

Tutor Finds Inspiration in her “Tremendous Admiration for Students”



Mary Sabia Allaire of Sandy Hook was one of the original tutors who met in February 2005 to prepare to teach English as a second language with Literacy Volunteers on the Green. A teaching colleague of LVG co-founder Rita Guariglia, she worked with Rita and Anne Maitland to present that first training session. Pictured here with two of her students, Ratanna Fletcher and Lisa Wang, she has stayed for six years because she says, “I love my students. I have tremendous admiration for them. One I’ve had from the very beginning. The dedication that I’ve seen from all of them is wonderful! All of my students have received their citizenship. I was glad to know that they wanted to continue after they had achieved their citizenship.”

Norma Fogarty of Brookfield was also among that original class of tutors. Norma continues because she too says, “I love my students, all of them. They appreciate it when you recognize and deal with their individual needs. My goal in tutoring students is to help them become all they are capable of being. This takes time and effort, and deals not only with language but in utilizing all their skills in a constructive way. This may sound like a big order, but it helps me by helping them.”

Other tutors from that first group who continue to be active tutors are Roberta Allen of Bridgewater, Casey Pascal of Washington, and Sue McWhinnie and Jan Kamm of Kent. A former teacher, Sue loves working with ESL students so much that she is pursuing Connecticut certification as a Teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages. Both Casey and Sue also serve as members of Literacy Volunteers on the Green’s Board of Directors.

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Annual Meeting Held on December 18, 2010

Literacy Volunteers on the Green held its annual meeting on Saturday, December 18, 2010 in St. John’s Parish Hall, New Milford, CT. In his report, out-going board president Allan Prialux of Kent summarized LVG’s major accomplishments for 2010:

- Helping 140 people learn to speak, read, and write the English language;
- Training 32 volunteers to be new tutors, bringing the total number of trained volunteers to 193;
- Providing almost 4,000 hours of instruction in one-on-one and small group settings;
- Adding two classes to help students prepare for U.S. citizenship;
- Strengthening our Board of Directors with the additions of Arri Sendzimir and José De Aguiar;
- Hiring our first staff, Executive Director Jacqui Farrell, who is continuing to implement the vision of LVG’s founders, Rita Guariglia and Anne Maitland, whom Jacqui succeeded as Executive Director;
- Holding a successful fund-raiser in April and conducting a fall annual appeal, which has allowed us to live within our means;
- Receiving grants from the United Way, the Connecticut Community Foundation, the Community Foundation of Northwest Connecticut, the McFadden Family Foundation, the Savings Bank of Danbury, and the National Book Fund to help defray 2010 expenses;
- Acquiring student/program and donor databases in order to streamline our operations; and
- Holding our first Picnic in September which introduced our students to the potluck concept.

Continuing Training Opportunities

Without dedicated, trained tutors, we could not provide free, quality instruction to our students. Both initial training and follow-up workshops are important. In 2010, Literacy Volunteers on the Green added to its training repertoire by offering a Basic Literacy Component.

For 2011, we are expanding our training program by offering additional opportunities to our veteran tutors. We are asking that each tutor commit to attending at least one of the sessions which will be held throughout the year in order to find out about the latest methods and materials. These meetings are also an opportunity to exchange ideas and build camaraderie with other tutors in your area.

In addition, we recommend several on-line opportunities through Verizon's Thinkfinity Network. These training sessions are free and easily accessed through the website www.thinkfinity.org. Simply go to the site, type in "on-line literacy courses" where it asks "What are you looking for?" and follow the prompts. It will ask you to register, then you can begin the course. Most take about one hour to read and review and print out a certificate of completion. The following courses look especially helpful:

Principles of Adult Learning
Citizenship: The Literacy Test
Citizenship: The Civics Test

Using the Newspaper in Adult and ESL instruction
Citizenship: The Interview
The Language Experience Approach



Consider Telephone and On-line Tutoring

On wintry days, or due to work schedules, it is sometimes necessary for tutors and their students to cancel classes. Could telephone or on-line tutoring be a viable alternative for you?

For many of our students, telephone communication is a challenge. But if the student is speaking with his/her tutor, valuable experience is gained. You might consider simply focusing on the initial conversation portion of the lesson, or with pre-planning review some of the pages of the lesson or activity book. Either way, instructional time and continuity will be maintained.

Another option for students who have internet access is to e-mail their tutors. This could either be in the form of a short message or of a longer paragraph to be corrected. The tutor can then respond with corrections.

The one-to-one and small group nature of our classes enables us to think outside the box and be flexible. If you and your student have developed other creative methods for instruction, please let us know so that we can continue to share ideas.

In the Words of a Student...

"Now I can attend my daughter's meetings at her school. I can go to the doctor's office when someone in my family is sick, and I can make and receive phone calls. I go shopping and if I have a question about some product I ask a salesperson and I don't feel frustrated. I can also fill out a form and send a note to my daughter's teacher."

New Materials Available

Stop by the office to check out the following materials for use with ESL classes:

- Multiple copies of sample Workplace Literacy Materials have been received from publishers. Please stop by to preview them and let us know if these materials would be helpful.
- Thanks to the Rotary Club of New Milford, we have English dictionaries suitable for use with beginning and intermediate students. Call if you would like some copies.
- An anonymous donor has dropped off copies of the American Girl Series. These are great to use with intermediate students as they teach English comprehension skills along with American history.



The Importance of Hours

The most common question and/or concern about tutoring seems to revolve around reporting hours. Why does LVG need to know?

We are more than inquiring minds at the LVG office. Monthly hours and tutor feedback are the only way we have of keeping track of our active students and their progress. It is also important to know who is using the various classroom venues.

LVG depends upon grants to purchase the close to \$9,000 worth of books and materials which are provided annually to students and tutors for free. In 2010, LVG received grants from the United Way, the National Book Fund, and the Savings Bank of Danbury for books and materials. For 2011, the Union Savings Bank Foundation and Savings Bank of Danbury Foundation have awarded us grants. We must carefully account for the number of students we serve and the number of hours of free instruction which are being provided directly to students by our tutors in order to receive those grants.

In order to maintain our affiliation with ProLiteracy America, we must track student hours to show that we are providing adequate instruction.

And, most importantly, we track hours in order to make sure that we are providing the best possible instructional experience for our students. Latest research from ProLiteracy indicates that it is important for Literacy Volunteer groups to increase the intensity and hours of instruction they provide in order to improve their students' success rate. Students who come to a Literacy Volunteers organization are usually the most in need of instruction and often become discouraged and drop out when they do not make sufficient progress. ProLiteracy's pilot project on increasing the number of hours of instruction included offering mini-courses, classes geared toward specific work-related topics, and conversation classes. It also emphasized the careful tracking of student hours in order to ascertain student success levels.

The entire research project is available at the ProLiteracy website (www.ProLiteracy.org) and is entitled "Promising Practices Increasing Intensity of Instruction in Volunteer-Based Programs." If you have any ideas for a mini-course or ways in which we can increase our students' monthly hours of instruction, please e-mail or call the office.

A Message from Arri Sendzimir, President of the LVG Board of Directors

At the December 2010 annual meeting of Literacy Volunteers on the Green, the Board of Directors elected board member and Connecticut native Arri Sendzimir its new president. Arri's professional experience covers four decades of for-profit and not-for-profit work in the United States and abroad. In the 1970s, she worked as editor of a French-language newspaper in Paris, France (where she learned to speak French) and was then employed as a French-English translator in Algeria. Upon returning to the States, she received an MBA from Columbia University before entering the world of publishing once again as editor of all Advanced Placement publications for the College Board in New York. In the late 1990s, Arri switched careers and took over management of her family's international engineering business. Presently, she serves as Director of Development for Neighborhood Music School in New Haven.

"I can't tell you how deeply satisfying it is to have this opportunity to lead Literacy Volunteers on the Green as it moves forward in its growth," she says. "I first met LVG's founders – Anne Maitland and Rita Guariglia – in 2006, when I was asked by the Nonprofit Assistance

Initiative of the Connecticut Community Foundation to help them get on their feet as a nonprofit. Few thought that these two women would succeed, but their tenacity and drive prevailed. One of the most important of their successes was the creation of a dynamic, engaged, and committed Board of Directors which, under the skillful leadership of Allan Priaulx, gave LVG its current financial and organizational stability. This is huge, for it permits us now to move forward into refining LVG's methods and objectives without worrying about day-to-day operations.

I look forward to leading, encouraging, and supporting LVG's board members, staff, tutors, and students in what I would like to see as our next growth phase: that of becoming increasingly responsive to the needs of our students while maximizing the potential of our tutors and satisfying the values of our community, all within parameters established by our Board of Directors. To this end, I hope that all who read these words believe that I value their advice and opinion and rest disposed to receive them."

Literacy Volunteers on the Green

7 Whittlesey Avenue
P.O. Box 366
New Milford, CT 06776

Phone: 860-355-0830
E-mail: info@lvg-ct.org
Website: www.lvg-ct.org

Save the Date!

Literacy Volunteers on the Green
will hold its Annual Gala Fund-raiser on

April 15, 2011
at the Candlewood Inn
in Brookfield, Connecticut

We hope you can join us this year.

For additional information, e-mail us at
info@lvg-ct.org

Tutor Training Session

**March 21, 22 and 28
6:00 to 9:00 PM**

St. John's Parish Hall
7 Whittlesey Avenue
New Milford, CT

Call 860-355-0830 for more information

LVG's Current Programs

- 74 tutors working with 140 students in venues ranging from Danbury to Salisbury/Lakeville
- 2 citizenship classes in Kent and New Milford
- 3 school programs—at Kent Center School and New Milford's Hill & Plain and John Pettibone Schools— to provide ESL classes to parents
- College mentoring program at New Milford High School to help navigate the college application progress

**Thank you for your continued support
for LVG's Mission**

Literacy Volunteers on the Green, Inc. is a non-profit charitable organization established under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3); tax identification number 26-2018636. All donations are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law and may be made by check to:

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or online with your credit card or PayPal account through
our website: www.lvg-ct.org