



English Express

November 2016

It's Not Too Late to Learn English!

The desire to learn can come at any age, and turning that desire into action can change your life. Miryam Palacio of North Port is proof.

She came to the U.S. from Colombia more than 30 years ago with her husband and daughter. They settled in New York where Miryam had family. Both parents soon found jobs, began working, built a life for themselves and had two more daughters. And 30 years raced by.

For all of those years, Miryam was like thousands of Spanish-speaking immigrants who come to America but don't learn English. She worked in the New York garment industry and says, "It was easy back then. So many people spoke Spanish. I didn't have to learn English to work. I had my family, my relatives and my neighbors. We all spoke Spanish."

Life was made easier yet because Miryam's husband worked in an English-speaking business and he learned the language. He knew enough English for their family to build a normal life in America and for Miryam to continue speaking only Spanish. Today, her three daughters -- all grown, and all fluent in English, of course -- also speak Spanish because the family spoke Spanish at home. "I'm very proud of them for speaking two languages," says Miryam.

Two years ago, everything changed when the Palacios moved to Florida. Suddenly, there was year-round warm weather, lots to do, and not so many Spanish-speaking relatives. It was then Miryam became curious about language: Could she possibly learn to speak English here in Florida? Was it too late? Would she be able to study and remember? Who would help her? And most importantly -- how exactly would she accomplish all this?



Gail Gursky

Miryam Palacio

Undoubtedly, it was fate. At the North Port Library, Miryam was introduced to Karen Bridegam who introduced her to Literacy Volunteers, interviewed her as a student and matched her with tutor Gail Gursky. Today, after 30-plus years in America, Miryam Palacio speaks English -- and loves it. She beams with pride.

Gail tutors Miryam weekly at the library, and Miryam also faithfully attends two classes taught by Mary Seyler and Jan Gallas. "It's hard at my age," she says. "Pronunciation is hard. I don't always understand everything people say. It's hard to remember new words, too. But I keep trying every day. I won't give up."

Gail Gursky won't let her give up. They use Voyager and Endeavor, and are major users of Duolingo online. Gail comes from New York too, but has lived in Florida for 27 years. She was trained to tutor in 2015, and says, "I have always wanted to do this, for as long as I can remember.

See Not Too Late on p.2

President's Corner

I am pleased to have been recruited as President of LVSSC. I am returning to this rewarding work after a 7 year hiatus. My husband John and I thoroughly enjoyed tutoring at an earlier time. Before retiring, I was an Administrative Secretary in a large suburban school district in New York.

It is important that we all work together to move our program forward in a positive manner. With this in mind, Joe Pokorney has agreed to be our Vice President. I will manage operations in North Port and he will supervise those in Venice.

Together we will work with tutors to improve their experience and support their efforts. We encourage you to express both your successes AND your concerns. We are open to any and all suggestions.

Don't wait to be "asked", make the effort to volunteer for different committees/groups.

Our most important goal is to serve the adults in our communities to the best of our ability. Please join me in our Literacy work – together we **"CAN make a difference"** in the lives of others in our area.

-- Jan Gallas



Welcome New Board Member - Mary Seyler



Mary is a retired elementary and high school teacher who taught in North Bergen, N.J. for 40 years. Following her retirement a friend introduced her to Literacy Volunteers of Monmouth County, N.J. She spent several years there working with adult immigrants who wanted to learn English so they could achieve their goals including getting better jobs and helping their children with homework.

Since moving to North Port five years ago, Mary joined the Suncoast Education Assistance Fund and Literacy Volunteers of South Sarasota County. This past April she was asked to join the Board. Mary thoroughly enjoys teaching English to adult immigrants so they can fulfill their ambitions. With her rich background in Adult Education, we are delighted to have Mary in a leadership position.

Not Too Late continued from p.1

I always knew I would, too." Even though she recently started her own business, Gail steadfastly carves out time every week for tutoring Miryam.

People say you can do anything you want if you put your mind to it. If you doubt that -- go to the North Port Library on Tuesday mornings. Meet Miryam Palacio.

Venice Literacy Office is Open for Business

Photos courtesy of Rob Christy, *Rob Christy Photography*.

Home sweet home! Beginning on Oct. 4th, the Venice office of Literacy Volunteers of South Sarasota County (LVSSC) happily moved into its new headquarters in the Hamilton Building, behind Venice Theater on Venice island, following the Feb. 1, 2016 closure of Venice Public Library (VPL). The Hamilton Building will serve as Venice Public Library and the home of Literacy Volunteers until a new library is built. The formal address for both VPL and LVSSC is 260 N. Nokomis Ave., Venice FL 34285.



ESL student Edna Schauer (left) picked up some grammar points from veteran tutor Joe Giorgianni (right) when both visited the new LVSSC location in October.

LVSSC President Jan Gallas gratefully acknowledged the generosity of the City of Venice, the County of Sarasota, and especially the staff of Venice Public Library. "We are so pleased to have a real office where we can again serve the literacy needs of the community, and provide our Venice tutors with a real literacy library," Jan said. "We are grateful to be included in the Library move and to have our services based at the public library. This is an institution we value, and we want to remain a part of it."



Literacy Office Coordinator Sharon Betterton is already hard at work in the new office location.

Coordinator Sharon Betterton is happy too, since she graciously ran the LVSSC office from her own home since February. Kudos to Sharon for being such a generous and helpful team player! She now occupies a 170 square foot office on the second floor of the Hamilton/Library building, with excellent space for our copier, our library of literacy books, and even a small table for meeting or tutoring. Sharon's office hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 pm. (closing for lunch from 11 a.m. to noon). Tutors -- stop by and say hello. Enjoy our new digs.



Former Literacy Office Coordinator Leslie Yard stopped by to see the "new digs" and return a book.

ESL Student Amazes His Tutor

Harry came here through the Venice Theater in 2014. He was part of the Armenian group presenting an original play at the Community Theater International Festival. His English was so limited that he got severely sunburned on the beach because he did not understand our warnings and failed to use the sunblock we offered. Soon he became a student of LVSSC.



Because he understood Russian, that was the language we used for computer translations. There was no translation program for Armenian, an ancient language that uses a unique alphabet.

Harry learned faster than we ever imagined. Within a few months he was using humorous idioms and making jokes in English. He not only learned to speak English very quickly but

could read and write within a year (although his spelling is still interesting). Harry passed his driver's test, obtained a green card, married an American girl, held a full time job as a handyman for a hotel and purchased his own car. Recently Harry attended truck driving school, finishing first in his class and now he drives an 18 wheeler around the country. While he is earning a great salary he is seeing his beloved America.

More Info About New Venice Office from Sharon Betterton

We are located on the second floor of the Hamilton Building. Our office area also houses our resource library, our copier, and a space that can be used for tutoring. We also have an additional space adjacent to our office which can be used as a tutoring location.



If you are interested in reserving either space for tutoring sessions, please notify me, and I will put you on the room reservation schedule. If you would like to look at our resource library, take out materials, or make copies, you are welcome in the office at any time.

The door to the office will remain unlocked, and access will be available whenever the library is open.

Since the Venice Literacy Office is through a door marked "Employees Only", the librarians will take you to the office initially. It would be best to meet your student downstairs in the main Library area. If you have a Literacy Volunteers nametag, please wear it when you come to the office. If you need a nametag, please let me know.

Our new phone number and email address is: 941-861-1352, Venice.Literacy@gmail.com.

Please return any Venice materials that you are not currently using with your student to the Venice Literacy Office. Tutors who use the Jacaranda or Elsie Quirk Libraries can return books using the Library Delivery System. Give the materials to the librarians, and address the envelope to Sharon Betterton/LVSSC/Venice.

Thank you for your cooperation and patience during our office transition!

Another Student Success Story - We'd Like to Print Yours

Lorenzo is a man in his 30s who moved to the United States from Puerto Rico. He was taught English throughout his school years and felt confident that he would not have a problem with the language. Much to his surprise, he did need assistance in improving his language skills. He had several years experience in the medical field, but started working in Venice Regional Bayfront Medical Center at an entry level position until he could pass a test which turned out to be a huge challenge.

He was able to read the questions, but he could not determine what exactly was being asked and how he should answer the questions. He worked with an LVSSC tutor until he felt confident enough to take the test again.

The second time he took the test, he passed and was immediately given a higher position and a raise of \$14 per hour. Having accomplished his goal, he decided he did not require the help of a tutor any longer.

LVSSC Helps Employees of Local Restaurant Learn English

Our organization has always been interested in working with groups who are employed by local businesses. For this reason Sid Shrauger, ESL tutor and former Board member, was very proactive when he learned that a Venice restaurant had employees who need help with English. He made arrangements with the business owner and soon after tutor Irma Arroyo stepped up to the plate and began very elementary classes with 5-7 students.

The number of students varies from week to week. The students come to work 1 1/2 hours early to meet with Irma and study basic vocabulary, pronunciation, reading and writing.

Since the students don't have strong reading and writing skills in their native language, the job is especially challenging. Most of Irma's students worked on farms and only went to school as a child for a short time. Their Spanish is rustic which makes translation more difficult. To their benefit they are all fairly young which usually makes learning language easier.

