



A Line on Literacy

Solano County Library Literacy Services

Volume 13, No. 2

Changing Lives through Reading

People ask us, “What is the literacy program? What do you do?” We can respond with, “We help people learn to read,” or “We train volunteers to read aloud to children in medical clinics.” But the real question is “So what?!”

The “so what” question gets to the heart of what we really do. Normally, adults don’t learn to read only to acquire a new skill. Reading is a pathway for making a difference in one’s life.

Take Joan for example. Joan’s ability to read enabled her to obtain a medical assistant job. With this job, Joan is able to contribute to the health and welfare of a community of elderly patients. And she can contribute to her children’s college education. Reading helped Joan to change her life and that of her family.

Another learner, Michael, dropped out of school years ago and eventually was homeless. He slept in the back of his friend’s furniture store. Michael changed his life with a 12 step program and a reading tutor. Today he is a high school graduate and working in an auto shop.

When little Maria was an infant, the family doctor told her parents how important it was to read to her. Each check-up, her parents were reminded to read to Maria, so she will be ready for school. Today, Maria gets all A’s on her second grade report card.

Reading, then, is not the end product. Reading gives us opportunities to better our lives, it gives us pleasure, reading even helps us to survive.

What do we do in the literacy program? We change lives through reading!



April 2009



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Reading Aloud to Infants: A Tried and True Practice

The infant was a fighter. Abandoned by his father, his mother, Flora, found herself unable to bond with him. His doctor approached Mrs. Jennie Prentiss, a nurse/midwife, who had recently lost her own baby. Mrs. Prentiss took the infant into her home, folding him into her routine with her older children. She often read aloud to them with the infant on her lap.

The child in this story had a tenuous start to his life, but early on he is supported in ways that even his grieving mother could not have imagined. Mrs. Prentiss' willingness to read aloud to the infant changed the quality of Jack London's life.

Over the years, Jack was a sailor on a sealing ship, a gold miner in Alaska, a journalist, and he is best known as a novelist. In his late-twenties, he became famous for his adventure story, *Call of the Wild*, which has been translated into numerous languages.



More than 100 years later, parents hear the message of the value of reading to infants and young children in our medical clinics in Solano County. Jack London's story is an example of the impact of this practice.



Welcome New Volunteers!

Tutors

Benito, Judy
Burnside, Sue
Cupid, Veronica
Darling, Meshia
Klemmedson, Susan
Longenbaugh, Pat
Magpusao, Shante
Messerli, Avylonne
Roberts, Claire
Tannenbaum, Marilyn
Winger, Vonnie

ROR Volunteers

Alvaro, Kristina
Boesch, Isabelle
Caoile, Jehn Rielle
Laxa, Tina
LeFebvre, Lisa
Slover, Sage
Stella, Marianne
Yanagawa, Denise

Other Volunteers

Atta, Freshta
Carbajal, Maria
Gomez, Felix
Keiffer, Michael
Kendall, Rowena
Mejia, Luis
Moore, Jackie
Olson, Janice
Palmer, Gail
Robinson, Diane
Traviesa, Sebastian

2009 Writer to Writer Challenge

Books bring pleasure. They open our minds to many exciting places and adventures. They teach us new things. Reading is one of the best ways to increase vocabulary and improve reading comprehension, spelling and grammar.

Last year, 23 students from Solano County Library participated in the California State Library Writer to Writer Challenge. Learner participants read a book, and then wrote a letter to the author explaining why the book was significant to the learner's life.

Does your learner enjoy reading books? Fiction? Non-fiction? Children's books? Listening to audio books? Is improving writing skills a goal for your learner? If the answer is "yes," then encourage your learner to participate in this year's challenge.

Visit the New Reader section at your branch. There you'll find classics like Jack London's *Call of the Wild* and Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer*. Or check out the new Bio-Graphics collection for titles like *Abraham Lincoln* and *Anne Frank*. Explore the New Reader collection for endless choices.

Interested in participating in the 2009 Writer to Writer Challenge? Here's how to get started:

- Spring: Choose a book to read (or listen to a book on tape).
- Summer: Read the book.
- Fall: Write a letter to the author, telling how you felt about the book.

Deadline: Send all letters to the Literacy Office by November 1, 2009

Entries will be judged by the Learner Council.

One winner will be selected from each community:

- Fairfield/Suisun/Cordelia
- Rio Vista
- Vacaville
- Vallejo

Winners will be announced and receive awards at the Literacy Celebration.

All eligible entries will be sent to the California State Library competition.



Solano County Library Literacy Services Receives ProLiteracy Accreditation

We are pleased to announce that the Solano County Library Literacy Services was recently awarded accreditation status by ProLiteracy America, the nation's largest nongovernmental organization of adult education and literacy programs! This prestigious award affirms that Solano County Library Literacy Services meets the highest quality standards for adult literacy programs. The literacy staff undertook the rigorous yearlong task of planning, implementing, documenting and providing evidence for sixteen quality standards for literacy services. The process culminated in a site review with a ProLiteracy evaluator and a literacy summit with community partners and staff.



