



Literacy Council for Josephine County

"Changing lives through learning since 1986"

SPRING/SUMMER, 2018

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

Path to citizenship a challenging journey of faith

For Antonia Chase, the road to U.S. citizenship was paved with speed bumps.

"It's been a long road," says her husband Aaron, an Oregon native. "When we look back on it, we had no idea when we fell in love and got married, what we were in store for."

Antonia grew up in a poor family in a small town in Mexico. When she was 20, she made the difficult and fateful decision to join a friend making the illegal journey into the United States.

"I want to come to the U.S. to work and send money home to help my parents," Antonia says.

She and her friend wound up in Denver, Colorado, and Antonia got a job working at a motel.

Which is where she met a young man from Oregon named Aaron Chase.

"My dad had just died and I was ready to see the world," Aaron says of what inspired his road trip across the country.

Antonia spoke no English and Aaron didn't know Spanish, but somehow they managed to connect. The 7-year-old child who was in the family Antonia lived with served as both their interpreter and their chaperone.

"We began to court, very slowly," Aaron says. "We were from different cultures, different faiths. She was a devoted Catholic, I was an atheist."

Antonia and Aaron married on a beach in Bandon in 2002. They moved to Grants Pass in 2005.

Antonia wanted to become a legal citizen, "but there were lots of complications," Aaron says.

For one, he had married someone who was in the country illegally. Then there was the paperwork needed to prove her residency, such as bills in her name. There was the need for her to return to Mexico for court documents, physicals and other essentials. And there was the expense.

And then Aaron, who ran a trucking company, got injured on the job, and was unable to work.

"We lost the business, we lost our home, we lost all hope," Aaron says.

They moved into a trailer on a friend's property. Antonia scrounging up work where she could.

"From 2002 to 2011, we were struggling just to get by,"



Aaron and Antonia Chase share a quiet moment at home. It took a long time and a lot of work, but Antonia earned her citizenship in October.

Aaron says. "Then God showed up."

Aaron joined a group called Hopekeepers, a support group for those with chronic pain or illness, and he experienced an epiphany of faith. And suddenly, it seemed, their lives turned around.

Aaron was approved for disability. He hired an attorney to help Antonia work through the details of citizenship. Antonia worked with Judy Taylor at the Literacy Council to improve her reading and writing.

In 2013, Antonia was registered as a permanent resident and began her citizenship studies.

"We began to study for to the test," Aaron says. "I would quiz her every night. We learned about U.S. history together. So many things I had forgotten or didn't know."

Antonia got her citizenship certificate in October.

Now she wants to get her GED, and is taking some classes at Rogue Community College.

"I had only six years of school in Mexico," she says. "I would like to go back to school."



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Page 2 SPRING/SUMMER, 2018

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Contact Us!

Call: our office at 541-472-0355 and leave a message; or Dee Pierce at 541-291-0004.

Email: jocoliteracy@yahoo.com

Find us online: literacyjoco.weebly.com and on Facebook

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 20	Sept. 17
July 18	Oct. 17
Aug. 15	Nov. 21

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.

Meet new tutor Ann Igl

Q. Share a little about your personal history, educational background and career path.

A. I was born in Ohio, and grew up moving a lot until eventually, my family settled in California. I completed my undergraduate degree in music education and my master's degree in psychology in California. I moved to Oregon after I was married and had a son.

I worked for several years as an instrumental music teacher and after that, I worked a little over 25 years as a licensed therapist, and am now retired.

Q. How and when did you come to get involved with the Literacy Council? Have you done any teaching or tutoring before?

A. Judi Hiscox told me about the Literacy Council and encouraged me to get involved. I started teaching private music lessons while in my teens and then taught music professionally. As a therapist, I provided workshops and seminars in addition to my normal practice. I found that teaching/coaching was an important part of my work.

Q. How has the tutoring experience been so far? What techniques are you using to connect with your student and to meet her goals?

