

TRI-COUNTY LITERACY

Helping Hands

Spring 2009

www.tricountyliteracy.org

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Member Agency of United Way
of Mid-Coast Maine



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REPORT FROM THE CHAIR - Tricia O'Reilly

Welcome Spring!!

Finally, sunny days and warmer evenings. Spring is always such a welcome season after the Maine winter! I can tell from the selection of birds in my yard that spring is really trying to come forward! There must have been 30 robins on my lawn the other day during the rain. I just smiled as I watched them go about their feeding. Having the opportunity to watch the seasons change is always a welcome gift.

We have been very busy this winter, starting with the Candy Cane Train event in December. Once again, children and adults alike had a wonderful time on the train enjoying cookies, cocoa, Santa, carolers and, of course, Santa's elves. We want to thank all of you who volunteer your time and talent to help us make this such a fun and profitable event for Tri-County Literacy. Check the newsletter for the 2009 dates, and be sure to purchase your tickets early!

We welcome Sue Barker as the new Coordinator for Read With Me, our Family Literacy program. Sue comes to us from a teaching background, and we are very happy to have her on board. Her enthusiasm for the program and the families it serves is invaluable to our program. Sue replaces Carolyn Hall, who designed her departure from the program to enable her and Sue to work together for several weeks to ensure a smooth transition. We will miss Carolyn and wish her well. Please see Sue's report in this newsletter.

We have several board members coming off the board this spring: Ken Wiley, who has been very active in every (and I do mean every) committee over the years, Dennis Copeland, our talented and enthusiastic ESOL instructor, will leave the board, but continue to teach our ESOL tutors as his traveling schedule permits, and Paul Dostie our current secretary, also candy cane carpenter extraordinaire. Thank you for all of your efforts on behalf of Tri-County Literacy!

This is my last newsletter as board chair, and I want to thank those of you who have stepped forward to mentor me for the past two years, and those of you who have provided invaluable support and information as I learned the TCL ropes. We are quite a group, with really talented and committed people on staff, on the board, and in the tutor ranks. Our common bond is literacy, and we do it well! I am very proud to have been part of the team effort, and I will continue to share and champion literacy as I go forward on and off the board.

Please note our annual meeting is scheduled for June 17, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. at the Curtis Memorial Library in Brunswick. Please see more in this newsletter. I hope to see you all there!

- Tricia

LITERACY VOLUNTEERS Program Coordinator Report

Literacy Volunteers of Maine presents: Faces of Literacy, Voices of Courage. This is a collaborative between Literacy Volunteers of Maine and the Maine College of Art Photography Department. The photographer Jean-Pierre Rousset will travel statewide photographing two learners from each affiliate who have agreed to participate in this educational outreach project. September 17 marks the date that the exhibit will be unveiled for the public to view. This traveling photography exhibit will be used to raise awareness and funds for Literacy Volunteers.

Tutor Information:

- Please note that monthly tutor support meetings are open to all tutors whether you are actively matched or not. Please be there to share your experiences and help support others. Next tutor meeting is June 4 from 9 am – 12 noon at the McClellan House next to the Hannaford in Brunswick. Call 443-6384 for directions.
- We purchased a new resource to circulate for low level readers especially of interest to men called “Junkyard Dan” by Elise Leonard. This is a series about a high-powered stockbroker whose wife leaves him for the roofer. He drives for miles until he runs out of gas, ends up in a rural town, and finds the simple life a perfect setting to escape the hustle and bustle of the city. He buys a Junkyard and the stories begin.
- We have added New Adult Literacy Reading workbooks and more to the LV sections in the following libraries: Topsham Public Library, Skidompha Library in Damariscotta, and the Waldoboro Public Library. These materials include the Voyager

series; levels Foundation through level 6, ESOL Everyday Dictionary with a workbook, the Laubach Series levels 1 – 4.

• Have you blogged us yet? All Literacy Volunteers emails have automatically been entered into our Tutor Exchange. This is for bloggers. Call me if you need the username and password or just want to learn how to blog. Only our Literacy Volunteers, Board of Directors and trainers can access our Tutor Exchange. It can be found under Tutors and Members in the menu located in the left hand column of our home page at www.tricountyliteracy.org Please visit this site to help other tutors who are seeking your expertise and support.

