

Literacy Council of Grand Island NEWSLETTER



Winter 2017—2018

Group Classes | One-on-One Tutoring | Language & Learning Lab | Community Connection Center

LC of GI Staff

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Karla McGeorge, *Director of Programs*
Julie Gustafson, *Grants Coordinator*
Madison Moe, *Educational Programming Coordinator*
Maddy Leigh Imig, *Work Study Student Intern*

LC of GI Board

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Tracy Noble

Want to Get Involved?

We currently have a large demand for tutors, with many students on our list still waiting to be matched.

We are also seeking volunteers to become Group Class Instructors, to assist in the Language and Learning Lab, or with our Community Connection Center.

For more information on how to become a volunteer, please call **(308) 385-5515** or email **info@giliteracy.org**

We appreciate your support!



Pictured: Merna (Tutor) and Nubila (Student) celebrating Nubila passing her US Citizenship exam!

A Letter from the Director

Dear Friends,

With winter finally coming to an end and spring just around the corner, this is a good time to talk about all the incredible things springing up at the Literacy Council:

- **Curriculum:** We are constantly reviewing and trying to update our instructional materials so that we can provide our tutors, instructors, and students with materials that improve the overall educational experience. We have ordered new materials and placed them on the Tutor Resource Shelf. Please talk to Madison if you'd like to review them, and give us your feedback! Also, if you know of other materials that you would like to use, please let us know and we will get them ordered for you. Additionally, we have discovered that many tutors are not familiar with all of the online companion resources (such as audio files, flash cards, and assessments) available. In order to assist with your instructing experience, we have downloaded these companion materials and have put them in binders on the Tutor Resource Shelf. We think these materials will help you to teach your students more effectively and help your students to achieve their literacy goals more efficiently.



Pictured: Muna and Sumia (Students) enjoy homemade ice cream that they learned how to make together in John's Group Class!

Our Contact Details

For more information on our services or how to become involved, please contact us.

Literacy Council of Grand Island
312 N Elm St. Suite 101
Grand Island, NE 68801

Office Hours:
Monday through Wednesday
9 AM to 12:30 PM
1 PM to 5 PM

Thursdays
9 AM to 12:30 PM
1 PM to 8 PM

Phone: (308) 385-5515
Email: info@giliteracy.org

Visit us on the web at
www.giliteracy.org



- **Group Classes:** We now have volunteers instructing **14** weekly classes! The need in our community for literacy instruction continues to increase and, unfortunately, our tutor numbers just cannot keep up. Right now **11** volunteers are teaching these classes — including one former student! We couldn't help nearly as many students without the dedication and time that these rock-star volunteers have put in! If you or anyone you know are interested in teaching a small Group Class, please contact us. We know that your time is limited, but this is great way to make a tremendous impact on the community with very little time invested!
- **New Lending Library:** Since receiving the Community Development Block Grant in 2017, we have made many much needed improvements to the Language & Learning Lab, and to our Group Class spaces. In light of these spatial and hardware updates — which have allowed us to better accommodate our ever growing student body population — we have decided to update the way in which students and Group Class Instructors access to educational materials. Students who cannot afford to *purchase* their books will soon be able to check them out with a small deposit. More details will follow as soon as it is up and running. For Group Classes, we've been seeking out materials that will make it easier for someone with no previous teaching experience to instruct. Also, instructors will be able to check out books for use in their classes so that all students can be on the same page — literally!
- **Window Painting Contest:** For those of you who were in and around the office in December we hope you got a chance to check out our amazing window art painted by our Educational Programming Coordinator, Madison! We are so proud to announce that our window art won 2nd Place in Railside's Holiday Window Painting Contest. Thanks to Madison for sharing her artistic talent and to all of you for voting for her work!



Finally, I want to thank you all for not only supporting our formal mission of providing free English literacy education in Grand Island, but for helping us to achieve our informal mission of building bridges in our diverse community. We all know that a small investment in education today creates tremendous dividends for our community tomorrow. Thank you for your dedication, hard work, and passion for building a stronger, better connected, and more prosperous Grand Island!

Best,

Kurt Stoppkotte
Executive Director

Student Spotlight: Nestor Gonzalez

Nestor Gonzalez is a shining example of what it means to give back to the organization that has given so much to him. While all of our tutors and Group Class Instructors volunteer their time to teach our students, it is not often that our students get a chance to volunteer *their* time to teach. Many students would be too nervous to do so, but not Nestor! He attended **9** out of our **12** Group Classes in 2017 spending approximately **80** hours in Group Class alone.

The expertise and experience Nestor received from attending so many Group Classes made him the perfect candidate when, one night, 10 students showed up for Group Class and the Instructor had called just minutes before class — she wasn't able to come in! Nestor stepped up to the plate and masterfully taught a 45 minute Group Class on basic English vocabulary using resources from the Resource Shelf! It is so great when students contribute to our organization and help out when they can. Inspiring indeed!

Nestor hopes to get his GED, perhaps own his own business, and bring his daughter here from Guatemala.



Pictured: Nestor Gonzalez (Student)

A Request for Our Tutors

Part of our informal mission is to build bridges in our diverse community. We want to share our stories with the rest of the community!

So our request, if you and your student(s) are comfortable doing so, is to ask your students to tell you their story and to work on writing it together.

While some students may be able to write about their journey themselves, it may be easier for others to share it verbally and have you record it; we still ask that you try to write it together. We just want to know their stories! The good, the beautiful, the sad: anything they would like to share about their past, and also their hopes for the future.

We want to hear your stories too: where you are from, if you and your students have anything in common now or from your past, etc. We want to learn all about you!

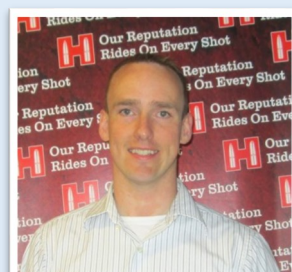
Volunteer Appreciation: Steve Kruse

Steve has been volunteering his time and invaluable technical expertise to our organization since 2017.

With the help of Steve and his employer, Hornady, we have been able to improve our students' experiences in our Language & Learning Lab.

Steve has been helping us solve some tricky issues with our server; Hornady even donated a server to us! This update has meant fewer freezes and glitches which has improved our students learning experience immensely!

Thanks Steve and Hornady!



Pictured: Steve Kruse (Volunteer)

9th Annual Scrabble for Literacy Tournament

The Literacy Council held it's 9th Annual Scrabble Tournament on Sunday February 25th, 2018.

We had **49** players and **18** volunteers that helped to spell this event into a fun, fundraising success!

Congratulations again to our winning teams: 1st place to AB Tree Injection and Lawn Service of Fullerton, 2nd place to GI Independent 1, and 3rd place to The Scrabble Buddies!

Special thanks to Full Circle Venue for donating the use of their space and to our Silver Level Sponsors — Tom & Tracy Noble with Edward Jones, and Pioneer Door, Inc. — and to our Bronze Level Sponsor, Agricultural Services, Inc.



Photo courtesy of the GI Independent

Tutor Resources: “News for You” & Lending Library

“News for You” provides adult ESL students and struggling readers with seven weekly news and human interest stories that are easy to read and understand. We suggest it especially for students who tested from High Beginning to Advanced! Please take one and try it out with your student! You can find them on our Welcome Table.

Lending Library

What is it?

Starting in Spring of 2018, thanks to funds we’ve received from the Wish You Well Foundation, we’ll be starting a whole new system of material check out for students! Keep an eye out for more information soon!

Why do we need the Lending Library?

After receiving feedback from students and Instructors, we’ve realized that some students may be struggling to purchase materials. This especially applies to Group Classes, because many students attend multiple classes a week and cannot afford a new book for each class. While we firmly believe that it is still important for our students to invest in their own education, we don’t want access to materials to be a barrier to learning. We hope this new Lending Library will make it easier everyone to have access to the materials that they need.

A Simple Twist of Fate: Tutor Spotlight & Memorial Dennis and Densel



Pictured: Dennis De Leon with Densel Rasmussen & Family

house to help him as he became more dependent on others. During their years together, Dennis and Densel grew to be like family and Dennis slowly became bilingual. Though Densel has passed, the impact he left on Dennis’ life and the lives of others in our community continues even now: Dennis was inspired by Densel to volunteer for Habitat for Humanity, and to pursue teaching with LCofGI. He said he could hear Densel telling him to spread the good.

The student has become the teacher. After “graduating” from LCofGI’s program, he began to volunteer by teaching bi-weekly Group Classes for Spanish speakers. Dennis feels that by volunteering, he is honoring Densel whom he considers to have been a father to him. Dennis felt that, “To me he was my dad even though he didn’t bring me into this world, because he did something better; he give a good life to live, the right path that he set me on, and he made me the person who I am right now.”

We all miss Densel Rasmussen, and honor his memory for the time and effort he dedicated to LCofGI. Dennis wants us all to remember Densel’s life motto, which Dennis uses as a guide for how he wants to live his life now: “Go into the world and do well. But more importantly, go into the world and *do good*.”



A Few Tips for Our Tutors

- Check out the new additions to our Resource Shelf! We have “binder-ed” printable activities for the English No Problem series, Challenger Series Puzzles, and the Laubach Tutor Training Manual, Tests, and more! All are welcome to make B&W copies of these to use with your students!
- We heard “through the grapevine” that some of our volunteers might be having difficulty explaining idioms to students! Well, instead of going “back to square one” check out our books “101 American English Idioms” on the Resource Shelf!
- Please encourage your students to use our other amazing educational services in addition to tutoring: Group Class, the Language Lab, and the Community Connection Center!

One of Densel’s favorite quotes, which means so much to Dennis as well, was from Fred Rogers: “If you could only sense how important you are to the lives of those you meet; how important you can be to the people you may never even dream of. There is something of yourself that you leave at every meeting with another person.”

Dennis De Leon, a former student of Densel Rasmussen (b. 1955 — d. 2017), started his journey to LCofGI from Guatemala. He worked with Densel at LCofGI for many years, and during that time they grew close. They would even meet at Densel’s house on Wednesday nights to study, share a meal, and watch *Modern Family*. When Densel became ill, Dennis took another step on his journey with Densel by moving into Densel’s

Volunteer Appreciation: Marilyn Davis



Pictured: Marilyn Davis (Volunteer)

Marilyn has been volunteering for our organization since 2016. Marilyn devotes her mornings Tuesday — Thursday working meticulously and repetitively with students with very low

literacy in our Community Connection Center.

Marilyn is often out-numbered eight-to-one by her students.

She said that her empathy for her students probably arises from her family's background: her mom's side was poor and came from German parents who struggled to assimilate.

She likes to see her students making progress and refers to herself as a "results oriented person."

We appreciate her dedication to our organization and to her students as well!

Thanks Marilyn for all that you do!

Khampang Gives Back



Pictured: Madison (Staff) & Khampang (Student)

Here at LCofGI we constantly try to emphasize the importance of our students giving back when they can; often that's volunteering their time or expertise,

sometimes a smile, and sometimes it's something more.

This year, as part of our holiday appeal drive, Khampang (an LCofGI student) gave what she could to our cause; those gifts add up and make all of the difference!

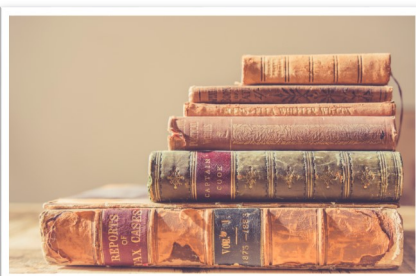
Community Resources and Involvement

Friday Extra Tutor Help Grand Island Central Catholic

LCofGI board member and tutor, Tracy Noble, has coordinated an opportunity at **GiCC** on **Fridays from 8:45 AM — 10:30 AM**. Students from Grand Island Central Catholic help tutor any Literacy Council students who are interested in receiving additional help when our office is closed on Fridays!



Pictured: GiCC Volunteers with Student



Got Piles of Books Laying Around?

Consider dropping off those books laying around your house — you know the ones that you don't read anymore? — to the **Tattered Book** in Grand Island, NE!

If you mention the **Literacy Council of Grand Island** when you donate, LCofGI receives a book credit equivalent to the amount donated. We use that book credit to purchase unique topical books and extra reading material for our students!

LCofGI Participates in Kickball League

The Literacy Council participated in a kickball league through the Grand Island Parks and Rec Department, to increase awareness of our organization in the community. We encouraged student, volunteer, and staff participation!

Stay tuned for future opportunities to engage in an activity with LCofGI in the community!



Pictured: LCofGI Kickball Team



WE'RE PARTICIPATING!
MAY 3, 2018

GoBigGIVE.org

To give to over 100 local nonprofits!

Thank You to Our Recent Funders!

NorthWestern Energy
Vern & Esther Taylor Trust

Tutor Memorial: Wilma Hotz

(b. 1923 - d. 2017)

We remember her for all she did for the community.

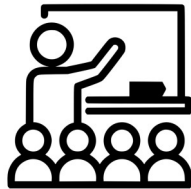
She will be missed.

Would You Like to Get Involved?

VOLUNTEER

TEACH

One of our free
Group Classes!



ASSIST

Students in our
*Community
Connection
Center* or in the
Language and Learning Lab!



TUTOR

You don't need to have
experience as a teacher!

One-on-One Tutoring only takes
one hour of your time a week!



CONNECT

Come chat with our students!



DONATE

To **FIND OUT MORE** about who we are as an organization or to invest in our cause please *visit us at our website*

www.giliteracy.org