We want to thank all of our dedicated volunteers, students, library staff, and literacy supporters who helped us to receive this distinct honor, and who continue to bolster our mission of changing lives through reading!



Calendar of Events 2009 - April, May and June

April

- 5 Monthly Tutor & Student Reports are due
- 16 ROR Roundtable, 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m., Vacaville Public Library, Cultural Center
- 21 Tutor Orientation, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon, Rio Vista Library
- 22 ROR Volunteer Training, 3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m., John F. Kennedy Library, Vallejo

May

- 2 Tutor Roundtable, 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m., John F. Kennedy Library, Vallejo, 3rd Floor Board Room
- 5 Monthly Tutor & Student Reports are due
- 14 ROR Volunteer Training, 3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m., Fairfield Civic Center Library
- 25 Holiday - Library Closed
- 30 Tutor Roundtable, 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m., Fairfield Civic Center Library

June

- 5 Monthly Tutor & Student Reports are due
- 25 ROR Volunteer Training, 3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m., Vacaville Public Library, Cultural Center



Meet Diane Robinson

Diane Robinson confesses she was scared, embarrassed and nervous the first time she came into the literacy office for her assessment. “I was intimidated by the unknown. I was scared, really embarrassed that I would score low,” she says. As the adult literacy program’s first native English speaker on staff, she now helps incoming native English speaking learners deal with the feelings she remembers all too well.



Diane attends all the New Student Meetings, literacy’s student orientations, across Solano County. She makes follow-up phone calls to give support. “It is a lot of information at one time. Sometimes they are confused. I can answer their questions,” she says.

Diane is filling a void the literacy program has long seen, the need for native English speaking learners to have extra support. Diane knows first hand how negative school experiences create shame for failing in the school system. “I know what it is like to walk in their shoes,” she shares. “Just before I hang up the phone, they thank me. They ask me to please call again. I always do. It makes me feel really good and I enjoy it.”

Reading vs. Reality

Recent studies on the brain validate the worth and importance of reading. Researchers have examined how the brain works during the act of reading and compared it to real life. Their studies show that the brain doesn't know the difference! When we read, our brains process information the same way as if we lived it. Could this information change the scope of what you are doing as a tutor? Since reading exposes us to cultures, beliefs, people and places outside our thoughts and surroundings, imagine the possibilities you are creating in the life of your student. You are doing more than helping your students accomplish their everyday goals. You are also helping them gain perspectives and experience life in ways they wouldn't have been able to do without you.

For more on this topic, listen to the National Public Radio broadcast from the link below.

Reading Creates 'Simulations' In Minds : NPR
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=100109043>



Tutors & Students Invited!

Bring your student, or come alone...

Choose the workshop best suited for your student.



ESL—Learning to Listen & Speak

*Presented by Kris Callahan,
former literacy tutor and Fairfield Adult School ESL teacher*

Tuesday, May 12, 7-8:30pm

Fairfield Cordelia Library

5050 Business Center Drive, Fairfield

Explore the process of second language acquisition, ESL activities, seeking out opportunities for exposure to oral language, and creating a relaxed, low anxiety atmosphere.

OR

Learning to Write

*Presented by Amy Prevedel,
former literacy coordinator for Berkeley Public Library*

Tuesday, May 19, 7-8:30pm

Fairfield Civic Center Library

1150 Kentucky Street, Fairfield

Learn strategies for teaching writing as a process—not a product. Show your student how to get ideas on paper and how to manipulate them. Experience writing as a free flow of thoughts without the fear of spelling errors.



**Please let us know which
workshop you plan to attend!**

**Solano County Library
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Literacy Services Staff

Sandy Tosti, Program Manager
Joanne Wright, Senior Program Assistant
Lorene Hamasaki, Program Assistant
Anika Johnson, Program Assistant
David Lewis, Program Assistant
Wyntress Smith, Program Assistant
Joy Gridley, Extra Help Program Assistant
Lori Anderson, Office Assistant
Julie Anderson, Departmental Aid
Angeles Williams, Departmental Aid

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Literacy Services***

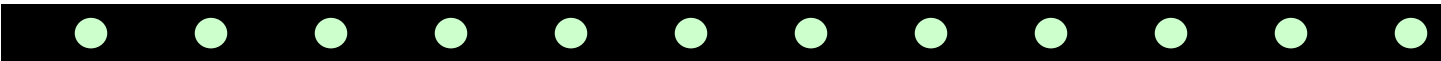
- The Solano County Library provides literacy education for
- Adults who want to improve their reading, writing and English speaking skills
 - Adults and their infants and preschoolers using children’s literature

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How to Reach Us
1-800-450-7885
or
707-784-1526
literacy@snap.lib.ca.us

We are on the Web!
www.solanolibrary.com

Literacy Office Hours
Monday—Thursday 10am-7pm
Friday 10am-5pm
Saturday & Sunday Closed



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