



Literacy Council for Josephine County

SPRING/SIMMER, 2013

223 S.E. M Street, Grants Pass, OR, 97526

Learning to read can be a battle — and a triumph

Dear Supporters of the Literacy Council for Josephine County:

Your help has brought many people the pleasure of reading English.

We don't always speak of the pleasure of helping someone to read. The student's benefits are only part of our story. Tutors enjoy being the hands and hearts that your dollars deliver.

A month or so ago, my student was just settling in at the table where we were going to have our lesson. I was opening the level one book of the Barton Reading and Spelling System to help work on her overcoming her problems with dyslexia. She is a tiny shy Hispanic woman of 62 years, who had recently lost her husband, who had done all the reading for them both.

When she touched my arm, I turned toward her. Excitement fairly bubbling up she still hesitated, then blurted, "I read something on Sunday."

Now, since you are evidently reading this, for you it would hardly seem like a great pronouncement, I read something on Sunday. You after all are reading.

My student went on to say she had been in church. There had been words shown on a big screen. She hadn't bothered to look at it before. The minister was evidently saying something about upcoming events.

Then she said, "I saw the word Friday, and I knew that's what it really said." Then she asked me worriedly, "I hope he didn't see me not looking at him while he was talking. I didn't mean to be impolite. Do you suppose he saw me?"

I assured her that others were reading as they listened and someday she would read all the words each Sunday along with the rest of the congregation. She hadn't imagined that's what happened for others. I was so happy for her I could hardly imagine that she felt happier than I did.

After congratulating her, I asked her what her son and his family had said when she told them she had read it. She looked down at her hands. "I didn't tell them. It's too soon."

Imagine having felt so humiliated for so many years by children knowing that you couldn't read.

They must have had many embarrassing moments themselves because of their mother's handicap.

With only a tenuous grasp of this new learning, she still doesn't have a way to imagine all that she will be able to do as her skills improve. Every time I think of hearing her tell of her triumph I'm thrilled again.

You, too, can experience these small battles and triumphs. You can call and apply to be a tutor, teaching people who need to read and write English as a second language (ESL), people who need to get their GED, or be trained to teach those disabled like the woman whose story I just told.

She thought it was because she never got to go to school in Mexico that she couldn't learn to read English. I had actually started teaching her as an ESL student. Luckily we were just working on getting a grant for a special system (Barton Reading and Spelling System) to help those whose dyslexia, which causes the relationship between letters and sounds to not correlate in the brain.

Because of this I was aware of the signs of dyslexia and realized that this lovely woman could be helped through other methods than the usual ones I first tried to use to help her. It was so thrilling last week to see her write three-letter words, and even read short phrases.

Are you one of those who has an hour or so twice a week to tutor? Can you see the time you have to share being part of such a happy experience? Give me a call at 541-471-4893.

Notes from the Chair

Andrea Dougan
Literacy Council Chairman



Generous donation from longtime supporter and tutor benefits Lit Council

For about 10 years of her life, Jacqueline "Jackie" Wright volunteered as a Literacy Council tutor, giving of her time and talents for the Council's benefit. She was also a generous financial donor, regularly contributing to the Council's fundraising efforts.

Now, even after her death, she's still giving of herself to help the Literacy Council.

Jackie died Nov. 22, 2012, at her Grants Pass home. In her will, Jackie left the Council 14 of her handmade quilts — a combination of wall hangings, table runners, lap blankets and full-sized bed covers — to use as the board saw fit. Most likely these beautiful pieces will be sold or raffled off, with the proceeds going to keep the council running smoothly, though their actual value is immensurable.

Jackie taught at Lincoln and Riverside elementary schools and especially enjoyed teaching third grade.

As a tutor with the Lit Council, Jackie met students in the council office and later in her home, spending many thoughtful hours preparing her lessons.

"She was a good public school teacher. She was a good tutor. Heart and soul, she was a kind but exacting teacher," remembers Liz Medley, a former Literacy Council tutor and board member.

Just as Jackie planned her lessons well, she also sewed wonderful quilts.

"Among her friends in the quilting crowd, she was a recognized expert," Liz says. "She coached, she advised and critiqued, usually with good humor, sometimes with vinegar."

In addition to quilting, Jackie enjoyed crafts, spinning and weaving, making doll house furniture, reading, and writing fiction.

The quilts Jackie left to the Literacy Council are a beautiful testament, not only to her talent and skill, but to the generous nature of her spirit.

"Her craftsmanship is superb," Liz adds. "Some are stitched by hand. They're beautiful. They're warm, just as our memories of Jackie are warm."

— Submitted by Kathleen Alaks

Books, books, books

■ **WHAT:** The Literacy Council annual book sale

■ **WHEN:** Aug. 3, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

■ **WHERE:** Daily Courier parking lot, Seventh & J streets, Grants Pass

■ **DETAILS:** This is big event for us. Last year, we raised more than \$700, selling tattered romances and best-selling novels, well-read adventure paperbacks and dog-eared mysteries, children's books, reference books, how-to books, self-help books and cookbooks.

■ **HOW YOU CAN HELP:** There are three ways:

1. Give books. We'll take anything you've got. And we'll be happy to pick them up and take them off your hands.
2. Give cash. Stop by the sale and buy books.
3. Give time. Volunteer to spend an hour or two helping out at one of our major fundraisers of the year.

■ **GET IN TOUCH:** Call Kathleen Alaks at 541-474-3815 (weekdays), or 541-955-5371 (evenings and weekends). Or email kalaks@thedailycourier.com

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