



LITERACY
VOLUNTEERS OF
BROOME/TIOGA
COUNTIES, INC.

SAVE THE DATES

SCHWAN'S Fundraiser

Starting November 9

Shop online
or
By phone

BARNES & NOBLE Bookfair

Friday,
December 11

at the
Vestal Store

Online
Dec. 11-16

AMAZONSMILE

Online - Anytime

See insert for details

Linked By Literacy

Fall 2015

With Change Comes Opportunity

Literacy Volunteers of Broome/Tioga Counties (LVBTC) has had our share of changes this past year, but with change comes opportunity — an opportunity to reorganize, strengthen and grow our organization.

Over the past four months, LVBTC experienced the loss of our New York State funding and the retirement of our executive director. We have embraced these challenges as an opportunity to move the organization forward. On May 29, the LVBTC Board appointed me Interim Executive Director. Formerly, I was the Administrative Manager and previously served on the Literacy Volunteers Board of Directors. With over 20 years of nonprofit and community outreach partnership experience, I am confident and excited to serve LVBTC in my new role and to help secure the agency's future capacity to serve the community.

We have a great team of staff, tutors, office volunteers, and board members who help to ensure our success! Our dedicated team is always ready and willing to support our students to reach their educational, employment and personal goals! We continuously look for new ways to enhance the quality of the services, broaden community partnerships, and expand our programs to reach more adult learners. With volunteer assistance from Chip Carlin, Director of Communications & Technology

(and the former Director of Resource Development) with Literacy New York, LVBTC has a new resource development plan. This plan includes actively seeking local and national private/public sector grants, increasing corporate and individual giving, and hosting new special fundraising events.

There are many ways you can support Literacy Volunteers of Broome/Tioga Counties during this time of change and opportunity. In this newsletter you will read about our programs, student success stories, and new fundraising events. I encourage you to support LVBTC with a monetary donation or by shopping for your holiday food and gifts at one of our fundraisers. Together we can make a difference in our community and increase literacy in Broome and Tioga Counties!

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, concerned citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has." — Margaret Mead

I wish you a joyous holiday season and thank you for your support of LVBTC,

Kristen Gordon-Pier
Interim Executive Director

Need help with your computer skills? T.A.L.L. can help !

The Tioga Adult Learning Lab (T.A.L.L.) is a basic computer skills instructional program for adults. Since 1992, in collaboration with the Tioga County Department of Social Services, T.A.L.L. has provided instruction in basic computer use.

Our free classes, workshops and labs have assisted job seekers with such skills as: how to conduct a job search, keyboarding tutorials, formatting resumes and cover letters, and general use of the internet.

The program offers a year round schedule of instruction:

- **Basics of Microsoft Office applications**
- **How to use Social Media**
- **Internet use & email tutorials**
- **Resume and cover letter workshops**
- **Assistance with on line job applications**

Classes are held in the Owego Free Academy in Owego. Last year 306 adult students attended TALL classes or workshops.

For more information call the LVBTC office at 607-778-6406
or
visit our website at www.broometiogaliteracy.org
for the current class schedule.

Successful Learning a New Way

Math Lab, English Lab, & Reading Roundtable

By Ann Marie Carmon
Adult Education Program Manager

It's 7:30 AM on a Monday morning. "Blip ba da buzzzz..." My cell phone alarm lets me know that it's time to get up. It's a Math Lab day at Literacy Volunteers of Broome/Tioga, Co. Time to get moving! By 9:30 AM, I have arrived at the Broome County Public Library and head up to the office. I don't have to be at the Lab. . . . we have an excellent team of volunteer tutors. . . . but, I always try to drop in! I enjoy seeing the students and it gives me an opportunity to observe how they are progressing.

Around 11:00 AM or so, I leave the office and walk through the Lab. It's wonderful to see the students hard at work. A hello here and there to tutors and students alike, a quick chat, sometimes a little tutoring help, and then, it's back to the office. At noon, the students and tutors begin to exit the lab....

"See you next time!"

The Math Lab was created in February 2014 for students that had not yet been matched with a tutor. Students could come to the library where several tutors would be available to help them work on math. This allowed them to begin their studies (rather than being on a waiting list for weeks). The lab quickly evolved into a viable alternative and/or adjunct to having a one-on-one tutor.

During lab, tutors work individually or in small groups with students. Check sheets are kept of each student's progress. This allows any tutor to know where a particular student is in his/her studies. Weekly attendance is encouraged, but in the event that illness, etc. necessitates an absence, each individual student can always continue to progress at their own rate (as they would with a one-on-one tutor).

