



LITERACY VOLUNTEERS

Greater New Haven | Meriden / Wallingford | The Valley

LITERACY LINK E-NEWSLETTER Issue 13, Spring 2016

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END OF YEAR CELEBRATIONS

Mark your calendars for the End of Year Celebrations!

All students, volunteers, Board members, and funders are invited to attend this annual event to celebrate student successes.

We will have student speakers, light snacks, and copies of the 2016 *Hear Our Voices* (fresh off the presses)!

- The New Haven Celebration, Wednesday,

SCRABBLE CHALLENGE SPELLS SUCCESS

Literacy Volunteers of Greater New Haven's 2016 Scrabble Challenge was a big success. The annual fundraiser was held on Wednesday, March 30 at the JCC of Greater New Haven in Woodbridge.

More than **300 attendees** including **67 teams** from New Haven, the Valley, Meriden and Wallingford communities turned out to compete in a night of word games for a good cause. The event raised **over \$40,000** through corporate sponsorships, player donations, a raffle, and an auction to support Literacy Volunteers' mission of serving the literacy needs of the community.

Literacy Volunteers' fundraising consultant, Bernadette Holodak, shared her experience: "This was the first year that we combined the Meriden/Wallingford tournament and the Greater New Haven and the Valley tournament. When I look over the numbers, we had 25 new teams join this year, plus returning teams, returning sponsors, new sponsors... And just **an amazing and incredible awareness of the programs that Literacy Volunteers offers free in our communities.**"

June 1st

- The Valley Celebration, Wednesday, June 8th
- The Meriden/Wallingford Celebration, Tuesday June 14th

Keep an eye out for an invitation sometime in May.

LITERACY VOLUNTEERS DONATION WISHLIST

- Postage Stamps
- Copy Paper (8.5 x 11)
- Green Pocket Folders
- Disinfectant Wipes
- Tissues
- New Plants for the office

Literacy Tastemakers

Literacy Volunteers would like to thank the restaurants and businesses who donated food and beverages for our Scrabble event.

If you're looking for a night out and something delicious to eat, consider patronizing one of the businesses that supports our mission:

- **Abate Restaurant -**

Teams were divided into three categories: **Education**, **Friends & Family**, and the **Sponsor Cup**.



Ridinger's Ringers: Gloria, Paul, Karen, and Cindy.

The **Education Category** included faculty, college students, and adult education employees. The first place winners in the Education Category were Ridinger's Ringers from the Hopkins School with a final score of 786 points.

Ridinger's Ringers named their team in honor of their beloved friend and fellow faculty member, Kristin Ridinger, who lost her battle with cancer this past winter. The team donned black fedora hats as their costume. Their highest point word was "rejoined" and their most unusual word was "minke", which is a whale.

Cindy Chase of Ridinger's Ringers said, "We loved the whole event. We were incredibly proud of our teamwork, which easily enabled us to use all of our tiles!"

Wallingford Adult Education Team 2 was the Runner-Up for the Education Category with a final score of 626 points.

New Haven

- **App's Ristorante** - West Haven
- **Brazi's Italian Restaurant** - New Haven
- **Cafe Amici** - Hamden
- **Chabaso Bakery** - New Haven
- **Lorenzo's Ristorante Italiano** - West Haven
- **Nica's Market** - New Haven
- **Slocum & Sons** - North Haven

SCRABBLE SPONSORS

We want to thank the businesses, foundations, and organizations who helped us reach our fundraising goal with sponsorships and in-kind donations.

- Tariq Farid Foundation
- Knights of Columbus
- The Cuno Foundation
- New Haven Register
- RJ Media Group
- Albertus Magnus College
- AT&T
- UI Holdings Corporation
- Yale-New Haven Hospital
- Beers, Hamerman, Cohen & Burger P.C.
- BIC
- Chabaso Bakery
- Comcast Corporation
- Community Foundation for Greater New Haven
- Connex Credit Union



Finally Grove: Lou, Mayor Kevin, Mike, and Neil.

The **Friends & Family Category** included tutors and anyone else who wanted to participate in the Scrabble Challenge. Finally Grove, a team comprised of Meriden players including Mayor Kevin Scarpati, took first place with a final score of 1,285 points. The team's most unusual and highest point word was "oxazepam" at 392 points.

Neil Weathers of Finally Grove said, "I enjoyed being with my teammates, having some laughs, [and] playing a game I truly love all while raising money for a group doing works that can transform lives."

Former Literacy Volunteers Board member Joyce Ghiroli's Team of Four was the Runner-Up with a final score of 945 points.



The Word Doctors: Katie, Denise, Annette, Kelly.

