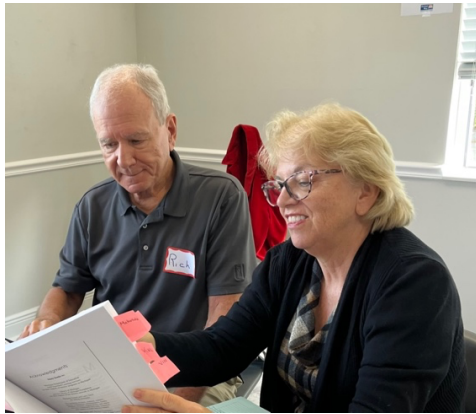


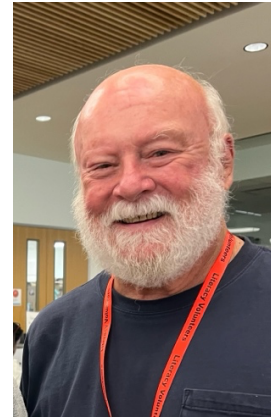


<http://www.literacychangeslives.org/>

## Part One: Meet New Tutors - Rich Ames, Pam Zulauf, and Glen Peterson



*Rich Ames and Pam Zulauf*



*Glen Peterson*

Welcome to the first part of a three-part series following tutors and their adult learners. Part one will focus on the tutors; you will learn about their backgrounds and why they are interested in being tutors.

New tutor **Rich Ames** has a keen interest in languages that could well have been sparked by his world travel in relation to his career.

Some years ago, he decided to learn Spanish. He signed up for an adult education Spanish class but only attended sporadically. Because of this, he then made arrangements to take private lessons with the class instructor. Rich entered this phase of learning Spanish with a basic understanding of the language, but he was hesitant to speak it. With one-on-one instruction, he overcame his reluctance to speak Spanish and was empowered to do so. His instructor was animated, and she included a lot of repetition, as well as movement and acting out scenarios, in her lessons.

Following his initial retirement, Rich led professional development sessions related to teaching computer-based business technologies that had been designed by his former employer. He soon determined that there was room for improvement in how the lessons were structured and went on to redesign them. Remembering his own experiences with learning Spanish, Rich ensured that the new sessions were engaging and hands-on. He found this approach to be far more effective than the previous "sit and get" variety of professional development.

After retiring from this work and moving to Venice, he was "Googling" around looking for language lessons when he came across information about Literacy Volunteers of South Sarasota County. The thought was formed that maybe he could take his interest and experience learning Spanish as well as his background in hands on learning and become a tutor.

In November, Rich participated in our two-day Tutor Training session. While in the training, he quickly realized that many of the others had more context and the vernacular of educators. However, drawing

on his personal experiences as a language learner and professional developer, he is forging ahead. Rich has been matched with a student and is ready to do his best to provide the types of lessons that will further his student on the path to becoming more fluent in the English language.

**Pam Zulauf** recently moved here from Colorado with her husband. She has a diverse professional background, having worked in business and in various positions within schools. Her last position before retiring was that of library teacher.

Some years ago, just prior to her senior year in high school, her dad's military career required them to move to Venezuela. Once there, she attended an international high school where English was spoken. She and her family, however, resided within a Spanish speaking community, not a military or ex-pat community where English would have been spoken. Thus, during her non-school hours, Pam was immersed in Spanish. She learned it well enough to function in her environment and develop friendships with neighboring kids.

Pam read about LVSSC through a post on Nextdoor.com. She participated in the November tutor training session. Due to the fact that she is accomplished in Spanish, she decided to set up a small group of level zero Spanish-speaking learners at the North Port Library.

**Glen Peterson** and his wife transitioned to Venice from Minnesota, where he was a professor of counseling psychology. Initially, he learned about tutoring opportunities from a poster on a bulletin board where he lives. His curiosity and interest were piqued. Over a period of time, he saw articles in local newspapers and brochures at the Venice library. He spoke with a neighbor who had tutored and decided to investigate the process of becoming a tutor. He met Peter Norrman, the literacy coordinator at the Venice library, and decided to sign up for tutor training to further explore whether this might be right for him and something he felt he could do.

