

## *Lucky Student, Lucky Tutor*

Ngoc Pham amazes us in so many ways. She has been in the United States for less than two years, yet she conveys a surprising level of comfort with the culture and language. Ngoc is very smart, articulate and delightful to know.

She came here from the Mekong Delta area of Viet Nam, several hours south of Ho Chi Min City. To learn English, she studied every day for many years. Her dream as a child was to become a dentist so that she could “bring shiny smiles to people” and provide the treatment they need. She is particularly interested in helping children overcome the anxiety of going to the dentist. Ngoc attended school every day for 14 hours and continued studying at home until midnight. She focused on math, chemistry and biology. The work paid off because she was accepted in a medical university to study dentistry.

When Ngoc got the opportunity to join her parents and grandmother in the U.S., she did not hesitate. She now attends to the University of South Florida and will soon enter the Dental Hygiene program. When she completes these studies, she will decide on her next academic move. Her plans are fluid but clearly, she will be the best in her field. Ngoc is a lifelong student who expects A’s in all she does.

She has left so much behind for the chance to live here like a local. She misses her friends and family and her favorite Vietnamese street food. But, for now she is satisfied with Papa John’s Sausage and Pepperoni Pizza. Her favorite movie is “Frozen” and her American hero is Barack Obama.



Nancy Zarowin is Ngoc’s ESL tutor. Nancy has been teaching English as a second language for 16 years. She and Ngoc are working on pronunciation which is particularly difficult for Vietnamese speakers. They are also working on advanced vocabulary. To make lessons more interesting they are reading the book Stealing Buddha’s Dinner together. Written by Bich Nguyen, the story recounts her coming of age in America and transition to pop culture. It seems like just the right book for Ngoc to be reading.

LVSSC has many earnest students like Ngoc. Some are struggling to learn the language; for others, it comes more easily. Some students have had little or no formal education and don’t read in their native languages. They face particularly difficult obstacles. Besides providing one to one tutoring, LVSSC provides group classes for many workers in local restaurants, assisted living facilities and wherever else there are groups of eager newcomers who want to learn our language and culture.

## President's Corner

We are coming to the end of our fiscal year and taking time to reflect on the many accomplishments we have enjoyed. We held our Annual Meeting on Monday, April 24 at the Venice Art Center. You can view pictures of this event on our Facebook page. It was a grand luncheon where tutors and volunteers were appreciated and students were recognized. Our speakers were dynamic, especially our own students. If you did not attend, you should put this on your calendar for 2018. It is a very positive, rewarding and heartfelt event for all.

We elected the following slate of officers for 2017-18 and sincerely hope you will support us in our endeavors starting July 1, 2017.

President – Jan Gallas  
Vice-President – Joe Pokorney  
Secretary – Nancy Pike  
Treasurer – Sandy McIntyre



We shall continue all of our current programs and add a few new ones along the way. You can look forward to more in-service tutor workshops, old and new fundraising events, additional classes and the new **“Start Now! North Port”** program. We hired a part-time Project Manager who will develop this program to address the waiting list in North Port.

We are always searching out new ideas. Should you have a suggestion for us to pursue, I am always eager to hear from you. Please make your thoughts known. Congratulations to our tutors and students for another successful year. Step up and join us as we continue our efforts proving that **“Literacy Changes Lives.”**

-- Jan Gallas

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## Tutor Coffee Klatch

Ideas really do flow with coffee! LVSSC hosted a Coffee Klatch for tutors on March 8 at North Port Library. President Jan Gallas was present to greet the crowd which was not only hungry for pastry and hot coffee, but more importantly, for new ideas! And we were not disappointed.



Peggy Ludgate demonstrated how easy it is to use a tablet for instruction with your student. She also recommended some great internet sites.

Ann Caron showed us how we can incorporate children's picture books into our lessons. By choosing subject matter which is significant to your student, you can both learn something new!



## Volunteer Thank You Luncheon and Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting was the culmination and celebration of all the successful activities of the year. We celebrated the new tutors we trained and saw them gather together with the cadre of veteran tutors. We met many of the students who learned or improved their English and bettered their lives.

This year among other things, we walked our walks for United Way, and talked our talks to various community groups, and played our hearts, clubs, spades and diamonds at the annual card and game party. We established a speaker's bureau. We had great success with grant applications, wrote an ambitious draft 5-year plan and established a Quality Assurance Committee. This was also a year when we didn't know from time to time where our Venice office would be located. We experienced the damage of a large number of books and witnessed generous supporters provide new ones. Tutor Luncheons and Coffees were held and will continue as a way to provide tutor-to-tutor guidance and assistance. We welcomed new board members and said thank you and good bye to those retiring.

To celebrate all of this, we came together to enjoy a lovely luncheon in the midst of the paintings and sculpture at the Venice Art Center. Our president Jan Gallas gave an inspiring speech about our accomplishments and plans.



