

The Literacy Connection Newsletter

In this Issue:

Volunteer Spotlight 2

Tea With a Tutor 3

Celebrating Success 4

The Shared Story 5

Stories of Impact 6

What We've Been Up To 8

TLC Programming 9



COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Dear friends of The Literacy Connection, welcome to our very first quarterly newsletter! I'm excited to connect with you to share the journeys of our tutors and learners, celebrating their achievements, and expressing our gratitude for their commitment.

As we reflect on our first year and a half as an in-house literacy program, I'm tremendously proud of what we've accomplished. Since our launch in September of 2023, we've provided literacy services to 179 adult learners, amassed over 2,800 volunteer hours, and cultivated a welcoming community for both learners and volunteers. We've also forged meaningful partnerships, extending our support to communities in need, including those at the SLO County Jail as well as migrant workers and their families.

The Literacy Connection's mission is to empower individuals in our county through compassionate learning and comprehensive literacy support. We believe literacy is a fundamental human right, and we're committed to providing adults with the tools they need for personal growth and full participation in our community. It's a privilege to serve as the Adult Literacy Coordinator for SLO County Libraries, and I'm deeply grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this impactful work.

Michelle Haddad
 Adult Literacy Coordinator, The Literacy Connection

To learn more about becoming a TLC learner or volunteer, please visit SLOlibrary.org/TLC or call (805)781-5077





Volunteer Spotlight

This month's volunteer spotlight is on Johanna Appel.

Johanna has been an active volunteer with us since December, 2023 and we are proud to recognize her for her dedication to TLC.

She is currently working with John, helping him achieve his literacy goals while also co-leading our English conversation group, creating a fun and welcoming space for our learners.

When she isn't here at the library, you can find Johanna volunteering at her local synagogue or baking delicious treats for her friends and family.

Thank you Johanna!



Act of Kindness

Johanna and John have formed a heartwarming bond. Browsing the Friend's of the Library bookshop, Johanna thoughtfully bought John books she thought he'd enjoy. He was deeply touched, revealing they were his first-ever owned books and pledged to read them from cover to cover, highlighting a small act of kindness with a meaningful impact.



READY TO MAKE A
DIFFERENCE IN
SOMEONE'S LIFE?

Become a literacy or ESL tutor.

Find out more at
SLOlibrary.org/TLC or
call (805)781-5077

Tea with our Tutors

CALLING ALL TUTORS! LETS CONNECT AND LEARN!

We invite all TLC tutor volunteers and interested volunteers to join our special Tea with Tutors gathering.

This event is a chance to connect with fellow tutors, share inspiring success stories, and learn from each other's experiences. We'll also create a supportive space to discuss challenges, brainstorm solutions, and access helpful resources.

Come prepared to share, learn, and connect with a community of passionate educators!

When: Tuesday, May 13th at 10:30am

Where: SLO Community Room

RSVP: athompson@slolibrary.org



Meet the TLC Staff!

Get to know Michelle and Alexis, the staff who play a vital role in facilitating and promoting literacy within the community.

Celebrating Success:

STORIES OF GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT

- Judith achieved her goal of obtaining a library card!
- Maria is in the process of studying to get her CA driver's license. She also is in the beginning stages of preparing to write an essay for college entrance for her master's program. She practices correct grammar and punctuation with her tutor.
- Naomi continues to seek out activities in the community that she and her family can attend, as well as resources that may enhance her experience living here. She also wrote a thank you note to the church where we often meet to tutor.
- Maria has made great strides in her English pronunciations and grammar skills. Her reading aloud is great now with very minimal help.
- Da has been making improvements in her vocabulary and conversational skills, which she has been using to talk with her son as well as customers at her work.
- Martin does hand-eye coordination exercises for pencil grip and handwriting. He just read his first three-syllable word!
- Through her book and conversation, Ana is increasing vocabulary and improving grammar.
- Vadym has been reading to his daughter and received his business license.
- Silvia says her son asks her after every session what new word she learned, and she is proud to tell him.
- Inna has been talking with people in her neighborhood and at Pickle Ball and they have all complimented her English!
- Susy is practicing a lot at home and working on her pronunciation and use of adverbs in conversation.
- Olivia was able to fill out her ballot and cast her vote in the national election!
- Ellen completed her children's story and her science fiction story ahead of schedule.
- Miku is coordinating with her family's caregivers and teachers. She is studying for her drivers license behind the wheel test.

Thank you tutors for your monthly reports! This information helps us inform the State of California Library Literacy Services of the literacy accomplishments in San Luis Obispo County.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

~ Nelson Mandela



The Shared Story:

The English conversation group participated in a collaborative storytelling game. This activity involved the entire group to work together to create a single narrative.

Each participant contributes one sentence at a time, building upon the previous, until their story is complete. What was left was a sweet story they were proud of creating together.



By Lily Diamond and Class

There was a kid who liked riding his bike. One day he fell and cried. I hugged and kissed him to make him feel better. Then he stopped crying and started riding his bike again. He saw a beautiful bird in a tree. He got off his bike.

He started to climb the tree. He got to the top of the tree and tried to catch the bird. The boy caught the bird and set him free.

My boy and I love to climb, and today, my boy climbed a tall tree and saw a squirrel. He found a lot of squirrels, not just one. He took them all home and they were very happy. When he got home, he fed the squirrel and made them a nest. The next day the house was full of animals. His mom was scared when she saw all the animals in her house. The boy gave the squirrels more nuts.

