

# Vision LITERACY

Partners Creating Opportunities

## Vision Literacy Tutor and Volunteer Newsletter April 2007

### WELCOME NEW TUTORS!

Vision Literacy extends a warm greeting to the following volunteers, who recently completed tutor training and have been paired with learners: **Sharon Chadwick, John Evans, Emilie Mukawa, Mary Margaret Mulgrew, Reza Nagahi, Maria Pasion, Gretchen Ross, Carmel Scott, Jennifer Stephenson and Julie Vogelmann**. We are grateful to have you join the Vision Literacy team.

### WRITER TO WRITER CHALLENGE OPEN TO LEARNERS

Vision Literacy learners are invited to participate in the California State Library's 2007 Writer to Writer challenge. To enter, students are asked to compose a friendly letter to the author of a book or book-on-tape that inspired them and submit it by June 30. Detailed instructions and an entry form can be found at [www.sclln.org](http://www.sclln.org).

Please encourage your learners to take advantage of this exciting opportunity. Last year learner Bill Douglas submitted a letter of appreciation to Garrison Keillor for his book of poetry, *Good Poems for Hard Times*, and earned an award at the intermediate level!

This year everyone who enters will receive a full-color certificate of participation from the state librarian, and the top three letter-writers will earn cash prizes, a trip to the Writer to Writer awards ceremony and a chance to see their work published.

### SAVE THE DATE FOR MACY'S SHOPPING DAY

On May 11, Vision Literacy will participate in Macy's Community Shopping Day – an in-store shopping event and fundraiser for nonprofits in the South Bay. Money will be raised through the sale of \$10 tickets that entitle the bearer to an exclusive 10-20 percent discount on almost everything at Macy's. A portion of the day's sales will also be given to each participating organization. By attending this event, you can support adult literacy and enjoy an exciting day filled with food and beverage samples, entertainment, promotional gifts, and the opportunity to win a \$500 shopping spree. To purchase a ticket, please contact the office at 408.262.1349. See you at Macy's!

### MEET THE VISION LITERACY STAFF: ELVIA HERNANDEZ, LEARNER ADVOCATE

#### *How she became involved with Vision Literacy*

After taking ESL classes at Gilroy High School one summer, Hernandez found herself becoming bored when lessons were repeated during the fall semester.



Someone at the high school suggested that she look into Vision Literacy to continue her education.

#### *Number of years with the organization*

Ten – two years as a student and eight years working with Judy Walko to organize and

teach classes at the Gilroy apartments.

#### *Best day on the job*

The day she was presented with the 2000 California Literacy ESL Student of the Year Award.

#### *Worst day on the job*

Sometimes she worries that students won't come back to class because the room gets so noisy from the children (of the learners) playing. She hopes to be able to offer childcare during class time in the future.

#### *The part of her job that surprises others*

She believes people are surprised to discover there are many different levels of learning going on in her classes. Hernandez also thinks that her friends and family would be surprised – and proud – to see her teaching and attending meetings.

#### *Books on her reading shelf*

*Basic English Grammar, Volume B*, by Betty Schramper Azar. She reads it first then works on it with her student.

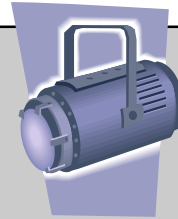


**Tutors: Please remember to send in your monthly progress reports by mail. Due date: May 3. Thanks!**

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

### A NEWCOMER

by Xin Lu



I am a newcomer myself.

Believe me, it's not easy to be one. After we got out of the airplane, we were so excited. It was a new start for us.

Both of us knew English, but my husband was better than I. At least I could try to communicate to people.

The people here were welcoming. They would smile to us, say "hello", every-time we asked favors, they would help us. We were lucky that we came to California, because this is a place full of immigrants.

But, I still felt lonely and helpless. I had no friends, no family around, no one to talk to and no where to go without a car. The first few weeks, after my husband went to work, I stayed home by myself. The house hardly had any furniture. Most of our things hadn't arrived yet. We didn't have any books, newspaper, TV. The nearest Chinese store was half an hour drive away. I cleaned the apartment twice everyday until there was nothing to clean anymore. I went out. There was a small shopping mall across the street. It had some grocery stores, a drug store and a coffee shop. But I didn't recognize most of the foods. I had never seen or tasted them before. I tried to walk around the neighborhood. It was May at that time, I still remember how beautiful everything was. Flowers were opening. Trees and grasses were so green, birds were chirping, and pretty little houses lined the street one by one. Not like where I came from, full of noises and crowds.

I called home to my parents everyday, but I could only tell them that I was fine. I didn't want to worry them. After I called, I felt like I wanted to cry.

After a few weeks, I went to English class in my husband's school. I met new people and made friends. Everything seemed to be getting better.

Now I have been here for years. I still have all kinds of problems, but things are getting better, with the help of the people here, I have begun a new life.

*Lu is a Vision Literacy learner in Mountain View.*

### JUNIOR LEAGUE TO HONOR TUTOR THEISS

Tutor **Fran Theiss** will be honored with a Certificate of Appreciation at the Junior League's annual Volunteer Recognition Luncheon on April 27. She is being recognized for her work tutoring inmates at the Elmwood County Correctional Facility in Milpitas for the past nine years.

In a lucky coincidence, Theiss will share the stage at the luncheon with her daughter, **Mary Sanbrook**, who will be receiving the Junior League's Crystal Bowl Award for her work with the Palo Alto Red Cross.

Congratulations to this generous mother-daughter pair who serve as a remarkable example of community volunteerism.

### LIBRARY MAKES ONLINE TUTORING AVAILABLE

The Santa Clara County Library has begun to offer Brainfuse – a free online homework help and skills building service for students working at a third- to 12th-grade level. The service is open daily from 1-10 p.m., and Spanish speaking tutors are available. For more information, visit [www.santaclaracountylib.org/brainfuse/](http://www.santaclaracountylib.org/brainfuse/).

### TUTOR TIP

This month's tip comes from Project Read in Provo, Utah:



*Are You Sure That's the Letter E?* Letters can look very different depending on the typeface used. To help a learner recognize letters in a different kind of type, select examples of different styles of a letter from magazines or newspapers. Cut them out and paste them on a sheet of paper. Make a separate sheet for each letter. As an alternative, ask the learner to find and cut out these examples.



**If you or your students have a question, comment or submission for the newsletter, please contact Kristin Seitz, editor, at 408.262.1349 or [kseitz@visionliteracy.org](mailto:kseitz@visionliteracy.org). Next deadline for submissions: May 14, 2007.**