

Literacy Notes

Summer 2013



[Left to right] **Ida Fay Winters** describes the health literacy project in Altus. • **Rebecca Barker** shares ideas on using high interest reading materials. • **Jana Smithey** (Elk City) and other literacy directors try to balance a hula hoop during team building exercise.

The 2013 Literacy Directors' Retreat

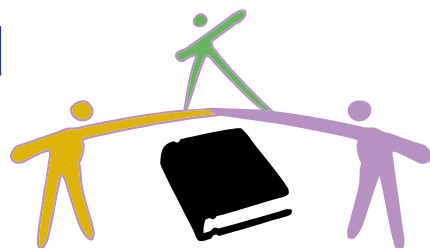
Literacy directors from throughout the state met to exchange ideas at Oklahoma's annual literacy directors' retreat. For the second year in a row, the retreat theme was inspired by an old *I Love Lucy* television episode

featuring Lucy and Ethel working in a chocolate factory. A morning brainstorming session had directors comparing new tutors to Lucy and Ethel's chocolate wrapping experience.

What was the consensus? Unlike Lucy and Ethel's humorous work practices, volunteer tutors are successful when they receive adequate training, on-going supervision, and regular feedback. Interspersed between fun activities, program directors also discussed fund raising, adult learner book clubs, health literacy, and techniques to deal with stress. The retreat was made possible thanks to Library Services and Technology Act funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

You Are Invited

The Oklahoma Literacy Coalition invites you to attend its *Great Expectations* event on September 27 at the Will Rogers Theater in Oklahoma City. The event will feature guest speaker, **Mary Dahlgren** Ed.D. The presentation, *What We Know About Reading in the Brain*, will provide current research about the brain and how reading develops. Dahlgren will share slides on how the brain reacts to educational interventions and changes that occur in a 10–12 week time period. Attendees will participate in an engaging exercise to simulate the experience of learning how to read.



Oklahoma Literacy Coalition

The presentation, luncheon, and annual meeting are free to Coalition members. Registration is required prior to the event. For more information, contact Angela Spindle at oklitcoalition@yahoo.com

Check out the state coalition's new website at www.okliteracycoalition.okpls.org

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About Literacy Assessments

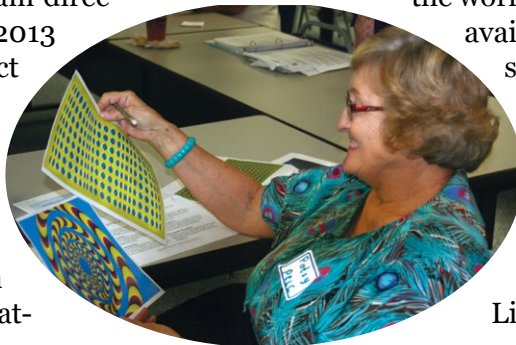
Most adult learners participating in local literacy programs are regularly assessed to determine progress in literacy skills and in English proficiency. Basic literacy learners are given the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) and individuals who are learning English are given the Basic English Skills Test (BEST Plus). The results are helpful in many ways. Learners get an idea of how they are progressing, tutors use results to determine appropriate curriculum and teaching strategies, and programs can measure overall program effectiveness. Recently, representatives from local literacy programs attended training in the BEST Plus to assure that assessments are administered correctly. WRAT training will be available later this year. For more information contact the Oklahoma Literacy Resource Office.



Carolyn Pirtle, with the New Dimension Literacy Council in Ardmore, discusses the *BEST Plus* with trainer **Marcus Ripp**.

Coming Soon—*Open Minds 4 Trainers*

Tutor trainers and program directors participating in the 2013 *Open Minds* trainer project met to share ideas and provide suggestions for the next update of Oklahoma's training model. The new training format, scheduled to be available in 2014, will provide even greater flexibility in preparing new tutors for success. A new ESL version is in



Open Minds trainer **Patsy West**, from the Pontotoc County Literacy Coalition, looks at props demonstrating visual stress.

the works, and updated curriculum topics will soon be available. The *Open Minds* training model was designed by Oklahoma trainers to meet the needs of Oklahoma tutors. Training is intended to be customized for local use based on such things as core curriculum, available resources, and reading levels of students served. A train-the-trainer workshop will be held December 4–5. The project is made possible thanks to Library Services and Technology Act funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. For more information, contact Leslie Gelders at the Literacy Resource Office.

Celebrating Our Journey

The newest edition of *Celebrating Our Journey* is headed to press and will be unveiled at a literacy event held in the spring. The publication will feature more than 90 *from the heart* stories written by adult learners from volunteer literacy programs and adult learning center's throughout the state. Here's a sneak peak...

