



Literacy Council for Josephine County

FALL/WINTER, 2017-2018

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

Common language helps break barriers to learning

Literacy Council tutor Michael Pascal has something in common with his student, Gerardo. They are both native Spanish speakers.

Michael was born and raised in Santiago, Chile. Gerardo is from Mexico.

But while Michael learned English early on, went to English-speaking schools and even tutored people in English while he was in college, Gerardo never had those opportunities.

"I realize how difficult it is to learn English," Michael says, noting the language's irregularities of verb tenses, its contradictions of spelling, its oddities of pronunciation. "It's easier to learn when you're young, but for an adult, it's tough."

Michael was in his mid-20s when he left Chile, settling in Los Angeles, where he worked as an engineer for large construction outfits, building oil refineries, fertilizer plants, chemical plants.

He also did marketing for a Japanese trading firm, and worked as a marketing consultant for the Canadian government.

In 2004 he retired, trading the big city for rural Southern Oregon, finding time for traveling, hiking, exercising. Earlier this year, he decided to make time for volunteer work.

"I wanted to teach someone to read," Michael says. "I found the Literacy Council online."

About three months ago, he was paired with Gerardo, meeting with him and volunteer coordinator Bette Mohr to discuss a game plan for how to approach things.

Michael scoured the Literacy Council's library of teaching materials, selecting a textbook that focused on typical, day-to-day dialogue and everyday issues, such as food, clothing, transportation, directions.

"We follow the textbook, but use it to go to other places, to go outside the text," Michael says. "I encourage him to ask questions. I think he's picking it up, though pronunciation is most difficult for him."

Gerardo is a factory worker in his mid-40s. He's been in Grants Pass less than a year and has two sons living in



Michael Pascal, left, works with Gerardo on vocabulary used in day-to-day dialogue.

Ensenada, Mexico.

His work with Michael has been very productive, he says.

"Before, I not speak so good," Gerardo says. Now he speaks English with his friends, co-workers, boss.

"Me gusto mucho. I like it."

Note from the chair

Dear Josephine County,

During this season of giving thanks, we at the Literacy Council are truly thankful for your assistance in helping those of our compatriots in the county who need to learn to read.

Whether you buy books at our book sale or give of your precious time and energy or donate money for our rent, utilities and supplies, we are truly grateful when you share with us. Thank you again,



— Andrea Dougan, Chairperson



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Contact Us!

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Find us online: literacyjoco.weebly.com

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:

Dec. 20	May 16
Jan. 17	June 20
Feb. 21	July 8
March 21	Aug. 15
April 18	Sept. 19

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

Our newest board member

Meet Rebecca Stoltz, who works for Josephine Community Libraries, now on our board of directors



Q. TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL HISTORY, EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND CAREER PATH.

A. I was born and raised in Grants Pass although over the years, I have lived in several of the rural communities in the surrounding area. I am a mother of an amazing 15-year-old daughter, Zoe who inspires me to make a positive impact in our community. Currently, I am the development manager for Josephine Community Libraries, the nonprofit that has kept libraries in our community open for the last 10 years. I have worked here for the last five years. I am very blessed to have the opportunity to work with so many passionate volunteers for an organization that provides vital services to our community.

Q. HOW AND WHEN DID YOU COME TO GET INVOLVED WITH THE LITERACY COUNCIL?

A. I am recently acquainted with the Literacy Council and its great work. A couple months ago, Robert Moore (Literacy Council board member and owner of Oregon Books) asked me to join the board because of my work at the library and I think it's a natural fit.

Q. WHAT, IF ANY, OTHER VOLUNTEER WORK DO YOU DO IN THE COMMUNITY? WHAT OTHER GROUPS OR CLUBS ARE YOU INVOLVED WITH?

A. Currently, I am the co-chair of the Grants Pass/Josephine County Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors. We attend ribbon cuttings for new businesses opening in our community and help with the Concerts in the Park series hosted by the Chamber of Commerce each year.

Q. WHAT'S THE BEST BOOK YOU'VE READ LATELY?

A. Stephen King's "It."

Q. WHO ARE YOUR FAVORITE AUTHORS?

A. It's hard to choose but I would say a couple of my favorites are Stephen King, Haruki Murakami and John Grisham.

Q. IF YOU WERE STRANDED ON A DESERT ISLAND, WHAT ONE BOOK WOULD YOU WANT TO HAVE WITH YOU?

A. There are too many to choose from. I just can't choose one.

Q. IF YOU COULD HAVE ONE SUPERPOWER, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

A. Time traveling.

Q. WHAT ONE THING DO YOU WANT TO DO THAT YOU HAVEN'T DONE YET?

A. Travel the world. This past summer I had my first experience traveling when I went on a week-long cruise to Alaska. It was the first time traveling by plane, first time on a ship, it was a first time for many things. I am already looking forward to my next adventure.

