



LITERACY VOLUNTEERS

Greater New Haven | Meriden / Wallingford | The Valley

LITERACY LINK E-NEWSLETTER Issue 14, Summer 2016

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END OF YEAR CELEBRATIONS



New Haven Basic Literacy Student Mary Jordan (center) posed with her tutors, Karen Johnson and Carol Loehmann.



New Haven ESOL Tutor Gene Feldman and his student (far right) Sutatip. Sutatip read her essay "How I Improved My English".

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Basic Literacy Student Earns College Certificate at 50!



Tutor Dita Varleta poses with her student, Vince Jones.

New Haven Basic Literacy student Vince Jones just completed his certificate in Human Services from Gateway Community College. He attributes this amazing accomplishment to his tutor, Dita Varleta. However, Vince's tutor believes it is Vince's determination that has got him this far.

"He is determined - a lot of determination. And that is an admirable quality," said Dita.

In 2010, 44 year-old Vince came to Literacy Volunteers because he wanted to be able to understand his bills and read stories to his grandchildren. Classes did not go as smoothly as he had hoped at first. He found it difficult to put words together and master grammar rules and punctuation. These challenges, however, did not diminish his enthusiasm for learning. Hoping to be a role model for his children, Vince was persistent and hard working -- he never missed a single class! Dita said that Vince was always willing to learn new things and picked



At the Meriden/Wallingford Celebration, Cathy Battista, City Councilor, District 4 and Meriden Mayor Kevin Scarpati acknowledged the hard work of volunteers, students, and staff.



Meriden ESOL student Rosa stands beside her tutor Sue Webb, at the Meriden/Wallingford Celebration.

IN THE COMMUNITY

Check out some of the events offered by our community partners.

THE PASSION AND JOY OF HISPANIC MUSIC -A CONCERT TO CELEBRATE NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

When: Thursday, September 22
6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Where: Hagan Memorial Library, East Haven

Taking you on a lively tour of Hispanic music, Acclaimed International Concert Violinist Dr. David Podles covers the Cha Cha, Tango, Samba, Merengue, Paso Doble, Mambo and Bolero to Spanish Classical composers. Travel with him through Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, the Dominican Republic and across the Atlantic to Spain where Hispanic music originated. Be prepared to have your senses dazzled evoking the excitement

things up fast. One strategy Vince often used was to highlight certain sentences in different colors to help him master the flow of sentences.

As the months went by, Vince started to see progress in his skills. Recalling the happiness of completing his first book, *Stranger Among Us*, Vince said "I was so proud of finishing the book...I could read it to my wife and my children." This first achievement would set him up for even more reading and pursuing higher learning.

After four years working with Dita, Vince decided to enroll at Gateway Community College. He admits that it was challenging, but owing to his can-do attitude, he was able to get the help he needed and obtain his certificate.

Vince believes his journey does not end here. His next step is to take more classes so that he can qualify to get his bachelor's degree.

"I have to prove to myself how much I want it," said Vince.

Now 50 years old, Vince is adamant that you are never too old to get an education. He says that education is saving his life - it has opened up his mind, and given him the perspective to understand his life experiences in a different way. It is obvious that Vince has a bright academic future ahead, and has the determination to achieve the goals he has set for himself. He is very thankful to Literacy Volunteers and his tutor for setting him on this path.

His tutor, Dita was thrilled to learn about Vince's progress and is confident that he will achieve even more. Her advice to other tutors is not to give up on your students. When you believe in them, they believe in themselves. Dita and Vince treated each other like partners - always making sure that they could count on each other to show up and do the work that needed to be done.

We wish Vince all the best with his future endeavors, and are happy to have been part of his journey!

FUNDING APPROVALS BOOST THE NEW YEAR PROGRAMS

We are proud to announce receipt of the following awards that are the first to support our programs in fiscal year 2016-17:

- \$18,000 in funds from the United Way of Meriden and Wallingford for tutoring that improves lives in those communities.

of Hispanic music.

HOW TO BECOME A NATURALIZED CITIZEN

When: Wednesday, Sept. 28
6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Where: Hagaman Memorial
Library, East Haven

Join us for a free information session conducted by an officer from U.S.C.I.S. This program will be held in conjunction with a children's program, so families are welcome.

IN MEMORIAM

This past spring, Literacy Volunteers mourned the passing of two long-time volunteers.

Jessica Lynch, a former ESOL tutor in Branford, passed away on May 23 after a brief battle with cancer. Jessica was an ESOL tutor for 7 years and taught English conversation classes at Gateway Community College, Blackstone Library, and Branford ERACE. Jessica shared her time and talents each week to support immigrants and refugees with the difficult transition to life in a new country. Her compassion, intelligence, and generosity will never be forgotten.

Dr. Robert "Bob" Bailey, a Basic Literacy tutor in Meriden, passed away on June 11 at his home in Meriden. For over five years, Dr. Bailey went above and beyond for his literacy students. Family members recall that Dr. Bailey always spoke fondly of his experiences with Literacy Volunteers.