This model can be used for other businesses as long as management is supportive and the students are willing to try. Emphasis in language related to the job appeals to management as does help with acculturating to American life style and conduct.

Need a Tutoring Location? Consider the Library at State College of Florida

One mile north of River Road at 8000 N. Tamiami Trail, the campus library at State College of Florida (SCF) is offering LVSSC space for tutoring meetings. A room large enough for 3-4 is available on a first come, first served basis, Monday - Thursday 8:00 am to 8:00 pm and Fridays 8:00 am to 2:00 pm.

If the room is already occupied by an LVSSC tutor and student, other corners of the library may be found to accommodate you and your student. Additionally, you may call to reserve the room, asking for Theresa Ennis-Smith at (941) 408-1435. The library is located in Building 3 in the center of the campus.

Monthly Volunteer Hours Reports

Please make it a habit to report your volunteer hours at the end of each month using the link emailed to you by a Coordinator or by going to LVSSC's web site:

www.LiteracyChangesLives.org

Mark These Dates! In-Service Training for Tutors

Pronunciation Training for ESL Tutors:

How many times have you said to students, “Put your tongue behind your top front teeth very lightly and then.....?” Even after years of tutoring, many of us still shudder at the thought of teaching English pronunciation. Maria Spelleri can help change that. An associate professor of language and literature at State College of Florida, Maria also has been a professional accent-reduction teacher for both immigrants and American-born citizens. In addition, she spearheads the English for Academic Purposes program at SCF, which many immigrants take to begin their college studies. Come learn some tips and techniques to help students with pronunciation. Here’s the schedule:

**Pronunciation Workshop
with Maria Spelleri, Friday, Dec. 2, 2016,**
11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Computer Lab, Jacaranda Library (Venice)

Venice and North Port tutors:
RSVP to Sharon Betterton at 941-861-1352
or email her at venice.literacy@gmail.com to
reserve your spot. Limit: 20 tutors.

Tutor RoundTable: Making the Most of ESL Teaching Aids

North Port tutor (and former teacher) Kathie Page will lead a hands-on, interactive round-table discussion for tutors on how to make effective, enjoyable use of workbook exercises, word games, game boards, flash cards, and other language-learning tools with their students. She will offer the workshop in both our North Port and Venice locations.

Kathie will bring an ample supply of the learning aids she uses in her own tutoring and show everyone how to use them. She also invites tutors to bring their own learning tools and to share and demonstrate for each other.

Tutor RoundTable: - Continued

But what if you don’t have any learning aids? Or you don’t know how to use them? All the better, says Kathie. Come and learn, get your hands dirty, go home with new knowledge!

Here’s the **Tutor RoundTable** schedule:

North Port: Tuesday, Jan. 17, 2017
10:30 a.m. to 12 noon. North Port Library,
Juliano Meeting Room.

Venice: Tuesday, Feb. 21, 2017, 10:30 a.m.
to 12 noon, Jacaranda Library, Computer Lab.
Limit 20 tutors.

For either program, RSVP to Sharon Betterton
at venice.literacy@gmail.com or 941-861-1352
to reserve your spot in North Port or Venice.

Effective Use of the Literacy Library:

Venice tutor Robin Blair will lead this workshop geared primarily to new tutors. It’s a paper-intensive, learning-intensive 3-hour+ program to help tutors choose the right books for their student, decide between “all purpose” and single-focus books, learn to blend content from two or more books, identify and mitigate trouble spots in books, and create their own exercises to give students more practice. Up to 10 ESL books are profiled, and tutors get to experience our books as their students might.

Here’s the schedule:

Thursday, Feb. 2, 2017, from 1 to 4:30 p.m.
(with a healthy-size break), Jacaranda Library,
Computer Lab.

Venice and North Port tutors:
RSVP to Sharon Betterton at 941-861-1352 or
email her at venice.literacy@gmail.com to
reserve your spot. Limit: 20 tutors.

Plan to attend this Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon on December 8!

LVSSC people are fun, sociable, lively, genial, bright, & friendly...

We'd Like to Get to Know You!

Join us for a casual lunch

- Chat with your colleagues
- Compare notes
- Learn more about LVSSC

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8, 12:30 p.m.

North Port Library/Juliano Room

Please RSVP to Janita Wisch 941-861-1318

ProLiteracy Education Network - Online Courses and Resources

ProLiteracy just launched a NEW Education Network. It has been updated to offer user-friendly resources to tutors and instructors, program administrators, and adult learners.

Go online to www.ProLiteracy.org. Click on **Professional Development** on the top menu and select **Education Network**. Click on **LOGIN** and then create your own Account.