Spring 2009 Combined ESOL and Basic Literacy Tutor Training concludes! We want to welcome 12 new Literacy volunteers to our organization. They are Lisa Grant, Janet Blevins, Lee and Jody Evans, Julli Morrison, Jane Danielson, Cindy Fisher, Jessica Tracy, Wendy Severson, Katherine Koch, Kim Forney and Jim Searles. Literacy Volunteer and board member, Harriet Gray attended the newly revised tutor training as well and provided refreshments for each of the sessions. A gracious thank-you to our team of trainers: Jay Lewis, Julie Mitchell, Jean Pope, Dennis Copeland, Kelly Watt, and to our tutor guests: Roger Jensen and David Fowler, who volunteered to share their LV experience with our new tutors.

Scrabble Tournament date set for May 16 at Curtis Library from 12 Noon to 4 p.m. Call 443-6384 if you want more information.

-Suzanne Gastaldo

Read With Me Coordinator Report

In January, Sue Barker took over the position of Program Coordinator. She moved to Bath last March after living in Brunswick for two years with her new husband, Bill. Previous to that, Sue had resided in many parts of the country, from New Hampshire to California, and numerous states in between. She loves Bath and plans to stay for a long, long time.

Sue has been an educator all her life, teaching students from first graders to college freshman over a span of 38 years. She graduated from UCLA, and had been a 5th and 6th grade classroom teacher in Massachusetts for 12 years when she and her son moved to California in order to be closer to family. She taught in Oxnard for a short period of time, but then came back east to Brattleboro, Vermont, where she taught Chapter 1 and middle school math for nine years. The desire for more education beckoned, so she decided to settle in Arizona in order to work on her Masters degree. While waiting for residency, Sue became a realtor and a 5th grade teacher on the Navajo Indian Reservation in Tuba City, and that proved to be the experience of a lifetime! She received her Masters degree in Rhetoric and Composition two years later, and returned to New Hampshire, where she taught social studies and English for nine years. In 2003 she met Bill, retired from public education, and came to Maine. She felt like she had come home.

Sue is thrilled to be a part of Tri-County Literacy, and is

looking forward to doing more with all of the amazing people she has worked with so far. They are supportive, knowledgeable, and passionate when it comes to literacy. Wow...a wonderful group.

The new year began with Sue visiting *Read With Me* sites and getting to know the teachers, staff and administrators associated with the program. The program continues to run smoothly, thanks to everyone's flexibility and cooperative approach. Directors from Merrymeeting and RSU1 Adult Education centers visited RWM sessions and familiarized attending parents and caretakers with the programs they offered. The visits were quite successful - several parents signed up immediately for classes and GED courses.

In March Sue attended a conference entitled “Improving Literacy Through Community Connections” in Augusta. It was an extremely rewarding experience - a day full of information, insights, activities and collaboration with literacy workers around the state. Also in March, she participated in Mid-Coast Maine Community Action's Self-Assessment of the Bath Head Start program. It gave her a great opportunity to observe firsthand the marvelous work accomplished by Head Start personnel, as well as the integral part that RWM plays in their curriculum.

On April 2nd, Sue and Darlene made a presentation to The United Way's Success by Six Council in order to request continuing funds for the RWM program. The outcome, hopefully a positive one, will be announced in May.

(continued on page 3)



Read With Me Coordinator Report, *continued*

Finally, we wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to the wonderful RWM childcare providers: Anita Brillard, Andrea Crossman, Julie Guild, Marsha Potter and Kathy Ritall for the terrific care they have given to the children whose parents attend the sessions. The patience they have displayed with rescheduling and larger-than-expected numbers of children is very much appreciated. If it were not for

these fine, caring women the program would not run; they are indispensable. When a session is over, the parents are enthused and excited, the children are relaxed and happy, and the site coordinators are grateful for the care that has been provided. Thank you for being an invaluable part of the *Read With Me* program.

-Sue Barker

From The Executive Director

The current economic downturn has taken a real toll on individuals and businesses in our community, so financial contributions to non-profit organizations like Tri-County Literacy have suffered. Likewise, the financial crisis has eroded the value of foundation endowments, so charitable foundations have had to cut back on grant awards. It is with this understanding that we are all the more grateful for the grants that we have recently been awarded.

Last August we received news that Tri-County Literacy had been nominated for the **Maine Community Foundation's** 25th Anniversary Community Building Award, and in October we learned that we had won that award! We received a \$2,500 unrestricted grant award from the Foundation and were entered for consideration for the Elizabeth Noyce Award for Nonprofit Excellence award in the fall. Although we did not receive the Noyce Award, we were honored to have been recognized as a Community Building organization. The generous award helped to support both Literacy Volunteers and *Read With Me* programs.

We received a \$1,000 grant from the **Senter Fund** to help cover the costs of much needed additional program texts and tutor training materials for our adult Literacy Volunteers program, which has experienced a large increase in requests for services.

