

Vision LITERACY

Partners Creating Opportunities

Vision Literacy Tutor and Volunteer Newsletter June 2007

NEW TUTORS COMPLETE TRAINING

Eight new tutors recently completed training at the Mountain View Public Library and have been paired with learners throughout the county.

Vision Literacy extends a warm welcome and hearty thank you to...

Ann Awakuni, Michel Brown, Haywood Ho, Patricia Markee, Holly Peters, Barbara Tolentino, Tom Watson and Gian Wong.

VISION LITERACY JOINS BALIT AT BOOK FAIR

On June 10, representatives of Vision Literacy staffed BALIT's booth at the second annual Book Group Expo at the San Jose McEnery Convention Center. Board members **Sandy Reed** and **Jennifer Lo**, and staff members **Pat Lawson-North, Martha Inouye** and **Kristin Seitz** spent part of their Sunday afternoon informing Bay Area book lovers about Vision Literacy programs and the need for tutors. In an unexpected coincidence, board member **Steve Wozniak** also attended the expo, participating in a discussion panel that was carried on the radio program *West Coast Live!*



Pat Lawson-North and Martha Inouye talk to Book Group Expo attendees about adult literacy.



Tutors: Please remember to submit your monthly progress reports, by either mail or our new online form. Due date: July 3. Thanks!

UPS "PROMISING PRACTICES" REPORT FEATURES VISION LITERACY PROGRAM

Vision Literacy's *CLEAR Steps for Success* mini-course has been singled out for its excellence in a report evaluating literacy practices in the United States. The report, "Increasing Intensity of Instruction in Volunteer-Based Literacy Programs," came out of a three-year study funded by UPS, which focused on innovative methods used to improve instruction for learners and develop new roles for volunteers. As a pilot program, Vision Literacy offered *CLEAR Steps for Success* at community sites in Cupertino, Milpitas, Mountain View and Gilroy. The program prepared students for active learning by examining learning styles, goal setting and time management. A schedule is currently being developed to offer *CLEAR Steps for Success* this fall to all new learners and tutors.

LIBRARIES LAUNCH "SUMMER OF MYSTERY"

If you or your learner enjoys reading mysteries, check out the "Summer of Mystery" reading program being offered by the Santa Clara County Libraries. Mystery authors will visit the libraries throughout the summer, and readers can earn "book bucks" to make purchases at library book sales by reading or listening to at least four books during the summer. For details go to www.santaclaracountylib.org/summerreading.

SANTA CLARA LIBRARIES NEED HELP

If you love books, consider applying to be an extra-help librarian for the Santa Clara County Libraries. For more information on current job openings, go to their web site at www.santaclaracountylib.org/about/.

**MEET VISION LITERACY:
BRENDA EITEMILLER,
ASSOCIATE MANAGER OF
INTERNAL OPERATIONS**



How she became involved with Vision Literacy

Eitemiller responded to an ad in the newspaper for an administrative assistant position at Vision Literacy. It seemed like a good opportunity to put her background as an ESL instructor and online English teacher to work.

Number of years with the organization

Six years – since July 2001. She spent one year as an administrative assistant and was promoted to associate manager of internal operations five years ago, when the organization went through some restructuring. In her current role, she is responsible for data management, reporting, some grant writing, and a variety of human resources and staff development activities.

Best day on the job

She was excited to move into the Valley Way office space, which was granted by the Sobrato Center for Nonprofits in 2004. Before moving, Vision Literacy occupied a small space at the Milpitas Library with a leaky roof and “overzealous” mice, according to Eitemiller. However, she still misses working with the library staff and being in the library during closed hours – when she had fun imagining the books were her own personal collection.

Another highlight for Eitemiller was her three-year experience tutoring a young woman in Milpitas. During their work together, the learner earned her high school diploma and found a job working for a real estate agent.

The part of her job that surprises others

Eitemiller thinks people would be surprised by how happy she is to meet the students, tutors and volunteers. Because she devotes so much time to entering, compiling and managing data, it’s exciting for her to meet the people behind the numbers.

Books on her reading shelf

Eyewitness travel guides, biographies and true crime stories.

TUTOR TIP

This month’s tip is taken from the archives of the Contra Costa County Library (www.ccclib.org).

Monster Sentences

One Contra Costa tutor and her student were reading a James Herriot book, and the sentences were often very long with many qualifying phrases and clauses. Since they were hard for the student to follow, the tutor decided that she and her student would try making up their own long sentences. They called them “monster sentences.”

They began with a short sentence: *The woman was waiting for the bus.*

Next, they added a phrase to describe the woman who was waiting: *The woman with the long red hair was waiting for the bus.*

Then, they added information about the bus: *The woman with the long red hair was waiting for the express bus to DVC.*

Then, they added information about when she waited: *Last Sunday the woman with the long red hair was waiting for the express bus to DVC.*

Then, they added information about how long she waited: *Last Sunday the woman with the long red hair was waiting for the express bus to DVC for over an hour.*

Finally, they explained why she had to wait so long: *Last Sunday the woman with the long red hair was waiting for the express bus to DVC for over an hour before she realized the buses don’t run on Sundays.*

After making up monster sentences such as this one during several lessons, the student found it easier to read the James Herriot book with natural phrasing – because she recognized the structures that held the sentences together.



If you have a question, comment or submission for the newsletter, please contact Kristin Seitz at 408.262.1349 or kseitz@visionliteracy.org. Next deadline for submissions: July 13, 2007.