Learning to Read, by **Joyce Wind**

Opportunities Industrialization Center Volunteer Literacy Services, OKC

When I first began my tutoring sessions, I was so excited to start learning how to read, and now eight years later, I'm still just as excited! It is such a good feeling to learn something new and then be able to use it in my everyday life. One of the very first things I learned from my reading lessons was how to use a phone book. I was able to then look up a restaurant name and number and order a pizza! Nowadays, if I don't want to order one, I can find a recipe in a cookbook, make an ingredient list, and go shopping for the needed items. I no longer need help shopping because I can read the aisle descriptions and product labels. I have also learned how to write personal checks and to use an ATM machine to pay for either my delivered pizza or my pizza ingredients.

Being able to read has opened up a whole new world to me.



A Whole Lot of Smiles from Half Price Books

Many organizations stepped forward to assist children and families affected by the tornados that tore through central Oklahoma earlier this year. Some donors received much publicity, while others gave without fanfare. Three local Half Price Books stores quickly answered a request to partner with the Literacy Resource Office and donate hundreds of books for children at the two damaged elementary schools. Responding to



a plea from a Moore librarian that was routed through Community Literacy Centers, ODL and Half Price Books quickly gathered more than 1,400 books, at least one for every child. Books were given away at a special gathering of the Moore children and their families and teachers. There was no donor publicity, no fanfare, no mention in the media...just three local bookstores who wanted to help. Thanks, Half Price Books!

Health Literacy



Adult learners **Bobby Wallen** and **Glenda Wallen** learn how to read food labels during the "Get A Fresh Start" health literacy workshop at the Tulsa City-County Library.

Five local programs are wrapping up projects that added health literacy as a literacy service. A variety of activities helped promote health awareness and healthy living. Pilot sites offered fun and helpful programs such as a healthy cooking class, *What to Do When your Child Gets Sick* workshop, and a Family Fun Night: *What to Do For Healthy Teeth* event. The Rogers County Literacy Council in Claremore produced and published *Simple Good Health*, using plain language writing techniques. The publication, printed in English and Spanish, was a result of collaboration between the literacy council and several community health organizations.

At Project READ of Edmond, learners who participate in small group instruction suggested the idea of an "at home" exercise class. A University of Central Oklahoma physical therapy student put together a list of exercises and pictures of the correct positions for each. After learning and practicing the exercises as a group, each participant received an exercise band to take home. According to Project READ director, Mary Young, "This group loves to interact and they are not shy about sharing with each other. This is a real plus in their learning."

These health literacy projects were made possible thanks to Library Services and Technology Act grants from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Additional health literacy projects will be available in 2014. For more information, contact Leslie Gelders at the Literacy Resource Office.



Edmond's Project Read learners suggested an exercise class.

Learner Achievements

Tonja Cox, Literacy Council of LeFlore County, received her General Education Development Certificate (GED). Congratulations to **Gabby Gonzalez** who is a new US citizen with the help of the Cherokee County Literacy Council. Gabby is continuing her education by attending the local technology center.

Citizenship is also big news at the Great Plains Literacy Council in Altus. Learners **Pete Aldape** and **Elizabeth Granado** are new US citizens, and **Alfonso Hernandez**, **Nicasio Perez**, and **Venus Valladares** are waiting for their ceremonies as they passed the USCIS examinations this summer.

Drew Thompson passed the GED tests with the assistance of the TANF program at the Literacy Council of LeFlore County. Drew is now taking classes at Carl Albert State College.



[Left to right] Literacy Program Coordinator **Lianne Wray** with **Vicki Silva, Dee Briggs, Mary Peerson, Liz Bond, Celine Windle, Amanda Hadden, Larry Boyd, Barbara Coffman, Lilly Tucker, Linda Sexton,** and **Kathy Lewis**

Pryor Library Forms New Literacy Program

Literacy services are now available in Mayes County thanks to **Susan Newberry**, director of the Thomas J Harrison Public Library in Pryor. Newberry saw the need for basic and ESL tutors and committed staff and resources for the new program. Literacy coordinator **Lianne Wray** arranged for a tutor training workshop

and eleven new tutors participated. According to Wray, “It takes a lot of passion to coordinate a new program with few resources, but we are two women who have that passion for our patrons and our community.” For more information contact Lianne Wray at 918-825-0777.

Fiesta in Fuqua in Duncan

Hundreds of area children showed up at Fuqua Park in Duncan for the 9th Annual Fiesta in Fuqua. Youngsters participated in a variety of games and activities, ate treats, and loaded up on free school supplies donated by local businesses, clubs, and community organizations. While country music played from a nearby gazebo, the Duncan Area Literacy Council handed out free books and hosted a game where children negotiated a maze balancing a book on their heads. According to literacy coordinator **Nancy Litsch**, “We wanted to let the community know the literacy council is here and can help anyone who wants to improve their literacy or English skills.” More than 70 organizations and 300 volunteers helped make the day a success.