The **George P. Davenport Trust** has generously agreed to continue their sponsorship of our Candy Cane Train signature fundraiser. The trustees strongly support the work that Tri-County Literacy does. Our fundraising directly supports our program services so they know that by supporting the Candy Cane Train they are supporting our literacy programs. They believe the Candy Cane Train is a great community event for families to enjoy in addition to being a successful fundraiser for us, and they enjoy being associated with our event. The Davenport Trust has generously awarded a \$6000 grant to our 2009 Candy Cane Train, which will help ensure another successful event.

We have been selected to receive a \$2,000 grant from the **Bowdoin College Common Good** Committee in support of our Literacy Volunteers program. The Common Good Grant Program was established in 2001 by an anonymous Bowdoin College alumnus who instituted an annual gift of \$10,000 for a 12-member group of Bowdoin students to allocate to local non-

profits in the form of grants. The program is intended to provide students the opportunity to learn about grants, foundations and philanthropy while becoming familiar with the work and challenges of nonprofit organizations. The Common Good Grant Committee develops the parameters of the grant, solicits proposals, evaluates submitted projects and determines the final allocation of funds. The grant award will be used for expenses of books, supplies and travel needed to support a large increase in learner-tutor matches in the past year.

We were thrilled to be awarded a \$3,000 grant as we were last year from **Paul and Kathleen Anderson** through their donor-advised Charitable Gift Fund. We are honored to have been recommended for the grant, which is again unrestricted in its use. Unrestricted grants such as this are invaluable in helping meet our operating expenses.

We have also received several non-grant gifts, including \$180.00 the First Congregational Church of Wiscasset, in support of both Literacy Volunteers and *Read With Me*. We have received several other contributions specifically for *Read With Me*, including \$500 from the Town of Wiscasset, \$1,000 from the Bailey Evening School, \$4,000 from Regional School Unit 1, \$2,000.00 from Merrymeeting Regional Adult Education and \$1,200 from School Union 74 Adult and Community Education. We greatly appreciate the continuing support of each of these churches, municipalities and Adult Ed. programs, which help assure we can provide literacy services in our communities.

Given the current difficult economic climate, the trustees of the **Davenport Trust** recently came up with another fun and exciting way to benefit children of Bath. For the past two years the Trust has purchased a block of tickets to the Candy Cane Train to be given to *Read With Me* participants in Bath, and has enjoyed being able to offer them this experience. Davenport has now teamed up with the Maine State Music Theatre to sponsor the Theatre's summer children's series. This summer's shows are *A Year With Frog and Toad*, *The Lion*, *The Witch & and the Wardrobe*, and *Schoolhouse Rock Live!* The Davenport trustees will provide blocks of tickets to eight non-profit organizations that work with children in the City of Bath. We are fortunate to be receiving 50 tickets for *Read With Me* participants. What a wonderful experience for some lucky kids! Thank you Davenport Trustees!

- Darlene Marciniak

Annual Meeting Set for June 17th

We are pleased to announce the upcoming annual meeting of the membership. The date has been set for Wednesday, June 17th, and the gathering will take place in the Morrell Community Room of the Curtis Memorial Library at 23 Pleasant Street in Brunswick. Our speaker will be Frances Bloxam, a local children's author. We look forward to the opportunity to meet with our membership and provide information about the

operations of the organization. We will also hold elections of new board members and request approval of the 2009-10 operating budget. Every active member is entitled to participate in these voting matters. As a reminder, a member is anyone who gives \$1 or more during the fiscal year. Additional information about the Annual Meeting will be provided in the near future.



Carolyn Hall Retires!

On December 9, 2008, staff, teachers, parents and friends gathered at the Patten Free Library to wish outgoing Read With Me Program Coordinator Carolyn Hall a fond farewell at the start of her retirement.

Carolyn started with Read With Me as a Site Coordinator, and when program founder Cathey Cyrus retired in 2005, Carolyn was selected as the new Program Coordinator. Even then, she continued as a Site Coordinator in the Boothbay and Wiscasset Head Start sites. Carolyn brought over 30 years of elementary classroom teaching experience to Read With Me. She also taught Children's Literature and Promoting Literacy classes for the American Institute for Creative Education, and she was instrumental in starting the Chickadee Award in Maine. The Chickadee Award is an award given annually to one of ten children's books nominated by a committee of teachers, librarians, and early literacy professionals. Each year the books are chosen from those published in the previous year and are selected



Retiring Read With Me Program Coordinator Carolyn Hall and Read With Me founder Cathey Cyrus

because they present a solid original story and artwork that supports and extends the text. Each of these experiences and involvements added to Carolyn's ability to very effectively lead and manage the Read With Me Family Literacy Project for our organization for the past 3? years. For Tri-County Literacy in general and for the Read With Me program in particular, her leaving is bittersweet. We have treasured her contributions to the organization and will certainly miss her, but we celebrate her accomplishments and wish her the best!

