



Literacy Council for Josephine County

SPRING/SUMMER, 2017

132 N.E. B St. Room 23, Grants Pass, OR, 97526

Tutor finds unique ways to connect with students

Literacy Council tutors tend to form tight bonds with their students.

Take tutor Paula Keller and her students, Camelia Lopez and sisters Lupe and Edel Aguirre.

Paula and her husband Fred first started tutoring the three women — all from Mexico, all in their 30s, and all married with children — after they retired to Grants Pass in 2012 and were looking for ways to get involved in the community.

The Literacy Council appealed to the Kellers. They both had taught English before, while on mission trips around the world, from Africa and Turkey to Costa Rica and Peru.

"We developed a really close relationship, with them and with their kids," Paula says of her students, noting that they all went to a performance of "The Nutcracker" together. "They are such sweet, loving women."

Fred stopped tutoring in 2014 — pursuing other interests — but Paula continued working with the women. That is, until a year later when she and Fred made plans to go on a 10-month mission trip to Turkey.

Paula tried to make arrangements for a substitute to tutor the women while she was out of the country. But they didn't want to work with anyone else. (However, Camelia did continue studies for citizenship, which she earned last year.)

During the Keller's trip — which expanded to 18 months — they taught English to Turks, to Iranian refugees and to Syrian refugees.

"It was really an incredible experience," Paula says.

Paula got back to tutoring in April — and the three women were ready to get back to work with her.

"I try to be creative and innovative with lessons," Paula says. "I mix it up because I don't want it to be boring. If they had a need or a question, I would expand on it."

One time, for example, they went to a restaurant and the women ordered French toast, saying it was something they really loved to eat but never made at home because they didn't know how.

Paula used the opportunity as a teaching moment. She invited the women to her home for brunch and she taught



From left, Paula Keller works with Lupe Aguirre, Edel Aguirre and Camelia Lopez.

them to make French toast for themselves. But it was much more than just a cooking class.

They talked about the ingredients and how they're used, wrote them down to work on spelling.

They talked about how to use a measuring cup and measuring spoons, used math to calculate measurements.

"It's good to get away from grammar and make a lesson more usable," Paula says.

Paula finds lots of ways to help her students learn by doing. She takes the women on walks to identify things they see along the way. She takes them to the store to read package labels. She takes them to restaurants to read menus.

She has them do math problems to help when it comes to handling money or to helping their kids with their homework. She has them practice writing checks and learn new words by playing a game with flash cards.

"Working with them is the bright spot of my week," Paula says.

— Submitted by Kathleen Alaks



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Contact Us!

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CALENDAR

Upcoming Board Meetings

Meetings are at 12:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month, at the Literacy Council office, 132 N.E. B St., Room 23, on the third floor of the Newman United Methodist Church offices.

The next meetings are:

June 21	Nov. 15
July 19	Dec. 20
Aug. 16	Jan. 17
Sept. 20	Feb. 21
Oct. 18	March 21

Offering hope; looking for help

Dear Friends of the Literacy Council,

I recently read an article about the brain. It stated that poverty causes deterioration of our most important organ.

Our own newspaper has let us know the status of the county in this regard.

Surely, lack of education keeps our share of poverty with us. Many have come to us wanting to transform this situation in their lives.

Our mission involves creating hope through finding ways for students to read and learn.

Many have improved their material lives by coming to us. They have gotten help reading drivers' manuals and prescription information.

So many have come to us because they wanted to be able to speak to their children's teachers and read notes from them.

One fellow even wanted to be able to read sheet music because he had played music by ear for decades. It was embarrassing for him to have someone come up to the stage, while he played for dance bands, and ask him to play some of the old-fashioned music from something they had jotted down.

Then there's the man who wanted to repair his young son's bed, which needed a larger bolt. This fellow's problem was that he knew what it was in Spanish but didn't know what to ask for in English.

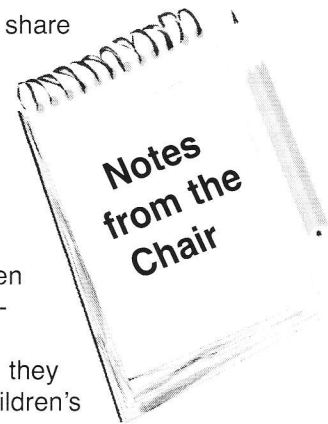
These are some of the people we have helped. But, now, we need your help. One of our regular grants has dried up because of the funds cut from our sister educator, Rogue Community College.

