



READ

Spring 2014

Creating a community where literacy is available to all.

Orange County Literacy Council

Our mission is to help adults reach their education, employment and life goals. We do this by providing free, flexible instruction in reading, writing and basic math, English and computer skills and GED® preparation.

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From Inmate to Graduate—One Student’s Story

Samuel Price will admit that he hasn’t always made the best decisions in his life, but one decision that he will never regret is the decision to begin studying for his GED®.

Sam has been a student in Orange Literacy’s tutoring program for inmates at the Orange Correctional Center (OCC) since Fall 2012.

Earlier that year, Sam started attending the GED® class offered at OCC by Durham Tech, but soon found that he needed one-on-one help to achieve his goal. When he was matched with his tutor, Asta Crowe, Sam was grateful. “She stayed on me and pushed me to keep trying,” he said, “even when things became difficult.”

Sam struggled most with the Social Studies test because there was so much to remember. Having dropped out of school with little more

than a sixth grade education, he had missed out on a lot, and had trouble remembering all of the facts and details of things like the U.S. Constitution, the economy, and the structure of government. Perseverance paid off, though, and he eventually earned his highest score in Social Studies.

Sam went on to pass Reading, Science and, with extra help from tutors Curt Torell and Bob Magan, Math. The only test remaining was Writing, a test he was hesitant about. “I had never written an essay before in my life,” Sam said. But hard work and persistence, from both Sam and Asta, came through and on February 28, 2014 Sam learned that he passed his final test and earned his GED®!

“Earning my GED® has been such a blessing,” said Sam. “I

had such a sense of relief and enjoyment about earning this achievement.” According to Sam, he never thought about education when he was on the streets. Now that he has earned his GED®, he’s looking forward to the future.

Sam is currently studying for the WorkKeys tests so he can show potential employers he has the reading and math skills needed to do their jobs, something that will be important for him as he comes up for work release in the near future. Sam is thinking about pursuing a culinary degree once he’s released, but in the meantime, he may take one of the college classes offered to inmates at OCC. “I might take a history class,” he said. “It turned out to be interesting, and I’d like to learn more.”

Joy Turner

Brooks Literacy Fund to Provide GED® Grants to Students

When earlier this year the cost of the GED® Test increased dramatically—from \$35 to at least \$120, and often higher—many of our students questioned whether they would have the financial resources to earn a GED®.

We are pleased to announce that the Brian Brooks Literacy Fund has created a grant

program to ensure that all Orange Literacy students interested in earning a GED® will now be able to afford it.

The Fund was created in 2011 as a memorial to Brian Brooks, son of longtime supporters Pat and Willis Brooks. Brian, who earned his GED® in 1986, was a Vice President at Travelers

Insurance of Hartford, CT.

The grant will provide vouchers to qualified students to cover the practice tests as well as all four of the actual GED® section tests, up to a maximum of \$250 per student.

For more information about the program, please contact Joy Turner, Program Director, at jturner@orangeliteracy.org.



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ESOL Tutor Debbie Granger

I sat down with Orange Literacy's ESOL Tutor of the Year, Debbie Granger, to learn more about her passion for tutoring in our program. Debbie is also a student in Meredith College's ESL Certificate Program, where she expects to graduate in December 2014.

How long have you been tutoring with Orange Literacy?

I have been tutoring at Orange Literacy for about three years.

What made you decide to volunteer your time?

I have enjoyed working with non-native English speakers for the last thirty years, so I guess you could say I was just drawn to the prospect of tutoring here.

Tell me a little about your current group.

Global Youth Service Day—April 12, 2014

Orange Literacy's AmeriCorps members, Heather Bucurel and Ashley France, partnered with other AmeriCorps members and area organizations to hold Word Olympics, a Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) Project. GYSD is an annual celebration of service projects completed

I work with two different groups at Orange Literacy. In the morning, I tutor seven adult students—all refugees from Burma—at the end of their red-eye shift at UNC. Despite the early (or late!) hour, they are eager, engaged learners, whose respectfulness and sense of humor often leave my mouth agape. The students in my evening class—who come from Mexico, Burma/Thailand, and Iran—are just as engaging. I encourage them to be as curious as possible about the culture and the language(s) of their adopted country, and I try to foster an environment in which they feel free to share their many experiences. I am always impressed that people with such diverse backgrounds can cooperate so effectively—and graciously—as learners.

by youths all around the world. This year it was celebrated between April 11th and 13th. In Orange County, GYSD was April 12th. Heather and Ashley worked alongside MusicianCorps, Sacrificial Poets, Blue Ribbon Mentor-Advocate, AVID, and other local

Do you have a memorable tutoring moment from your time with Orange Literacy?

I can't think of one particular tutoring moment; I really enjoy them all. I do know that I am always thrilled when I am trying to think of a word or an example, and a student comes up with it before I do.

What is one of your favorite books?

One of my favorite books is *The Water Is Wide* by Pat Conroy. I also enjoy reading short stories, particularly those of Alice Munro and Guy de Maupassant.

