



Literacy Council for Josephine County

FALL/WINTER, 2015/2016

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

Literacy Council graduates first Barton student

Randy Turashoff and the Literacy Council have a lot to celebrate.

This winter, Randy became the first Literacy Council student to graduate from the Barton Reading and Spelling System, a tutoring program designed for people struggling with dyslexia.

"I think it was one of the biggest Achilles heels in my life," Randy says of his learning disability. "I walked away from jobs because it got too difficult. That led to depression and anxiety. The expectations were overwhelming."

A learning disorder that muddles a person's ability to read, write and spell, dyslexia affects people of all ages.

It has nothing to do with intelligence. But it can make it difficult to get through school or to hold down a job.

Now in his early 40s, Randy grew up in and out of foster homes and in and out of schools. He was in the ninth grade before he properly learned to read.

He's worked dozens of jobs — delivery driver, shuttle driver, school bus driver, warehouse worker. But none ever lasted very long.

"I would get deep in my depression and that affected my work performance," Randy says.

In 2010, a private sponsor paid for him to get tutoring from Maureen McCarthy, who runs 3R's Tutoring out of her home in Grants Pass. But after just six months, the funding ran out.

That's where the Literacy Council came in.

In 2012, the Literacy Council received a grant allowing it to pur-



Literacy Council tutor Maureen McCarthy, left, works with Randy Turashoff using the Barton Reading and Spelling System. Turashoff, who completed the 10th and final level of the program in December, is the first Literacy Council student to graduate from Barton.

chase the Barton System, a multi-sensory phonics program that helps dyslexic students break down the sounds within a word.

Randy's foster mother read about the grant in the newspaper and approached the Literacy Council about getting tutoring for her son. Maureen, who volunteers with the council as well as doing private tutoring took him on again as a student.

They worked together for about two years, one hour per session, two or three sessions per week.

"It's helped me a lot," Randy says. "I can read much more confidently

and when I go online, I'm able to catch misspelled words and to use the vocabulary that I use to talk with."

Randy moderates an online chat on the Twitch TV gaming site.

"I get to commiserate with others who are dealing with the same issues," he says.

The Barton system has 10 levels, each one building on the other.

"Dyslexics need things presented in a logical order," Maureen says. "They need to learn each rule and it has to be firm before going on to the next one. And they get tested at each

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Literacy Council Board Members

- **Andrea Dougan, chairman**
phone: 541-471-4893
e-mail: dougan1844andrea@yahoo.com
- **Dee Pierce, vice chair**
phone: 541-955-5185
e-mail: pierceda@q.com
- **Liza Sculley, treasurer**
phone: 541-592-2626
e-mail: lizasculley@umpquabank.com
- **Bette Mohr, development**
phone: 541-476-0032
e-mail: readmohr@rogueriver.net
- **Kathleen Alaks, publicity**
phone: 541-955-5371
e-mail: kalaks@thedailycourier.com
- **Carolyn Shaw-Straus, RCC liaison**
phone: 541-840-8075
e-mail: cshaw@rogueduc.edu

Contact Us!

Call: our office at 541-472-0355 and leave a message; or Dee Pierce at 541-955-5185

Email: jocoliteracy@yahoo.com

Find us online: literacyjoco.weebly.com

CALENDAR

Board meetings are at 12:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month. Beginning in January, we will be meeting at the new Literacy Council office, 132 N.E. B St., Room 23, in Grants Pass.

We're upstairs, on the third floor. Take the stairs or elevator.



The next meetings are:

| | |
|----------|---------|
| Jan. 20 | May 18 |
| Feb. 17 | June 15 |
| March 16 | July 20 |
| April 20 | Aug. 17 |

New digs for the new year...

Dear Friends of the Literacy Council for Josephine County:

In January, the Literacy Council is moving its offices to the third floor of the building behind the Newman Methodist Church's sanctuary.

In our spring/summer newsletter, we mentioned our concern about the rent going up at the Coalition For Kids building, where we have resided for decades. But an unexpected opportunity came to us to save more than 20 percent on the rent.

Our rent at the Coalition building was going up a percentage every year for the next five years until at the end of the increases it would have been almost 40 percent more than the rent for the church property we just procured.

This is like a gift of a couple thousand dollars a year.

There are many advantages. A big thing for those of us who will teach there is that the space is light and airy with WINDOWS. Yeah, windows! We also have free wi-fi.

The new space also has an elevator to our third floor suite of rooms, though those wishing to use the stairs will find them wide and carpeted.

We will be able to have access more times of the day and week as we will have keys for access. This will mean a lot to those whose jobs preclude them coming for class after work to study for their GED, learn English as a second language, or train with the dyslexia program.

The new space is very central for those using a bus, as some of our students need transportation. Parking on the street and behind the building will be handy for both tutors and students who drive.

There are three rooms, as we had before, but one of them is much bigger than all three previous rooms put together.

The paint is fresh. The carpet clean. We are happy.

Andrea Dougan
Literacy Council Chairman

Notes from the Chair

...and we could use your help

To celebrate the move to our new office space, we're planning an open house for sometime in the spring.

