

# From the Back of the Boat

Bob Garfinkel

This summer I had the privilege to be the entertainment (speaker) at the Algoma Lions Club monthly meeting. I have always found this Algoma group warm, friendly and supportive. I spent a lot of time discussing something everyone in the room had in common – being a volunteer. For me, it got a bit emotional since Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the founder of the Special Olympics, died that day, and I reflected on the greatest volunteer I have ever known – my father.

One of my dad's favorite past-times was volunteering at the VA Hospital in Milwaukee, talking to vets and working in the pharmacy. His favorite saying was, "In life, the things you do for yourself will be buried with you, but what you do for others lives on forever." In his case, this statement was so true. Many of the changes he made at the VA Pharmacy are still in place 10 years after his death.

What does this have to do with Literacy Partners? Simply said, our instruction, influence and impact on a student do not end at the conclusion of a class session. If our students feel they are improving their lives through literacy, our efforts will impact the lives of their entire family. Your influence as a tutor may go one or two generations deep – maybe more. "What you do for others may live on forever." Looks like you were right again, Dad!

## THE STAR

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A Bi-Monthly Publication of Literacy Partners of Kewaunee County

November 2009 Vol. 4 No. 1



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### Recognition Day--2009

At this Third Annual Recognition Celebration Day, many people, all involved in literacy, were acknowledged and congratulated. The gathering included students, board members, tutors, supporters and employers.

On entering the cafeteria and signing in, the first obvious point of interest was a long table of books. Dominion Energy had again provided new books for all of our students and their children. It was a striking way to underline the need for literacy. Being able to read, write, and speak the language of our country is of ultimate importance. For the cover of the program, one of the students provided a drawing of his home in Honduras.

After a delicious supper, each student with the tutor was given a certificate for their work, and their picture was taken. Employers of the students were introduced. Sponsors and supporters were thanked. Tutors who had spent 250 or more hours (see picture) volunteering were awarded a beautiful pin with the Literacy Partners' logo. Bob's daughter, Anne and her husband, Steve Laurent, both responsible for creating our website, were introduced. Anne also worked on the design of the pin given to the tutors. When they came to the stage, we also got a glimpse of their twins.

Bob Garfinkel did the honors of being MC for the event with the help of his student/translator. Thanks also to Bob for his leadership in this organization.

# Introducing Our Tutor of the Season

Julie Thoreson, nurse, grandmother, creative homemaker, tutor

The Tutor of this season has been with Kewaunee Literacy Partners for a year and a half. She teaches a farm worker from Mexico.

Julie grew up in Kewaunee County, graduated from Kewaunee High School, and from Holy Family School of Nursing. Since 1964 she has been employed as a registered nurse, and presently works as the school nurse for the Kewaunee School District K-12. She and her husband, Paul, share their home with Paul's mother, Dorothy, and their exchange student, Sara, from Lodz, Poland. They live on five acres of land south of Kewaunee with their five yellow Labrador Retrievers.

In her words, "My love of cooking takes me to Heritage Farm where I help cook for special occasions and help with baking classes. My mother taught me to sew many years ago and I sew or quilt almost every day. I have made garments for all members of my family, especially our three grandchildren. We have many quilts throughout our home."



My ancestry is Czech and I love singing with the Czech Choraliers. We have a garden and grow many of our own vegetables. We make sauerkraut every fall with friends and relatives. My husband and I go polka dancing whenever we can."

"I became a literacy teacher because I feel there is a great need for people who live in the United States to speak English because it is our national language. I have always liked English in school. My student is eager to learn, which makes it a joy to teach him. I am happy there is a program like this in Kewaunee County.

## Is Health Literacy Important? ..... You Bet Your Life It Is!

Bob Garfinkel

As far as I know, the United States today is experiencing something that has never happened in the history of the world. In past history, people who had money, education, and influence were fat and sassy, while the poor and uneducated were lean and fit. Today, on the average, the more educated a person is in the US, the higher the person's health literacy, the better the person's general health, and he/she is more likely to have health insurance. Less educated people tend to have lower levels of health literacy, poorer general health, and more than not, lack health insurance. These statements were supported by the following study.

