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Mayor Honors Refugee Strivers

Appearing at the Lincoln Literacy Annual Awards for a third time during his tenure, Mayor Chris Beutler praised the contributions of refugees and immigrants to our city's vitality.

"Lincoln has been a welcoming city for immigrants and refugees since

the 1970s," the mayor told his audience of volunteer tutors, immigrant and refugee learners, board members and other supporters gathered at First Plymouth Church on June 24th for our awards luncheon. "Starting over and building a life in a different country is a big challenge. Learning English is a very important step. I have great admiration for English language learners — as well as the homegrown literacy learners."

See *Mayor*, p. 3



Mayor Chris Beutler addresses Lincoln Literacy board, tutors, and students at awards ceremony.



Photo credits; Charles G. Haacker

When Even Sugar Seems Strange, Where Can a Person Turn for Help?

For a new arrival in our country, everything, even the little, everyday things like groceries can seem mystifying. Award-winning English learner Ling He, pictured at right introducing her husband, shares her story.

It's my pleasure to introduce my family and our story to all the people. I am Ling He, from Beijing, China, a housewife now. My husband is Haipeng Zhang, from Beijing, China, too, a Ph.D. student at UNL. Haipeng has ambition in his fields, and I love him, so we moved to Lincoln from Beijing, China, last August.

When we moved to Lincoln, we found everything is different. I remembered our first shopping time in Lincoln. I went shopping in Supersaver, and I didn't know some strange kinds of vegetables such as mustard greens. I didn't know what was so "fine" about salt or sugar.

See *Ling's Story*, p. 2



In This Issue

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Mayor Praises Refugees | 1 |
| Student Tells Her Story | 1 |
| Caring Teacher Honored | 2 |
| Complete List of Awards | 3 |
| Second Van Gives Rides | 4 |

If You Can Read This, You Can Surely Help!

Lincoln Literacy depends on volunteer tutors to get the job done. We offer highly effective training and support to the volunteers who teach our students. Tutors have a wide range of choices, from serving in classrooms or as one-to-one tutors. For more information, go to our website, www.lincolnliteracy.org, and click "Get Involved" next to our logo. Or, give us a call at 402-476-7323.

◆ **Ling's Story**

Continued from Page 1

At that time, I can't find Chinese sauce. Except shopping, traffic, food, life style and so many things are different between Beijing and Lincoln.

Haipeng is always busy in doing his research and I had enough time to enjoy the "boring and lonely" hours at the beginning. Due to my poor English, I was scared to talk with my neighbors and rent office manager, I was scared to make new friends here, I can't go shopping by myself, I didn't know how to take a bus, and I didn't know how to see a doctor. At the beginning of the Lincoln life, I was upset and sad. I thought I had been foolish to come here.

After two months later, my husband's professor introduced Lincoln Literacy to us, and I was so lucky to become an English student here. It is a pretty wonderful place where I can learn English, know about the local culture, share and enjoy our international food, show our Chinese culture. The most important thing is that I made new friends here. With my tutor's help, my English is better than before. I can do a lot of things by myself, I found my new goals in Lincoln. Now I am confident, happy and optimistic. I enjoy our life in Lincoln and recommend my friends to visit to Lincoln, where is "nice place, nice people".

At the end of the story, I want to say "Thank you" to Lincoln Literacy, all tutors, staffs, and the people who care about us.

Shaping the Future

Thanks to Helen Roeske and Martha Countryman, Lincoln Literacy is building a Fund for the Future. Their planned gifts have grown the fund to more than \$90,000. With federal Refugee Social Service dollars in jeopardy, the goal could not be more important: to secure annual funding for the organization to carry out its work, free from the vagaries of grant funding.



Marcia White

Now, Marcia White, an honoree in this year's Champion of Literacy Award, has joined the circle of those who plan to leave a legacy for literacy. Large or small, every planned gift helps get us closer to a secure future.

Big-Hearted Schoolteacher Is Named Tutor of the Year

Dan Holmberg is a full-time teacher. You might think that when it comes to volunteering he'd want to do anything but teach — but that's not Dan.

Years ago, he and his wife taught English in South Korea, and while there they struggled to learn Korean. That experience left him with a heart for immigrants who are trying to find their way in our community. "Making sure there's a real

personal welcome to their new situation — that's my motivation," he told us. If there were another way to do that as a volunteer, he might consider it. "Teaching just happens to be the skill I have."

Throughout the school year Holmberg spends every Saturday morning teaching a group of adult refugees and immigrants in our classes at St. Paul United Methodist Church. He brings all the skills of a seasoned teacher and

the warmth and good sense of humor of a caring and curious guy. The student who nominated Dan said, "He is a great teacher. He has knowledge and experience."