Tom Melville, Executive Director of the Literacy Council of Sarasota, gave a brief and informative talk.



Olga Strelkova of Jacaranda Trace shared with us the importance and value they place on their partnership with LVSSC.



Olga Strelkova  
Jacaranda Trace



Diana Fernandez  
Student

The highlights of the programs were, as at every Annual Meeting, the remarks provided by our students. They again reminded us of what a privilege it is to be an American citizen and how much it means to them to have volunteer tutors.



Mary Dudko  
Student



Ewa Zabielska  
Student

## Annual Card & Game Party



Nancy Pike, Leslie Yard, Mary Seyler, Karen Bridegam, Judith McGinty, and Claudia Daniels

Once again, LVSSC had a very successful Card and Game Party fundraiser. The event was over the top this year, exceeding everyone's expectations for fund raising, attendance and fun. What a nice venue!

The card party is held each year in one of the great halls at Jacaranda Trace Retirement Community in Venice. JTRC always reserves such a nice room for us and provides the players with yummy finger foods and beverages.

There were 114 attending this year. The little groups included the fierce Mah Jongg and Bridge players as well as Hand and Foot, Dominoes, Euchre and Ulcers players.

Janita Wisch was in charge of the teacup auction that had something for everyone.

The bidding was fierce on jewelry, gift certificates, art and goodie baskets.

This was the third year LVSSC was fortunate to receive two round-trip tickets donated by Southwest Airlines via the Florida Literacy Coalition. Board members and other volunteers sold a record number of raffle tickets. This year's winner is a member of Rotary, a local service club.

Along with that raffle, 50/50 tickets and Tea Cup auction tickets, LVSSC netted over \$5,000. This event's amazing income will be contributed to materials for tutor training, books for students and office expenses. Our organization depends on this Annual Card & Game Party for a major contribution. We are never disappointed.



## United Way Community Charity Walks (Walk-A-Thons)

Every year LVSSC participates in the United Way Walk-A-Thons in Venice and North Port. Joe Pokorney led the Venice Walk in February with 12 walkers who raised \$760 as our share from the United Way. Jan Gallas and Janita Wisch joined 12 walkers in North Port who raised \$510 for a total of \$1,270.

We encourage volunteers to be planning for next year and be part of this most important fundraiser for our organization. Raising more money in contributions assists both LVSSC and United Way. Thanks to those who participated this year.



LVSSC won the trophy for most money collected at the Venice Walk.



North Port walkers were sporting their “Steppin’ Out for Literacy” shirts.

## ***Tutor Training for New Volunteers - Please tell your friends!***

### **Register to attend both sessions:**

Friday, June 9 - 10:30 am - 5:00 pm

Friday, June 16 - 2:30 - 5:00 pm

Contact the Coordinator in the North Port or Venice Literacy Office to register.

### **Location:**

North Port Library, Juliana Room

13800 S. Tamiami Trail, North Port 34287

## ***SCF Library - Convenient Tutoring Location***



Halfway between Venice and North Port, the State College of Florida (SCF) Venice Campus, is partnering with LVSSC and offering its Library as a meeting place for tutor-student pairs. The campus is at 8000 S. Tamiami Trail, about 1 mile north of River Road.

There are seven private rooms available on a first come, first served basis. In the rare case all the rooms are full, tutoring may commence at one of the many library tables tucked away. Not only is

the College Library a convenient meeting place, but meeting there also gives the less confident student a chance to “safely” explore future educational opportunities in the community that may move the student toward his or her goals.

SCF Library Hours: Monday-Thursday 8-8, Friday 8-2.

There is a map on the internet showing the location of the Library which is building 300:

<http://www.scf.edu/AboutSCF/Locations/> Scroll down to **Campus Map** under **SCF Venice**.

## ***Dear LitWits...***

**Question:** My student and I have been working together for 6 months and have made great progress. But now it is time for me to head back up north until October. I am determined to keep our relationship intact and continue to help him, but I can't seem to be able to come up with a plan. Do you have any suggestions?

**Answer:** You have a great opportunity to continue with your student...by email. If you have been working on tenses you can give your student writing assignments that require him to use various tenses. Give him a list of verbs to be included in the writing. If vocabulary is being stressed give him a list of words to be used in the writing exercise. Mark up the work, take a photo or scan it and send it back. Consider a follow-up call for each assignment so that you can work on pronunciation.

You don't need to use Skype or video calling unless you are both tech savvy and prefer it. Email and phone calls will work just fine to keep the learning momentum going.

Have a question for **LitWits**? Email it to [venice.literacy@gmail.com](mailto:venice.literacy@gmail.com) with “LITWITS” as the Subject.

## Speaker's Bureau



Nancy Pike is one of LVSSC's speakers.

Literacy Volunteers of South Sarasota County has been providing a great, free service in our community, but the challenge is getting the word out about who we are and what we do. That is why we established a Speakers Bureau - to inform the public. Another reason for the Speakers Bureau is to reach potential volunteers.

