

From the Back of the Boat

Bob Garfinkel

About a month ago, I ran into an old fishing buddy who I hadn't seen since our last adventure six years ago. He asked me what I have been up to and I told him about Literacy Partners of Kewaunee County. His response was, "You are trying to save the world again!" He had no clue what I was talking about.

Since meeting with my old friend, I have found the following story that sums up a lot of my feelings of what Literacy Partners is all about. I will send him the "Star Thrower" on our stationary with our logo showing two figures hand in hand reaching for a star (see the Star Thrower below).

THE STAR

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Star Thrower **By Loren Easley**

A young man was picking up objects off the beach and tossing them out into the sea. A second man approached him and saw that the objects were starfish.

"Why in the world are you throwing starfish into the water?"

"If the starfish are still on the beach when the tide goes out and the sun rises high in the sky, they will die," replied the young man.

"That is ridiculous. There are thousands of miles of beach and millions of starfish. You can't really believe that what you're doing could possibly make a difference!"

The young man picked up another starfish, paused thoughtfully, and remarked as he tossed it out into the waves,

"It makes a difference to this one."

We have all been gifted with the ability to make a difference, and if we throw our stars wisely and well, Kewaunee County will be an even better place in which to live.

News at a glance:

Coming events – Seminars
Student Writing

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Board members

Coming Events

“Comprehension Strategies: Universal Design to Benefit Every Reader”

Date: May 12, 2009, at 6:30 pm
Place: NWTC Luxemburg (Room 114) 133 Commerce Drive
RSVP Deadline: May 6, 2009

Jo Allison Scott's reading comprehension workshop was designed for literacy groups such as ours, who work with a variety of students and reading levels. Jo Allison's objective will be to present three kinds of reading comprehension strategies that will help literacy tutors maximize their efforts at any reading level.

Jo Allison is a Basic Education Instructor at NWTC. Her reading presentation last year to a group of 20 of our tutors was rated as “excellent” on our evaluation sheets. Under the evaluation question, “What could be improved?” tutors consistently said, “This seminar was too short!” The tutors did not want Jo Allison to stop! Please RSVP by May 6, 2009 by calling Bob (845-2516) or by e-mail (rgarfinkel@centurytel.net).

Report of the Last Seminar:

Everything you wanted to know about Latinos” with Gema Garcia

By Mary Novak

“What is a family tradition that you would not want to give up?” asked Gema Garcia. “The Christmas holiday, jingle bells on the porch, sauerkraut, meals together, family events, Sukkoth,” answered participants at the program, “Anything You Wanted to know about Our Latino Neighbors, but Were Afraid to Ask.” The program was presented on April 22 in Casco. The message was clear, we cling to family traditions because they identify us and provide meaning to who we are as people. Traditions that are not reinforced by others become lost over time.

This was the preface to understanding culture from the perspective of generations – first generation, second generation and third generation people in this country. Program participants reflected on their own place in time, and most were third generation in this country. Most could not speak the language of their grand or great-grandparents. Some remembered traditions of grandparents and a few practiced those traditions, but the group lost most traditions of their native land and acculturated to living in this country.

Gema went on to contrast the generations. First generation Latinos have a strong language preference, while second generation Latinos mix English and Spanish when they speak. This is known as “Spanglish.”

First generation folks are very hard-working and role oriented. The man works outside the home and the woman remains at home. In second generation families, both parents work and may rely on their children to translate for them. The children are then empowered and may resist their parents and may feel they don't have to listen to them. A professional translator can avoid this.

First generation parents demand respect of their children. Second generation parents are both working and so, focus less on the children. Traditions are less emphasized and teenagers are bored at cultural events of their elders.

Honesty, offering welcome and food are traits of first generation folks. “Don't say no to first generation people because this is how they reach out to you. They will feel rejected,” Garcia said. People enjoy large celebrations and if they invite someone, that person is welcome to invite others along.

In general, people tend to be fearful of law enforcement and want to stay away from them. This is often based on their experience in communities where they are stopped for nothing.

