

BETWEEN the LINES

{ Volume 6 • Issue 4 • Winter 2009 }

SAVE THE DATE IN 2010

- 4th Annual Larry Dierker "My Team" Celebrity Golf Tournament, February 22
Reserve your team now! Contact Judy McFarland at 713-266-8777 or judy.mcfarland@literacyadvance.org
- Community Volunteer Tutor Symposium - March 27
- Tutor Training Workshops and Enrichment Labs - please visit www.literacyadvance.org

Learn more on our Web site, www.literacyadvance.org.

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*Requests to be included on our mailing list should be directed to: info@literacyadvance.org. If you would be interested in receiving our newsletter via e-mail, please send a request to irene.evans@literacyadvance.org. *Between the Lines* is designed as a general newsletter for the information of our learners, volunteers, donors, board members, supporters and friends. We welcome your comments and questions.*

Literacy Advance of Houston is an Accredited Affiliate of ProLiteracy America and Literacy Texas, and a member of the Better Business Bureau, Houston READ Commission, and United Way of Greater Houston.

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Literacy Advance of Houston

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{ phone 713.266.8777 } { fax 713.266.8889 }

Open a new chapter in someone's life.

*For as little as \$10 a month,
you can provide one learner
with a week's worth of
invaluable literacy classes.*

Our monthly sustainer program is a secure, easy and convenient way to support the efforts of Literacy Advance while budgeting and tracking your charitable donations.

Sign up for the monthly sustainer program at www.literacyadvance.org and begin supporting the mission of Literacy Advance securely and conveniently through automatic giving.

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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE LITERACY TEXAS ADULT LEARNER OF THE YEAR!

We are so proud of Fea Ngaujah, one of our ABE learners. Earlier in the year, she received the Literacy Advance nomination for Literacy Texas' Adult Learner of the Year award, and we were so excited to hear that she had won! Below are excerpts from the nomination, written by Literacy Advance Programs Coordinator Connie Loh.

I remember that we were working together in the computer lab, and Fea pulled out a job application and showed it to me. "I need help with this. Can you help me?" she said. I looked at the job application and everything seemed fine, except for the education part of it. It was empty. It wasn't until I saw that empty space that I understood how meaningful going to class is for her. Fea never went to school. Literacy Advance is the only school she has ever attended.

She told me, "I never went to school in my country. Literacy Advance is my school. How can I explain that when I am applying for a job? When I go to the interview, what should I say? They will think I am illiterate. But I am not. This is my school. I can read, write, comprehend because I came here to learn, and to be able to get my GED, go to college, and have a better job, a better life."

The improvements Fea has made have been noted by her tutors. One of them, Margaret Felice, wrote: "Today Fea has an impressive vocabulary, tremendous comprehension of what she reads, has started her own Mary Kay business and has made a turnaround in her writing. She is a creative writer who expresses herself very well. Fea has made these strides because she is completely dedicated to her learning."

Congratulations, Fea!



ALUMNI

When our ESL learners graduate from Literacy Advance programs after they complete their Level 5 class, we want to help them remain part of the Literacy Advance community. This is why we started the alumni group in April 2009. Open to all graduates, the group aims to keep learners in touch with each other — and with us — and to give them opportunities to socialize and continue practicing their English.

It has been a great success! The alumni group already has over 35 members and is led by seasoned tutor Elaine Brimmer, with help from various members. Outings have included visits to the Museum of Fine Arts, the Menil and the Houston Museum of Natural Science. When not going on field trips, the members regularly gather for book club meetings, socializing and conversation. Best of all, a significant number of alumni group members has been volunteering regularly at Literacy Advance, and five have registered for the Learners as Tutors program, where they will learn to tutor lower level ESL classes.



Literacy Advance of Houston

Dear Literacy Advocates and Supporters,

I am very excited about the opportunities we have at Literacy Advance to help individuals improve themselves and our community! Can you imagine what it's like not to be able to read? I can't, because it's been a central part of almost all my life. Not being able to understand a prescription label or a bill and not being able to read to your child or help with their homework — it's hard to put myself in that position, but many in our community face that every day. With your continued support, Literacy Advance is changing lives.