The National Assessment of Adult Literacy performed an assessment of health literacy in the US in 2003. This was the first time a study linked health and literacy. Health literacy is defined by the US Dept of Health as: the degree to which individuals have the capacity to process and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.

The NAAL's study surveyed 19,000 adults at random in the US that were 16 years of age and older. The following is a summary of the results:

1. 36% of adults surveyed have basic or below basic skills in health literacy and lacked many skills needed to follow basic health instructions.

2. Most (53%) had intermediate health literacy skills.
3. Only 12% could be considered proficient navigating through our complex health care system.
4. The lower the health literacy skills of adults, the poorer the health of the individual.
5. Adults over 65 years of age had lower health literacy than other age groups.
6. Women's health literacy was higher than men's.
7. Adults who only spoke English before going to school scored higher on health literacy than those who spoke another language before going to school.

The entire report can be viewed at: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2006/s006483.pdf>

## What Does All this Mean?

Most people in the US are not receiving the health care they need and deserve, because they are having problems communicating orally or through the written word with health care professionals, or simply because they don't take the time to navigate through the complex health care system. **Our students and their families are particularly at risk.**

A committee of Literacy Partners tutors, a health care professional from the Kewaunee County Department of Health, a health care specialist, and a Kewaunee County UW-Extension Family Educator met Oct. 22, 2009 to discuss possible courses of action. The committee needs your help. Please e-mail or call Bob and give us the following information.

1. What kind of questions has your student asked you about health issues?
2. What questions have you not been able to answer?
3. If we were to put together a brochure of handy health related contacts, what or who should be included (Resources)?
4. What would you like to see us include in health literacy?

Health Literacy is not a new concept. This past October was the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Health Literacy Awareness Month in the US. In 2010, we hope to feature several events to get us to a point where we can help our students and their families deal more effectively with health issues.

You will hear from our health literacy committee in the January Issue of the "Star." Here's to your health, the health of your family, and the health of your student and his/her family!

## Mary Novak Earns Chancellor's Award



On October 1, 2009, Mary Novak, Literacy Partner's advisor and certified tutor, was presented with the prestigious UW-Extension Chancellor's Award by Dr. Wilson, UW-Chancellor. Mary, UW Extension Department Head, was awarded the Chancellor's Award for her role in starting up and maintaining Literacy Partners of Kewaunee County, Inc. She was nominated by her area supervisor, Karen Hintz and Bob Garfinkel, LP President. As far as anyone can remember, Mary is the first person in Kewaunee County history to receive this award. Congratulations to Mary!

Mary, thanks for everything you have done for us from Literacy Partners, students, tutors, Board of Directors and "Friends of Literacy."

# The Trainer's Corner

Barbara Baldwin

In our September Newsletter the Language Experience Approach was highlighted. This month I would like to direct you to a wonderful online resource maintained by Literacy Dupage that provides actual video segments of students and tutors working together.

Although many different topics and techniques are demonstrated in short video clips, I would like to direct your attention to the two segments that use the language experience technique. Simply right click on this link and open the hyperlink.

<http://www.literacyvolunteersdupage.org/RealTutorsRealLearners.html>

You will have to scroll down until you find the video clip titled, "ESL 1 Experience Story." Click on the arrow to download the video. It takes less than 6 minutes to watch. You will see a student dictating a story to her tutor and you will be able to observe the tutor guiding the student through the writing process.

The next video, directly below the last one, is titled "ESL 2 Experience Story" (10 minutes). In this segment a more advanced and secure student has written a life experience story at home and the tutor is guiding her through the editing process.

Notice how the tutor gently guides the student through the self correcting process and only makes further corrections *after* the student identifies goals or what she would like to work on. The student identifies grammar and pronunciation. Through the whole process, the tutor praises the student's strengths and accomplishments. The tutor gains insight into the student's needs and uses this assignment as a springboard for future lessons.

## Award Winning Tutors



The tutors in the picture received a pin for completing 250+ hours of volunteer time. Bottom row L to R: Jane Ries, Sue Hingst, Mike Urmanski, Peter Ries, Meg Naysmith, Sue Weisser, Marietta Kenzik. Top Row: Sr. Mary Anne Albert, Donna Kinnard, