
WALWORTH COUNTY LITERACY COUNCIL

SPRING NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2008

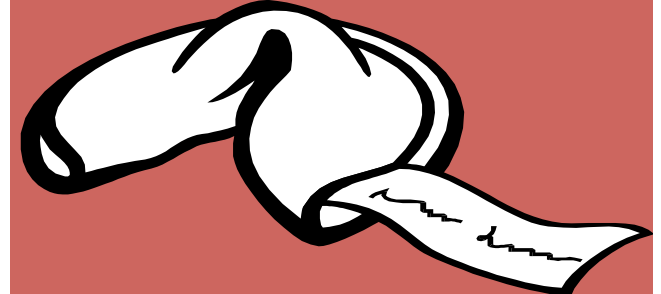
GOOD FORTUNE LUNCHEON

George Williams/Aurora University to host luncheon to benefit WCLC

On Wednesday, April 23rd, George Williams College/Aurora University will host a “Good Fortune Luncheon” on its lakeshore campus in Williams Bay. The theme arose from a desire of George Williams/Aurora faculty to support a local organization by gathering together, sharing a meal, and learning about the work of the Literacy Council. George Williams/Aurora faculty chose the Walworth County Literacy Council (WCLC) as the beneficiary of the luncheon proceeds, due to the important work we do in the community: teaching adult learners to read, write, and communicate the English language.

All tutors, students, and community members are invited & encouraged to attend! The luncheon will be a great opportunity to meet with like-minded & good-hearted people, who value the gift of literacy. A minimum donation of \$10 is suggested, to cover the cost of the luncheon. All proceeds will directly benefit the Literacy Council. The Council will use any proceeds to put books in the hands of students & tutors, to provide ongoing training & programming to volunteers, and to continue to grow the Literacy Council.

Brigette Kutschma, Coordinator of the Literacy Council, will talk to the group about the organization and our need for more volunteers. She is also seeking an interested tutor and/or student to share a few thoughts, or a tutoring experience, with the group at the luncheon. Please contact Brigette at bkutschma@walworthcoliteracy.com or 262-741-5278 if you and/or your student would be interested in this opportunity.



● ● ●
Good Fortune Luncheon
April 23rd • Noon

☼
Beasley Center @
George Williams College
(Williams Bay)

☼
RSVP by 4/16 to Gail Zieman
gzieman@aurora.edu
262-245-8576



WCLC WELCOMES NEW TUTORS

The WCLC recruited and trained 18 individuals to become volunteer tutors with our program since October 2007. Additionally, several existing tutors have been paired with new students. **THANK YOU FOR GIVING THE GIFT OF LITERACY!!!**

The WCLC waiting list continues to expand on a near daily basis! To date, the waiting list holds approximately 40 individuals, with a wide range of learning needs and language backgrounds. While students are waiting county-wide, Darien & Delavan have the biggest need for new tutors! If you, or someone you know, are interested in having a new student(s), please contact the WCLC.

JAIL LITERACY PROGRAM TO LAUNCH IN WALWORTH COUNTY

ESL and ABE classes will be taught in the jail

In collaboration with the Walworth County Jail, the Literacy Council will introduce a new literacy program at the jail. The jail is located in Elkhorn, and housed 4,180 inmates in 2007. The target start date for the program is the summer of 2008. Two courses will be offered to inmates: 1) Adult Basic Education (ABE) literacy, and 2) English as a Second Language (ESL). Initially, class size will be limited to 10 students for both ABE and ESL. The classes will each meet 2 times per week for one hour. The WCLC is currently looking for interested volunteer tutors to teach the classes. The WCLC awaits a grant determination for funding for the project.

The jail literacy project began in the summer of 2007, as the WCLC Board of Directors embarked to research the need and desire for a literacy program within the jail. The first step was to survey each new jail inmate, via a questionnaire. The survey addressed demographics and the need for literacy classes. Board Member John Bigler created the jail survey, and Board Member Terry Schuerman prepared the questionnaire in Spanish. The survey was then distributed by jail staff to each new individual booked in the jail. From June 2007 to December 2007, 567 surveys were completed. The survey results clearly illustrate a need and desire for literacy classes in the Walworth County Jail.

“Beyond their sometimes hardened exterior and beyond the title of their offense, lies an individual who so often wants to change their life but does not know how or where to

begin. I have represented individuals charged with everything from the most serious murder to a rather petty theft. My experiences have shown me that there must first be a *desire* to do the hard work to change their lives. Education is the key to change for so many of those incarcerated. Education instills esteem and power—power to leave the criminal ways behind them, to stop making excuses, and to create a brighter tomorrow”, says Brigette Kutschma, former Public Defender in Walworth and Rock counties.

Several national studies have shown that correctional based educational programs have a significant impact on the recidivism rate. For example, a Three State Recidivism Study, published in 2001, focused on 3200 individuals who were released from prison in three states, Maryland, Minnesota and Ohio. The Study evaluated the 3 common areas of recidivism—re-arrest, re-conviction, and re-incarceration—between those who had participated in educational opportunities while incarcerated and those who had not. The Study found that educational participation while incarcerated reduced the likelihood of re-arrest by 13%; reduced the likelihood of re-conviction by 21%; and reduced the likelihood by 29%. (Steurer, Stephen J., Linda Smith, and Alice Tracy, *Three State Recidivism Study*, Correctional Educational Association, Lanham, MD, 2001.)

Based on the local need and desire for jail literacy classes, the proven effects of educational jail programming nationwide, and the cooperation of the Walworth County Jail, the WCLC aspires to launch the jail classes this summer.

If you are interested in this exciting & rewarding tutoring venture, please contact WCLC. A jail literacy training will be held in the end of April—we hope to have new jail tutors attend this training!!!

Tutoring Tidbits

MONTHLY REPORTS

Thank you to those who submit monthly report forms!!! However, I estimate that I receive monthly report forms from only 20% of our tutors. These forms are invaluable for keeping accurate statistics, grant writing, and for communication between you and the Literacy Council. Please, submit the report forms--Even if you haven't sent one in awhile, you can start today! If you want to save a stamp, you can email Brigitte a short summary of your hours, work accomplished, progress made, and any issues you may have. If you need a paper copy of the Report Form, contact Brigitte & she will mail you some new forms.

BEST ASSESSMENT TEST

The WCLC has a great tool to use with new and existing ESL students: The BEST Assessment Test. The BEST test is a brief, computerized test that assesses a student's English comprehension and abilities. WCLC will be using the BEST test for all new ESL students, in order to place them in the best textbooks, and to give the tutor a better idea of the student's English abilities.

A big challenge for our existing tutors has been to understand the level of their student's English—thanks to the BEST test, we are better equipped to target the student's needs and strengths. If you think that the BEST test would be helpful for your student—contact the WCLC. We will arrange for a time to come to your tutoring session, and to facilitate the test.

A big **THANKS** to Gateway Technical College of Elkhorn for lending the WCLC a laptop for the BEST test!!!

“GETTING TO KNOW YOUR STUDENT” TUTOR TRAINING HELD

Acclaimed literacy expert shares her wisdom and advice with WCLC tutors

On February 26th, the WCLC hosted a tutor training at Gateway Technical College in Elkhorn. Robin Schwarz, a renowned literacy expert, spoke to the group on the topic “Getting to Know Your Student”. The focus of her presentation was on building curriculum and student lessons on what your student *really* wants & needs to know and learn. By asking the right questions, and carefully listening to your student's answers, you will be better equipped to tutor to your student's wants and needs. It is easy to get caught up in textbook grammar exercises—however, Ms. Schwarz challenged the tutors to help their students become active language learners. She reinforced the notion that learning does not (and cannot) stop at the end of the tutoring session. Tutors need to encourage their students to incorporate the classroom lessons into their daily lives. Ms. Schwarz suggested small homework assignments to accomplish this goal.

For example, encourage your student to use 3 to 4 vocabulary words that they have learned in class, in the ‘real world’. When class resumes, have the student report back to you on their usage of these words. Students will likely be hesitant or very busy in their everyday lives, but this is essential for the true apprehension of the English language.

If you were not able to attend the February 26th training, and you would like a copy of the worksheets distributed, please contact the WCLC.

A special **Thanks** to Wisconsin Literacy and Gateway Technical College for making this tutor training session possible!!!

“In life people are divided by land or sea, religion or principal, language or culture. Some of these are impossible to remedy, but language, the gift of expression and understanding, is something we can help provide one another. Whether it is the gift of reading or speech, these are precious gifts that cost nothing but your free time and whose value is immeasurable.”

