

Vision LITERACY

Partners Creating Opportunities

408.262.1349

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www.visionliteracy.org

Tutor & Volunteer Newsletter

February 2009

HUNDREDS COME TOGETHER FOR READING AND FUN AT MINI FESTIVAL OF BOOKS

Nearly 650 people attended the Mini Festival of Books hosted on Valentine's Day by Vision Literacy and the City of San Jose's Dr. Roberto Cruz/Alum Rock Branch



Pedro Espinosa Matty, Mexican Consulate official, reads a story to children

Library. Local families were treated to free refreshments and a variety of activities including bookmaking, Valentine crafts, a performance by storyteller and musician Jose-Luis Orozco, and a children's book reading by Mexican Consulate official Pedro Espinosa Matty. In addition, more than 400 books were given away at the event – one to every child in attendance.

Congratulations for a successful festival go to Vision Literacy Associate Manager Marina Dols, who produced the event with Rosa Leon Monday from the San Jose Public Library. Additional financial support was provided by the Read Aloud Collaborative and First 5.



Volunteers, staff and partners gather at the festival

WELCOME NEW TUTORS!

Vision Literacy extends a warm welcome to nine new tutors: **Elizabeth Fox, Precious Funtila, Mally Gardiner, Betty Hutz, Susan Lee, Ruth May, Muriel Scott, Patricia Simicich, and Suzanne Warden.** These volunteers will be working with individual learners in the north county, small groups at a local women's shelter, and patients at Valley Medical Center in San Jose. They are also the first class of tutors to graduate from Vision Literacy's new training program, which incorporates the Inspired Learning Model of instruction. Good luck and thanks to you all!

WORKSHOPS TEACH MONEY BASICS

Learners are invited to participate in four new Vision Literacy workshops that will cover important financial skills. Topics covered will be:

- March 14 – Create a budget and save money
- April 4 – Saving for the future
- May 2 – Budget for major life events
- June 6 – Put your plan into action

Sessions will be held from 10 a.m. to noon in the group study room of the new Milpitas Library at 160 N. Main Street. Space is limited. For more information or to reserve a spot, call the office at 408-262-1349.

CLASS TO OFFER CONTEST HELP

Learners and tutors inspired by reading are invited to participate in Vision Literacy's upcoming workshop for the 2009 Writer to Writer Challenge. Information on the contest and tips for creating a prize-winning entry will be available. The session will take place at the Mountain View Library on March 23 from 2-4 p.m. (See enclosed flier for details.) Call 408-262-1349 to register.

Tutors: Please submit your monthly progress report by mail or online at www.visionliteracy.org. Reports are due March 3. Thank you!

TUTOR SPOTLIGHT:

Sujay Mukherjee, North County Tutor, Explains What Motivates Him

Doing work experience for a year in a hospital in the United Kingdom opened my eyes to some of the issues facing healthcare. One of these issues was a patient's ability to speak English. Since patients were sometimes not able to comprehend a doctor's questions or relay the appropriate information for diagnosis, I found that translational services were vital for the diagnosis and treatment of patients. Doing further research, I found that these services were costing the National Health Service \$107 million dollars a year. Alarming, this was considered a conservative estimate!

After moving to the United States and finding that poor literacy also plagued society here, I knew that, while I wanted to dedicate my life to medicine, I also had to first try to increase the literacy of the general population. Vision Literacy was an organization that did just that – helping members of society, from all walks of life, to increase their literacy skills. By volunteering in this organization, I hope to reduce the cost of translation services by health providers and, therefore, allow for this money to be better spent in diagnosis and treatment services.



Mukherjee has been with Vision Literacy since 2007.

TUTOR TIP: FILLING OUT FORMS

This month's tip is adapted from Second Start, the Oakland Public Library's adult literacy program (<http://www.oaklandlibrary.org/services/SecondStart/>)

To encourage a learner to use writing skills to meet practical needs, collect samples of the forms he or she may need for everyday life, such as a child's school emergency contact form, a library card application, or a job application from an area business. Work with the learner to fill out one of these forms. Then ask the learner to complete the other forms independently, using information from the one you did together.

FAREWELL AND GOOD LUCK, TIM MILLER!

Sadly, Vision Literacy recently said goodbye to Tim Miller, associate manager – corrections. Since 2006, Miller had worked at the Elmwood Correctional Facility in Milpitas, overseeing literacy instruction and library services for inmates and their families. He is leaving the post to move to Southern California with his wife, who was recently promoted.



Vision Literacy is currently looking to fill the position Miller vacated. Please contact Pat Lawson-North in the Milpitas office for more information or to refer a candidate.

CHECK OUT CORPORATE GIVING POLICIES

Recently, several Vision Literacy tutors discovered that their volunteer hours made Vision Literacy eligible for hundreds of dollars in contributions from their employers. *Do you know your employer's giving policies?* If you are currently working, please check with the human resources department of your company to see if the time you spend helping others can be the catalyst for even more giving. In today's uncertain financial times, Vision Literacy can use all the support it can get! Contact Pat Lawson-North, 408-262-1349, for more information.

COMPUTER TUTOR NEEDED IN GILROY

Imagine trying to navigate today's tech-driven environment without computer skills. That is a reality many Vision Literacy learners face everyday. If you would like to help these men and women develop the basic knowledge they need to open an email account or fill out an online job application, consider becoming Gilroy's tutor for the Basic Computer Skills class. It meets every Monday and Tuesday from 10 a.m. to noon. For more information, contact Louise Shields, south county associate manager, at 408-848-5366.

AND THE WINNER IS...

Tutor **Gary Steinbach!** His name was drawn from among the group of tutors and staff who completed newsletter surveys before February 1. He'll receive a copy of the CD *Songs Inspired by Literature*.

Thank you to everyone who responded to last month's survey. The input will prove useful as Vision Literacy explores ways to improve the newsletter, as well as its other communications efforts.

Let us know if you have a question, comment or submission for the newsletter. Contact 408-262-1349 or info@visionliteracy.org. Next deadline for submissions: March 13, 2009.