Because LVSSC is an organizational member of ProLiteracy, LVSSC volunteers will have free access to all courses, even those with a fee for non-members. On the second page of creating an account, be sure to click on Literacy Volunteers of South Sarasota Co. Here's a video about explanation of the web site features and how to set up your account:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9LRJ3-rICl>

Enjoy Lunch Out and Raise Funds for Literacy Volunteers.....



Save the Date!

Tues., Dec. 13 from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

50% of the cost of your lunch on Dec. 13 at North Port's new **Chipotle** Restaurant, 17019 Tamiami Trail, will be donated to Literacy Volunteers. Karen Bridegam, North Port Literacy Coordinator, will be distributing flyers with complete information in the near future.

2016 Giving Challenge “24 Hours of Online Suspense”



On September 21 and 22 we participated in this year's Giving Challenge, one of 527 organizations all competing for donations.

The Challenge began with a 2-hour workshop in late June for team leaders. The presentation outlined this year's Challenge Rules and discussed various ways that organizations could increase their donations.

The Giving Challenge was an exciting 24-hour online giving event supporting more than 500 nonprofits serving Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte and Desoto counties. The 2016 Giving Challenge was presented by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County with giving strengthened by The Patterson Foundation, as well as support from other organizations.

This year's theme was "Be The One" and through the generosity of the Patterson Foundation all donations from New donors were matched 2 to 1 and all Repeat donations were matched 1 to 1 up to \$100, so we had an opportunity to truly expand our donations if we could turn out the donors!

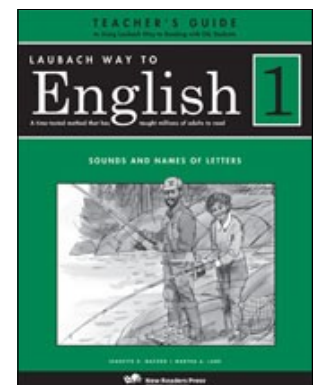
The efforts by Board members to solicit tutors, LVSSC members, friends, relatives, and acquaintances via e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, and face to face requests was successful beyond our expectations. We raised \$4,930 in donations and \$8,035 in matching funds for a grand total of \$12,965. We had one donation of \$500, 18 of \$100, 18 of \$50, and 15 donated \$25.

Dear LitWits...

Question: I have begun work with a young student who has been in Venice for about a year working with several others from his home country in Latin America. He is at Level 0 in English and has almost no reading and writing skills in Spanish. Even his Spanish is very rustic. He wants to learn English to get a driver's license and get a better job. Where do I start?

Answer: *Laubach Way to English* (LWE) is a series of Teacher's Guides designed for teaching ESL particularly to functionally illiterate adults. These guides walk tutors and their students through a beginning English program in listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Each guide begins with lessons in conversation skills that prepare the student for a *Laubach Way to Reading* (LWR) book at the same level. Also, there are Free Resources on the New Readers Press web site to download including illustrations that correspond to the Level 1-3 LWE books and the *Laubach Way to English Tutor Workshop Handbook*. The Handbook includes instructions for teaching Level 0 ESL students.

<http://www.newreaderspress.com/laubach-way-to-english-teachers-guide>



Have a question for **LitWits**? Email it to venice.literacy@gmail.com with "LITWITS" as the Subject.

Take English to the Next Level - Academic English at SCF

Is college a goal for your student? State College of Florida, Venice Campus, can help your student pursue his or her dreams! Students who have reached at least an intermediate level of English ability may qualify for SCF's English for Academic Purposes (EAP) program. Located at 8000 S. Tamiami Trail, mid-way between North Port and Venice, State College of Florida offers intermediate and advanced classes in Grammar and Writing, as well as Reading and Speaking.

The goal of the EAP program is to help students cross the bridge from everyday English to the higher level, academic English needed for college success, with a focus on critical reading, essay writing, making academic presentations, developing note-taking skills and increasing academic vocabulary. As students improve their English, college instructors and advisors will assist them to move seamlessly from the EAP program to a pathway for a professional career in one of many possible areas of study at the College.

To participate in the EAP program, a student must apply to the College, which includes completing forms and providing documentation.

The next semester begins in January, and interested students should begin the inquiry and application process as early as possible in order to meet all deadlines, as this process can often take over a month.

Many EAP students qualify for Financial Aid, which covers some or all tuition costs. Additionally, SCF offers a convenient monthly payment plan to spread the tuition cost across the semester.

