

# Vision LITERACY

Partners Creating Opportunities

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[www.visionliteracy.org](http://www.visionliteracy.org)

## Tutor & Volunteer Newsletter

June 2009

### PUBLIC ALLY ASSESSES WORK, PERSONAL GROWTH AFTER YEAR-LONG ASSIGNMENT

As this year's public ally assigned to Vision Literacy, Lauren Patron learned many lessons, both professional and personal. She recently assessed these lessons at her "Presentation of Learnings" in front of an audience of supervisors and colleagues. Most importantly, said the recent graduate of California State University – Monterey Bay, "I learned the way I work."



Patron (right) poses with her Public Ally coach Tiana Woodridge

For six years, Vision Literacy has been a partner organization with Public Allies, an AmeriCorps program that gives young adults leadership mentoring and paid work experience in nonprofits. As our 2008-09 ally, Patron spent her year tackling a variety of tasks, such as tutoring women in transitional housing at InnVision, championing nutrition education in First 5 parenting classes, and staffing the Community Learning Center at Valley Medical Center.

While the assignments were diverse and frequently forced her outside of her comfort zone, they also made her appreciate the strengths of the larger community and recognize the power of collaboration and diversity.

"I found that that, where my weaknesses are, there are someone else's strengths," Patron remarked during her presentation.

Patron cautions that nobody should never underestimate the worth of what he or she "brings to the table," but she also discovered that it's not necessary to pretend to know everything. In fact, she found that being honest about her shortcomings helped adult learners, in particular, to feel more comfortable working with her this year.

Patron has signed on to another year of work with Public Allies but will be assigned to a different nonprofit. She will also assume a mentoring role for the new allies who begin training later this summer.

### WELCOME NEW TUTORS

Vision Literacy welcomes 22 new tutors to its ranks: Armilene Abucay, Minita Choudhary, Gordon Cooper, Hugh Cox, Brooke Doverspike, Kathryn Doyel, Kathleen Echeverria, Patricia Evans, Suzanne Goodwin, Gloria Ho, Mary Clare Hopkins, Jessica Koran, Marcia Lanz, Katherine Menzies, Javier Perez, Audrey Randazzo, Kaye Sapikas, Greg Sickal, Susan Sickal, Niraj Toprani, Christa Williams, and Jo Yamoto. Thank you for choosing to dedicate your time and talents to help adults in the community, and good luck to you all!

### ECONOMIC CRISIS THREATENS PROGRAMS

Along with hundreds of nonprofits throughout Santa Clara County, Vision Literacy is facing budget cuts for its 2009-2010 fiscal year due to the national economic recession and California State budget crisis. According to the Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits (SVCN), more than 230 programs are facing at least \$16.5 million in cuts from Santa Clara County, City of San Jose and First 5. Particularly vulnerable for Vision Literacy are \$53,000 in First 5 funds designated for parenting workshops in Gilroy and the Mayfair neighborhood of San Jose. These numbers do not take into account state budget funds, which are also expected to be reduced.

If you would like to support Vision Literacy during this challenging economic time, please visit our website at [www.visionliteracy.org/donate](http://www.visionliteracy.org/donate) and contribute to the Friends of Vision Literacy. You may also contact the Milpitas office at 408-262-1349 to share your ideas and learn about additional volunteer opportunities.

Tutors: Please submit your monthly progress report by mail or online at [www.visionliteracy.org](http://www.visionliteracy.org). Reports are due July 3. Thank you!

## LEARNER SPOTLIGHT

Maria Teresa Vargas came to Vision Literacy in October 2008 because she had failed her written test for citizenship. Vargas had been given four months to work on her writing skills in preparation for a second test. She knew she had to work hard on her writing skills right away because of the possibility she might called back to work and no longer have time to study.

Vargas joined Elvia Hernandez's ESL tutoring group at the Gilroy Apartments to learn how to read and write. The group focused on verbs and writing sentences using the verbs. When Vargas went back for her second citizenship test, she was asked to write, "I like to play in the park."

And she passed.

Vargas is very thankful to Vision Literacy for providing the program in Gilroy. She is particularly grateful that it offered childcare, which made it possible for her – a single mother of three girls – to study and pass the test.



Families select free children's books to take home at the 2009 Festival of Books in San Jose

## THOUSANDS CELEBRATE LITERACY AT FOURTH ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF BOOKS

A record-breaking 6,245 people – including dozens of Vision Literacy learners – participated in this year's Festival of Books at the Children's Discovery Museum on May 30. Designed to encourage literacy in families with children under age five, the event celebrated books with story times, music, crafts and free books for kids. Vision Literacy enlisted several guest readers for the event, including San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed, Mexican Consul David Figueroa, and consulate representative Pedro Espinosa Matty. Employees Marina Dols, Israel Velasquez and Lauren Patron helped to staff the event.

## COMING EVENTS

- June 27 North County Computer Classes  
Sobrato Center for Nonprofits  
10 a.m., 11:15 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.
- July 11 North County Computer Classes  
Sobrato Center for Nonprofits  
10 a.m., 11:15 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.
- July 17 Deadline for Writer to Writer entries
- July 18 Learner Group Meeting  
Milpitas Library  
10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Let us know if you have a question, comment or submission for the newsletter. Contact Kristin Seitz at 408-262-1349 or [info@visionliteracy.org](mailto:info@visionliteracy.org).  
Next deadline for submissions: July 13, 2009.



Vision Literacy is a service of the Santa Clara County Library

## DEADLINE FOR WRITER TO WRITER LOOMS



Remember: July 17 is the final deadline to submit letters for the annual Writer to Writer Challenge sponsored by California Library Literacy Services (CLLS). Adult learners are invited to read a book of their choice and then write a personal letter to the author of that book, sharing their thoughts about how the book affected them. For more information, call Martha Inouye at 408-262-1349 or visit the CLLS website at [www.libraryliteracy.org](http://www.libraryliteracy.org).

## TUTOR TIP: MOTIVATE WITH MINI-GOALS

Help your learners to stay motivated by setting mini-goals – attainable, short-term milestones that can be measured and documented. A few examples might be:

- I will meet two hours a week for ten weeks.
- I will finish this book by August 1.
- I will say hello to my neighbor in English next week.
- I will write ten Experience Stories.
- I will learn to spell this list of words.

After you have identified the goals, write them down, date them and check them off when completed. And make sure to reward success!

*This month's tip is adapted from LITSTART.*