Both Jessica and Dr. Bailey will be missed.

- \$25,119 Community Block Development Grant from the City of New Haven to provide free literacy tutoring to adults to increase reading, writing and English speaking skills.
- \$3000 Community Block Development Grant from the City of Meriden with the objective of empowering Meriden adults through literacy.

Thanks to these and all of our partners for their ongoing commitment to adult literacy !

THE MANY WAYS VOLUNTEERING IS GOOD FOR YOUR HEART

The excerpt below is from an article authored by Julie Corliss, Executive Editor of the Harvard Heart Letter. The full article can be found [HERE](#).

If you do volunteer work, whether it's at a school, soup kitchen, or senior center, perhaps you've experienced the emotional rewards of donating your time. What you might not realize, however, is that volunteering may offer some added advantages for your heart.

"There's a growing body of research showing that volunteering is associated with better physical and mental health outcomes," says Eric S. Kim, a research fellow at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. A study he co-authored, published in *Social Science and Medicine* earlier this year, found that volunteers were more likely to use preventive health care services. For instance, people who volunteered were 47% more likely to get cholesterol checks and 30% more likely to get flu shots than those who didn't volunteer. (An annual flu shot appears to lower the risk of heart attack and stroke by about one-third over the following year.)

To continue reading this article, please visit the [Harvard Health Blog](#)

LOOKING TO VOLUNTEER?

Literacy Volunteers of Greater New Haven will offer New Tutor Training for ESOL (English Conversation) and Basic Literacy (Reading and Writing) Tutors in September.

Complete a volunteer application on our [website](#) and learn more about how to get involved!

NEW MEMBER JOINS

SAVE THE DATE



Main & Vine Wine Tasting
Thursday Sept. 29, 5:30-8:00PM

Silver City Brewfest
Friday Sept. 30, 5:30-8:00PM

**Call (203) 235-1714 to reserve
your ADVANCE discounted
tickets for \$20.**

**Literacy Volunteers would like
to thank our event sponsors:**

- Meriden Rotary
- City of Meriden
- Fosdick Corporation
(PLATINUM SPONSOR)
- The L Suzio York Hill
Companies (SILVER
SPONSOR)
- Record-Journal (MEDIA
SPONSOR)

Visit the [Nites in the City
Facebook Page](#) for more
information!

Literacy Volunteers Offices

4 Science Park
New Haven, CT 06511
P: (203) 776-5899

14 West Main St
Meriden, CT 06451
P: (203) 235-1714

415 Howe Ave
Shelton, CT 06484
P: (203) 924-6651

20 Church St
New Haven, CT 06511
P: (203) 285-2621

LV BOARD

We are pleased to welcome Karla Lindquist to the Literacy Volunteers Board of Directors.

Karla is currently the Business Development Officer at the Economic Development Corporation of New Haven.

"I have known about Literacy Volunteers for a long time. My mom was a volunteer in her twenties and told me about her experience when I was growing up," said Karla.

She believes that literacy has the power to connect people.

"My favorite book series are called *The Belgariad* and *The Mallorean*, by David Eddings. My dad, who passed away when I was 25, really enjoyed fantasy novels and introduced me to these when I was probably 9 or 10. I like to read them over every couple of years. The character development is great and it's a nice connection to my dad to be able to reread his books."

Karla describes herself as principled. She appreciates the sense of purpose she feels working in the New Haven community.

"I hope that my contributions as a Board member to the Literacy Volunteers organization are varied and numerous. I hope to help the organization navigate the increasingly harsh funding climate, as well as helping to grow interest in the organization."

We look forward to seeing the positive impact Karla has on the future of Literacy Volunteers.





Helping Hands
Community Thrift Store & Furniture Bank



DONATIONS WANTED

TO HELP SUPPORT:

#339



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- ♥ Downsizing? Buying new furniture? Clothes no longer fit? Let Helping Hands turn your gently used things into cash for LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF GREATER NEW HAVEN. Donate to LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF GREATER NEW HAVEN through Helping Hands and when your donation is sold in the Helping Hands Thrift Store, a portion of the sales price will benefit LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF GREATER NEW HAVEN.
- ♥ Your donation is tax deductible
- ♥ Helping Hands has a central location in Orange for donation drop offs and shopping, or you can call 203-782-4800 for a FURNITURE AND LARGE ITEM PICK-UP
- ♥ You can also drop off your donations at Tzedakah House, 8 Lunar Drive, Woodbridge (203-387-2266)

ORANGE
334 Boston Post Road
Telephone: (203) 298-0499

HOURS: M-F 9:30 AM – 8:00 PM
SAT 9:30 AM – 6:00 PM
SUN 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM



Find us on
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Visit our Website at

www.helpinghandsctfb.com



Mention **Literacy Volunteers of Greater New Haven** and our **#339** when you make your donation.

Visit the [Helping Hands Website](http://www.helpinghandsctfb.com) for more information.