

LEARN

Alive!

Libraries Empower All to Read Now
Adult Literacy Program
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Spring 2011

PAVING THE WAY

LEARN's citizenship classes are making a comeback this year! Citizenship programs dwindled down from four to two classes last summer after our Americorps members completed their one-year commitment with LEARN. The classes in San Marcos and Spring Valley came to an end, while I continued to teach the class at the Vista Branch. The class in 4S Ranch returned last year after a short break thanks to Sarah Seene, former Americorps member, who decided to volunteer with us to continue teaching her class.

This year, I decided to begin the practice of training and entrusting volunteer tutors with the task of teaching citizenship classes at various branches. The first of these classes was begun by two volunteer tutors at the new Fallbrook Branch this past February. Carol Krantz and Nancy Simmons both have a Master's in Education and that was the decisive factor which motivated to launch this idea. Another class was started this month by a volunteer tutor at the San Marcos Branch. Dennis Kibler, the instructor, has been working with his learner since last year. When his learner expressed an interest in becoming a citizen, Dennis thought that perhaps he could help others prepare for the

citizenship exam.

In addition to these two new classes, LEARN is already in the process of starting another three classes, one in Ramona's new branch, and another two in East County, at the Crest Branch and once again at the Spring Valley Branch. The Ramona Branch class will begin May 9th and will be taught by a new volunteer tutor, Debra Warnock, while the class in Crest will be taught by Library Technician Martha Preciado and will start soon. The class in Spring Valley is projected to start in June and will be taught by a volunteer tutor.

The class in Fallbrook has been a great success, with over 20 future citizens enrolled and an average of 15 attending

class. The class in San Marcos is still small, with only three learners enrolled, although the instructor is confident there is a demand for the class. As always, anybody can join a class on any given week and it is up to the future citizen to decide when they are ready to mail their N-400 form to apply for citizenship. LEARN provides all the materials necessary free of charge, and the instructors also offer assistance with the application process. The application now costs \$675 but a fee waiver form is available to low-income applicants.

Hector Ortega
Library Associate



Hector Ortega (right) teaching the Vista citizenship class

THE PERFECT MATCH

I moved to San Diego from Maine in autumn of 2008, and one of the first things I did was get my CA Driver's License; then straight to my neighborhood library for a library card.

One day as I walked through the El Cajon Library I noticed a poster for the LEARN Adult Literacy program--the perfect match for my "retired teacher need to work with students and reading." I attended the first available training at the library branch and I was ready for students.

Since then I have worked with six adults in the San Diego area; Blanca, my very first student, has become a good friend. We share families, life stories, and college class stress. I currently work with one Hispanic, one Vietnamese, and two Korean women (I also had some male students in the course of the last two years). I enjoy every minute I get to spend visiting and teaching in their lives.

I cannot imagine life without access to the written word, in any language. I think the LEARN program is outstanding. Not only does it give hope, joy and enlightenment to the students, it gives satisfaction, pleasure, and joy to the teachers.



Sincerely,
Linda J. Kaup
LEARN Tutor

LANGUAGE FOR SUCCESS

There is no question that English is vital to the success of immigrants in the United States; however, mastering conversational English is one of the largest obstacles people face when coming to this country. Recognizing this need, LEARN launched the first English Conversation Café at the Vista Branch Library in 2007. Since then, six other classes have sprung up throughout the San Diego County Library system. The premise is simple: non-native English speakers of various backgrounds come together at the library

for an hour-long immersion in conversational English.

Lincoln Acres branch manager Jose Ocadiz facilitates one of the longest running English Conversation Cafes in the SDCL. "It's a joy giving the class to the students. Once you get to know them and their personal journeys, you come to realize how important English is to their success and survival." Ocadiz finds his work as an instructor gratifying and notes the participants' willingness to strive to achieve greater things. "Some are

here for jobs, others for education. Whatever the reason, we are here to help them build their English language skills so they can succeed in their personal and school experiences."

Volunteer instructor Donna Reeve works with a diverse group at the El Cajon Branch Library. While the students see the café as an excellent opportunity to improve and expand their English language skills, they enjoy learning about American culture and building a sense of community with others. Challenges such as the varying language levels of the participants or not being able to express oneself are common place, but the students point to the social aspect of the class as a means to overcome these obstacles. As was expressed to me on a recent visit, somewhere along their journey through English Conversation Café, the students discovered that they are both students and teachers.



Donna Reeve (3rd from left) and El Cajon Branch English Conversation Café participants

Kevin Vigil
Library Associate

Want to learn additional tutoring strategies?

READ/San Diego's 21st Annual Tutor Conference

Saturday, June 11, 2011
University of San Diego campus
\$30 registration
Call LEARN for details/registration info
888-466-0668

Dates to Remember:

May	June	July
5/27 Fine Free Friday	6/4 New Tutor Orientation & Training <i>El Cajon Library 10:00 - 4:00</i>	7/4 Independence Day <i>library closed</i>
5/30 Memorial Day <i>library closed</i>	6/5 Monthly Tutor Reports due	7/5 Monthly Tutor Reports due
	6/11 READ/SD Tutor Conference <i>University of San Diego</i>	7/10 LEARN Volunteer Appreciation Picnic
	6/24 Fine Free Friday	7/16 New Tutor Orientation & Training <i>Vista Library 10:00 - 4:00</i>
	6/25 LEARN Summer Reading Program begins	7/29 Fine Free Friday

Looking for tutoring materials?

Check out LEARN's materials list:

<http://www.sdcl.org/learn-materials.html>