With Carolyn's leaving, we have a wonderful new addition to the staff. Sue Barker joined us two months before Carolyn retired. She was able to familiarize herself with the many and varying responsibilities of the Program Coordinator position while shadowing Carolyn, which proved to be invaluable. Be sure to read Sue's column elsewhere in this newsletter.

- Darlene Marciniak

A Call to Our Membership

Membership contributions are still welcome for the current fiscal year, which ends right after the Annual Meeting in June. To date, we have received contributions from only a small percentage of the membership. Every contribution is extremely valuable, as they help us meet our regular operating expenses. In the current economy, donations are even more important. Receiving this newsletter is one of the benefits of membership. We would absolutely love to continue mailing the newsletter

to every individual on our list, but the cost of this has become very difficult in the current economy. If you are in a position to help, please use the form provided below for your convenience. Please send your check to:

Tri-County Literacy
2 Sheridan Road
Bath, ME 04530

Thank you!

-Darlene Marciniak

Membership/Donation for Fiscal Year 2009 (July 1, 2008-June 30, 2009)

Name: _____
 Address: _____

 Phone: _____ Email: _____
 (optional) (optional)

My contribution is
\$ _____

Please send check to:
Tri-County Literacy
2 Sheridan Road
Bath, ME 04530

Also, in order to keep our mailing list up-to-date, please indicate your preference below:

- I would like to continue to receive the Tri-County Literacy newsletter by mail
- I would like to be notified by email that the newsletter is available on the TCL website
- I would like more information about becoming a volunteer

If you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please contact us by phone at 443-6384 or by email at tricityliteracy@tricityliteracy.org.



2008 Candy Cane Train Was a Great Success!

Since we haven't had a newsletter published since prior to the 2008 Candy Cane Train fundraiser, we want to include a quick report in this newsletter about the success of this wonderful event and thank the many, many people who helped make it such a success! The event was held on one weekend, Saturday 12/13/08 and Sunday 12/14/08, and consisted of seven family train rides and one adults-only train. Approximately 2,250 riders of all ages enjoyed the scenic ride, a visit from Santa and many of his elves, stories and songs, and treats of cookies and hot chocolate. We are very pleased with the popularity and success of our Candy Cane Train. In the three year history of this event, the community has absolutely embraced it, and its success was due to overwhelming community support. This annual fundraiser is extremely important in helping Tri-County Literacy continue our work to provide literacy services in Mid-Coast Maine. The net profit from this most recent Candy Cane Train provided our organization with approximately 18% of our fiscal year's operational budget!

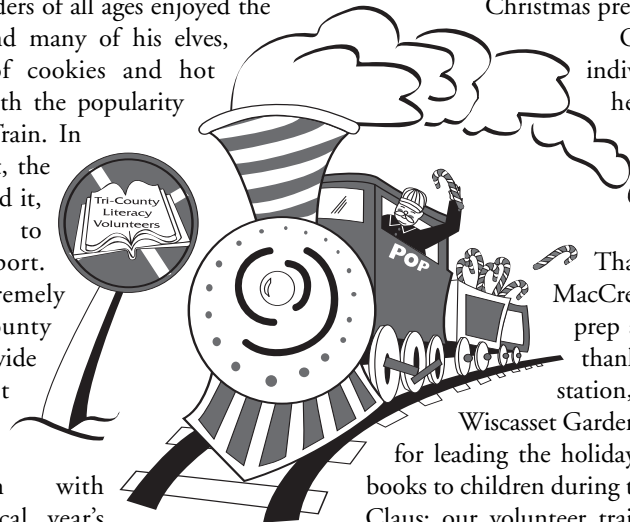
We received a number of contributions that help us cover event expenses, most notably the costly rental of the Maine Eastern Railroad. We gratefully received a \$6,000 grant from the George P. Davenport Trust in support of the event and a sponsorship contribution of \$2,000 from Bath Iron Works and many, many smaller donations from of individuals and businesses in the community. Additionally, The Davenport Trust also once again purchased tickets for 40 Read With Me participants from the Bath Head Start Center. Read With Me families who received these tickets were selected by the Read With Me Program Coordinator, Site Coordinators, and classroom teachers, primarily on the basis of

consistent attendance and participation. The recipients who received these tickets were very excited!. Several mothers made a point to tell their Read With Me Site Coordinator how thrilled they were that they were going to be able to take their children to the Candy Cane Train. One mother who had felt badly that she could not afford to take her child said that receiving these tickets was like an early Christmas present to her!