But in the meantime, we're looking for help with various parts of the move.

Here's what we'll need help with:

1. Packing up books and miscellaneous items at our Coalition for Kids location, probably on Dec. 30.
2. Helping to unpack at the new office the week of Jan. 4. The plan is to have movers transport furniture and boxes in early January.
3. Decorate and accessorize the new location — we know there are artists among you. For our open house, it would be nice to have some creative and attractive décor. Do you have some artwork, posters or wall maps to donate? Houseplants? Knickknacks?

Please let us know if you're willing or able to help with any or all of the above? Call Andrea Dougan at 541-471-4893 or Dee Pierce at 541-955-5185. Our new address will be 132 N.E. B St., #23, Grants Pass, OR, 97526.



Chinese student now an American citizen

From the time Xingmei Sun moved from China to Grants Pass, she had set her sights on some lofty goals.

Now, three years later, and with help from Literacy Council tutor Judi Hiscox, she has achieved them all.

"When we met she was shy and nervous," Judi says of Xingmei, who has been her student for two and a half years. "Her goals were to get her driver's license, get a job, learn to read and write English and get her American citizenship. We've worked on all this."

They started with her English, meeting weekly to study vocabulary, sentence structure and grammar.

When she felt comfortable enough with the language, Xingmei started to study the rules of the road and other driver education materials. She applied for a driver's license, took the test and passed on the first try.

Getting a job was a bit more difficult. Judi went with Xingmei to the Job Council to help her fill out job applications. Judi also talked to potential employers to vouch for her.

"Her references were all in China," Judi says. "That's why it was so difficult. People were reluctant to hire her for her first job" in the United States.

After an unpleasant experience working at a gas station, in August, Xingmei snagged a job as a Walmart cashier. Already in her short time there, she has learned to handle difficult customers with grace and has received several positive job citations, Judi says.

And in October, she became an American citizen.



Xingmei Sun, left, and Judi Hiscox look through one of the history books they used to help Xingmei study for her citizenship exam.

"Before the test I was very anxious," Xingmei says. "I thought my English was not good enough. But I studied a lot, over a year."

The citizenship test involved oral, reading and writing sections. Her citizenship ceremony took place Oct. 22 in Portland.

"I couldn't be more proud," Judi says.

Xingmei and Judi plan to keep working together, though they haven't quite yet defined their next set of goals.

"She could be mayor," Judi says of Xingmei. "The sky's the limit. As long as she can work hard and study hard there's nothing she can't do. There's no glass ceiling for Xingmei."

— By Kathleen Alaks

Literacy Council...by the numbers

2015 has been an outstanding year for the Literacy Council. Here are some of our achievements over the past year:

- We took in 18 new students and tutored a total of 50 learners
- 33 tutors volunteered with us, nine of whom were new
- One student passed her citizenship test
- One student received his GED certificate
- Four students passed their driver's test
- One student got a promotion at work and another was asked by her employer to apply for a promotion
- One student got her Certified Nurse's Aide Certificate and got a job as a CNA at a local nursing home
- Four dyslexia program students progressed to the next level(s) in the Barton system, and one has finished the final level 10 this year. (See story on Page 1 of this newsletter.)

Every one of these successes was made possible by the generous support of our donors. Please help us continue our vital work in 2016.

Thank you





Literacy Council graduates first Barton student

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

level."

With the completion of Level 10, Randy receives a graduation certificate signed by Susan Barton, who developed the program.

"Barton has been in use since around 2000," Maureen says. "And there have been fewer than 700 graduates so far, at least who got a certifi-

cate. That puts Randy in a pretty elite group."

Now, Randy has his sights set on more education.

"My No. 1 goal is to get my GED," he says. "That's been something my family has been wanting me to do."

He also wants to go to college for a business degree and something in electronics.

"Randy is a great guy, a big heart, lots of common sense," says Maureen. "Lack of skill has kept him down and I look forward to him meeting and exceeding his goals in the future."

— By Kathleen Alaks

reprinted by permission of the Grants Pass Daily Courier

The Literacy Council is part of a big circle of givers: Our volunteer tutors and officers give hours of their time each week to empower others through the gift of literacy, and these efforts are supported by financial gifts from individuals, businesses and foundations in our community.

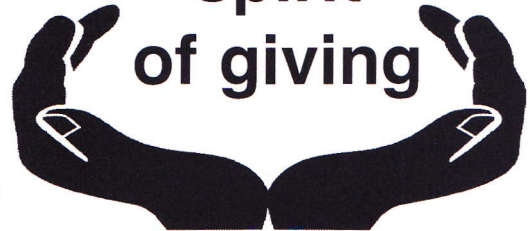
We invite all who value this work to send a contribution. We've enclosed an envelope with this newsletter to make your donation that much easier.

Make a New Year's resolution to show your support.

To those who have already given, we extend our most heartfelt thanks.

— Sincerely, Board of Directors

The spirit of giving



The Literacy Council for Josephine County
223 S.E. M St.
Grants Pass, OR, 97526