Winter came, so the squirrels went back home

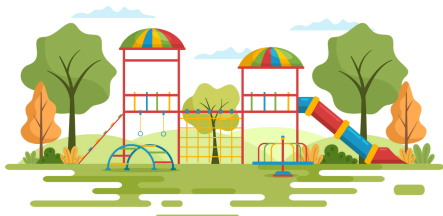




Stories of Impact: Amy

It's been a year since Miku, Naomi, and I started meeting weekly for English language learning. They had moved here from Japan the previous summer and at first, we focused on daily interactions that were challenging or confusing to them: What is the correct response to a friendly Trader Joe's employee? What should I say if a Kohl's associate asks for my rewards card? What is a typical birthday gift for my child's classmate? The very first phrase I wrote down for them was "figure it out." It's become a catch-phrase for us now, a way to boost confidence when faced with a future uncertainty: "I know you will figure it out!"

Over time, as Miku and Naomi's confidence in themselves and trust in me grew, the situations we discussed became more complex: navigating health care, communicating with teachers, and where is the best place to watch fireworks on July 4th(!) As their English comprehension and speaking skills improved,



I watched their worlds expand. What I didn't expect is that mine would, too. Soon, my own circle of friends became invested in Miku and Naomi's success, volunteering childcare and recommending preschools. When the library was closed and kids were out of school, we met at playgrounds... places I haven't visited in years since my kids are now teenagers. And there, I would see Naomi run into a parent from her child's school and schedule a playdate or watch Miku give another child's swing a push and smile at the mom.

To date, we have celebrated birthdays and drivers licenses, held an ongoing book club, shared magazine articles, and provided troubleshooting and support for daily life. More recently, Miku and Naomi asked for focused and strict corrections to their writing, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. As a lifelong learner, I respect their openness to feedback and desire to improve. As a volunteer, I am touched by their gratitude and acknowledgment of my time. As I challenge them with increasingly difficult concepts (gerunds! prepositions! inflection!), they challenge me to show up as the best tutor I can be each week. But mainly, we are just three people, now friends, doing our best to "figure it out" together.

Stories of Impact: Miku

It's been a year since I met Amy. My English is incomplete but she listens patiently, speaks, and explains until I can understand. Thanks to her, I was able to have the courage to speak English. And since I came to the United States, I have been more worried about raising children, but she always helps and gives me advice so that I can live a better life. She is my teacher and my dear friend.



Stories of Impact: Naomi

"Thanks to this tutoring program, my life here has become more fulfilling. My tutor, Amy, always listens to me and tries to understand even when I make mistakes in English. She gives me many opportunities to speak. Because of that, I have become more confident in conversations and it motivates me to keep learning more English.

If I hadn't met Amy, I would have been afraid of conversing, missed many opportunities to interact with others, and would have faced many difficulties in my life.

I'm grateful to Amy and look forward to our enjoyable weekly conversations!"



What We've Been Up To:

Family Literacy:



Thank you for everyone who participated in our DINO-Vember Family Literacy Storytimes! TLC was happy to support our 14 County Library's with dinosaur themed books, dino facts, and fun activities: not to mention a visit from a real-life dinosaur!

Please check the SLO County Library website for more information on dates and locations to our Pete the Cat themed Storytime Events starting in March.



Migrant Education:

The San Luis Obispo County Library and Lucia Mar School District have collaborated to create a unique program focused on Migrant Education.

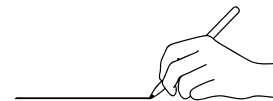
This program provides vital support to migrant adults and their families, offering ESL, Spanish Literacy, and Family Literacy classes.

Our goal is to address the unique challenges faced by these students due to their mobile lifestyle, ensuring they have access to necessary educational and support systems.

We are incredibly proud of our learners for their dedication to learning, despite the challenging times.

Jail ESL and Literacy:

Our storytelling workshop at the county jail has allowed inmates to improve their reading and writing skills, using critical thinking and embracing their imaginations. Please enjoy a short story from one of our learners:



"If only I had one wish it would be to live my life as a fish. What kind of fish you ask? A beautiful mermaid, not a bass. The name I choose is Ariel most indeed. On the oceans bottom is where I feed. An exotic looking mermaid colors purple and green. Never having to drink water from a canteen. The food I eat is seaweed, usually brown. Always smiling and never making a frown. Living along the Hawaiian Islands is my dream. Like happy thoughts eating candy ice cream."

Free Programs at the Library



Family Literacy Story Time

Get your groovy shoes on! We're having a Pete the Cat Family Literacy Storytime during the month of March! We'll read some of Pete's most far-out adventures, sing along to some catchy tunes, and even do a cool craft. Don't miss this purr-fectly awesome event!

All ages welcome! And don't forget to take a free book from The Literacy Connection to add to your family's home library!

Please check the SLO County Library website for more information on dates and locations.



Citizenship Class

- Learn the history of the United States
- Practice for the written and oral exam
- Fill out the N-400 Naturalization application form

Join our 8 week class beginning Saturday, March 1st from 9:30-10:30 at the San Luis Obispo Library.

To register for the class or for more information, please call (805)781-5077.



English Conversation Group

- Improve your English skills
- Meet new friends
- Gain confidence in speaking English

Every Wednesday and Saturday 10:30-12:00 pm at the SLO Library.

No pre-registration required. Just drop in and join the conversation! All proficiency levels welcome. Ages 18 and up.