Eric V., 24, Tutor in Lake Geneva

WCLC RECEIVES UNITED WAY GRANT

The Walworth County Literacy Council is the proud recipient of a \$2000 grant from the United Way of Delavan-Darien. For more than 60 years, the United Way of Delavan-Darien has been fulfilling its mission “to meet critical human needs of residents by supporting nonprofit, human service agencies” throughout Delavan, Darien, and Walworth County communities. www.delavan-darienunitedway.org/about.com This is the first time that the WCLC has been awarded a United Way Grant. The contribution will be put to good use for materials and trainings of tutors, targeting the Delavan-Darien area. WCLC is grateful for the United Way support, which enables our program to “give the gift of literacy” through our fourth year of operation!!!

VALUABLE INTERNET TOOL FOR TUTORS

Brian Anderson, Tutoring Director at *Literacy Network* in Madison, Wisconsin has created a literacy “blog”, which is an amazing tool for tutors and those interested in literacy topics. His website is incredibly insightful, and has a ton of practical information, resources, and tutoring tips. His tutoring tips come from real tutors, just like you, who share a bit of wisdom they have developed through their literacy experiences. I encourage everyone to check out his blog at: www.literacynetwork.blogspot.com. Here’s an excerpt from the blog on “Phrasal Verbs”, a *tricky* area for learners of the English language: [Printed with permission by Mr. Anderson]:

There is a two-letter word that perhaps has more meanings than any other two-letter word, and that is 'UP.' It's easy to understand UP, meaning toward the sky or at the top of the list, but when we awaken in the morning, why do we **wake UP**? At a meeting, why does a topic **come UP**? Why do we **speak UP** and why are the officers **UP** for election and why is it **UP** to the secretary to **write UP** a report?


We **call UP** our friends. And we use it to **brighten UP** a room, **polish UP** the silver, we **warm UP** the leftovers and **clean UP** the kitchen. We **lock UP** the house and some guys **fix UP** the old car.


At other times the little word has real special meaning. People **stir UP** trouble, **line UP** for tickets, **work UP** an appetite, and **think UP** excuses. To be dressed is one thing, but to be **dressed UP** is special...

We seem to be pretty **mixed UP** about **UP**! To be knowledgeable about the proper uses of **UP**, look the word **UP** in the dictionary. In a desk-sized dictionary, it takes **UP** almost 1/4th of the page and can add **UP** to about thirty definitions. If you are **UP** to it, you might try building **UP** a list of the many ways **UP** is used. It will **take UP** a lot of your time.... {Submitted by Beth Gleisten to www.literacynetwork.blogspot.com} ☞

ONLINE CITIZENSHIP MATERIALS

Does your student want help preparing for the citizenship test? Below are two online resources for tutors & students alike!

 [www.uscis.gov] This website contains a great deal of information and downloadable learning tools, to help your student prepare for the citizenship test. Once at the USCIS main page, follow the prompts for “Education and Resources”. You may then select “Civics and Citizenship Study Materials” or “Resources for Adult Educators”, which are among a wide variety of available options.

 [www.thinkfinity.org] A wonderful tool for tutors! This site, sponsored by Verizon, provides citizenship resources, lesson plans, interactive activities, and so much more. It is easy & free to register with the site, in order to gain access to a plethora of literacy tools you can use! ☞

CHECK IT OUT

If you are looking for an entertaining and inspiring book to read, check out: [How I Learned English: 55 Accomplished Latinos Recall Lessons in Language and Life](#), edited by Tom Miller (2007). This great read is a compilation of essays from notable Latino figures, including a congressman, author, TV personality, and baseball player. They each reveal a personal and often fascinating story on their journey to master the “quirks and challenges” of the English language.

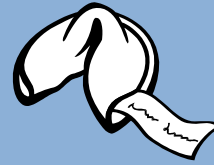
WCLC CONTACT INFORMATION

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WCLC Board of Directors

Marilyn Putz, President

John Bigler	Dan Draper
Richard Goetsch	Terry Schuerman
Grace Kragness	Judy Stone



Good Fortune Luncheon

Wednesday, April 23, 2008
⊗ 12 p.m. ⊗

*George Williams College/Aurora
University (Williams Bay)*

RSVP by 4/16/08
Details in newsletter

Walworth County Literacy Council
1000 E. Centralia St.
Elkhorn, WI 53121

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED