

Uniting Our Community with English for All

Immigrant Grandma Wins Mayor's Award

Alexa Galeno never had the chance to graduate from high school in her native Mexico. Since emigrating to America, however, with help from Lincoln Literacy she has done that and so much more: passing the GED test, the U.S. Citizenship Exam, and landing a job – all while looking after her two young grandchildren. On Saturday, June 16th, with her own mother proudly looking on, the 47-year-old grandmother received the 2012 Mayor's Award for Language & Literacy Achievement.



Galeno with Executive Director Clayton Naff and Director of Urban Affairs Dave Landis

With Mayor Chris Beutler away on an official visit to China, former state senator and current Director of Urban Affairs Dave Landis stepped in to present her the award.

Landis charmed the audience with an ancient Yiddish tale of baker who

generously fed others, just as Lincoln Literacy's tutors nourish the minds and cultivate the talents of our students. For her part, Galeno expressed determination to go on to higher education, so that she too can help others.

See Mayor's Award on p. 3

Computer Class Helps to Open New Vistas

Lincoln Literacy's Business Manager Sanela Ganic put Quickbooks aside this summer to teach a class for New American students wanting to learn basic computer skills. Bennett Martin Library hosted the class, and library staff came to work an hour early just to facilitate our class. For many of the students, this was their first time ever using a computer, and as one can imagine, becoming acquainted with new technology can be overwhelming, let alone learning these new skills and vocabulary in English, and unfamiliar language. Ganic could empathize with her students: 13



Computer class students holding their new library cards

years ago, she arrived in the U.S. as a refugee from the civil war in Bosnia, and needed to learn how to use a computer. Ganic was able to teach her students the basics of using a mouse, creating documents in Microsoft Word and how to safely use the Internet and email. The students not only left with the knowledge obtained in their six-week session, but with library cards to access the computer labs to practice the skills learned in the summer session. Library staff also worked with students and their young children. Lincoln Literacy is thankful to the Lincoln City Libraries for making the class and follow up possible. Ganic says, "Practice is needed to make what I teach stick with them, and become helpful."

Inside This Issue

Awards Ceremony	1
Computer Class	1
Fast Food Mystery Tour	2
Thanks to Tutors	2
Fun with Family Literacy	2
Zoo Trip	3
From Novice to Tutor	4

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Fast Food Mystery Tour

By L. J. Evermann

What if you were from another country and trying to learn the complicated language of English, with all its colloquialisms and slang? What if you just wanted to understand how to simply go to a "fast food" restaurant and order?

My student has a four-year-old child who is learning English in daycare and Chinese at home. This youngster is also hearing about American "fast food" and "Happy Meals" from her daycare pals. This newfound knowledge is then carried home to her parents, who know little about the topic. As seasoned American "fast food" experts, we think nothing at looking at the "big boards" at our favorite grab and go restaurants and choosing our burgers, tacos and chicken etc. For someone from another country however, this can be a very mysterious and confusing thing.

Taking the Mystery Out of Mystery Meat

In an effort to demystify this topic, I encouraged my student to suggest the coffee houses and "fast food" restaurants of which she had questions and interest. We have visited various coffee houses, fast food places and even spent an afternoon in the Food Court at the Mall, to observe the many varied choices offered in that environment. (did you know some give out free samples during the lunch hour?)

Now I'm not suggesting this is appropriate for every student, but I am saying that turning questions into opportunities for education beyond just learning the language can be engaging and informative for the student and the tutor. As many of us know, our language used in communication is the very basis of a healthy community, but the key that opens the door of understanding, is using that language in real life.

The more secure our new English-speaking students (and future neighbors) become with our language, the sooner they will become positive, active participants, in the city of Lincoln. As we all know, some have even opened up restaurants, that have introduced Lincoln to foods, well beyond the "Happy Meal."



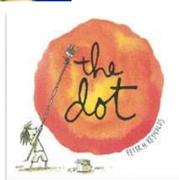
Fast food of many kinds can be found in the Gateway Mall food court.

Fun with FLAIR Family Literacy

FLAIR, a family literacy program for New Americans, has been busy as ever, reading stories and creating their own ideas from what they learn. The project featured in the picture was a lesson based on Peter H. Reynold's book, *The Dot* (2003). His book tells the story of Vashti's growing interest in success in creativity once she was given encouragement, and how she spread her encouragement to others. This book comports well



Young artists creating their own works inspired by Reynold's book.



with FLAIR's aims for immigrant and refugee children. Both strive to create a warm, welcoming space for children in which they can grow their creative ideas.