So far this year, Literacy Advance has:

- Documented over 44,000 learner hours
- Seen an increase of over 200 percent in the number of hours the computer lab is utilized by learners
- Trained a record number of new tutors

Hopefully, you have had the opportunity to join us for some of our events this year and hear directly from one of our learners. Our most recent Champion of Literacy celebration honored Dwight Edwards at the Junior League. Our next event is the Larry Dierker "My Team" Celebrity Golf Tournament at BlackHorse Golf Club on February 22, which promises to be a fun day benefitting a great cause. As many of you know, Larry Dierker is not only a member of the board of Literacy Advance, but also a dedicated volunteer tutor.

We invite you to be part of the success of Literacy Advance and help change people's lives and our community. There are many opportunities to volunteer, be an advocate and supporter, and contribute financially. The economic environment has increased the need, but has also made fundraising more challenging. Contributions are needed now more than ever. If you can read this, please help someone who can't.

Thanks for everything you do as a champion of literacy!



Carla Tibbitts
Board President

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Carla Tibbitts – <i>Community Volunteer</i>
Vice President	Steve Ginsburgh – <i>Universal Weather & Aviation</i>
Treasurer	Don Baird – <i>Community Volunteer</i>
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Member	Carolyn Mayo – <i>Vollmer Public Relations</i>
Jane Holston	<i>Executive Director, Literacy Advance</i>

BECOME A FAN OR A FOLLOWER OF LITERACY ADVANCE!

Get up-to-the-minute news and updates when you become a Facebook fan or a Twitter follower of Literacy Advance!

Thanks to volunteer tutor Jeff Westenhaber for keeping both sites up to date for us.



MEET ANNA ZUBKOVA



Where would we be without Anna? Starting as a learner in Literacy Advance ESL classes, Anna has now given back more than twice the number of hours as a volunteer than she ever spent in class! Whether it's organizing Volunteer Appreciation

events, helping with the alumni, assisting us around the office in all sorts of ways, or representing Literacy Advance at United Way fairs, Anna constantly raises her hand to offer to help us out. And not only does she give us hours of her time each week, she also encourages others to volunteer as well.

1. How did you first come to Literacy Advance?

I was looking for classes to improve my English skills. When I first attended, I was impressed with the friendly environment and the quality of the curriculum each class provided. I enjoyed my time there and made a lot of friends. While attending my classes, I had witnessed an enormous amount of love and care going into the educational process by the staff. After graduation I realized that I would love to be a part of this team of volunteers.

2. What do you most enjoy about volunteering here?

Each day I work at Literacy Advance gives me the satisfaction that I have done something to make our community better by helping people get a better education and improving their self-esteem.

3. What would you say to other people thinking about volunteering?

It is a very good way to learn something new, find new friends, improve yourself and make someone else's life better.

*Thank you, Anna,
for all that you do for us!*

OUTSTANDING YEAR FOR OUTREACH!

The Literacy Navigator Program is our community outreach program that provides selected community partners with adult and family literacy services. This program is crucial in meeting the growing demand for literacy because it is a vehicle for expanding and exporting Literacy Advance programs into the areas of Houston where they are needed most.

So far this year, the program has provided English literacy classes to over 630 community members. Currently, English as a Second Language learners make up 94 percent of the program while the other 6 percent are Adult Basic Education learners. The majority of the beneficiaries in our outreach program are low-income women with no or limited English, who have children and work in the home. Literacy Advance knows that because these moms have the opportunity to improve their English literacy, their children will also benefit, thanks to the increased literacy skills of their parents.

The learners in our partner locations are succeeding daily. Following are a few highlights from the progress reports learners completed in spring. The great majority of learners report that due to their involvement in the program, they can:

- read to their children
- communicate with their doctor
- handle life issues more independently
- communicate with their child's teacher
- successfully use a computer
- read and understand road signs

Literacy Advance is proud of the progress our learners have made in our partner locations and we look forward to continued collaboration with all of our partners in 2010. We would like to welcome our newest Literacy Navigator Program partners: Emerson Elementary and St. Paul's United Methodist Church.

