



TRI-COUNTY LITERACY

Helping Hands

Spring 2008

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

Dear Literacy Friends,

At last the spring flowers are blooming, and there are some warm and sunny days for us after this long winter.

We have had a very successful and large turnout for our Basic Learner and ESOL tutor classes these past few months. Many matches between tutors and learns have already taken place! Read more from Suzanne Gastaldo's report in this newsletter.

The *Love Letters* play/fundraising event this February was a wonderful success, and thanks to so many of you for helping out as servers during the fun evening! A special thank you to Elizabeth Rodenz and the fundraising committee for spearheading this event.

Watch for the Candy Cane Train dates to be announced for this December, and buy your tickets early so that you get the trip that you want. We are looking forward to celebrating the third year of this very successful community event, which brings holiday joy to old and young alike!

On a very sad note, our community lost one of the founding members of the Candy Cane Train this past February. Peter Robohm, affectionately known as “Pop”, wore that name joyfully on his conductor's hat, and rode every train ride that we had for the Candy Cane Train. His infectious joy and “can do” spirit brought this event from just a passing conversation with a friend to a wonderful annual event, which we hope will keep rolling along for friends and families to enjoy for years to come. He will be greatly missed by all of us who had the opportunity of sharing a friendship with him.

Enjoy the spring weather, and please note on your calendars the annual meeting scheduled for June 18, 2008 @ 6:00, at the Curtis Memorial Library in Brunswick. Please call the office for more information on the evening.

- Tricia

A tree uses what comes its way to nurture itself. By sinking its roots deeply into the earth, by accepting the rain that flows towards it, by reaching out to the sun, the tree perfects its character and becomes great. Absorb, absorb, absorb. That is the secret of the tree.

- Deng Ming-Dao

Read With Me Report

We are just about finishing up a very busy program year that included eight sessions at Dike-Newell kindergarten and first grades, an increase from six to eight sessions at each Midcoast Maine Community Action Center Head Start site and the first-time inclusion of Wiscasset Primary School kindergarten and first grade. Library visits at each site resulted in several families getting library cards for the first time. Most of these visits were done during the day, and libraries involved include Curtis Memorial Library in Brunswick, Topsham Public Library, Gibbs Library in Washington, Waldoboro Public Library, and Skidompha Library in Damariscotta. Site coordinators June Dorion, Jeannie Harrington and Carolyn Hall also hosted a party for Bath families at the Patten Free Library and two parties at the Wiscasset Public Library. At these evening events, Jeannie Harrington read from some of her writing for children and attendees participated in a follow-up craft activity. Many thanks to all the libraries and librarians who are so welcoming to the program and the families we serve.

In previous newsletters I have mentioned *Read With Me's* connection with SPARC (Strengthening Partnerships and Resources in Communities). One of the major changes this

involvement has brought about is an increased level of communication with the entire Head Start program. This is especially important because we conduct no fewer than 72 sessions at Head Start sites. I'm delighted to continue to work with Chris Rallis, Sue Kingsland, Leslie Russell and Jennifer Caron on this initiative, and to be welcomed at the Center Managers and Family Services meetings as well as serving on the Ed Advisory committee.

Read With Me is very grateful for the recent donation of \$250 from the Woodland Charitable Foundation. We plan to use this toward the purchase of program books to be distributed to families during the 2008-2009 program year.

I would like to publicly thank the wonderful corps of child care providers without whom *Read With Me* sessions would not run: Anita Brillard, Andrea Crossman, Julie Guild, Marsha Potter and Kathy Rittall. Their patience with rescheduled snow days and unexpected numbers of children is amazing. Best of all, each and every one of them has a wonderful way with children, and we are very lucky to have them as part of the *Read With Me* program.

-Carolyn Hall

PROGRAM COORDINATOR REPORT

This year the **Stars in Literacy Award** goes to Colleen Sanders (Tutor) and her learner Qi Ming Huang. They have been matched since 2003. One of the major highlights that resulted in their match is that through the assistance of Colleen, Ming was able to marry his childhood sweetheart and bring her back to the United States as well as their three step children from China. He also obtained citizenship and registered to vote. Not to mention his English is very good now, too. The Stars in Literacy Banquet where they will be recognized is May 7 at the Glickman Library on the University of Maine campus. Hooray to Colleen for all her hard work and dedication!