Lincoln Literacy Honors Trainers

Fortunately or unfortunately, it is a fact that many of us at Lincoln Literacy find that our skill with the English language greatly exceeds our mathematical skills. Nevertheless, we still have managed to come up with impressive four-figure totals for the estimated combined number of tutors trained by Marcille Ansong and Noreen Carpenter. Together, they have generously given nearly a quarter of a century of volunteer service to the Lincoln Literacy training team. What remains immeasurable is the benefit passed along by volunteer tutors they have trained to the students ultimately served by hundreds each year!

Both Marcille and Noreen were honored along with our other current trainers at a May Lincoln Literacy trainer appreciation luncheon. Since then, Marcille and her husband have moved to their new home in Tillamook, Oregon, and Noreen is spending extended time with family in Vermont.

Once more we honor and thank them as we bid them adieu — until we meet again!



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If You Can Read This, You Can Help!

Lincoln Literacy depends on its volunteer tutors to get the job done. Every month, we offer orientation and a highly effective set of training classes to prepare volunteers to teach our students, either in teams serving in classrooms or as one-to-one tutors. For more on this, go to lincolnliteracy.org, and click "Get Involved."

Refugee Families Enjoy Outing to the Zoo

By Keegan Krause



A group of Lincoln Literacy students admire the zoo's Humboldt penguins.

On a bright sunny day in May, Lincoln Literacy's Workforce Readiness English (WRE) class took a grand trip to the Lincoln Children's Zoo! This class for refugees working towards gainful employment usually takes place twice a week at First Presbyterian church. It is quite demanding — to say the least. Our tutors provide students a curriculum based on critical skills that one needs to make it in the American employment culture, whether it be job interview skills, résumé writing, basic economic vocabulary or conversation skills. This year WRE students have taken various fieldtrips around Lincoln to augment their learning experience. Our ELLers have ventured to the State Capitol building, to the University's Morrill Hall science and natural history museum, as well as to some local businesses to practice their newly acquired English skills.

With the help of the Lincoln Children's Zoo and its Children At The Zoo (CATZ) program, Lincoln Literacy was able to say thank you to our wonderful students and tutors by having an end-of-the-school-year party, filled with educational fun and first-time experiences for many of our students!

◆ Mayor's Award

Continued from Page 1

Other awards presented:

Judy Ellingson Award—Robin Westhoff; honorable mention—Barb Johnson Frank and Tom Ukinski

Lois Poppe Award (presented by Lois Poppe, former executive director of Lincoln Literacy)—Marlene and Sheppard Perkins; honorable mention—Rich Mildnerberger

Tutor of the Year Award—Kathie Uhrmacher; honorable mention—Marnie Jensen and Diane Robie

Lifetime Dedication Award—Leona Mitcheltree

Student Leadership Award—Neema Niyokwizera

Learner of the Year Award—Shae Kyaw; honorable mention—Nyjong Yual and Kham Bane Panthavong

Champion of Literacy Award—Party America of Lincoln

Distinguished Service Award—Joyce Hahn, Keegan Krause, Sandra Rojo and Donna Stadig



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Our mission is to assist people of all cultures and strengthen our community by teaching English language and literacy skills.

Lincoln Literacy is proud to be affiliated with:



From Nervous Novice to Gratified Tutor

By *Tim Wilkins*

One of my main inspirations for having an interest in teaching English comes from watching my mom teach English growing up in Ralston. A couple of times she let me come to her classroom to introduce myself and practice conversation with her students. Following in her footsteps, I am now leading a conversation group at First Presbyterian Church on Saturday mornings.

Before teaching, the other tutors and I went through four different training sessions. The training brought up many possible situations and scenarios that shed light on the many differences in culture and language that we all take for granted. I think I can speak for many tutors that the training has made us more aware of how we communicate and how we pick up communication from others. My first day with Lincoln Literacy turned out to be a very rewarding experience. Before separating into classrooms, all the students and tutors gave self-introductions, showcasing the great diversity in this city. However,

even with the training, I was still pretty nervous walking into the front door of the classroom for the first time. The night before I had made a lesson, but as I tried starting, I realized how daunting of an experience it can be to encourage conversation in front of many people.

Eventually, I grew more comfortable teaching and enjoyed getting to know their varied backgrounds. My advice is to be ready to adapt to the subtle characteristics of each class, and to walk the line between having a plan and being flexible. If done right, being a tutor can be an awesome and electrifying experience for everybody!



Tim teaching at First Presbyterian

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