More than 20 organizations are waiting to partner with us — only limited resources are stopping us from moving forward with them.

If you are interested in being a volunteer tutor at one of our many partner locations, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator Kathryn Bauchelle at 713-266-8777.

It's easy being green!

Literacy Advance Wilcrest has made great strides in being more environmental this year. We now recycle paper, glass, aluminum and plastic, and we have replaced some of our Styrofoam cups with reusable mugs. Our monthly newsletters to tutors and volunteers are sent via e-mail, which saves reams of paper every month!

If you'd like to join us in these efforts, please consider asking to receive *Between the Lines* via e-mail instead of through the mail. If you'd like to make the switch, please contact Irene Evans at irene.evans@literacyadvance.org or 713-266-8777.



Partner Spotlight

PINE SHADOWS ELEMENTARY

Number of Classes: 2

Number of Learners Served: 21

Tutor: John Bobbitt

"Pine Shadows Elementary parents are grateful for the opportunity that Literacy Advance of Houston is providing them to learn English.

Through these classes they are better prepared to participate more fully in their children's education."
*Luisa Rodrigues, Pine Shadows Elementary,
Spring Branch ISD*



LEARNERS READ TO SUCCEED

Jennifer (ESL – graduate) - started tutoring an ESL class

Ben (ABE) – passed driver's license tests

Mayada (ESL – graduate) - now attending cosmetology school

Odette (ESL) – improved one language level after attending While You're Waiting classes

Li (ESL) - passed driver's license tests

Fea (ABE) - got a new job working with children at daycare center

Ron (ABE) - featured in an interview with KHOU

Monica (ABE) - interviewed for The Blvd Magazine

Lester Benton (ABE) - featured in the Houston Chronicle

Read more about these accomplishments on our Web site:
www.literacyadvance.org.

Don't waste the recession!

Ever thought about volunteering? We can use all sorts of skills, and almost any amount of time, large or small! Contact Kathryn Bauchelle (Kathryn.Bauchelle@literacyadvance.org or 713-266-8777) for more information.

WISHLIST HIGHLIGHTS

- NEW children's books (infant – elementary age)
- White boards to replace worn-out inventory
- Storage shelving for book donations
- Shelving for Resource Room books and materials
- Prepaid broadband/WiFi access cards for Navigator program staff
- Cell phones and plans for our Navigator program staff
- Laptops for our Navigator program staff
- Updated staff computer(s) to support our growth

And, as always, you can help our growing programs by funding staff positions or by donating your time!

Contact us for more details at 713-266-8777.

See our full Wish List at
www.literacyadvance.org/wishlist.asp

FAMILY LITERACY NIGHTS

In 2009, we reached over 1,500 parents and children at our Family Literacy events, and distributed over 1,000 books!

Our most recent Family Literacy Night was at A.A. Milne Elementary. We welcomed 130 parents and 270 children. Volunteers, we thank you for your help!



Literacy Advance of Houston's Jen Walters reading to children at A.A. Milne Elementary

CHAMPIONS OF LITERACY

An Evening with Hannah Storm

May 1 • Minute Maid Park

Hannah Storm, co-host of ESPN's Daytime SportsCenter, was presented with the prestigious Champions of Literacy award for her work as an author and philanthropist. Over 200 guests came to Minute Maid Park to honor Storm and to support a more literate community.

The audience included several former Champions of Literacy including Larry Dierker, Oliver Luck, Valerie Koehler, and Jana Mullins, as well as Storm's husband, NBC Golf Host Dan Hicks.

"I'm here because I'm being honored as a Champion of Literacy," Storm said during the awards presentation, "but I'm really here because I want to honor this amazing organization."

Literacy Advance volunteer tutor and Halliburton employee Sherle Watson and her learner Nohemy Luevano also spoke to the audience about their experiences. Nohemy is a mother of three who wants to earn her GED and find a better job. "Tutoring Nohemy is one of the most exciting things I've ever done," said Sherle, Halliburton senior policy coordinator. The audience gave the pair a standing ovation.