A big thanks to Debbie for being an incredible tutor.

- Kelly Sanders

From the Executive Director

It's hard to believe, but Orange Literacy turns 30 this year!

We began in 1984, as a glimmer in the eyes of founders Susan Attermeier and Mike Meyers. And since then, we've grown from a handful of students and volunteers to an organization serving over 550 individuals each year, with over 100 volunteers, 6 fulltime staff (including 2 AmeriCorps

members) and an additional 7 contract instructors.

We're just beginning to plan our 30th Anniversary Celebration. We want to do something that includes everyone who has had a hand in making our 30 years possible—students, tutors, volunteers, funders, donors, staff members, policy-makers and cheerleaders. If you'd like

to help out, just let me know.

In the meantime, please check out our student videos (see page 8), which demonstrate the reason we do what we do. The stories will take your breath away.

Computer Classes for UNC Employees

On March 6, 2014 nine employees from Facilities Services at UNC-CH began a nine week Intermediate Computer Class organized by Orange Literacy. The students sat attentively in front of brand new laptops, ordered for this class by Justin Case, Training Specialist for Facilities Services Human Resources. For nine weeks, the students will have hands on practice using computers in ways that will help them both personally and professionally.

The curriculum for the class was developed by contract instructor Kelly Peak, who worked with us several years ago on a similar project for UNC's Facilities employees. The difference between this class

and those classes is that this time the instruction can go a little bit deeper and in more detail. Rather than getting a basic intro, students will have the opportunity to practice what they are learning in multiple ways so that they can master each skill, whether that skill is how to type, how to save files, how to complete required occupational trainings, or how to format in Word.

Kelly began the class by passing out pieces and parts from the inside of a computer so that students could see and feel the parts that make a computer work - the CPU, the memory card, the hard drive, and the network card, among others. The students were interested to see these

components of a computer first hand, and it helped to demystify what a computer is and how it works. From there, they jumped into logging on to their computers and opening browser windows and began their nine week adventure into the world of computers and the internet.

As computers become more and more prevalent in our everyday lives, both at home and at work, it will become increasingly important for individuals to stay up to date with technology. Orange Literacy hopes to continue offering classes like this one to improve our students' computer skills and prepare them for the future.

- Joy Turner



UNC Facilities Department employees try out new laptops.



Teaching With Games

On a bright and sunny Saturday morning, a group of ten tutors and staff gathered to engage in a little friendly competition, all in the name of education. The mission: learning how to incorporate games into lessons and how to adapt them to varying skill levels.

Lara Olson, an ESOL tutor and former Peace Corps member, led the group in a series of different games, each touching on skills ranging from memory and matching to speaking and writing. She explained that many times, adults are hesitant to play games because they seem silly, but these games were nothing of the sort. Rather, they focused on practical skills and tasks, which help students practice and review the lesson at hand.

Lara also pointed out that it is important to involve all of the

students in a game and, if possible, to have a student lead the game. Further, if games involve students moving around or using their bodies, they are not only fun but are also helpful for students who learn best kinesthetically. A good example is a game called Writing Relay, where students form teams and race to write words on a list provided by their team leader. Writing Relay brings in several learning styles: listening, writing, reading, and motion. Incorporating all of these elements makes for more effective learning and teaching.

Games are important not just in ESOL learning, but for ABE students as well. They can be adapted to fit skill levels and to incorporate topics such as math, science, and social studies. One game that can be easily adapted is Tic-Tac-Toe.

Instead of simply marking spaces with an 'x' or 'o', you can replace each space with an equation or target vocabulary that you want your student to answer. Only when your student answers can an 'x' or 'o' be drawn in the space.

Our group also received valuable tips in planning games to ensure their effectiveness. As a tutor, the best way to have students understand a game is to model what you would like them to do, and teach them all the vocabulary they need to review the lesson completely.

At the end of training, it was easy to see that it was both an exciting and helpful session, as tutors left discussing what they would incorporate into their next classes!

- Heather Bucurel

Tic-Tac-Toe

write the words 3 times each	write the words with silly letters	rainbow write the words 2 times each
write the words with blue vowels and red consonants	write the words with all CAPITAL letters	write the words with dots on the letters
write the words and how much each is worth 3 letters = 3	write the words with an AB color pattern	write each word and a word that rhymes with it

Illustration from Tales of a Teacherista - teacheristatales.blogspot.com

Book Giveaway at Family Literacy

“Parental literacy is one of the most important indicators of a child’s academic success. Parents who read to their children, have books in their home, exhibit a positive attitude toward school and establish high achievement goals for their children tend to have higher achievers than parents who do not.” (U.S. Dept of Education, 2000)



Celebrating 200 Hours



Hard work does not go unnoticed or unrewarded! On the evening of Monday, April 14th, seven students from our ESOL class at Efland-Cheeks Elementary School were recognized at the biweekly Orange County School Board Meeting for completing 200 hours of instruction. The students were asked to stand as their names were called so the board and community

members could celebrate their accomplishments. One board member congratulated the students in Spanish, and thanked them for devoting their time and energy to studying English and for helping their children. While everyone was initially nervous, nerves soon dissolved into big smiles on everyone’s faces as they thanked the board for their recognition. They then gathered

outside for a quick group photo, excitedly talking about their class and how they planned to apply their studies. In addition to their awards, the students will receive custom-made books about their home country of Mexico to share with their families and read to their children. The books are a gift from former Efland-Cheeks principal, Dr. Lisa Napp.