LVBTC's English Lab started in the Fall of 2014. After the successful start of the Math Lab, students and tutors began inquiring about an English Lab. The Math Lab was growing and



Susan Blumberg, Lab Manager, gets ready for Math Lab.

becoming quite popular with the students and tutors.

So, how could an English Lab be organized to be successful? What are the basic English skills our students need to have? A quick Google search yielded that educational sources list speaking, listening, reading, and writing as the skills to study. That's a lot!

We decided that we would begin with reading, since it is the skill that is assessed on the test our students must take to meet New York State guidelines – the TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education). It is also the skill that most standardized tests are based on, including the new high school equivalency test (TASC – Test Assessing Secondary Completion). We would utilize TABE review workbooks as a guide.....and so the English Lab began.

Noting the success of the Math and Reading Labs, tutor Joan Zahorian saw the interest in creating a Reading Roundtable, designed for adults to read and reflect on books and short stories. Each Wednesday, Ms. Zahorian meets with students to discuss books and stories in depth.

"There is always something electric in the air when we start a new story..we never know where the conversation will go, but we do know it's going to be quite a ride, an adventure in learning how to live better".

The Reading Roundtable allows tutors and students to summarize stories, discuss plots and charac-

ters, draw conclusions and otherwise reflect on stories they read. Even reading aloud is part of the sessions - giving adults invaluable reading practice. When reflecting on one roundtable session, Ms. Zahorian commented on a vocabulary word they were discussing, "philosopher". **"A lot of time was spent in that session discussing what it meant, and how a person becomes a philosopher"**, she commented. And so it led her to this reflection:

"In 399 B.C. Socrates said, 'the unexamined life is not worth living'....and here we are, in 2015 discussing the meaning of life with literacy students....don't tell me this isn't worth it!" Yes, Ms. Zahorian is right - our adult literacy programs are definitely worth it, as they can make a difference in the lives of all adults who participate!



The Math and English Labs, as well as the Reading Roundtable, are a work in progress. The tutors observe what is being done and help determine what still needs to be accomplished. They are doing a phenomenal job of making improvements and additions to activities in the labs. We credit the success of these programs to our tutors.

Thank You Tutors!!!

Weekly attendance at each lab averages
4-10 students
2-7 tutors

As of June 30, 2015
a total of 50 adult learners have been assisted.

Annual Tutor-Student Recognition Dinner

Literacy Volunteers of Broome/Tioga Counties, Inc. held its Annual Tutor-Student Recognition Dinner on April 23, 2015 at the Broome County Public Library in Binghamton. More than 50 tutors, students, volunteers, board members and staff gathered to celebrate the past year's successful programs and events.

While numerous stories were shared that evening (too many to print here!), two stories highlighted the kind of success our students have, and show the level of commitment our volunteers give to our program.



The first highlight of the Recognition Dinner centers around Annamary "Annie" who had been working towards her high school equivalency diploma for over 6 years. After previously being enrolled in a traditional high school equivalency program, Annie found she wasn't making progress. She sought out Literacy Volunteers for one-to-one tutoring.

In 2013, she took the exam twice, and passed all portions but math. After working exclusively on math with her tutor, Linda Lisman, she did indeed pass the math portion and received her New York State High School Equivalency Diploma.

Annie had been working towards her high school equivalency for over 6 years. Last year she took the exam twice and passed all of the sub tests except for the math portion. So, for the past year, we worked almost exclusively on the math section.

Irrational numbers and dividing exponents drove us both a little crazy. But I am so proud and pleased to report that she did indeed pass the math and got her highest score of any of the subtests.

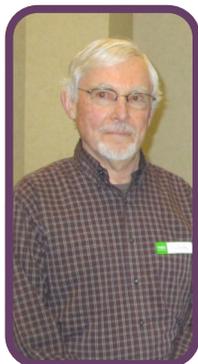
When she got her diploma, she jumped up and down and cried. She originally wanted to work to make her two daughters proud. And they are. But, she also has a new sense of confidence in herself and in her own accomplishments.

Annie should truly be the face of what Literacy Volunteers can accomplish.

Linda Lisman (Annamary's Tutor)



Annie with family and friends at her graduation held at Tutor-Student Recognition Dinner



Another reflection from the evening was the thank you acknowledgement for retiring tutor Jim Boyden. Having been a tutor for two decades, Mr. Boyden worked with numerous students and through many changes in staff and adult education requirements. Staff reflected on how he is representative of many of our tutors and volunteers: a person who dedicates his or her time to improving the lives of others. Staff commended Jim's long term commitment and quality of his work for the organization. The dedication that Mr. Boyden and all our volunteers give is greatly appreciated!

