

Literacy Links

Fall
2007

a newsletter for volunteer tutors

special editor, Kris Magaurn, *PCC Tutor Coordinator, Tigard Senior Center*

Congratulations Chely!

After years of hard work and taking care of others, Washington County VLT Coordinator Chely Castillo is ready to move on and fulfill her own dreams. She has been granted a full scholarship to Portland State University and will be attending full time this Fall term.

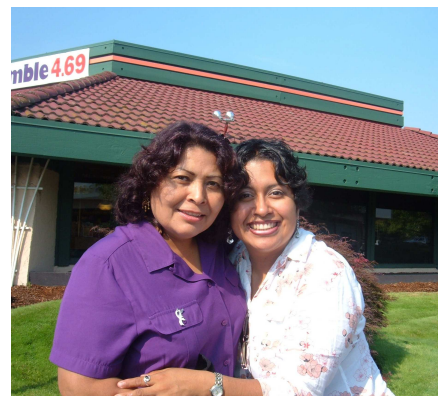
The path to this achievement has been long and difficult, but Chely's energy and dedication have kept her motivated to overcome the many obstacles she has had to face. Chely was six years old when she emigrated to the U.S. from Mexico with her family. She spoke only Spanish, but went through the ESL classes at school until the 8th grade. From then on she took mainstream high school classes and then college prep courses, all the while doing the cooking and cleaning at home for her two younger siblings while their mother worked to support them.

Chely had hoped to go on to college after graduating from Glencoe High School in 1997. She won three scholarships, but had to turn them down and become the family breadwinner when her mother had to quit work due to a disability. She continued to work to keep her sisters in school and finally see them graduate from high school. Both Chely and her sister recently passed the Citizenship test and are now proud U.S. citizens.

While working full time as a bank loan officer, Chely also worked part time as an ESL Coordinator for Hispanics at St. Matthew's church in Hillsboro and helped establish a Survival English Outreach Program for Jesuit High School. She went on to become the director of the Jesuit program, explaining, "The director position technically required a masters degree, but I dared to ask for the opportunity. When I was hired I promptly went to the library and researched how to direct a program." Her ability to seize opportunities and meet challenges head on has enabled her to succeed in her endeavors. Chely continued her work with English as a Second Language when she was hired as a Volunteer Tutor Coordinator at Portland Community College in 2004.

Through her years of work in Washington County, she has helped many people learn English, get GEDs, attain their citizenship, and improve their job skills through computer classes and mentoring programs. Chely is enthusiastic about becoming a full time college student. "When I encourage my Survival English students to continue studying to empower their lives, I feel a personal conviction to further my education as well," Chely told us. Last year, she spent three weeks in Guatemala as part of her course work for a class at Portland State. She was a member of a group of bilingual educators working on a variety of projects in three rural Mayan schools. The group continues to raise money for the schools in Guatemala. Whether she is in her own community or abroad, Chely continues to work to help others improve their lives.

Now Chely's dreams are becoming a reality. She has become a US citizen, she has been granted the Portland State University Diversity Scholarship as well as the Ford Family Foundation Scholarship. She will be able to attend PSU full time, and will still find time to volunteer on Saturdays for the ESL classes in Washington County. Through her college experiences she hopes to gain "the skill to give voice to my experience, and the opportunity to serve my community at a higher level where I can continue to model for others." There is no doubt that she will succeed in this endeavor, too.



Chely, right, with her aunt Maria Hernandez who made it possible for Chely to come to the US.

Literacy Links

Longtime Tutor and Trainer Retires

Bev Brookens has retired from volunteer tutoring after 26 years of working with literacy students and tutors in the Portland area. Bev has worked one-on-one with 37 students both Adult Basic Ed and English as a Second Language, and she has trained hundreds of volunteer tutors over the years. She has been a mentor to many of her students and contributed countless hours to the literacy efforts in our community.

In 1981 Bev took the Laubach Tutor Workshop and tutored her first student, Christy Fischer. She and Christy have remained friends through the years and still see each other often. Another of her students appeared on the Oprah Winfrey Show to talk about her struggles learning to read as an adult. Many of her students have gotten high school and college degrees, and they attribute much of their success to Bev's teaching and encouragement.

Bev emphasizes the importance of phonics in teaching reading, and credits much of her tutoring success to the basic teachings in the Laubach Way to Reading skill book series. "In my experience, people with low reading skills lacked decoding skills and weren't taught phonics in school." The Laubach books provide the letter sound and word recognition skills, as well as the phonics practice that her students needed. She feels strongly that the structure and repetition in the Laubach lessons gave her students the tools they needed to be able to decode any word and experience success in reading and writing.