Glen believes that helping area residents learn English is "the right thing to do". He has a natural inclination toward working with people to achieve their goals. He appreciates that these individuals and families have made great sacrifices to be here. He believes that they are important members of our society. He wants to help them learn English so that they will be able to gain their place here in our English-speaking community.

He participated in the September training session and found that it presented teaching strategies very different than those he used in his previous experiences in teaching. While the training was well done, he left wondering: can I do this, am I the right person for this, will I be able to help? With some confidence building from Peter Norrman, his training materials in hand, he was matched with an adult learner. Glen thinks that he is prepared enough to "jump off the cliff" and begin tutoring.

In the upcoming part two of this series, we will introduce you to the adult learners working with these tutors. We will hear from both the tutor and learners as they share what it was like getting started. The series will conclude when we check in with the tutors and learners to get updates on how it's going, now that they have been working together for many months. It is our hope that this series will provide a representative snapshot of the tutor/learner experience.

"Do not wait; the time will never be 'just right'. Start where you stand, and work whatever tools you may have at your command and better tools will be found as you go along."  
Napoleon Hill, author

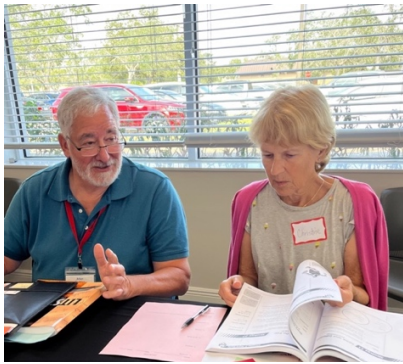
## Tutor Training

Our organization is comprised of dozens of volunteers and yet we need even more to meet the needs of our program. No teaching experience is necessary for participation. Please join us or encourage a friend, neighbor or casual acquaintance to attend an upcoming two-day training session. Tutor Trainings are hosted at State College of Florida, Venice Campus. This campus is just off Hwy 41 South near Wellen Park.

**Upcoming Training dates: March 12 & 14, May 21 & 23, July 16 & 18, Sept. 17 & 19, and Nov. 12 & 14**

Contact Karen Bridegam ([north.port.literacy@gmail.com](mailto:north.port.literacy@gmail.com)) at the literacy office in the North Port Library or Peter Norrman ([venice.literacy@gmail.com](mailto:venice.literacy@gmail.com)) in the Venice Library literacy office for more information or to register.

Below are some of our recent diligent trainees from November's class, engaging with each other and the resources.



*Allan Metzler and Christine Pizer*



*Andy O'Connor and Philip Lamade*



We congratulate January's class of newly trained tutors. Their trainers were Trish Roberts and Carolyn Pearce. They were assisted by tutor trainer Deb Metzler.

### **Upcoming Tutor/Instructor Networking Session: Feb. 23 from 10 -12 am**

Please join us at our upcoming networking session. It will be held at State College of FL, Venice Campus. Plan to park in the student parking lot. We will be in the library, which is **building 300, room 325**. Light refreshments will be available. Contact Karen or Peter to RSVP.



## United Way of South Sarasota County is Changing, Support for Literacy Volunteers Continues

Barbara Cruz, President and CEO of UWSSC, is leading a transition in how UWSSC awards funds to local non-profits and how their organization uses funds to provide direct services to residents in need of help.

This change was underway when Hurricane Ian devastated homes in South County, leaving residents without basic needs. UWSSC was able to provide donated food, clothes and supplies at their office at 4242 S Tamiami Trail, Venice, near Books-A-Million. They also established Hurricane Ian Long Term Recovery Committees and worked with the World Renew Disaster Response organization to process requests from people for money to repair their damaged homes. More than \$1.6 million in aid was distributed to hurricane victims.