Students who may qualify for State College of Florida:

- Are permanent residents of the U.S. (Green Card holder) or U. S. citizens
- Have a Social Security number
- Are high school graduates from any country AND have access to their original diploma and transcript

If your student would like to learn more about the English for Academic Purposes program at SCF and begin the application process, the student may contact Maria Spelleri at spellem@scf.edu (preferred) or (941) 408-1505. A face-to-face appointment can also be arranged. If your student isn't sure of his or her level, a quick evaluation of a writing sample can be completed at that time.

An urgent request to all tutors.....

Please check your bookshelves, book bags, and closets for books that you are not currently using with your students. Please return these books to the Venice or North Port Literacy office. It's easy to accumulate books and forget to return them when there is no due date or penalty. Please do this soon so they will be available for other tutors to use.

TUTOR TRAINING FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS

Dec. 10 and 17 (two Saturdays) at **North Port Library**

- Contact **Karen Bridegam** at north.port.literacy@gmail.com to register for this 2-day workshop.

Jan. 5 and 12 (two Saturdays) in **Venice at VABI (Venice Area Beautification, Inc.)**

- Contact Sharon Betterton at venice.literacy@gmail.com to register for this 2-day workshop.

The VABI office is located a stone's throw from the new Venice Library. Don't be fooled that the Library's address is 260 N. Nokomis Ave. and VABI's address is 257 N. Tamiami Trail; access to both buildings is through the north end of the Venice Theatre parking lot on N. Nokomis Ave.

Contributors, Thank You for Your Financial Support

from July 2015 - June 2016!

\$1,000-\$4,999

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Plantation Community Foundation
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Lizabeth A. McKibben

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Thank you, too, to everyone who made membership contributions and donations to the United Way Walk-a-Thons in Venice and North Port to benefit Literacy Volunteers.

Welcome New Tutors

On May 21 and 28, these volunteers were trained by Linda Wieman at the North Port Library.

Congratulations

to

Linda Wieman

who completed the

ProLiteracy

requirements and tests

and became a

Certified Trainer

on Oct. 17, 2016



Left to right: Racquel Alcaraz-Figueroa, **Linda Wieman** (Trainer), Liz Krakowski, Carol McCarron, Kathy Callisto, Carol Wood, Lisa Vargas, and Mary Ann Magliacano.

On July 7 and 14, these volunteers were trained by Esther Bird at Jacaranda Library in Venice.



Back left to right:

Minerva Vasquez-Farmer, Vic Noschese, Linda Ann Olson, Murray Kanetsky, Kathleen Riggs, Marian Marcinkiewicz, Amy Scholten, and Elise Logan.

Front Left to Right: Ruth Boysworth, David Maus, and Bonnie Hurley

On September 10 and 17, these volunteers were trained by Linda Wieman at North Port Library.

Back left to right are: Kathleen Davenport, Darlene Ryan, Judy Thuer, Gloria Majerus, and Hugh Laubis.

Front left to right: Anne Easker, Jan Cecchin, Diane Francois, and Kristin Livek.



Summary Statement of Financial Activities

for the Year Ended June 30, 2016

Unrestricted Revenue & Expense

Revenue:

United Way of South Sarasota County	\$ 7,000
Unrestricted Grants	1,058
Memberships & Other Contributions	12,226
Fundraisers (net of expenses)	<u>11,198</u>
Total revenue	<u>31,482</u>

Use of the facilities of the Sarasota County Libraries
in Venice and North Port and the skilled services
provided by our wonderful volunteers

PRICELESS!

Expenses:

Salary/Payroll Taxes	17,475
Training & Training Materials	1,546
Office Supplies & Expense	3,613
Dues & Fees	467
Directors Insurance	<u>775</u>
Total expenses	<u>23,876</u>

Change in Unrestricted Net Assets \$ 7,606

Donor Restricted Grants

Received in the current year	\$ 5,477
Use of restricted funds	<u>(3,963)</u>
Change in Restricted Net Assets	1,514
Restricted Net Assets - beginning of the year	<u>486</u>
Restricted Net Assets - end of the year	<u>\$ 2,000</u>

Betty Black, Treasurer

**Literacy Volunteers
of South Sarasota County**
260 N. Nokomis Ave.
Venice, FL 34285

Literacy Changes Lives



FIRST CLASS

Literacy Volunteers of South Sarasota County

www.LiteracyChangesLives.org

**Mailing Address: 260 N. Nokomis Ave.
Venice, FL 34285 Phone: 941-861-1352
venice.literacy@gmail.com**

**North Port Library, 13800 S. Tamiami Trail
North Port, FL 34287 Phone: 941-861-1320
north.port.literacy@gmail.com**

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Tutor Trainers

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Linda Wieman, North Port

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Judith McGinty, Editor
Sandy McIntyre, Layout

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