Congratulations to all of our students for their accomplishments! And thank you to Mr. Boyden and all our volunteers!

STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES

Students achieve many goals throughout the year. Here are just a few that tutors have reported:

N.B. was able to pass the written test to get a Learners Permit - the first step in getting a driver's license.

T.W. can now read and understand recipes, which is helping her with cooking. She has improved her academic skills so she can help her children with their homework as well. Her improvements in reading and verbal communication have helped her to understand her doctors better as well.

J.S. is nearing completion of his high-school algebra studies . . . and is half way through the high-school social studies curriculum. He will soon be ready to take the (TASC) high school equivalency exam.

V.M. was born, raised, and educated, in her home country. She studied English there and developed an understanding of our language, but knew that learning a language from books was different from actually conversing with English speakers and writing English. In the United States, she had two goals: 1.) To be able to carry on a conversation and to write well in English. 2.) To become a citizen. After meeting weekly for almost a year, V.M. made wonderful gains in conversational and writing skills. She studied the citizenship preparation book, Becoming a US Citizen, learning about US history, government, civics, institutions and the obligations of a US citizen. I am proud of V.M. She used her skills to read, write and speak English in addition to using the knowledge she gained about the US to PASS her Naturalization test to become a US citizen.

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*Affiliate Member of
Literacy New York*



*Member Agency of
Broome United Way
Tioga United Way*

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Permit 197

**Literacy Volunteers
Staff**

Kristen Gordon-Pier,
Interim Executive Director

Ann Marie Carmon,
Adult Education Program Manager

Georgianna Horvath,
Computer Literacy Program Manager

Janice Miller, *ESL Program Coordinator*

Karen Hills, *TALL Program Assistant*

Jean Fornillo, *Office Assistant*



Adults Who Read ... Succeed



Get a jump start on our annual campaign! Support efforts to help those who seek our services become more literate by making a tax deductible donation today. Simply fill this out and mail in with your donation to our office today!

**Literacy Volunteers
Board of Directors**

Lisa Stuckey, *President*

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Brenda Fuller, *Secretary*

**Margaret Goodfellow
Karen McMullen
Margaret Menart
Naomi Rupright**

**Literacy Volunteers Broome/Tioga Counties, Inc.
185 Court Street, Binghamton, New York 13901**

Enclosed is my tax deductible donation of:

Other _____ \$200 _____ \$150 _____ \$100 _____ \$75 _____ \$50 _____

Make checks payable to: Literacy Volunteers of Broome/Tioga Co., Inc.
(If you or your spouse qualify for a corporate matching gift, please enclose a form.)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

check here if you would like your donation to remain anonymous



Support Literacy Volunteers of Broome/Tioga Co. (LVBTC)

Three ways you can support LVBTC while you shop for the holidays!

AMAZONSMILE

WHEN: ANYTIME - ALL YEAR!

Start your shopping at smile.amazon.com! AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know...same products, same prices, same service. Anything you would purchase on Amazon.com, you can purchase through AmazonSmile – only better – because LVBTC gets a portion of the proceeds!!

Just log on to www.smile.amazon.com, choose Literacy Volunteers of Broome/Tioga County, Inc. and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible Amazon-Smile purchases to us whenever you shop - all year round, not just during the holidays.

SCHWAN'S FUNDRAISER

WHEN: November 9 – December 24, 2015 (20% of sales)
December 25 – March 20, 2016 (5% of sales)

Campaign ID: 24347

Literacy Volunteers of Broome/Tioga Counties has started a fundraising campaign with Schwan's Cares to raise \$1,500. Schwan's Cares offers online shopping to new or current customers with delivery direct to your home. As a supporter, you can choose from over 350 high-quality, delicious food options. Shop online or by phone. <https://www.schwans-cares.com/c/24347> or 1-855-870-7208

BARNES & NOBLE BOOKFAIR – VESTAL

WHEN: Friday, December 11, 2015 from 10am – 10pm

Come shop at Barnes & Noble on December 11, and a percentage of your purchases will be donated to Literacy Volunteers of Broome/Tioga Counties!

We will offer free gift wrapping for all of your Barnes & Noble gifts. Children's activities will be available from 10am to 9pm. Costumed members of our local Star Trek Club will be there from 1-9 pm.

From 3-7 pm, there will be a special visit from Science Fiction & Fantasy author Joshua Palmatier, who will be signing his most recent fantasy novel, *SHATTERING THE LEY*, in support of Literacy Volunteers!

In addition, you can visit BN.COM/bookfairs to support us online from December 11 – 16, 2015 by entering Bookfair ID 11572658 at checkout.

For More Information Call: 607-778-6406