At the end of the evening, City Controller Annise Parker surprised Storm with a proclamation from Mayor White declaring May 1, 2009, "Hannah Storm Day" in the city of Houston.

EVENT SPONSORS

Slide Into Home Sponsors:

Cameron
CenterPoint Energy
Comcast
Universal Weather & Aviation

Opening Pitch Sponsors:

Continental Airlines
Houston Astros
The Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, Houston

Emcee:

Smokin' Joe Pogge



Champion Event: Honoring Dwight Edwards

October 28 • The Junior League of Houston

Dwight Edwards, best-selling author, was presented with the prestigious Champions of Literacy award for

his work as an author and his commitment to the mission of Literacy Advance. Over 200 guests were present to honor Edwards and to hear a compelling case for supporting a more literate community. In the audience were former Champions of Literacy honorees including Larry Dierker, William B. "Bill" Stubbs, Valerie Koehler and Jana Mullins.

Lucy Chambers of Bright Sky Press and Ellen Elam, immediate past president of the board of Literacy Advance, co-chaired the event.

"Happiness and pleasure are dictated by external circumstances, many of which are outside our control. Joy happens when we discover that unique work for which we are hardwired to offer to this broken world," said Edwards. "The learners, tutors, volunteers, and staff at Literacy Advance have discovered that."

Literacy Advance volunteer tutor Pam Nutt and her learner Sidney Frasier, spoke to the audience about their experiences. Pam, a retired school teacher of 32 years, thought her teaching days were over until she met Sidney. For Sidney, schooling was cut short as a youngster when he became the primary wage earner for his family.

Pam and Sidney met at Literacy Advance and they both found joy. "Sidney was reading Little Golden Books when we first met," said Pam. "I knew he could do better; he knew he could do better." Sidney agreed, but added, "Sometimes I would look at those thick books she would bring from the library and think, 'Oh no.'" Sidney is now an accomplished reader, thanks to his tutor.

"The man who said, 'Money can't buy happiness' must have been broke. Of course, money can buy happiness...but it can't buy you joy."

- Dwight Edwards, Author, *The Tale of Three Ships*

Navigator Underwriters:

Cameron
LITMUS Consulting
Strake Foundation

Compass Underwriter:

KGOW 1560 The Game

Emcee:

David Gow

Thank you for being a Champion of Literacy!



THANK YOU, DOWNTOWN CLUB!

After an extensive evaluation process, The Downtown Club Philanthropy Group selected Literacy Advance as its local charity to receive proceeds from a series of events that took place at The Downtown Club of Houston and The Clubs of Kingwood, Club Corp International Houston area members. The Downtown Club presented a check at the recent Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors of Literacy Advance.



From left to right: Brock Herman, Downtown Club Philanthropy Group; Larry Dierker, Literacy Advance Board Member; Carla Tibbitts, Literacy Advance Board President; Max Cameau, Downtown Club Charity Committee

FIRST, LEARN TO READ

By Bill Sutton, Data Quality Manager

Wherever you want to go in life, whatever you want to do with your life, no matter what you choose to achieve or accomplish—

First, learn to read.

If you want to get a driver's license, first you have to read.

If you want to order at a restaurant, first you have to read.

If you want to take a bus, first you have to read.

If you want to fill out a job application, first you have to read.

If you need to take medicine, first you have to read.

If you want to learn more of anything, first you have to read.

Reading comes first.

Literacy allows a life to be fully lived. Anything less is poverty. At Literacy Advance, reading comes first.

“I was nobody, until I could read to somebody.”

— Sydney, ABE learner

LEARNING LAB NEWS



Our computer lab celebrated its first birthday this past August, and it received two presents thanks to IBM and Dollar General. IBM donated Reading Companion software, and Dollar General Literacy Foundation provided a grant for Literacy Advance to purchase all four levels of *Oxford University*

Press' Step Forward and *Oxford Picture Dictionary*. This software allows learners to work at their own pace for as many hours as they like in an effort to improve their language skills. More than 150 learners have already signed up to use these programs!