- Heather Bucurel

Meet Tina Chen, New U.S. Citizen



Tina Chen with her children and Bev Kawalec, her tutor.

Please meet Tina Chen, an Orange Literacy student and recent citizenship recipient. Tina is a Chinese immigrant who has been in our program for a little over a year. After preparing for six months, January 20, 2014 was a monumental day for Tina. It was

the day she received her United States Citizenship. “First, I was worried, nervous, and scared, but when you get there, it’s not scary. It’s normal,” she said. Tina was supported by one of her good friends and her son and daughter as she became the first in her family to

accomplish this goal. Now that she has her citizenship, she wants to work on bringing her parents over from China. When asked how she felt, Tina responded, “I’m so happy! I’m very happy and excited!” Congratulations Tina!

- Ashley France

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Writers for Readers 2014—Another Success!

The 7th annual Writers for Readers Book & Author Event was a sold-out success once again! This year's event was held at Top of the Hill Brewery & Restaurant on the evening of Tuesday, February 25th, and was guided by host Kathryn Bell, emcee and co-chair Jeff Polish, co-chairs Steven Petrow and Shannon Ravenel, and the cast of Orange Literacy staff members and volunteers.

Over hors d'oeuvres and drinks, the literary crowd of attendees mingled before taking their seats to watch a brief yet powerful video highlighting the work of Orange Literacy. The video was produced by Figure 8 Films and featured the frank testimonials of several of our most determined students, some of whom were in the audience that evening: Thelbert Green, Genoveva Flores,

Faydene McSwain and Tkru Hswe. The credits rolled to a massive wave of applause as the evening's attendees were reminded of the hard road to success that so many of our students traverse, as well as the ever-increasing need for the services that Orange Literacy provides.

As the evening progressed, a panel of three North Carolina authors—Jay Leutze (*Stand Up That Mountain*), Sarah Dessen (*The Moon and More*) and Daniel Wallace (*The King and Queens of Roam*)—were interviewed in front of the rapt audience by journalist and television personality David Hartman. The three authors discussed their lives and their craft—the writing and publishing process, personal inspirations and influences—and the

intricacies of their most recent books. The differences in their writing styles and genres—Leutze in adult non-fiction, Dessen in young adult fiction and Wallace in adult fiction—allowed for a lively and diverse discussion. David Hartman deftly maintained the focus of the interview and took questions from the audience before the panel session drew to a close. The authors then stepped down from the stage, brought out their pens, and took up their new positions at the book signing tables in the adjoining room, where for the rest of the evening they chatted with the attendees and personalized each and every book that came their way.

- Matt Dailey

A special thanks to moderator **David Hartman**, authors **Sarah Dessen, Jay Leutze and Daniel Wallace**, host **Kathryn Bell**, co-chairs **Steven Petrow, Jeff Polish and Shannon Ravenel**, designers **Katy Clune and Heidi Perov** and our Writers for Readers Committee : **Sally Greene, John Kinneer, Tema Larter, Wayne Pond, Tamara Rice and Cindy Sellars**.

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Writers for Readers 2014—Photo Gallery



Our thanks to Photography by Blanche Williamson—bwphoto.zenfolio.com

Students' Stories on Video

Orange Literacy's coming to the small screen!

Earlier this year, Figure 8 Films in Carrboro worked with six Orange Literacy students to capture their stories on video. Students recounted the struggles they experienced before deciding to improve their reading, writing, math and English language skills or before deciding to earn a GED® or study to become a citizen. They talked about the trouble they had finding jobs, helping their children in school or just navigating the public transportation system. They also talked about how their lives have changed with more education and a better understanding of the English language.

As we approach our 30th Anniversary Celebration in October, we'll roll out a new student video on our website every few weeks.

Beginning May 7th, we'll introduce you to Faye, who earned her GED® in November 2013 after taking the math section 11 times. We'll follow Faye's story with ones from: Genoveva, a student from our Family Literacy Program; Berthe, an ESOL student who is also studying for her citizenship exam; Gaby, who started in Family Literacy and graduated to GED® preparation; Tkru, who is studying English, and; Thelbert, who has made great strides in building his reading and writing skills.



Check in often to hear all the stories. You can link to them through our website at www.orangeliteracy.org

Our thanks to Figure 8 Films—in particular Kami Winningham and Ajit Prem—Tamara Rice, Jeff Polish, Kate Torrey, Alan Torrey and Shannon Ravenel. And a special thank you to our students and tutors who were so open in sharing their stories.

Celebrate our 30th—October 2014

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