All our workers are volunteers, but we still need to pay for books, rent and utilities. This cut in funding is the equivalent to five months of rent payments, which is our biggest expense.

Later this month, when we make our annual fundraising appeal, please consider giving a bit more as you are offering your gift.

As always, thank you for all of your support.

— **Andrea Dougan, Chairperson**



If you would prefer to receive the Literacy Council twice-yearly newsletter via email, please let us know, by contacting us at jocoliteracy@yahoo.com. Be sure to include your name and address as well as the email address we should send it to.



Volunteers needed – in a big way

The Literacy Council is in a period of transition.

Budget cuts at Rogue Community College mean we've lost some major annual funding.

Our annual book sale is in limbo. While we do have a new inventory of unique books — courtesy of Robert Moore and Oregon Books — the sale of the Washington Federal Bank building to Dutch Bros. means we're left scouting out a new location for that lucrative fundraising event.

Where we do find stability, however, is in the ongoing help of supporters. And you can support us by volunteering.

Volunteers bring optimism and enthusiasm, create positive energy and share diverse perspectives that lead to positive outcomes, both for our organization and for our community.

Many of our volunteers choose to support our mission by tutoring. But if tutoring is not for you — because of time commitments or any other reason — we welcome volunteers who are interested in helping the Literacy Council in other ways.



Join the fun, fun, fundraising

Budget cuts at Rogue Community College mean the end of the college's tutoring program.

Which means the end of federal grants supporting the program.

Which means an end to RCC's financial outreach to the Literacy Council.

Which amounts to \$2,000 a year.

That's a good chunk of the council's annual budget. In fact, it adds up to five months of rent payments.

To find ways to make up this deficit, the Literacy Council has formed a fundraising committee, to help guide the Literacy Council board with ideas for ways to raise much-needed funds.

This founding committee can use all the help it can get. If you have any experience raising money for non-profits, if you have any ideas for ways the Literacy Council can raise some extra cash, if you have an active imagination, unbridled enthusiasm or a mattress full of money, please consider joining our efforts.

For more about the fundraising committee, contact Robert Moore at 541-660-9701.

How you can help...

- Tutoring
- Helping with special events, such as the book sale
- Speaking to local civic organizations
- Joining the board of directors
- Referring a student or tutor
- Making a tax-deductible donation
- Participating in fundraising activities
- Staffing an information table at a community event
- Finding community involvement opportunities
- Researching and writing grants
- Helping with mailings

Consider bringing your expertise to the table, whether it be in fundraising, leadership, organization, grant writing, website management, public relations, mentoring, marketing, public speaking or just getting the job done.

Visit the Literacy Council website — literacyjo-co.weebly.com — to explore more about us.



Profitable partnerships

There are lots of ways to support the Literacy Council. Shopping is one of them.

The Literacy Council is a beneficiary of three shopping rewards programs. Participate in one of them — or all three — and support the Literacy Council when you shop, at no cost to you.

Here's how:



• **OREGON BOOKS.** This downtown Grants Pass store at Seventh and E streets is a big supporter of local nonprofit organizations and schools. And the store's co-owner Robert Moore is on the Literacy Council board.

Take advantage of this partnership program by mentioning the Literacy Council when you're checking out, to trigger a donation of 5 percent of the sale to our organization.

Thank you, Robert! And thank you, Oregon Books!

• **FRED MEYER.** Link your Fred Meyer Rewards Card to the Literacy Council, and every time you use it, you can help us earn a donation from the store.

You may have already signed up for this program, but Freddie's has recently upgraded its rewards program and shoppers need to re-up.

Go to fredmeyer.com, click on Rewards at the top of the page, then select Fred Meyer Community Rewards. Scroll down to "re-enroll or link your Rewards Card now." Then choose the Literacy Council for Josephine County as the organization you want to support. Click on "Enroll" to link your rewards card to us.



Thank you, Fred Meyer!



• **AMAZON SMILE.** Next time you're shopping online at Amazon, consider signing up for the company's AmazonSmile program, which donates a percentage of purchases to the organization of your choice,

First, go to smile.amazon.com, and select the Literacy Council for Josephine County as the organization you want to support. Then, every time you shop, .5 percent of the price of your eligible purchases will be donated to us.

AmazonSmile has the same selection and prices as Amazon.com — and you can use the same account on both sites. The only difference is that AmazonSmile allows you to support the Literacy Council every time you shop.

Thank you, AmazonSmile.

And thank you for your support!

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