At the UWSSC Engagement Luncheon last October, LVSSC Board members learned about a partnership between UWSSC and the Sarasota County Sheriff's department called SHIELD (Supportive Housing Initiative, Eviction Lifeline, Diversion). The Sheriff's Office Civil Unit is required to serve writs of eviction on tenants, more than 800 writs in 2023. Deputies spoke emotionally about this dangerous and sad duty. The SHIELD partnership has improved this process. Working with Gulf Coast Legal Services housed in the UWSSC office, deputies now give tenants information on UWSSC resources including legal assistance and UWSSC does what it can to prevent tenants from becoming homeless.

United Way of South Sarasota County (UWSSC) has awarded funds to Literacy Volunteers since 2000. They continue to support the literacy education we provide to individuals who need to learn English and or improve their reading skills so they can get better jobs, further their education, and care for their families. Please consider donating to United Way of South Sarasota County at: <https://uwssc.org/ways-to-give>.

## Tutor Online Resource: "News in Levels"

News in Levels <https://www.newsinlevels.com/> is a free resource that provides world news for students of English and much more. This online resource contains brief articles and presents them at three different reading levels. At each level there is an audio recording of the article.

"Robinson Crusoe" and "The Little Prince" are also presented in three levels with audio recordings.

These examples from "China Fog" will give you an idea as to the complexity of each of their levels.

level 1 - Shanghai has a thick fog during the holiday. It is hard to see famous places.

level 2 - Shanghai faced a thick fog during the year-end holiday, which caused worry about transport problems.

level 3 - Shanghai's well-known landmarks vanished behind dense fog during the year-end holiday, causing concerns about potential transport disruptions.

News in Levels could provide you with an alternative resource to complement your lessons or it might be a homework resource. It is worth exploring if your learner is working at one of these levels.

## LVSSC Community Outreach in Search of New Volunteers

Executive Director Sue Spayd and Literacy Coordinator Karen Bridegam recently attended the IslandWalk Residential Development Nonprofit Fair in Wellen Park. There were about 225 participants. Twenty-six indicated an interest in potentially becoming volunteers.



*Karen Bridegam is eager to welcome potential volunteers at IslandWalk in Wellen Park.*

Also, in January, LVSSC Board Member Mike Farmer and others attended the Venice Chamber of Commerce Nonprofit Rally 2024.

This was a large event with 45 nonprofits promoting their organizations.

This is the first time that we offered bookmarks at a promotional event. The bookmarks may have helped lure the over 100 people who stopped by to learn about LVSSC. About a dozen indicated they might be interested in volunteering. All were very impressed and shared their appreciation for what we do for adult English language learners within our local communities.



*Mike Farmer promoting LVSSC.*



## Literacy Volunteers of South Sarasota County Numbers of Interest, January – December 2023

In 2023 we provided services to **444 adults learners, a 39% increase from 2022:**

- 441 Adults learning to speak, read and write English
- 3 English-speakers working to improve their reading and writing skills

Adult learners participated in:

- 223 1-to-1 tutoring with a volunteer tutor
- 299 English Language Learning classes with a volunteer instructor
- 80 Both 1-to-1 tutoring and classes
- 19 Learning Upgrade, an online teaching tool

Services delivered by **184 community volunteers, a 26% increase from 2022:**

- 173 Tutors and instructors
- 11 Board of Director members, non-tutoring volunteers

Tutor training for new tutors and small group instructor volunteers, has increased 42% from 2022:

- 85 Volunteers completed our two-day tutor training sessions

Additionally, we provide Citizenship Classes:

- 11 English Language Learners became U.S. Citizens following participation in these classes

Staff deliver direct support to volunteers and coordinate programs:

- 1 Part-time Executive Director in North Port at the Family Services Center
- 2 Part-time Coordinators, one per office (North Port and Venice Libraries)

Planning, Oversight, Community Outreach, and Fundraising is coordinated by:

- 12 Members of the Board of Directors of Literacy Volunteers South Sarasota County

## Barbara Robidoux, Student Zoom Chat Lead Teacher, Comes to Town



*Kim Pike, Barbara Robidoux, and Peter Norrman*



*Dick Robidoux, Barbara Robidoux, and Vladimir Tiplitski*

Many tutors and students may have heard about, visited, or joined in our ongoing series of Student Chats. Barbara Robidoux develops the lessons and is the lead teacher of these sessions. The chats were initially originated several years ago during the pandemic. The goal of each session is to provide opportunities for students at level 2 or higher to engage in conversation. These Zoom chats are held on Mondays at noon and Thursdays at 6 pm. Contact Karen or Peter for you and/or your learner to be invited to one or both of the weekly zoom chats.

