



Mary Seyler's Level II Literacy Class



Tatiana Popova, Svitlana Kulenko, Tetyana Anufriyeva, Marharyta Tkachuk, Mary Seyler, Instructor, Margarita Covaljiu, Nataliia Karpenko, Lyubov Ivanova, and Volodymyr Andreychyn

Mary Seyler, a retired high school math teacher from New Jersey, has been teaching literacy classes at the library since shortly after moving to North Port about a dozen years ago. She initially taught a beginner class and then progressed to level 1 and currently teaches a level 2 class on Tuesdays at noon. Her class is 90 minutes in duration.

Some of her students have been in her class for years. However, one student in her current class, Svitlana Kulenko, from Ukraine, only arrived in the U.S. in September of 2022. Svitlana had studied "British English" in her native country and that provided her with enough of a foundation to participate at this level.

Mary's class averages about eight students each week. They like that in her class they listen to and read stories, write responses to the readings, learn grammar, and talk a lot. Her students like her friendliness, kindness and that she shares information about America and Americans.

The students in this class are eager to expand their

knowledge of English. In addition to this class, four of these students meet weekly with a tutor. Three attend this class along with one or more other classes each week.

They want to learn English because as student Tatiana Popova says, "I live in a country where all the people speak English." Tetyana Anufriyeva wants to be able to speak English to communicate and understand others speaking English.

Although Mary misses the four seasons in her native N.J., she revels in meeting wonderful students. Witnessing their accomplishments fills her with joy.

On behalf of your current class and the years of classes before them, Literacy Volunteers thanks you for your continued dedication to teaching English.

In addition to Mary's class, there are several other literacy classes offered at the North Port Library on varying levels. At this time none are available in Venice. Please contact the North Port Literacy Office or Venice Literacy Office, if you are interested in becoming an instructor or joining a class.

Welcome LVSSC New Board Members



Dell Rubin-Smithern

Dell Rubin-Smithern was born, raised and married in Detroit, Michigan. The family and their three children moved to Chicago, Illinois where Dell started her sales career as an Avon District Sales Manager. Her job included recruiting, training and motivating hundreds of sales representatives.

Following her years with Avon she joined The Sweig Company where she became a pioneer, as the only woman in the USA, selling any type of exterior wall cladding for commercial construction including anti-ballistic glazing for prisons and mental health institutions.

Dell and her second husband Earl, retired to Englewood several years ago. Dell became a Tutor out of the Venice Library this past July, after seeing an article in the Sarasota Herald Tribune. "I knew I could do this, as I had a Russian family with two little boys live in my home for four years. I taught them all English. "

In addition to tutoring in February of this year Dell developed and launched our New Tutor Mentoring Program and is Chairperson of the Tutor Training Committee. Soon she will also become a tutor trainer.

It had long since come to my attention that people of accomplishment rarely sat back and let things happen to them. They went out and made things happen.

Elinor Smith ~ A pioneering American Aviator



Patricia Roberts

Patricia Roberts is a retired Special Education and English Language Arts teacher with over thirty years of experience helping students improve their communication skills.

As a published author, Trish has a passion for sharing her expertise and love for reading and writing with others.

Her strong desire to continue to improve literacy skills inspired her, last November, to become a member of the Literacy Volunteers of South Sarasota County.

As a board member of this engaging community, one of Trish's goals is to use her advanced degree as a School District Administrator to become an effective literacy leader.

Trish wants to use her experience and expertise to help others gain lifelong literacy skills that will empower their learning and change their lives.

We also welcome Mary Lou Belisle and in July we will have yet another new member of the LVSSC Board and they will be profiled in an upcoming newsletter.

Student Chat: Conversation Classes on Zoom

Do you tutor a student who would benefit from opportunities to converse informally, read or listen to a brief news passage, respond to questions and chat about their personal experiences and prior knowledge?

Are you a tutor that would like to observe a master teacher at work modeling a lesson format and structure that you may discover is easily adaptable to your lessons?

Literacy Volunteers offers an online opportunity where students are welcome and urged to participate as much as they are comfortable and able. The level of participation varies from some level 1 students participating for sections of the lesson, to some students engaging fully in all aspects. Tutors who join the chat are encouraged to take part in the conversations and sharing of experiences.

The Zoom Chat sessions are led by Barbara Robidoux, a retired reading teacher who lives in New Hampshire. She is assisted by tutors Denise Valentich and Dr. Steve Weiner. These dedicated tutors assist Barbara by providing their perspective and knowledge as well as substituting for her when she is unavailable to lead a session. All of these session leaders demonstrate a sensitivity to the students' needs and set a tone of respect and caring.

An article from "News for You Online" is at the core of each session. This website is updated each Wednesday and consists of seven news articles of high interest written in plain English. Each of these articles is set up in a way that students can read or listen to them. In addition to the articles there are teacher resources for each article as well as many generalized teaching tips available on the website.

We have a subscription to this resource which you can access via this address:

<http://newsforyouonline.com/>. It is suggested that you familiarize yourself and your student with the website. You might decide to incorporate some of the articles into your lessons with your student and/or encourage them to participate in the Zoom Chat sessions. To sign in you will need the following password 0CFB3C. (The first digit of this password is a zero.)