Last fall, three dedicated LV tutors disbanded the Mobius Literacy group in Damariscotta. They had been meeting weekly for several years creatively teaching literacy with several adults with developmental disabilities. I would like to personally recognize Ellie Day, John Price, and Ginny Berry for their stories, bingo and weekly crafts. The members of that group miss them very much! I am very pleased to announce that a new literacy group has formed in Damariscotta. Although regretfully the former LV tutors

have retired, we are fortunate to have several new tutors who have replaced them. They are meeting the first Wednesday of each month at the Skidompha Library in Damariscotta. This group will not meet over the summer months, but will form again in the fall. For information please call the Tri-County office.

On March 18, LV Maine hosted a Regional Meeting. Each affiliate around the state of Maine came to share their highlights. LV Maine gave each affiliate a prototype policy manual for board members, as well as a teaching CD for LV ESOL tutors who are working with learners on renting an apartment, banking, consumer affairs and voting. Copies can be made and distributed to any tutors who would like one.

On February 14, 24 new LV tutors completed the ESOL training. Many of these new tutors have already been matched and are hard at work volunteering their time. Our next ESOL training will be this summer. Please contact me if you are interested in the summer ESOL training, at 443-6384

~Suzanne Gastaldo



From The Executive Director

RECENT EVENTS

A Romantic Evening

Thank you to everyone who participated in and attended our February fundraiser, "A Romantic Evening." Despite the very cold weather, the atmosphere of the event was wonderfully warm! The focus of the evening was the the delightful play *Love Letters* which centers on just two characters, lively, artistic Melissa Gardner and staid, dutiful lawyer Andrew Makepiece Ladd III. The play consists of the two characters reading letters they have sent each other. It is a love story told through a lifetime of heartfelt and revealing letters, and it is only at the sad ending that they realize they were really love letters all along. Before the play, we enjoyed wonderful appetizers and drinks while we were entertained by beautiful classical piano selections, and between the play's two acts, we enjoyed delicious desserts along with tea and coffee.

As always, we have many to thank for the success of this event, including the stars of the play, Tri-County Literacy Board member Elizabeth Rodenz and member David Baker. Thank you, too, to our pianist Elizabeth Eypper, technical director David Bennett, Richard White for staging and set-up, Ida Wiley for providing flowers, The Brunswick Knights of Columbus for beverage service, board members Elizabeth Rodenz, Sande Updegraph, Barbara Croston, Kathy Kenyon, Ken Wiley and Dennis

Copeland for their contributions of appetizers and desserts, and all our friends of literacy who attended this event.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Help Tri-County Literacy Raise Money Through the Shaw's Receipt Rewards Program

Everybody has to shop for food, but what if food shopping meant you could also help raise money for Tri-County Literacy? Now you can! **Shaw's Receipt Rewards Program** is a unique fundraiser that returns 1% of purchases to participating non-profit organizations! We have been registered to participate in this program. Now we just need your cash register receipts. Please collect register receipts from family, friends, business associates, relatives, neighbors, and anyone who shops at a Shaw's or Star Market! Bring them or mail them to the Tri-County Literacy office. We will submit them to Shaw's corporate office, then 1% of eligible purchases* will be sent back to us. It's that easy! There is no limit to the amount of register receipts we can collect and submit. However, only original register receipts will be accepted. Register receipts will not be returned.

**Some items are excluded from the program, including but not limited to tax, postage stamps, money orders, lottery tickets, gift cards, phone cards, prescriptions, photo processing, milk, tobacco and other items prohibited by law.*

- Darlene Marciniak

FUNDING NEWS

We have been very fortunate to receive the following grants over the past few months:

Senter Fund – Tri-County Literacy received a \$1,000 grant from The Alfred M. Senter Fund to help cover the costs of training resources and program texts for our adult Literacy Volunteers program. Awarded funds were used to purchase materials for each of four focus areas (tutor training, GED preparation, English language assistance to learners for whom English is a second language, and leveled text books.

Stephen & Tabitha King Foundation – We are very pleased to announce that we have received a \$5,000 grant from the Stephen & Tabitha King Foundation for support of our *Read With Me* Family Literacy Project. This grant was awarded to *Read With Me* for assistance in expanding the program to eight sessions in all Head Start Centers in our service area. A grant from The Verizon Foundation in August 2007 allowed the organization to begin the

academic year with the expanded schedule, and The Stephen & Tabitha King Foundation grant ensures that the schedule can be completed.

Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund – We are also very pleased to have been awarded an unsolicited \$3,000 grant from a private donor through the Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund. Donors, who set up a Giving Account, can recommend grants from their Giving Account to selected non-profit organizations. We are honored to have been recommended for the grant, which has no specified designations for its use. More and more frequently, grant funders stipulate that they will not provide funds for general operating support, preferring instead to fund only new projects. Like all non-profits, our greatest struggle is to continue quality existing services with limited financial resources. Unrestricted grants like this are so appreciated, and help us immensely in meeting our program expenses.



Get Ready to BLOG

Our blog is up and running at tutorexchange.org. Please let me know if you have any trouble accessing it or logging in.

For tutors:

Username = tutor1

Password = maine

This will be used and viewed by LV tutors, board members, trainers, staff and other appropriate add-ons, such as ESOL teachers, Adult Ed directors, etc. Please remember your learner's name is confidential. I look forward to comments and suggestions about our adult literacy program.

- Suzanne Gastaldo

In-Kind Donation of Office Copier

Tri-County Literacy is the fortunate recipient of a nearly-new business-grade copier! By the time this newsletter is distributed, a 7-month-old Sharp copier valued at \$5,000 will have been delivered to our office. McCann Fabrication of New Gloucester, Maine has recently upgraded their office machine, and has donated their "old" copier to Tri-County Literacy. Thank you McCann Fabrication! We are very excited to receive this gift, which will greatly improve our administrative efficiency. We are grateful for the efforts of Tri-County Literacy Board Treasurer Barbara Croston and SymQuest (SymQuest Group, Inc., Westbrook, Maine) Account Manager Craig Winslow, in brokering this arrangement.

- Darlene Marciniak

Membership Reminder

Membership contributions are still welcome for the current fiscal year. The fiscal year began on July 1, 2006 and will end on June 30, 2007. We received a good number of responses following our last appeal, but would love to hear from you if you haven't yet responded!

As a reminder, "Anyone who gives \$1 or more during the fiscal year is considered a member and will be included on our membership list. Every member is entitled to receive the organization's newsletters and is

entitled to one vote at the annual meeting."

If you are in a position to give a membership contribution and have not yet done so, we would appreciate hearing from you. A form is provided 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)

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
- Please remove my name from your mailing list

My contribution is
\$ _____

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



Remembering Peter "Pop" Robohm

The Tri-County Literacy family lost a dear friend recently, as Peter Robohm passed away February 28, 2008. Peter "Pop" was a wonderfully vibrant person with a huge heart and spirit! Peter was a key player in helping us establish Tri-County Literacy's signature event The Candy Cane Train. Pop had a passion for trains and was always quite enthusiastic about helping us plan the event. He worked tirelessly with board, staff



and other volunteers to make the event the joyful and successful event that it has become. His very presence added so much to the days of the event as he happily greeted each and every passenger, welcoming them aboard and inviting them to enjoy the ride. All of us at Tri-County Literacy join in conveying our sympathy to Peter's wife Sharon, his daughters and their families. Pop, we miss you terribly!



Merrymeeting College Connection Program

Are you ready to:

- take charge of your future?
- learn more to earn more?
- build up your skills to succeed in college?
- work with an advisor who will guide you and make the process less intimidating?

This free program will prepare you to:

- Enter and succeed in college
- Fill out college applications & secure financial aid
 - Improve your math and English for college
- Develop important study skills & test taking strategies

The truth is every person in Maine can afford to go college.

Classes begin June 23 (summer intensive program)

Call for an appointment with a Merrymeeting College Connection Program advisor

729-READ (729-7323)



Tri-County Literacy
2 Sheridan Road
Bath, ME 04530

DATES TO REMEMBER

The Spring 2008 Board meetings:

Tuesday, May 27, 2008

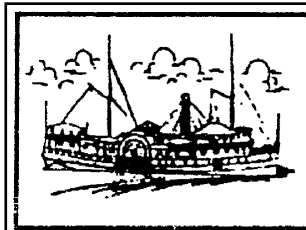
All board meetings are held in the Patten Free Library in Bath, from 6-8 p.m. and they are open to all Tri-County Literacy members.

Annual Meeting At the Curtis Memorial Library in Brunswick, on Wednesday, June 18, 2008 at 6:00 p.m.

For **Tutor Training** dates and **Scrabble Tournament** information, call the office for information.

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

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

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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.