In November, Esther Bird trained five volunteers to be speakers for LVSSC. In February, four more were trained. Eighteen presentations have been made this year to community groups and more are scheduled in the coming months. Please let Esther know of groups you think may be interested in learning more about our work. All contact information should be emailed to her at:

[chickadee72393@comcast.net](mailto:chickadee72393@comcast.net)

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## Immigrant Concierge Service at SCF provides English for Academic Purposes

Is your student interested in pursuing academic goals? Students who have reached at least an intermediate level and who are high school graduates from any country may apply to State College of Florida (SCF). At SCF, students continue English studies in the *English for Academic Purposes* program. The EAP program focuses on skills for higher education - analytical reading, academic writing, professional presentations, note-taking, and more. College advisors then help students transition from the EAP program to a professional degree pathway in the College. EAP is for both students who are attending college for the first time, and for those who are college graduates from another country and want to pursue a new area of study or transfer their degree to the U.S. The EAP program also serves students who just want to polish their English skills at a higher level without participating in a degree program. SCF welcomes non-traditional students, and half the EAP students are over the age of 30.

A new semester begins every August and January. Students are encouraged to apply 7-8 weeks early in order to complete the steps in the process and make sure they have the necessary documents. The College now offers a "concierge" service to assist immigrant students from the day of their first inquiry to day of their first class. Interested students and tutors can visit the website for more details or contact Maria Spelleri, Curriculum Coordinator for the EAP program. She's ready to meet with students (and their tutors!) to discuss the program as well as to help students complete the application process and apply for financial aid.

Information: [www.scf.edu/LearnEnglish](http://www.scf.edu/LearnEnglish)

Maria Spelleri: [spellem@scf.edu](mailto:spellem@scf.edu) 408-1505



## Student Success Stories - We'd like to print yours!

### LVSSC Students Open Delightful French Cafe



Steve and Jessica Longet came from France to the US in 2016. Even though their English language skills were minimal, they opened Cafe Longet at 239 Miami Ave. W. in Venice shortly after they arrived. They had this goal before arriving, and through hard work and optimism, they now have a very successful business. We are told that the cuisine is *marveilleuse*.

Kathy Olson, their tutor spent 2-3 hours each week with them at the Jacaranda Library. While their reading skills are very good, their English speaking skills have needed much work. Kathy conducts "Just Talk" sessions for 15 minutes during which she asks questions. Their responses reinforce speaking skills and often elicit great laughter. And, because telephone conversation is often frightening and confusing, Kathy has developed a method to get clarification that works well.

Since the business is booming, the threesome have less time to meet regularly but plan to continue lessons during the summer.



### Venice Literacy Office Update

In the new Venice office, our tutors are busy serving new and long-time students. As seasonal tutors make their way up north, there are opportunities for tutors to pick up some students over the summer months. If you are interested in working with a student for the summer, please contact Sharon Betterton for a match.

As Jan Gallas announced during the Annual Meeting, we would like all tutors to have red literacy lanyards to wear when meeting with students. This is especially important at the Venice Library, since access to the meeting rooms is through an employee entrance. Again, contact Sharon if you need a lanyard.

There are new books available for tutors to use with students. Come in anytime and take a look. The Literacy office at the Venice Library is open whenever the library is open.

Contact: [venice.literacy@gmail.com](mailto:venice.literacy@gmail.com)

## Literacy Changes Lives

## *Welcome New Tutors*

On February 16 and 23, this group of new volunteers attended Tutor Training by Esther Bird at the Jacaranda Library in Venice.



Front, left to right - Carol Burns, Deb Metzler, and Paula Nelson  
Back, left to right - Jack Nugent, Cornelius Carr, Linda Aguilar, Allan Metzler, Chris Pilkington, and Evelyn Albert. Barbara Koehler was not in the photo.

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On April 22 and 29, this group of new volunteers attended Tutor Training by Esther Bird at the Jacaranda Library in Venice.



Front, left to right - Deb Jackson, Marie Clements, and Cindy Fox.  
Back, left to right - Bob Hanbury, Lydia Lewis, Skip Hastings, Kim Pike, and Jean Smith.

**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](http://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**

#### **Officers**

President	Jan Gallas
Vice Pres.	Joe Pokorney
Secretary	Nancy Pike
Treasurer	Betty Black

#### **Directors**

Esther Bird  
Claudia Daniels  
Judith McGinty  
Sandy McIntyre  
Jim Patterson  
Mary Seyler  
Polly Skinner  
Janita Wisch

#### **Literacy Coordinators**

Sharon Betterton, Venice  
Karen Bridegam, North Port

#### **Start Now! North Port**

Kim Pike

#### **Tutor Trainers**

Esther Bird, Venice

#### **Newsletter**

Judith McGinty, Editor  
Sandy McIntyre, Layout

Yes, we will mail printed copies to members who do not have an e-mail address or who request paper copies.



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