Chat sessions meet via Zoom each **Monday at noon** and **Thursday at 6 pm**. Peter Norrman hosts the Monday sessions and Kim Pike, a Literacy Volunteer, hosts the Thursday sessions. You can sign up for one or both of these classes by emailing either Peter Norrman, our Venice Literacy Office Coordinator at venice.literacy@gmail.com or Karen Bridegam, our North Port Literacy Office Coordinator at north.port.literacy@gmail.com.

Peter or Karen will see that you receive an email containing a link to the article for your chat session to read prior to the session. It is not necessary to download or print the article as it will be displayed during the Zoom chat.

Please be aware that all participants will need to have Zoom downloaded to their device prior to their chat session. The email from Peter or Kim will also contain a link for the Zoom Chat session. When it is time for the session, you can click on the Zoom link in the email and instantly join in.

While this all may sound complicated, you can rest assured, you and your student will be glad that you put in the effort to explore this outstanding opportunity. Additionally, these zoom conversation sessions are a great way for students to continue learning English any week that you are not available to do a lesson.

On behalf of students and tutors we want to express sincere gratitude to our Zoom Chat team: Barbara, Denise and Steve as well as our Zoom session hosts Peter and Kim. Your dedication to creating and supporting this valuable learning opportunity for students and tutors is a treasured resource.

New Tutor Mentoring Program

By Dell Rubin-Smithern, Vice President

Training and retaining Literacy Volunteers is critical to Literacy Volunteers of South Sarasota County. There are hundreds of applicants waiting to learn to speak, read, or write English, to obtain a driver's license, apply for a new job, read to their grandchildren, support their families, and improve their status.

I learned last November that there has been an issue retaining newly trained tutors. My solution was to create and implement a Tutor Mentoring Program. This program was initiated in February by contacting our newest tutors to offer them support. Donna Sweet was kind enough to assist me with this first group of 43 tutors.

Now, when training classes are completed, an e-mail is sent to each new tutor, welcoming them to The Literacy Volunteers of South Sarasota County and informing them that they will be contacted by phone in about two weeks. The tutor will be asked for the following information: if they have chosen a student, and if so, the country they are from, their ESL level, etc. If a new Tutor cannot be reached by phone, then a questionnaire is e-mailed to them.

The feedback has been enlightening! "Oh, I did not know there was a Tutor Mentoring Program" or "I'm happy to know I'm not out here alone." "New Tutors prior to March 2023, were thrilled to learn that a workbook could now be given to their student, to write in and keep".

I saved a few tutors who were about to quit, before they even started, by talking to them and easing their fears. A few felt "overwhelmed," but I broke things down into manageable steps for them, and they realized "yes, they could do this." A little "mentoring" goes a long way.

I have learned from personal contacts with new tutors, that over half are "snowbirds"! We are encouraging our "snowbirds" to please take at least one hour a week while away, to meet with their student via Zoom, Snap Chat, Facetime etc. Their response has been positive. Keeping contact via technology when needed supports the emerging bond of commitment and trust between student and tutor that is so important.

The New Tutor Mentoring Program is working out beautifully and I am happy to announce that Donna Sweet will continue to partner with me in this program. English is the "passport" to the American Dream! Our dedicated Volunteer Tutors from LVSSC help make that dream happen!

Congratulations Lenore Good Southwest Airlines Round-Trip Flight Winner



Sandy McIntyre, Treasurer, Paddy Padmanabhan, President and Melanie Odom, Venice Librarian drawing the winning ticket

LVSSC in conjunction with the Florida Literacy Coalition and Southwest Airlines recently held a raffle for two round-trip flights.

Lenore Good won the flights. Jim Patterson, a LVSSC Board Member, sold her the winning ticket. It was among the many tickets that he sold.

We would like to thank all those who sold and purchased tickets. The funds raised will be used to enhance our tutor recruitment displays and update our brochure.

LVSSC ANNUAL LUNCHEON AND MEETING



LVSSC Board and Staff Members Pictured at the Luncheon

Back row - Joe Pokorney, Nancy Pike, David Williams, Sandy McIntyre, Polly Skinner, Paddy Padmanabhan, Dell Rubin-Smithern, Mary Lou Belisle, Peter Norrman, Front row - Janita Wisch, Patricia Roberts, Karen Bridegam, and Sue Spayed

Literacy Volunteers held its 2023 annual luncheon and meeting on Wednesday, April 19, in the Community Room at the William H. Jervy, Jr., Venice Public Library. 75 people attended and enjoyed a buffet lunch prepared and presented by the board members. Board member Janita Wisch, Assistant Manager at the North Port Library, arranged the table decorations. Current Treasurer Sandy McIntyre and board member Polly Skinner greeted attendees at the door. David Williams, also a board member, took photographs of the event.