The **Sponsor Cup Category** is reserved for teams sent by sponsoring organizations. The Yale-New Haven

- Gateway Community College Foundation
- HealthyCT
- Hopkins School
- JCC of Greater New Haven
- McKesson Medical-Surgical
- NewAlliance Foundation
- People's United Bank
- Start Community Bank
- United Way of Greater New Haven
- Valley Community Foundation
- Yale University

LITERACY VOLUNTEERS WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBER



Kamal Lahlah joined Literacy Volunteers' Board of Directors in January 2016.

He brings a unique perspective to the Board as a Meriden

Hospital team, The Word Doctors, took home the cup again this year with a final score of 840 points.

The Yale-New Haven Hospital team has a reputation for winning the cup by a wide margin every year. What's their secret? We couldn't tell you, but we have it on good authority that they regularly practice as a team!

United Way of Greater New Haven's team was the Runner-Up with a final score of 686 points.

LITERACY VOLUNTEERS RECEIVES \$5,000 GRANT FROM LIBERTY BANK FOUNDATION



Above: Donna Violante accepts the grant check from Mike Helfgott, Liberty Bank Foundation and Chandler Howard, President & CEO Liberty Bank.

The Liberty Bank Foundation has awarded a \$5,000 grant to the Literacy Volunteers of Greater New Haven to expand free literacy classes to adult learners in New Haven, Meriden, and Wallingford.

Donna Violante, Literacy Volunteers Executive Director, commented that "We are truly fortunate to have such a great supporter as the Liberty Bank Foundation."

Since its inception in 1997, the Liberty Bank Foundation has awarded over \$9 million in grants to nonprofit organizations within Liberty Bank's market area. The foundation seeks to improve the quality of life for people

resident and former Literacy Volunteers student!

Kamal was born in Algeria, where he attended medical school and worked as a pharmacist until 2011.

In January 2012, Kamal moved to the United States. Despite his advanced degree, he struggled to find a job and spent a year working at a McDonald's in Meriden. He also started taking English Conversation classes with Literacy Volunteers in Meriden to improve his English.

Kamal worked with Literacy Volunteers tutors for two years at Meriden Adult Education and Middlesex Community College. His efforts paid off when Kamal caught the attention of Protein Sciences, a biopharmaceutical service company in Meriden renowned for their FluBlok influenza vaccine. Kamal was offered a position as Quality Control Analyst and a year later he was promoted to group leader.

Now, Kamal plans to give back to the community and support the organization that helped him find success.

Please join us in welcoming Kamal to our team!

**HELP US EARN \$
EVERY TIME YOU
MAKE AN AMAZON**

of low or moderate income by investing in three areas: education to promote economic success for children and families; affordable housing; and nonprofit capacity building. Along with its grantmaking, the foundation strives to foster the convening and collaboration of nonprofits, funders, business, and government to address community issues.

GEARING UP FOR THE GREAT GIVE 2016



Over the next several weeks, you may be seeing a lot more Literacy Volunteers posts on Social Media and in your inbox.

Don't worry, we'll try not to spam you.

We just want to let you know about an exciting fundraising challenge that we'll be taking part in along with nearly 900 other non-profits in Greater New Haven and the Valley.

The Great Give 2016 is a **36-hour, online-only giving campaign** that offers participating non-profits the chance to maximize their fundraising through prizes and matching funds.

Beginning on May 3rd at 8:00 am ending at 8:00 pm on May 4, Literacy Volunteers is eligible to win more than \$170,000 in matching dollars and prizes thanks to The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, the Valley Community Foundation,

PURCHASE



For complete details about the AmazonSmile program, please visit [Program Details](#).

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20 Church St
New Haven, CT 06511

P: (203) 285-2621



Alexion Pharmaceuticals, Liberty Bank Foundation and other generous community sponsors.

This year, Literacy Volunteers hopes to raise \$7,500 (doubling our earnings from last year). We are also partnering with another literary-minded non-profit, [Read To Grow](#), to try and win prizes. Keep an eye out for an invitation to one of our TWO lunchtime events on May 3rd and 4th. Literacy Volunteers and Read To Grow are trying to win one or both of the Lunch Hour Prizes by getting people to donate to the Great Give between the hours of noon and 1 PM. These *Literacy Lunchtime* events will be held at [Atticus Bookstore and Cafe](#) in New Haven and at [R.J. Julia Booksellers](#) in Madison on May 3rd and 4th.

To donate, visit the Literacy Volunteers donation page on The Great Give website during May 3rd or 4th (when the campaign goes live). Complete the form with your credit card info through the site's secure server and receive instant verification of your donation.

You can [LIKE our Facebook page](#) to see our **Faces of Literacy** series in the weeks leading up to the challenge. Meet some of our adult learners and read about the impact our literacy classes have on their lives. Please **SHARE** Faces of Literacy with your friends!

Worried you'll forget? You can even ask The Great Give website to e-mail you a reminder on the day the campaign begins. Click [HERE](#) to set your Donor Reminder!