Barbara and her husband Dick live in New Hampshire. Until January of this year, they hadn't visited our area. She sincerely wanted to meet Peter Norrman and Kim Pike, the local Zoom facilitators, as well as the local LVSSC volunteers who are key components to the success of this ongoing series of chats. Barbara and Dick were able to arrange a visit and enjoyed a night out getting to meet all these helpers face to face, no Zoom required! It was a joy-filled event to be sure.



*David Williams and Verna Silk*



*Barbara Robidoux and Dr. Stephen Wiener*

As always, it is a delight to acknowledge and celebrate the dedication and commitment of our many volunteers and the various circumstances in which they support English language learners within our communities.

# LVSSC President's Message, by Paddy Padmanabhan

By the time you see this in your Newsletter, a month in 2024 will have passed. Even before the advent of the New Year, we knew it would be a challenging year. If the first month is any indication, 2024 will require of us, the Board members specifically, to rise to the challenges of implementing programs to ensure that we achieve our objectives to continue to make LVSSC a sustainable organization.

Our challenges are on three fronts. First, we need to find better ways and methods to meet the increasing demand. Not only do we need to recruit more tutors but we must also develop programs to maximize the utilization of the tutors that we have. This may require fresh thinking, novel and efficient methods to address the increasing demands for our services.

Secondly, we need to shake off the shackles of "this is how we have always done it". All board members and tutors alike are strongly encouraged to share fresh ideas and suggestions to ensure that more people know and are aware of LVSSC. Please take the opportunity to promote LVSSC and its Mission and Vision as a member of other social or community organizations with which you associate. Always be on the lookout for opportunities to recruit new tutors and volunteers.

Lastly, we do need to increase our funding base to effectively implement our services for current and future adult learners of English. Again, when you are with friends and families at social gatherings make them aware of ways to donate to LVSSC. I am asking the board members to seriously focus on this issue and have robust discussions to implement new fundraising programs this year. While our Grant Committee has been doing an excellent job in getting funds from various organizations, our needs far exceed our current financial resources.

Funding is crucial as we need to improve the way the organization is staffed. It is our goal to add a Staff Assistant, who will perform program work as well as administrative duties and maintain our Executive Director position. "Academic research has shown that groups that spend more on overhead often deliver better results "(The Economist, January 13th-19th 2024 edition). These two positions can also provide needed help to our Grants Committee in writing grant requests.

It is also important that we market LVSSC effectively and take care of the needs of our tutors. Our volunteers deserve our ongoing support and mentoring to keep them engaged in our mission.

I would like to take this moment to thank all the tutors/instructors, the tutor trainers/mentors, the incredible administrative staff and the board for their excellent work in 2023.

In conclusion, I extend a big welcome to the newly graduated tutors of January 2024.

Never believe that a few caring people can't change the world.  
For, indeed, that's all who ever have.

Margaret Mead, author and anthropologist





## Literacy Volunteers of South Sarasota County

[www.LiteracyChangesLives.org](http://www.LiteracyChangesLives.org)

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Venice, FL 34285 Phone: 941-861-1352

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

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North Port, FL 34287 Phone: 941-861-1320

[north.port.literacy@gmail.com](mailto:north.port.literacy@gmail.com)

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Peter Norrman, Venice

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Andy O'Connor

Carolyn Pearce

Trish Roberts

### Newsletter Editor

Deb Metzler

### Speaker's Bureau

Paddy Padmanabhan



## Give Via the Flanzer Trust

**Your individual donation of \$5 - \$500 to Literacy Volunteers may be matched by the Louis & Gloria Flanzer Philanthropic Trust (Restrictions Apply).**

[www.flanzertrust.org/make-a-donation/](http://www.flanzertrust.org/make-a-donation/)

For more information, go to our website

<http://www.literacychangeslives.org/> then click on DONATE

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