Q. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE LITERACY COUNCIL DO TO IMPROVE ITS VALUE TO THE COMMUNITY?

A. I would love to see the Literacy Council raise awareness in the community about the vital services it provides. As a board member, I hope to bring more community awareness to this wonderful organization.



Dear Literacy Council Supporter.....

We extend our most heartfelt thanks to your ongoing support of the Literacy Council for Josephine County.

For almost 30 years, we have been able to help people learn English, improve their reading and writing skills, earn their GEDs, overcome the obstacles of dyslexia, and become American citizens.

Our work is a big circle of givers: volunteer tutors and officers who give hours of their time to empower others; their efforts, in turn, are supported by the financial gifts of individuals, businesses and foundations in our community.

It's a circle of giving that is all part of the gift of literacy.

Because of you, our list of accomplishments this year includes:

- Connecting 20 tutors with 25 students; on average, divided equally between our dyslexia program and our English-as-a-second-language students.

- Helping two of our ESL students pass their citizenship tests, with two others studying for it.

- Enrolling eight new students this year, along with signing up four new tutors and two returning tutors.

- Fostering collaborations between local employers and their employees. For example, we are helping several employees at a local manufacturing company to learn English. Another local business asked us to help an employee write more succinct, readable reports. This was accomplished, and the skill will be an advantage to the worker as he advances in his profession.

Help us continue our important work by making an end-of-year donation in the envelope enclosed in this newsletter.

Or visit our website, literacyjoco.weebly.com to make a secure donation online.

With your support, we can continue to provide free literacy services to adults in our community.



Other ways you can show your support

If a financial donation is out of your reach, consider bringing something else to the table, whether it be fundraising, leadership, organization, grant writing, website management, public relations, mentoring, marketing, public speaking or just getting the job done.

Volunteer opportunities include:

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

Or, you can help by signing up for one of the three rewards programs that let you support the Literacy Council while you shop. At Oregon Books in Grants Pass, mention the Literacy Council to trigger a 5 percent donation of the sale. At Fred Meyer, sign up for their Community Rewards Program and a portion of your purchase amount will go to the Literacy Council. And if you shop online, sign up for the AmazonSmile Program and they will donate .5 percent of your purchases to the Literacy Council.



Improve your life — and your brain — through volunteering

We all know that there are many benefits to volunteering. It can provide a sense of purpose, it helps others and is good for communities.

But now, according to new research from the University of Missouri, it seems volunteering can also help improve brain function.

Christine Proulx, associate professor of human development and family science at the University of Missouri, has found that volunteering might be linked to higher levels of cognitive functioning in older adults, that volunteering could actually help adults protect their mental functioning.

Older adults worried about losing their cognitive functions could consider volunteering as a potential boost, according to Proulx.

“Cognitive functions, such as memory, working memory and processing are essential for living an independent life,” Proulx said.

“They’re the tools and methods the brain uses to process information. It’s the brain’s working memory and processing capacity that benefit the most from volunteering.”

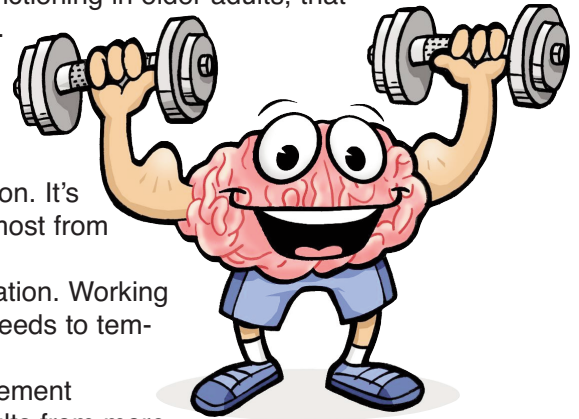
Processing is how fast the mind is able to take in and store information. Working memory, which is different from long-term memory, is what the brain needs to temporarily store and manage information.

For this study, Proulx used national data from the Health and Retirement Study, which has been collected for the past 25 years. Looking at results from more than 11,000 adults aged 51 and over, Proulx found significant associations between cognitive function and volunteering among all participants, regardless of the amount of time volunteering. However, adults with lower levels of education and women seemed to benefit the most from volunteering.

“Prior research has shown that older adults with lower levels of education are at greater risk of cognitive decline,” Proulx said. “Engaging in volunteering might compensate for some of that risk.”

Proulx suggests that volunteering benefits people because it stimulates the brain. When volunteering an individual must follow directions, solve problems and be active, all of which engage the mind’s working memory and processing.

Her study was recently published in “The Journals of Gerontology: Social Sciences.”



The Literacy Council for Josephine County
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