A. I enjoy it very much. Chanya and I get along well, and I love reviewing grammar myself in order to be ready for her great questions, as we work through the Side by Side Series. I think that being present and mindful of her experience are important cues in recognizing specific goals and interests that she has. I encourage and applaud her successes.

Q. What other volunteer work do you do in the community? What other groups or clubs are you involved with?

A. I volunteer for many functions through my church and am a member of the Josephine Social Action Alliance. I enjoy the book club at Newman Methodist Church.

Q. What's the best book you've read lately?

A. "The Book of Joy" by Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu and Douglas Carlton.

Q. Who are your favorite authors?

A. Margaret Mahler, Steven Pinker, Loren Eiseley, Thich Nhat Hanh, Madeline L'Engle, Stanley Greenspan — and many others.

Q. If you were stranded on desert island, what one book would you want to have with you?

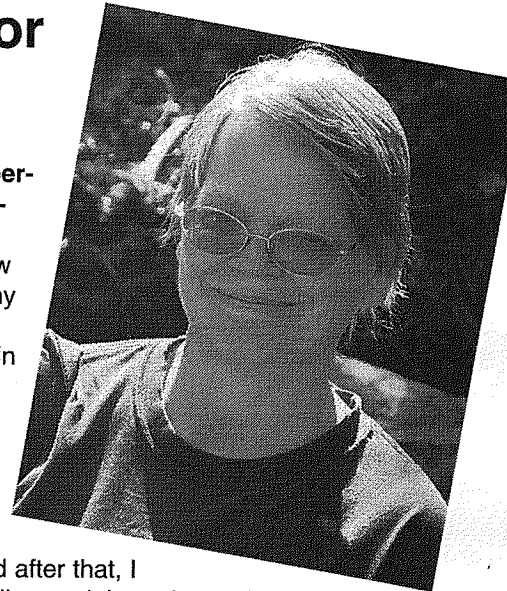
A. "Man's Search for Meaning" by Victor Frankl

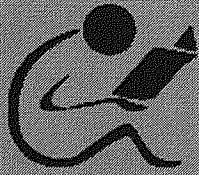
Q. If you could have one superpower, what would it be?

A. Total compassion, gratitude and acceptance. (If that counts as three, just go ahead and choose one).

Q. What one thing do you want to do that you haven't done yet?

A. Travel the United States in an RV with my husband. Then on to Europe!





Dear Friends of the Literacy Council:

"For me, it's everything, passing the test. It's my lifestyle, it's taking care of my family; the accomplishment of succeeding at something I've worked so hard for. Gosh, I feel so blessed to be helped by the Literacy Council. I had nowhere else to go and no one else to turn to. No one else could help."

These are the words of one of our students, a single dad with dyslexia caring for two teenage girls, and we are helping him study for the Oregon Contractors License test. Also, be sure to read in this newsletter issue about the exciting achievement of another one of our students who recently became a US citizen.

The Literacy Council has changed the lives of these two students. "Changing lives through learning since 1986" is what we're all about. Our many inspiring student stories and successes are a testimony to the hard work of our students, the dedication of our volunteers, and the support of donors like you.

You can contribute to these successes, too. Become a part of this exciting and much needed service to our community!

The all-volunteer Literacy Council for Josephine County continues to help a growing number of adults with their learning needs free of charge. With one-on-one tutoring in literacy, GED, ESL and citizenship, our goal is to assist individuals to achieve a higher standard of living and maximize their contributions to our community.

