

# Vision LITERACY

Partners Creating Opportunities

## Tutor & Volunteer Newsletter

July 2007

### SHIELDS BECOMES NEW SOUTH COUNTY MANAGER

Vision Literacy is delighted to announce that **Louise Shields** has become Vision Literacy's new associate manager in the south county. A resident of Gilroy, she has served as a social worker, fundraiser and grant writer for a variety of area nonprofits, and most recently held the position of child development coordinator for Community Language Connection. Shields has been on the job in Gilroy since June 25 and has been



working closely with Judy Walko, who is leaving the position after 12 years to spend more time with her family.

### FALL ORIENTATIONS COMING UP

Vision Literacy will be offering four orientation events this fall, so please help spread the word. Individuals interested in attending can call 408.262.1349 to register for one of the following sessions:

**Vision Literacy, Milpitas**, 540 Valley Way  
Sat., Aug. 18 from 10:30-11:30 a.m.

**Saratoga Public Library**  
Sat., Aug. 25 from 10:30-11:30 a.m.

**Campbell Public Library**  
Tues., Aug. 28 from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

**Mountain View Public Library**  
Thurs., Aug. 30 from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

### VOLUNTEER UPDATES NEWSLETTER BANNER

**Holly Peters**, a professional illustrator and designer and a new Vision Literacy volunteer, generously donated her expertise and updated the newsletter banner. The new version graces the front of this month's issue. Thank you, Holly!

### VISION LITERACY WINS MAJOR UNITED WAY GRANT



On June 28, United Way Silicon Valley awarded Vision Literacy with a three-year, \$60,000 per year grant.

The money will provide general financial support to our organization as it pursues its adult and family literacy efforts, particularly in the south county. The United Way Silicon Valley dramatically changed its giving strategy this year, choosing to make larger and longer-term grants to fewer nonprofits. Only 52 organizations, including Vision Literacy, received grants this year from the community-giving powerhouse, and all underwent an extensive evaluation of their mission, programs and financial standing.

### MONTHLY REPORTING IMPROVES SIGNIFICANTLY

Thank you, tutors – nearly all of you are turning in your monthly reports on time and helping Vision Literacy keep its mandated reporting on track. "It's never been this good before," said **Brenda Eitemiller**, associate manager of operations and the staff member in charge of reporting. She believes the improved rate of monthly reporting has been helped in recent months by the addition of an online form on our website ([www.visionliteracy.org](http://www.visionliteracy.org)). In fact, nearly 50 percent of north county reports are being submitted electronically. Whatever the reason, keep up the good work!

### TAPE RECORDER AVAILABLE AT MOUNTAIN VIEW

Does your learner need to practice pronunciation? Does he/she find it difficult to remember how words sound? Your literacy specialist has a tape recorder available for your sessions. Your learner can take the tape home and practice between sessions. Call 650.526.7016 or email [minouye@visionliteracy.org](mailto:minouye@visionliteracy.org).



Tutors: Please remember to submit your monthly progress reports. Due date: August 3

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

### MOTHERHOOD

by *Xin Lu*

Life does change a lot when a new member comes to the family.

I still remember when my first child was born. It seems just like a while ago. I hardly know how small a baby can be, but I sure remember every detail about the first few days to be a new mom.

I was not myself anymore. Even though during the pregnancy I couldn't sleep well, I had all the time I needed to take a nap. After the baby came, neither I nor my husband could get a full night sleep anymore. It seemed the baby needed to be fed, changed, held and rocked all the time.

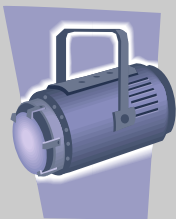
Sometimes when you just close your eyes for like few minutes, she would start crying for no reason. Everyday, after my husband left to work, I was worried that she would get sick. Why wouldn't she stop crying, was I doing something wrong.

It wasn't until my mom came to help us a week later that everything became better.

It became more and more fun to have a child. You watch every step she grows. The first smile, first crawl, first stand, first step, first word. You can't imagine how exciting it will be after you have had your own child, you will know how hard it was for your parents to raise you. How much work they did for you and how much love they gave you.

Yes, I missed lots of things. I couldn't go out to have dinner with my husband for a long time. I couldn't do any all day long shopping as before. I couldn't wear lots of your old clothes any more. I did not look as good as before. But I think I gained more. It was worth it.

*Lu is a Vision Literacy learner in Mountain View. Her essay "Newcomer" appeared in the newsletter in April.*



## FAREWELL, GOOD LUCK TO TWO STAFF MEMBERS

Sadly, Vision Literacy will say goodbye this August to two of its employees, **Rachel DiFranco** and **Kristin Seitz**. DiFranco, Vision Literacy's Public Ally during the past year, has played a key role in several ESL and family literacy projects in the Mayfair neighborhood of San Jose. This fall, she will enter a dual master's degree program in international studies offered jointly by American University in Washington, D.C., and the United Nations University for Peace in Costa Rica.

Seitz has served as communications and events coordinator since last fall and has been responsible for Vision Literacy's marketing and publicity efforts, including this monthly newsletter. She is leaving to spend a year traveling around the United States with her family.

### TUTOR TIP

*This month's tip comes from the website of Second Start Adult Literacy Program in Oakland ([www.oaklandlibrary.org/services/SecondStart](http://www.oaklandlibrary.org/services/SecondStart)).*

#### **Using a Thesaurus**

Kelly Frasier, a Second Start tutor and staff member, came up with a novel idea for helping her student learn to use a thesaurus and expand his vocabulary. First, she explained how a thesaurus is like a dictionary and how it's different. She then had her learner read a short descriptive paragraph with some key words underlined. Her student wrote down the underlined words, looked them up in the thesaurus, and made columns of synonyms for each word. After this, he re-read the paragraph and copied it, inserting a new word for each underlined word.

Kelly notes, "Reading through the second time there was less hesitation. There were some words he decided not to change because another word would not have made as much sense. After he had rewritten the paragraph, he read it again with almost no hesitation. He really liked doing this and seemed pleased to use the bigger words, which are in his vocabulary."



### SHOW US YOUR SMILES!

A volunteer appreciation event is currently in the works for fall, so the staff is looking for pictures of tutors, volunteers and learners to include in our displays and presentations. If you have a photo you'd like to share, please email it to [kseitz@visionliteracy.org](mailto:kseitz@visionliteracy.org) or mail it to the main office at 540 Valley Way, Milpitas, CA 95035.

**If you have a question, comment or submission for the newsletter, please contact 408.262.1349 or [info@visionliteracy.org](mailto:info@visionliteracy.org). Next deadline for submissions: August 13.**