Two years after becoming a tutor, Bev became a tutor trainer, first leading Laubach based workshops, and later the state wide TELT trainings. She helped write and revise the training manual for the TELT trainings, as well as the Math training workshops. She also worked with the Laubach National Committee for New Readers. She traveled to Washington D.C. with a group of new readers for the New Readers Congress and had the opportunity to visit the White House and meet with the first Mrs. Bush, a strong literacy supporter.

As Bev reflects on her many years of literacy work, she takes pride in her students' successes. Her last student was a high school student whom she taught to read. Sometime later, his parents called her. They were full of pride because they had just attended their son's high school graduation. They told her "It never would have happened without you." These are the memories that Bev treasures, along with the satisfaction of helping so many people. "I loved it," she reflects, "It was a passion." Her dedication throughout the years has been an inspiration to so many. She leaves a long legacy of contributions and many grateful tutors and new readers.



Bev Brookens reflects on her 26 years of literacy contributions.

Promoting literacy in our community.

Portland Literacy Council
P.O. Box 2872
Portland, OR 97208-2872

**2007-2008
Board of Directors**

Chairperson
Kris Magaurn

Treasurer
Penny Russman

Secretary
Scott Demos

Board Members
**Gary Marschke
Cari Martz
Jay Morgensen**

Thank you, Pastini Pasteria!

Thank you Pastini Pasteria for donating gift certificates for staff and volunteers in the Volunteer Literacy Tutoring Program.

Chalk It Up Celebration a Big Success

On a warm Saturday in August, Pioneer Square was buzzing with activity as the 6th annual Chalk It Up for Literacy Celebration filled the square with artists creating literacy themed chalk drawings. Crowds of visitors watched as the drawings progressed. Storytellers and face painters entertained the children. There was live music, a book sale and booths with opportunities to sign up to be a tutor or get information about programs in the area.

Oregon Literacy organizer Jon Toorock explained “This is the best year ever, with more artists and community partners participating. We’re really getting the literacy message out to the community.” Several drawings were sold at the event and more are being exhibited at local gallery showings. Smaller posters of the artwork are also available for purchase, with money raised going to literacy needs in the Portland area. During the month of October, the artwork will be on exhibit at the Albina Community Bank, NW 10th and Glisan in Portland. For more information about Chalk It Up and the artwork visit the Oregon Literacy website at www.oregonliteracy.org.



Many artists and onlookers enjoyed the Chalk It Up Celebration earlier this summer.

Tutor Resources: Games and Icebreakers

From Edit McDonald, *VLT Coordinator, PCC Rock Creek*

Here is a number game for beginning- high beginning ESL. Good to use as an icebreaker or warm-up activity.

What’s My Number?

Level: beginning-high beginning

Aim: Review of numbers and arithmetic vocabulary

Materials: tape, blank papers to make signs

Procedure:

1. Students form small groups of 7. (or one big group of 7)
2. Assign 3 random numbers to each of 3 students in each group. For example, one student gets a ‘7’, one gets a ‘3’, and another gets a ‘9’. Write these numbers on a piece of paper. Students tape these signs to their chests, or hold them up.
3. Assign the roles of *plus sign (+)*, *minus sign (-)*, and *equals sign (=)* to three more students. These signs are taped to their chests, also.
4. The remaining student, “the answer person”, has a blank sign.
5. Each group arranges itself in the shape of an arithmetic problem. Example: $9-7+3=$ __. The “answer person” writes a 5 on his sign.
6. Each group reads its problem to the whole class.

Groups rearrange themselves into new problems. The “answer person” makes a new sign for each new problem. The students can trade numbers and continue the activity, or you can give out different numbers if there’s interest.

Mark Your Calendar! Annual Tutor Conference is March 15, 2008

Portland Literacy Council Launches New GED Website!

This June, PLC launched its new GED information website.

The site, www.GEDoregon.org, is intended to assist adult learners and their tutors with finding basic information about GED resources and GED materials. In launching the new site, PLC hopes that it will serve as a resource for GED students, tutors, and educators alike. Take a look: www.GEDoregon.org



Share the Power! Friday, November 16, 1:00-4:00 pm
Central Portland Workforce Training Center - (CPWTC-PCC next to OMSI)

A free workshop for literacy providers - This workshop will provide an overview of Power Path, an assessment tool used to identify learning difficulties and guide instructors. Volunteer tutors, instructors and students are invited to attend.

Please call Kathleen Holloway 503-788-6280 or Kay Talbot 503-977-4903 to register or for more information.

Portland Literacy Council
P.O. Box 2872
Portland, OR 97208-2872

**NONPROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 5134
PORTLAND, OR**