

WALC Talk Spring 2015

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Stephen Koelle

Question: What is the best kept secret in the greater Whittier area?

Answer: The Whittier Area Literacy Council (WALC).

I have been a resident of Whittier since I entered Whittier City Schools in kindergarten at Lincoln Elementary School and continuing through my graduation from Whittier High School and beyond. I've taught reading improvement in local high schools and at Rio Hondo College for 37 years and it wasn't until September of 2013 that I learned of WALC's existence. I was invited to the annual open house in October of that year and met some of the wonderful people associated with WALC (Board of Directors, Advisory Board, tutors and of course, Julie). I was so very impressed with everyone and this valuable organization. The president at that time, Cel Carr, invited me to the next Board of Director's meeting. I accepted her invitation and at the meeting she asked if I would be interested in joining the board. I was honored and a little intimidated at first, but I accepted. I remember thinking to myself, "The Whittier area has been very good to you, Stephen, isn't it time you started contributing?" I am extremely glad I did. I have been so impressed with the quality of people associated with WALC, especially our volunteer tutors! I love to come to WALC and watch our tutors work with their student's whether they are 3rd or 4th graders or adults. The concept of "Each one, teach one" resonates with me because that is why I became interested in direct reading instruction in the first place. Well, enough about me...

As we wind up the 2014-2015 school year, we remember the great time everyone had at October's "Scrabble Challenge", the holiday season, our Board of Director's Effective Practices Seminar in February and March's "Soup and a Good Book".

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Bonnie Weber

President's Message (Continued)

We look forward to honoring our tutors in June and, of course, the all-important fund raising season starting now! I encourage all of our valuable members to renew (even upgrade) their memberships in WALC, for without your help, both in time and money, this organization would cease to exist.

Finally, I wish to express my thanks to Pat Almada. Although we are titled, "Co-Presidents", Pat is 90% Co-President; I'm the other 10%. Pat has made this year an exciting one and challenged all of us to grow as individuals and as an organization.

Union Pacific Foundation Grant

By Anna Hinkle

On March 25, 2015, Steve Koelle and Anna Hinkle, Board Members of the Whittier Area Literacy Council, were honored to attend the ceremony for The Union Pacific's Foundation Grant assembly held at their facility in East Los Angeles. We were presented with a check for \$4,000 for which we are deeply grateful. The check was presented to us by Lupe Valdez, Director of Public

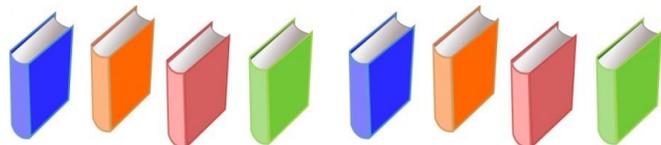
Student Success

By Pat Almada

I would like to share with you one of our success stories to illustrate the life changing experiences that result from our work here at the council.

Paola C., an immigrant from Colombia, was referred to our council by her English as a Second Language professor at Rio Hondo College. She needed to improve her grammar and conversational skills and was not able to progress in a large group situation. Paola was matched with Jamaica, a young college graduate who worked at UCLA and was able to tutor in the early evenings. Jamaica tutored Paola for three years helping her keep up with her courses at Rio Hondo and later the ROP program. Together they studied for the driving license and citizenship tests.

Last spring, Paola fulfilled her dream of becoming the Registered Dental Assistant and a US citizen. Paola says her journey was "difficult but not impossible" thanks to the patient support of her tutor. She only has words of thankfulness for her tutor and the council.



WALC Core Values

- **We believe that literacy is a human right and we invest our time, effort, and skills into changing lives, one person at a time.**
- **We value the commitment of our tutors and the persistence of our students.**
- **We are bound together by the belief that we can help children succeed in school and empower adults to fulfill their life goals.**

Soup and a Good Book

By Laura Chavez Warner

On Saturday, March 7th, 2015, the Whittier Area Literacy Council held its 10th annual “Soup and a Good Book” fundraiser. This year’s theme was, “A Potpourri of Poetry,” and everyone in attendance had a wonderful time.



The guest speaker, Peggy Dobreer, provided an interesting and engaging talk, sharing her poetry with enthusiasm and sincerity. We are grateful to Peggy for generously providing her time and artistry to the event.

Delicious soups were provided by several local restaurants, including Baily Street Kitchen, California Grill, Dal Rae, Greenleaf Café, Mimi’s Café, Subway, Sweet Dreams Desserts & Bistro, and Uptown Mexican Cate. We thank these establishments for their generous contributions, which were enjoyed by all who attended.

The Board of Directors would also like to acknowledge all those who volunteered their time and effort in making this year’s Soup and a Good Book event a success, including Sheila Kraics and the Rio Hondo College students who read our students’ poetry.

In addition, we congratulate our students and their tutors, whose commitment to literacy development resulted in well-written and thoroughly enjoyable works of poetry.

Family Literacy Night

By Cristina Gardener

WALC held its second Family Literacy Night on February 25th. Two of our board members, Lisa Dabbs and Maricella Ibarra, were our presenters for the event. Their workshop was titled, "Embrace Your Child's Digital Life and Citizenship." The workshop was designed to bring awareness to families of the ethical behavior of their children while they are online. Guidelines were given on how to become responsible of the manner in which they choose to present themselves to the world. The workshop stressed how vital it is to maintain a good digital citizenship and the everlasting repercussions that come along with not upholding an appropriate citizenship. Parents greatly appreciated the informative workshop.

CATCH A GOOD BOOK...SUMMER READING PROGRAM

By Barbara Walters and Lucy Alaniz

The stakes for children who do not read over the summer are high. Research shows that it is usually the students who are already behind in reading who are most likely to suffer from summer reading loss and consequently fall even more behind their peers. "The few months' loss in reading skills compounds over the years; by the time children reach middle school, those who have not read during the summer may have lost as much as two years' worth of achievement," says Julie Wood, Ed.D.

Keeping in mind the importance of summer reading, WALC is sponsoring Catch a Good Book, a summer reading program. Students are encouraged to read five or more books between June 8 and August 14. WALC tutors will be assisting students' reading in sessions as well as independent reading, and overseeing the completion of a book report for each book. Book report forms will be made available, and students may choose the one that best "fits" the book read.

Each student who fulfills the obligations outlined above will receive a certificate of participation with the completion of one book report. A special coupon for a yogurt sundae will be awarded to those students who read and complete five book reports. Notices about the program are being sent home with students and are requesting parental support.

It's easy, it's fun, it's free, and it's a way of enhancing reading levels before the start of a new school year! So...catch a good book!

WALC would like to thank our grant funders, whose generosity and commitment sustains WALC in our mission to provide literacy skills to our students.

**BCM Foundation
City of Whittier
East Whittier Lions Club
Union Pacific
Weingart Foundation
Whittier Sunrise Rotary Club
Whittier/Hacienda Heights Newcomers Club**

Upcoming Events

WALC Closed
Memorial Day
Monday, May 25, 2015

Student Recognition
Saturday, June 13, 2015

The Mission of the Whittier Area Literacy Council is to build a stronger, more literate community by connecting those who can help with those who need it the most.

Through your generous donation, you can help WALC achieve its mission.

See Julie for more information.

Whittier Area Literacy Council

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