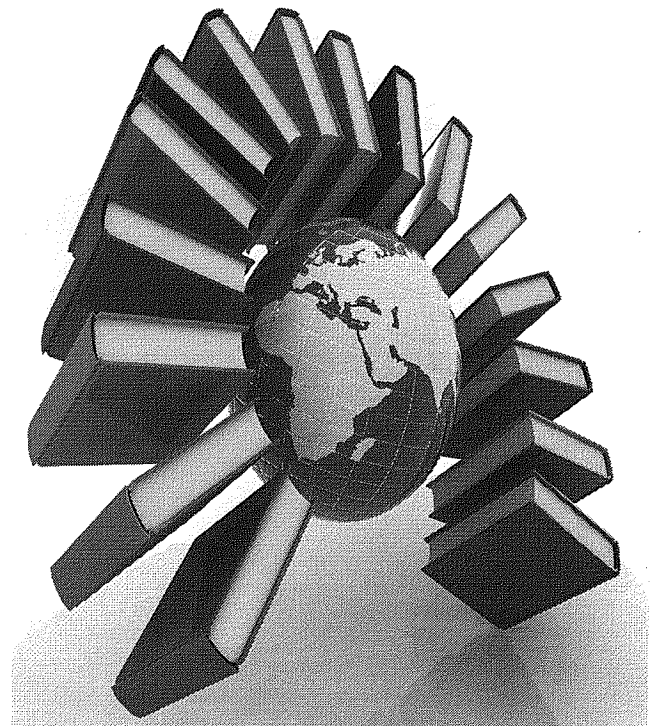
Please help our students by sending us your tax-deductible donation today. Your support will enable us to continue these student successes in 2018 and beyond. You can either use the enclosed donation slip or go to our website, literacyjoco.weebly.com, to make a secure online single or monthly recurring donation. A small amount given monthly, automatically, is convenient for givers and helpful to us because it provides a steady source of income that we can plan on. We are most grateful to those of you who have supported us in past years!

Thank you!

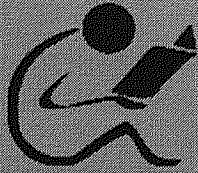
With warm regards,

Andrea Dougan
Chair, Board of Directors

P.S. If you belong to an organization and would like someone from the Literacy Council to speak at one of your organization's meetings, please contact Dee Pierce at 541-291-0004 or pierceda@q.com.



Literacy opens a world of possibility.

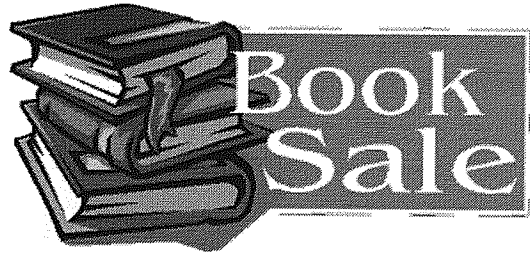


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Page 4 SPRING/SUMMER, 2018

132 N.E. B St., Room 23, GRANTS PASS, OR



WHAT: Literacy Council book sale

WHEN: Friday, June 1, 4 to 7 p.m.

Saturday, June 2, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

WHERE: Oregon Books & Games parking lot at Seventh and E streets in downtown Grants Pass

MORE: On Saturday, more than a dozen local authors

will have booths set up selling their books, signing copies and talking about their craft.

We've got a huge inventory to choose from. All proceeds go to support the all-volunteer, nonprofit Literacy Council for Josephine County, which offers one-on-one tutoring, free of charge, in reading, writing, GED, ESL and citizenship.

We could also still use some volunteers to spend an hour or two helping to set up or take down the sale tables, selling books, visiting with customers or just offering moral support. Let us know how you can help. Call Kathleen Alaks at 541-474-3815 (daytime work number) or 541-955-5371 (evenings and weekends). Or email kalaks@thedailycourier.com.

If you can't help out at the book sale, or if a financial donation is out of your reach, consider bringing something else to the table, whether it be fundraising, leadership, organization, grant writing, public relations, mentoring, marketing, public speaking or just getting the job done.

How about:

- Tutoring
 - Helping with special events
- 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
- Signing up for one of the rewards programs that let you support the Literacy Council while you shop. We have partnerships with Oregon Books, Fred Meyer and Amazon Smile.

Visit the Literacy Council website — literacyjoco.weebly.com — to explore more about us.

The Literacy Council for Josephine County
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Grants Pass, OR, 97526