AMERICA LEARNS



America Learns is a new place to reflect on tutoring experiences — and to share ideas — both within the Literacy Advance community and further afield.

Check it out at www.americlearns.net/lah

Thanks to Dollar General Literacy Foundation for providing the funds to make it possible for Literacy Advance to join the America Learns network!

2009 BUSINESS COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Literacy Advance initiated its Business Community Partner Program in 2007 in order to sustain the efforts of the leagues of volunteers, staff and contributors that came before them. The ongoing financial support from our Business Community Partners enables Literacy Advance to continue to advance lives in Houston's workplaces, neighborhoods and families. In addition, professional services from our Business Service Partners totaled in the tens of thousands. The encouragement this support represents during these challenging times is doubly appreciated.

Literacy Advance would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to our 2009 Business Community Partners for their support:

BMC Software, Inc.

Whataburger

Pinnacle Financial Strategies

Taxis Fiesta/Yellow Cabs

Habanero Properties

If your company would like to learn more about our Business Community Partner Program, please contact Judy McFarland, Resource Development, at 713-266-8777 x 22 or e-mail judy.mcfarland@literacyadvance.org.

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS BOARD

Literacy Advance of Houston would like to recognize the Young Professionals board members for 2009. They have been busy this year being literacy advocates and helping us raise funds!

Members include:

President	Brian Walters	Member	Bob Todd
Vice President	Sarah Rhoads	Member	Allison White
Financial Officer	Jorge Mancilla	Advisory Member	Dusty Gilbert
Communications	Annie Foley	Advisory Member	Jonathan Rhoads
Member	Lydia Clay	Literacy Advance Board of Directors YP Liaison	Derrick Reed
Member & Tutor	Jackie Hugel		
Member & Tutor	Ashley Mohring		
Member & Tutor	Edrick Romo		

The Young Professionals have promoted and hosted a number of community events in 2009. Events have included the Sammy's Rock Star Karaoke Benefit, a happy hour and networking event at Flying Saucer Downtown, the Saint Arnold Brewery event featuring Larry Dierker, and, to end the year, they are hosting a children's book drive to benefit Literacy Advance's Family Literacy program. Thank you to our Young Professionals!

To learn more about the Young Professionals group, please contact Jen Walters at 713-266-8777 or e-mail Jen.Walters@literacyadvance.org.

LEARNERS CELEBRATE LITERACY

In September, we had our first-ever Learner Donor Appeal. As a show of appreciation, and in an effort to pass on the gift of free literacy classes to new learners, our learners personally contributed over \$900!

4TH ANNUAL LARRY DIERKER "MY TEAM" CELEBRITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

Reserve Your Team Now!
4th Annual Larry Dierker "My Team" Celebrity Golf Tournament
Monday, February 22, 2010
Longest Drive • Straightest Drive • Closest to the Pin
The ALL inclusive day of events includes: breakfast, lunch, and open bar after lunch, goodie bag, exciting round of golf with celebrities on the award winning BlackHorse Golf Club's North Course.
For sponsorship and team information contact Judy at 713-266-8777 or golf@literacyadvance.org
All proceeds benefit Literacy Advance and its free programs in the community.

White Oak Gives Back
TICKET 97.5 FM
Anheuser-Busch, Inc.
Literacy Advance of Houston
713.266.8777 | 2424 Wilcrest, Suite 120 | Houston, Texas 77042

For sponsorship and team information, contact Judy at 713-266-8777 or golf@literacyadvance.org.

All proceeds benefit Literacy Advance and its free programs in the community.

As the education level of adults improves, so does their children's success in school. Helping low-literate adults improve their basic English skills has a direct and measurable impact on both the education and quality of life of their children.

- National Institute for Literacy

We're changing lives daily at Literacy Advance.

- Every week over 450 learners fill our classrooms
- Every month we are contacted by over 100 prospective volunteers
- Every year hundreds of volunteer tutors are trained

Change a life at Literacy Advance - please give today.