Gema emphasized the importance of realizing how a person's generation explains their values and behavior. It also explains the sadness families may feel when their children don't care about traditions because they are becoming acculturated. Being in the United States is a gain, but there often is a loss.

A few of the many comments given by the attendees on the evaluation form are:

Judge Dennis Mleziva

"Ms. Garcia's perspective on the generational changes in Hispanic immigrants in this country were very interesting and informative."

Lorraine Aspenleiter

"Her dynamic energy as well as her own background (and her child who was present exemplified the 2nd generational situation) was most helpful in understanding what she shared."

Mary Anne Albert

"The presence and comments of the sheriff and judge were helpful."



POW WOW IN KEWAUNEE

Kate Phillips, Literacy Partner Board Member and tutor extraordinaire, planned another exciting cultural event for this year.

It was a presentation of the Oneida Pow Wow! Similar to last year's Hispanic Cultural Dance, the Pow Wow featured all the sights and sounds of a realistic western US Indian dance. From the dignified and graceful traditional dancers, to the chants and drums, the Pow Wow was a time to get together to sing, dance, renew old friendships and make new ones.

The dancer's extraordinary skills excited the audience who gave standing ovations throughout the performance.

LEFT: A smiling dancer shows off his costume.

Introducing Our Tutor of the Season

Mary Gotstein, tutor, board member

Mary has lived her entire life in the Luxemburg-Casco area. Although she graduated with a degree in Child Development and Elementary Education from UWGB, she decided not to teach, but rather to work with her husband at the Casco Telephone Company which is now CenturyTel. She has been there 30 years.

Education has always been an interest. She has served 18 years on Holy Trinity's school board, has taught CCD, and was a Girl Scout leader. Awareness of the literacy program opened an opportunity to get back into education and a way to give back to a community that has been good to her and her family. She was surprised that it also offered a special bonus—the connection that developed between her and the student she was tutoring.

“Working with my current student has been such a rewarding experience. I have gained so much from working with her. Her dedication to learning English so that she can improve her chances of getting a better job has impressed me. She puts so much effort into being a good mother, a good student, and a good person, that I am thankful that I have the opportunity to be a part of her life. We are half-way through the third series and have begun working toward her GED. Her goal is to become a nurse.”

“My goal is to get more people interested in becoming a tutor. It is rewarding to see the growth each student makes, but it is even more rewarding to see the smile on your student's face and know that you can make a difference.”

New at the Resource Center

The most exciting addition to ever hit our Resource Center shelves will be available for the first time during our Open House on May 14, 2009 from 6:30 – 8:00 pm at Hillcrest School in Kewaunee. The new materials are exciting books on CD. Each kit includes a student book, teacher's edition and CD. Students could independently read and listen to the selections at home and just enjoy them or tutors could actively go through the teacher's manuals and work on comprehension and vocabulary.

The benefits of books on CD are just being realized by many educators. Following a text read by someone else improves left to right eye movement, increases word recognition and vocabulary, and stimulates interest in reading.

Rules to withdraw books on CD will be posted on a book shelf in the Resource Center. A limited number of CD players will be available for check out for students who do not own a player. If interested in this opportunity, see if your student would be interested in books on CD and if he/she owns a CD player.

Level One Books on CD are written on a first to second grade level (not Laubach level) and Level 2 books are at a third to fourth grade level. Two speeds are available at 17% slower than normal conversation and at 40% slower than normal. Interest levels are middle school through adult.

Level One Books on CD

Earthquake!
Geronimo
The Gift of the Magi
Gloria Estefan
Jackie Robinson
Michael Jordan: Out of Thin Air
Montana Showdown
Nowhere to Hide
Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.
The Tell Tale Heart
Twister

Level Two Books on CD

Curse of the Werewolf
Danger in the Canyon
Earthquake!
Emma's Nightmare: The Voyage of the Titanic
Good Health
Magid Johnson
Michael Jordan: Out of Thin Air
Mr. Nice@XXXX.com
Murder in Cabin A-13
My Baby: From Birth to Six Months

Our Students Shine

Achievements of our students and tutors in March were absolutely fantastic! Nine of our students either completed a level in Laubach or a GED level.