Hello and Goodbye

Welcome to Oklahoma’s newest program directors: **Nancy Litsch** with the Duncan Literacy Council; **Brenda Little** in Coalgate; **Renee Decker** with the Westcentral OK Literacy Coalition in Weatherford; **Nancy Brown** with the Wagoner Literacy Council; **Ann McKelvey**, the director of the new TEACH program in Owasso, and **Annette Loos** with the Rogers County

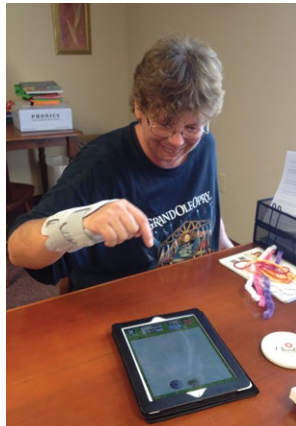
Literacy Council in Claremore. Hello to **Randall Rap**, the new assistant with the Wagoner Literacy Council. Goodbye to **Cassie Spindle**, former director of the Ruth G. Hardman Adult Literacy Service in Tulsa. Cassie will soon embark on her new career as the Children’s Services Manager at the Moore Public Library.

Beta Chapter of Delta Theta Chi Sorority Wins National Award

Since 2008, the Beta Chapter of Delta Theta Chi has purchased books for children at Hawthorne Elementary School in Oklahoma City. The children attending this school are considered at-risk for low literacy and are likely to live in homes with few, if any, children's books. By providing books to the children, the Beta Chapter hopes to encourage reading and development of essential literacy skills. Thanks to personal donations of chapter members more than 500 children have been reached, and plans are underway to expand to three classrooms this year. For their on-going and outstanding efforts to address emergent literacy needs of Hawthorne children, the Oklahoma Beta Chapter of Delta Theta Chi was recently awarded the Crystal Flame Award from their national organization. Congratulations!



President **Dionna Barker** holds the Crystal Flame Award



Adult learner **Dena Livingston** looks forward to practicing sight words on the iPad.

iPads Enhance Tutoring Efforts

Creek County Literacy Program's (CCLP) three new iPads promise to be a big hit with adult learners and tutors alike. Several learners have already named their favorite apps as *Sight Word Bingo* and *300+Sight Words*. Both provide the opportunity for learners to practice reading

sight words and to hear the words when extra help is needed. CCLP's Computer Literacy and Technology Coordinator, Calvin Barnett has been busy researching and downloading appropriate literacy-related applications for the iPads and will soon begin training tutors in their use. The new resources and the supporting technology coordinator were provided with a Community Literacy Grant from the Oklahoma Department of Libraries. For more information, contact CCLP director Melissa at 918-224-9647.

Literacy Grants Help Local Programs

The Oklahoma Department of Libraries recently awarded \$196,871 in community literacy grants to twenty-three local programs throughout the state. Grants will be used to provide such things as staff, tutoring materials, technology, and training. In 2013, the Altus program used a portion of the grant to purchase a 3-year subscription to Mango Languages. This computer program helps individuals learn English or more than 50 other languages and can be accessed anywhere at any time.



State Representative **Charles Ortega** [far right] and Senator **Mike Schulz** met at the Altus Public Library to learn how literacy grants are helping the community. Also pictured are literacy director **Ida Fay Winters** [far left] and **Kathy Hale**, director of the Southern Prairie Library System.

Oklahoma Champion of Change

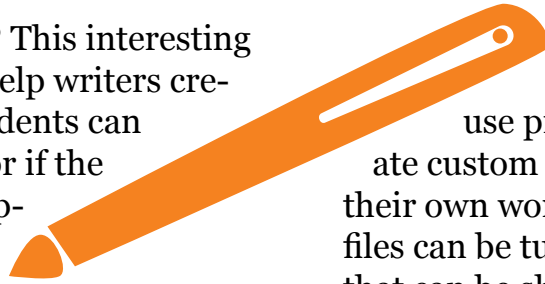
Bravo to **Sandy Tharp** who was honored by the White House as a *Champion of Change* in the Museum and Libraries category. Each week, twelve people throughout the country are recognized for their outstanding contributions to the community. Sandy's enthusiastic involvement in literacy has gone well beyond her job as library director of the Iowa Tribe in Perkins, OK. Sandy not only started a summer reading program for children, she worked with area thrift shops to get books for the children to take home and keep. Sandy also

started an adult literacy and GED program, where 51 people have received their GED. Her list of accomplishments doesn't stop there. For more about Oklahoma's Champion, visit goo.gl/MVzkJM

Thanks to the Gelvin Foundation and Walmart stores in Sapulpa and Glenpool for supporting the Creek County Literacy Program

Helpful Web Resources for Encouraging Writing

Ever heard of Inklewriter? This interesting site provides a format to help writers create interactive stories. Students can decide if their story ends or if the story branches to other topics or has multiple endings. While users focus on writing, Inklewriter guides them to potential story paths. Finished stories can be shared with a limited or global audience at the writer's discretion. Check it out at www.inklestudios.com/inklewriter



Another great writing tool is FlipSnack, an easy to use program that lets users create custom digital flipping books using their own words and graphics. Simple PDF files can be turned into beautiful books that can be shared on a program's website or blog for online use. Writers can also share links to their stories so they can be read by family and friends. For details visit www.flipsnack.com/edu

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