

Vision LITERACY

Partners Creating Opportunities

Vision Literacy Tutor and Volunteer Newsletter March 2007

INOUE SELECTED AS NEW LITERACY SPECIALIST

Martha Inouye has joined the Vision Literacy staff as the North County literacy specialist. In her new role, she is responsible for literacy services, such as pairing and supporting tutors and learners, in the territory ranging from Milpitas to Saratoga.



Inouye is already well known to many in the Vision Literacy community, thanks to her dedicated work as a volunteer tutor. During the past two years, she has established a successful one-on-one partnership with a learner in Campbell, and has taught in group settings at MACSA and at an area women's shelter. She also has conducted new volunteer orientation and helped train and support the San Jose State students who are currently volunteering with Vision Literacy as part of their coursework.

Inouye brings a rich history of employment and volunteerism to Vision Literacy. She holds a degree in social work from Sacramento State University and has worked with elementary, college and developmentally disabled students in a variety of settings. For the past six years, she has served as a tutor in the ESL and citizenship programs at Sacred Heart Community Services in San Jose. In addition, she has extended her kindness to the canine citizens of the Bay Area by becoming foster mom to 50 rescued dogs over six years, and adoptive mom to two of them.

Commenting on her decision to accept the position of literacy specialist, Inouye said, "Just like a Henry Huffman student who commits to being a lifelong learner, I feel like I'm a lifelong volunteer, and I want to support other volunteers."

Inouye assumed her new role on March 12. She replaces Shannon Gomez, who left Vision Literacy in December. She is also taking on the literacy specialist responsibilities in Mountain View, which have been overseen on an interim basis by Tim Miller.

TUTORS NEEDED: MANY LEARNERS ON WAITING LIST

With dozens of learners currently waiting to be paired with tutors, Vision Literacy is in serious need of more volunteers. Please help us step up our efforts to recruit more volunteers – and serve our learners – by distributing the enclosed flyers publicizing our last round of springtime orientations. (More flyers can be requested by contacting Kristin at 262-1349 or kseitz@visionliteracy.org.) Ask if you can post them at your favorite coffee shop, bookstore, neighborhood school...wherever you think they might be discovered by thoughtful, generous people in your community.

As always, if you know someone who might be interested in becoming a tutor, please encourage him or her to call 262-1349 and register for our upcoming orientation sessions:

Milpitas Office, 540 Valley Way
Sat., Mar. 31, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Campbell Public Library, 77 Harrison St.
Wed., April 11, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Mountain View Public Library, 585 Franklin St.
Wed., April 18, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Along with our future learners, Vision Literacy thanks you for your help!

LEARNER WRITING OPPORTUNITY FOR SPRING: A PASSION FOR SPORTS

The NCAA basketball tournament. Baseball spring training. World soccer rivalries. Last January's Superbowl. There's always something going on in the world of sports that elicits excitement and strong feelings. If your learner is passionate about sports, encourage him or her to submit a paragraph of original writing to Vision Literacy describing that passion. All authors will receive a gift, and a selected paragraph will be published in this newsletter.



Entries are due by May 31 and should be sent to: Vision Literacy, 540 Valley Way, Milpitas, CA 95035 (attn: Kristin Seitz). Entries should include a return address, so a gift can be mailed to the author.



Tutors: Please remember to send in your monthly progress reports by mail. Due date: April 3. Thanks!

VISION LITERACY EXPANDS PARTICIPATION IN FESTIVAL OF BOOKS

Vision Literacy's presence was stronger than ever at this year's Festival of Books on March 18. Representing our organization were eight guest readers, and dozens of Vision Literacy learners, volunteers and employees who attended the festivities with their families.

Most notably, a diverse and distinguished group of men and women volunteered as guest readers on behalf of Vision Literacy. These volunteers, who read stories aloud to groups of young children, included Mayor of San Jose Chuck Reed, and his wife Paula; Consul General of Mexico Bruno



Figueroa, and his wife Veronica Gonzalez de Figueroa; Bob Ingle, Vision Literacy tutor and former San Jose Mercury News executive editor; Ruben Dozal, author and

Vision Literacy learner; Dr. Elizabeth Greyber of Valley Medical Center; and Cynthia Rios Garcia, a Santa Clara County Library representative.

Vision Literacy's involvement was spearheaded by Marina Dols, family literacy specialist, and Rachel DiFranco, a Public Allies apprentice at Vision Literacy. In addition to their behind the scenes work, Dols served as a guest reader, and DiFranco handed out information and take-home gifts to festival participants.

Also attending the event were Program Manager Pat Lawson-North, board member Sandy Reed, Associate Manager Judy Walko, volunteers from San Jose State University, and Learner Advocate Elvia Hernandez, who brought with her a group of more than 30 learners and children from her classes in Gilroy.

The Festival of Books is a literacy event held annually at the Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose for children ages 0-5 living in high risk zip codes in the Bay Area. Children who came to this year's festival were able to attend readings, participate in book-making workshops, and enjoy all of the museum's current displays and activities. For many families, participating in the Festival of Books also served as their first opportunity to visit the museum.

If you or your students have a question, comment or submission for the newsletter, please contact Kristin Seitz, editor, at 408.262.1349 or kseitz@visionliteracy.org. Next deadline for submissions: April 13.



MEET THE STAFF: JUDITH WALKO ASSOCIATE MANAGER, LITERACY SERVICES – SOUTH COUNTY

How she became involved with Vision Literacy

After moving to Gilroy, Walko became an active member of the local library. She worked to support Measure A and, when that passed, started working at library book sales. She found out about Vision Literacy by seeing a flyer at one of the book sales.



Number of years with the organization

Twelve – starting out as a volunteer tutor when she was between jobs. She was soon invited by Barbara Kong (former Vision Literacy manager in Gilroy) to start working in the office five to ten hours a week. She shared the position of associate manager with Kong for five years and has been on her own for seven.

Best day on the job

A memorable experience was working with one of her first learners, a man who couldn't read at all – an unusual situation, according to Walko. She worked with this learner for three or four years and taught him everything about how to read.

Worst day on the job

Walko says it's hard when technology fails because, "I'm not a techie." Some of her hardest days have been when the student computers (which were donated by individuals in the community more than five years ago) break down and she has to troubleshoot the problems.

Books on her reading shelf

The Crocodile Bird by Ruth Rendell. It's the last book in a series of 40 – all of which she's read.

TUTOR TIP OF THE MONTH

This tip is drawn from BALIT in San Mateo County (www.literacynet.org):

A general principle in teaching is that instruction should move from the known to the unknown. When teaching grammar and pronunciation, make the lessons more accessible by using as examples words and phrases with which a learner is already familiar.

For instance, one BALIT tutor taught her football-loving student the "soft C" sound using the following words taken from newspaper articles: Bru(ce) Allen, San Fran(ci)sco, Jerry Ri(ce), re(ce)ption, offi(ci)al, practi(ce), agen(cy), experien(ce), conferen(ce). After working with words like these, the student was open to learning about a new sound of "C" – which didn't feel like such a new idea anymore.