Not only are students finishing levels at a record pace, but the quality of their tests has been outstanding. This high level of achievement is not only due to the tremendous effort of our students, but also due to the efforts of our caring and hard working tutors.

Congratulations goes to Maureen Kinnard, Carol VandeVen (2 students), Jane Ries, Debbie Haumschild (2 students), and Lary Swoboda and their students for completing a level in Laubach. Congratulations also to Kathleen Hutchison and John Ingrisano and their students for completing a GED level

Congratulations—Congratulations—Congratulations

Our students have accomplished goals other than finishing a level in Laubach and GED. Tutor monthly reports are loaded with student goals achieved (both major and minor). One of our tutors would like to share an accomplishment of her student.

“My student told me how she went to get her medication with her husband (a non-English speaker) and handled the conversation totally on her own. Usually her son went with her because he knows how to speak English. Her son would talk to the pharmacist and translate for her. At the store, the student was asked to spell her name, give her birth date, confirm identification and give other information. The student was so proud to be able to answer all the questions in English!”

Please share your student's accomplishments with our readers. Call, email, or mail them to Bob.

Students Enter Writing Contest

Muriel Seidl and Bob Garfinkel's students submitted essays to the Milwaukee Area Technical College Writing Contest. Students selected their topic and wrote the story on their own. Tutors were able to proof the student's stories. If a student's work is selected, it will appear in an attractive book with all of the award winners. Both Kewaunee County Libraries have already requested a copy of the book!

The following is one of the essays submitted to the writing contest. The student is an English as a Second Language student. He has been with our program for almost three years and has been actively writing a pen pal for almost two years. The second student essay will appear in our July newsletter.

My Dreams Came True

When I was 20 years old, I lived in Chihuahua, Mexico with my sister, brother-in-law, and their two children. I liked living there and stayed there for two years. I was in the army. My job in the army was to take care of cows and horses. My job was to make sure everything was good and give shots. The ranch had 8,000 cows. After the cow had a shot, we cut the hair off the tail and painted a white line on the cow's back so we knew the cow had her shot.

Another job I had in the army was to find people who had illegal drugs. We had to protect a circle of 20 miles. When we went looking for drugs, we never knew if we would come back alive. It was the most dangerous thing I have ever done.

When I was 21 years old, my first dream was to go to the USA to find a job. I needed money to pay back friends that gave me money to come to the USA. After I paid them back, I made money to buy a GMC red truck. It had to have a short box, a loud muffler, wide tires, and a radio that played good music.

My dream was to learn about cows. I found a job at the Ponderosa Farm in Kewaunee County, Wisconsin. This farm is the biggest and best farm in the county. When I started there, I learned how to milk cows. Now I breed cows and check to see if they are pregnant. My manager and I take care of the farm.

My next dream was to find a girlfriend. I dated a girl, but she was wrong for me. I found the girl of my dreams when I was 24. Her name was Maribel. We fell in love, got married, and had two beautiful kids.

The dream that did not come true is that I am not rich and I will never be rich. I was thinking I was not rich and my pregnant wife and my two beautiful kids came in the room. Now I am thinking maybe I am rich.

OF THIS AND THAT

Thank you to the Casco Lions for renewing their financial support of Literacy Partners.

Thanks goes to the Algoma Lions for their "Gift of Sight" to one of our students.

The Kewaunee Rotary also renewed their commitment to literacy with a donation to Literacy Partners. Thank you once again, Rotary!

There are still seats available for Jo Allison Scott's reading comprehension workshop on May 12, 2009 at NWTC – Luxemburg at 6:30 pm. to reserve a seat, call Bob at 920-676-2061

A Kewaunee County volunteer (woman) would like to be a pen pal for one of our Hispanic students. If your student is interested, please contact Bob.

Updated lists of Resource Center materials are available by calling Bob or by stopping at the Resource Center.

If you are a tutor and would like to be a tutor trainer and help Barb Baldwin, call Barb at 920-776-1541 for details.

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Judge Dennis Mleziva, Bob Garfinkel and Gema Garcia posed after Gema's dynamic seminar.

We Recognize ----

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