Of course we must thank the many individuals, organizations and business that helped pull off this magnificent event! Special thanks go to the Candy Cane Train committee, headed by Judy Dillon, Barbara and J. Collins, Kathy Kenyon, and Cathy Morton. Thanks to the Bath Elks and especially to Mac MacCreary for providing a staging area for food prep and entertainment. We would also like to thank those who decorated the train and the station, especially the Bath Garden Club and Wiscasset Garden Club; the Nor'easters Barbershop Chorus for leading the holiday singing; the many individuals who read books to children during the ride, Santa and his many elves and Mrs. Claus; our volunteer train conductors; those who baked cookies, made hot chocolate, made hors d'oeuvres for the adult train; those who served food on the adult train; our many train stewards; and The Maine 3 Railers Model Train Club for sharing their great display of electric trains at the Train Station. We also appreciate the many donations of food items from the following businesses:

Bath Printing Company, Café Crème, Freeport Comfort Suites, Hannaford's Supermarket – Boothbay, Harraseeket Inn, Henry and Marty's, Hilton Garden Inn, Katherine's Kookies, Kennebec Tavern Restaurant & Marina, Mae's Café & Bakery, Marnee's Cookies, Now You're Cooking, Richard's Restaurant, Scarlet Begonias, Shaw's – Bath, Solo Bistro, Southgate Restaurant, Starlight Café, Treats, and Wild Oats Bakery & Café.

And of course we would like to thank everyone who purchased tickets and rode the Candy Cane Train! We'll see you in December for the 2009 Candy Cane Train!



The presentation of our \$2,000 Bowdoin College Common Good Grant award.

Pictured from L-R: Rosie Laflam (Class of '11), Bowdoin College Common Good Grant Committee member, Darlene Marciniak, Tri-County Literacy, Susie Dorn, Director, Joseph McKeen Center for the Common Good and Rachel Turkel (Class of '11), Bowdoin College Common Good Grant Committee member.

FUNDING NEWS

On Friday May 15th, Tri-County Literacy staff, board members, and other volunteers participated in the Bath Iron Works Gate Collection Program. This program allows a selected non-profit organization to greet employees arriving for the morning shifts and accept donations. This early morning effort resulted in total donations of \$1,282 and an opportunity for additional community exposure of our organization. We are grateful for the continuing support of the many, generous BIW employees!



Tri-County Literacy
2 Sheridan Road
Bath, ME 04530

DATES TO REMEMBER

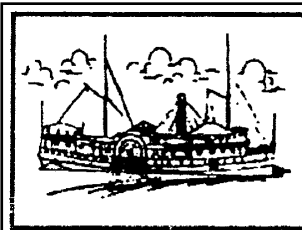
Board meetings:

All board meetings are held in the Patten Free Library in Bath, from 6-8 p.m. and they are open to all Tri-County Literacy members.

Annual Meeting - June 17th, Curtis Library, 6-8 p.m.

Tri-County Literacy
(207) 443-6384 • (877) 885-7441

Executive Director: tricountyliteracy@tricountyliteracy.org
Literacy Volunteers: literacyvolunteers@tricountyliteracy.org
Read With Me Program: readwithme@tricountyliteracy.org
www.tricountyliteracy.org



A special thanks to the community spirit of the folks at Gardiner Savings Institution, FSB who have funded the production, printing and mailing of this newsletter to benefit all TCL adult learners and volunteers.

GARDINER SAVINGS INSTITUTION, FSB

Design and layout of Helping Hands is provided courtesy of **in Demand arts Graphic Design** ~ www.indemandarts.com.

Tri-County Literacy **MISSION STATEMENT**

Tri-County Literacy believes that the ability to read and write is critical to personal freedom and the maintenance of a democratic society. The mission of Tri-County Literacy, therefore, is to promote increased literacy for adult learners through the effective use of volunteers, the provision of support services for volunteers and learners, and collaboration with individuals, groups, or organizations desiring to foster increased literacy.

As such, Tri-County Literacy Volunteers is committed to:
Enabling adults and families in need of basic literacy skills to achieve their potential through one-to-one or small group instruction.
Training, supervising, and supporting Tri-County Literacy volunteer tutors and learners.
Strengthening and improving the organization's capacity to provide literacy instructions and services to the community.