President Paddy Padmanabhan welcomed everyone and encouraged people to enjoy the lunch in recognition of the dedication and hard work of all the volunteer tutors and our many diligent students. Paddy said that there are 43 million adults in the United States who cannot read, write, or do basic math above a third-grade level. Bringing all adults to the equivalent of a sixth-grade reading level would add 2.2 trillion dollars in annual income to the country's economy!

Following the lunch, several tutors introduced their students. Trish Roberts presented her student Ilona Fuerbeck. Verna Silk introduced her students Vladimir Teplitskiy and Aya Ajabboune. Vladimir spoke briefly about how much he enjoys learning English and participating in both face-to-face tutoring and the Zoom Conversation sessions offered twice each week.

Joe Giorgianni, who has been a tutor for more than 14 years, shared exciting news about his student Sabrina Hernandez. She holds a Doctor of Dentistry license in her native country of Venezuela. She worked with Joe on becoming more proficient in English and is currently studying dentistry at a university in Puerto Rico. Upon completion of her studies, she plans to return to the US and will be qualified to get her license. Joe also introduced his new student Semra Karacay from Turkey.

Following the inspiring presentations from tutors and students, Paddy introduced Literacy Volunteers' officers for the coming year, July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024:

President: Paddy Padmanabhan Vice President: Dell Rubin-Smithern
Treasurer: Mike Farmer Secretary: Nancy Pike

Here is a link to a video by David Williams of the luncheon:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1reytUg_D9w

Additional Luncheon Photos By David Williams



Tutor Teaching Tip - High-Frequency Words, Sight Words, Fluency and Comprehension

Phonics is essential in reading instruction. However, not all words follow phonetic patterns. With the goal of our students being able to read fluently, to be able to read orally with speed, accuracy, and with proper expression, it is essential that in addition to instruction in phonics they know high-frequency words by sight.

High-frequency words are words that appear most often in print materials. Students will need to practice reading these words, without having to “sound them out”. While some high-frequency words are decodable (did, with, at) and some are irregular (the, was, have) **all** of them should be easily recognized by sight.

To determine where to begin with your student you can print off sight word lists and have them read down through them. As soon as they have missed 10 words, stop and focus on working with those words. We also want them to be able to spell these words. A good exercise is to have them: repeat the word after you three times and then have them see it, say it, and write it. After these words have been mastered continue on with the list repeating this sequence until they have mastered list after list.

A student’s ability to recognize high-frequency words by sight is fundamental to developing fluency in reading. Fluency in reading leads to increased comprehension.

Fry High-Frequency Sight Word Lists - <https://sightwords.com/sight-words/fry/#lists>

LVSSC President's Comments:

As we approach the end of our 2022/2023 fiscal year it is time to reflect back and plan for the future. In the last six months as a board, we have been extremely productive in terms of tutor recruitment and fundraising. Our visibility was increased by an article: "Around the Town" in the Venice Gondolier, a featured article in Venice Life Style Magazine and another featured article in the North Port Sun. Even with this great publicity I ask all the tutors and board members to please continue to promote LVSSC with your family and friends. Let them know we need more tutors and that we are eager to speak to organizations and at events to promote LVSSC.

We recruited and trained 61 new tutors between November 2022 and March 2023. It is during this time that the tutor training committee fine-tuned the training schedule in response to tutor feedback. At the same time the committee also implemented a tutor-mentoring program.

In our ongoing effort to express appreciation for tutors we will now hold quarterly events. We want to thank the tutors and provide opportunities for them to interact with each other and share their experiences. I recognize that your schedules are busy but I believe these events provide tutors insights and encouragement.

Thanks to the Grant Committee's efforts we have received grants from various organizations as well as some significant individual donations. These increased funds have enabled us to now offer consumable workbooks free of cost to our students.

One of the highlights in the first quarter of 2023 is the recruitment and appointment of an Executive Director, Sue Spayd. She will assist us in achieving our goal to recruit more tutors in 2023/2024. Sue will also work diligently to promote LVSSC in the immigrant communities, recruit students, and make contacts with organizations to recruit volunteer tutors. We have an ever-increasing demand for our services with over 100 students waiting to be paired with a tutor.

A big shout out to all the tutors for doing a fabulous job. Thank you for your generosity with time, effort and language skills. Lastly, Nancy Pike has been our secretary for as long as I have been at LVSSC (6 years) and she is also actively involved in the grant committee. She would like to retire from her position as secretary and enjoy a bit more free time. If you are interested in joining our board as secretary, please contact me at paddy0206@gmail.com or Sue Spayd at start.now.north.port@gmail.com.

Life Changing Literacy Lessons



Linda Carson, Suncoast View Host, Paddy Padmanabhan and Sue Spayd

On May 5th Paddy Padmanabhan, President of LVSSC and Sue Spayd, Executive Director of LVSSC joined Linda Carson live on Suncoast View, ABC 7 Sarasota, and enthusiastically shared the work of our literacy organization and the continuing need for more volunteer tutors. You can view this segment of the show at the link below.

<https://www.mysuncoast.com/video/2023/05/05/life-changing-literacy-lessons-with-literacy-volunteers-south-sarasota-co-suncoast-view/>



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