While some teachers take summers off, Dan doubles down. He leads English classes twice a week during our summer session.

Dan enjoys working with the highly motivated learners in Lincoln Literacy classes.

"They have such appreciation of the chance to learn," he notes. "It's a real difference from what you sometimes encounter in the classroom."

As for his award, Dan says it's especially meaningful knowing how many great tutors there are at Lincoln Literacy.

"What I do," he adds, "is not that different from what all the other tutors do."



Holmberg accepts his award from Cynthia Martinez.

You too can make a gift that lasts forever: Leave a Legacy for Literacy!

You can designate a life insurance policy, set a portion or a percentage of your estate, or look into a charitable annuity to help LL into the future. Contact us for details.

You can also support our present-day work by making a tax-deductible donation online at: lincolnliteracy.org

◆ **Mayor**

Continued from Page 1



Mayor Beutler presents an Honorable Mention to Kali Ali, originally of Iraq.

Mayor Beutler spoke of their importance to the economic success of Lincoln, as well as their key role in the city's cultural effervescence. The mayor acknowledged TMCO founder Roland Temme (at right) and his many refugee workers, including Poe Day (by Temme), honored as Learner of the Year.



"We are proud of our reputation as being a great place to be a New American," he said. "It is such an inspiration to see the outstanding work taking place every day through Lincoln Literacy."

Noting that Lincoln Literacy is one of the many agencies dedicated to helping New Americans feel at home in the Capital City, Beutler said, "Lincoln Literacy has emerged as the community leader in charitable language and literacy services for refugees and immigrants." During the ceremony, the mayor presented an award to refugee Sanaa Naser and an Honorable Mention to refugee Kali Ali for their strides in learning English.

Talented, Dedicated, & Caring: Winners, Every One

- ◆ Lee Thomas & Renee Davis Meyer _____ Judy Ellingson Award for Excellence in Tutoring
- ◆ Juliana Bukoski _____ Lois Poppe Award for Volunteer Dedication
- ◆ Dan Holmberg _____ Tutor of the Year
 - Matthew Dwyer _____ Honorable Mention
- ◆ Matt Schlange, Joan Prince, Enia Kiusals, _____ Tutoring Team of the Year
 - Mike Eppel, and Dennis King
- ◆ Sakura Sakai _____ Student Leadership Award
- ◆ Poe Day _____ Learner of the Year
 - Ling ("Gloria") He _____ Honorable Mention
- ◆ Axel Sutton _____ Little Learner of the Year
- ◆ Sanaa Naser _____ Mayor's Award, Language & Literacy Achievement
 - Kali Ali _____ Honorable Mention
- ◆ Cynthia Martinez & Party America _____ Champion of Literacy
 - Marcia White _____ Honorable Mention
- ◆ Akuel Lwith _____ Bette Boellstorff Award for Dedicated Service
- ◆ Ever Preciado, Culler Middle School _____ Certificate of Appreciation



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

Want to advance the cause? Become a member or sign up to train as a tutor today!

Lincoln Literacy is proud to be affiliated with:



Return Service Requested

To Give More Rides, Lincoln Literacy Acquires New Van



Our new 2015 Ford passenger van gleams beside our 2003 workhorse of the same make.

For many years, Lincoln Literacy has been providing rides to refugees, immigrants, and other learners who cannot otherwise attend our classes. The need for transportation assistance has grown rapidly in the last few years as Nebraska became No.1 in the nation for refugee resettlement. This spring Lincoln Literacy began to lease a

second van each week to meet the needs of recently arrived refugee families. "That worked in the short-term," says Executive Director Clayton Naff, "but we could not go on leasing forever. The daily charges add up fast."

Then something amazing happened. On Give to Lincoln Day, we received more than \$70,000 in donations, and an anonymous donor gave us a vehicle we could trade in. That combined generosity enabled us to purchase a nearly new van. With help from Sid Dillon Auto, a longtime supporter of Lincoln Literacy, we got one for an excellent price.

Now, both vans are in operation nearly every day that Lincoln Literacy offers classes, helping people use learning opportunities they would otherwise have to forgo.

One good turn leads to another. "With two vans available, we were able to rethink our fall schedule," Naff said. "We are now looking at offering 10-hour-per-week classes to refugee families who are required to spend at least that many hours in the classroom in order to retain basic benefits until they can find employment."

Meanwhile, thanks to the generosity of our donors, Lincoln Literacy will be able to continue to offer 1.5 hour classes every day of the week to those who don't face the same requirement. We expect to offer nearly 100 classes a week this fall. In preparation for this ambitious plan, additional drivers are being hired, and the new van will soon be branded with the Lincoln Literacy logo.