

# Vision LITERACY

Partners Creating Opportunities

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## Tutor & Volunteer Newsletter

January 2010

### A MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM MANAGER

When asked to speak at a literacy conference many years ago, adult learner Enrique Ramirez said, "I have so much I want to say, I don't know where to start." "Speak from your heart," was the advice of Gary Strong, a former California State Librarian.

My message today is from my heart.

These are trying times for many of us personally and professionally, and Vision Literacy is not exempt from facing challenges. The need for literacy services continues to grow, but our financial resources have begun to shrink. As has been reported previously in this newsletter, several of our major grants, such as FIRST 5, have been reduced or not renewed. And while the staff and board of directors have been working hard to find new sources of revenue, the stressed California economy is making that a difficult task. As a result, and with regret, I was not able to renew the contracts of two team members, Literacy Specialist Martha Inouye and Administrative Assistant Maria Fregoso. In addition, all of the remaining personnel have had their hours reduced.

The next few months are important for Vision Literacy. As I work with the Santa Clara County Library and the Friends of Vision Literacy to forge a solid plan for moving our organization into the next decade, I ask you, our volunteers, to help us overcome present challenges with continued commitment and generosity. Your work is what sustains our purpose, and your success – such as when a learner sends her first email, passes his driver's license test, or writes a letter to an author – inspires us all.

I also ask two new things: first, patience, as our organization balances the same workload with a reduced workforce. Vision Literacy program employees are very dedicated, but they are all part-time. Please be understanding as they strive to make sure all of our volunteers, learners and partners continue to be supported.

Second, I ask you to be creative. Spread the word with your friends and coworkers that literacy in Santa Clara County needs support, and encourage them to donate to us online at <http://www.visionliteracy.org/donate.html>.

Also, consider sharing your extra time and talents to help us meet our challenges. Perhaps you would consider writing a letter to the editor of your local paper about the importance of adult literacy in our community. Or maybe you'd be willing to donate one afternoon a week to answer phones. I know that our volunteers are an exceptionally talented group of people, and Vision Literacy would gratefully accept any additional help you could offer.

No, Vision Literacy is not exempt from the financial turmoil that our nation faces, but I am hopeful that the dedication of our volunteers and personnel, as well as the bona fide value of our mission, will pull us through these hard times and ultimately make 2010 a Happy New Year for everyone.

– Pat Lawson-North

### EDITOR'S NOTE: LEANER NEWSLETTER REFLECTS LEANER TIMES

In line with the funding and personnel cuts described above, the *Tutor and Volunteer Newsletter* has been trimmed to one page. The time saved by producing a shortened publication will be devoted to better serving our volunteers and learners. Despite the changes, I hope that the newsletter will remain a useful way to bind our literacy community together.

– Kristin Seitz

***Tutors: Please submit your monthly progress report by February 3. Thank you!***

