journey!”

Thank You, Tutors!

MAY 2-
MAY 6

TEACHER
APPRECIATION
WEEK



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: HEEJUNE KIM

(submitted by Adrienne Carlton, Tutor)

I have had the pleasure of tutoring Heejune since the summer of 2021. "June" is a very hard-working student. She attends class on time, does her homework, and participates in class activities. Beyond that, she displays critical and analytical thinking skills.

June is very curious about the English language. She wants to understand basic grammar and vocabulary. She also wants to know how and why the context of words changes in given situations.

June asks important questions in class. At times, I find myself challenged to answer these questions so that all in the class can benefit. Personally, I also enjoy June's sense of humor and how she openly expresses it in class. Every tutor would like to have a student like her! We asked June to tell us more about herself:

1. I was born in South Korea. It's very similar to New York in terms of weather.

2. I came to the United States since 2009, in March with my family.

3. I have two children and a husband. My son has been in the Air Force since 2019. He is very proud of himself. He works as a dental assistant on the base in Florida. My daughter is a college student. We look very alike like friends. She always helps me even with my English homework. But, we speak Korean with each other. And my husband's job is an office job in Queens.



4. I heard about Literacy Nassau from my friend. I learned English here on and off for 3 years.

5. I started learning English in Great Neck Adult Learning Center from the beginning level. I got all the way to pre-GED class, but gave up because that was too difficult for me. English is hard and confusing. Even though, they have great teacher. They were a little strict when I was in class. I wanted to take ESL class a little longer but I moved to pre-GED class because it was mandatory. Years later I heard about Literacy Nassau, I started learn English again. I was nervous and didn't know what to expect. Meanwhile, I met my current class teacher, Adrienne. She is very kind to all of us, teaches very well and when I ask a question in class she answers it with care. And I study with my classmate who is Japanese so we speak English only.

6. I want to pass the GED test and go to college in the United States. And I want to speak English well without my daughter's help to be able to visit the hospital, DMV, social security office all by myself.

7. I want to tell Literacy Nassau that I love that it's free for NY residents to learn English and that the teachers are so nice. Thank you Literacy Nassau!

OUR NEWEST U.S. CITIZEN: GEORGE SANKEY

(submitted by Fran Fox, Tutor)

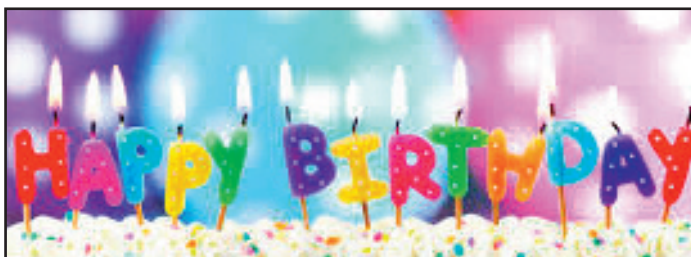
During the past few winter months, I have had the privilege of helping several students prepare for the United States Citizenship test. One of my students, George Sankey, was fortunate enough to take his test at the conclusion of our Citizenship course. With all the information fresh in his memory, George passed the test and will soon attend the Citizenship ceremony and become a US citizen.



George was born and educated in England. He came to America in 2007 due to a job relocation with no plans to stay. But he met his future wife while working here and his original plan took a different path! George and his family have settled on Long Island after living and working in several different locales. He then decided to make America his permanent home and take the Citizenship class with Literacy Nassau. George has a daily three hour round trip commute to and from New Jersey. He managed to stay awake through our evening classes due to his determination to pass the test. In George's own words, he said, "It was worth it though to pass the interview the first time. I am proud to become a citizen of a nation that is founded on the principle that all men are created equal."

Congratulations to George Sankey on becoming a fellow United States Citizen!

*Thank you, Fran and Adrienne,
for all the contributions to your
students and our program!*



Warm Birthday Wishes to our Tutors!

Roslyn Armstrong Powell – Sr. Mary Alice Aschenbach
 Donna Bennett – Dee Berger – Lynne Borah – Carl Borruso
 Esther Braun – Marjorie Brown – Christopher Cantanno
 Regina Dallensandro – Nicolas DeMarco – Kate Dickson
 Delia A. Espinal – Joanne Finochiarro – Johnny Gilchrist
 Maryanne Gogolinski - Laura Graves – Scott Gutterman
 Daniel Henick – Sandra Herman – Sherry Jagels – Mindy Kaiser
 Daniel McCarthy – Kaitlyn Migliore – Evelyn Monaco
 Meena Natarajan – Grazia Norton – Sandy Palma
 June Prisand – Alisa Promakul – Barbara Randall
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 Kathy Scheiner – Mahendra Shah – Lanie Spencer
 Harriet Studness – Ernestine Warner – Sherika Wheatley




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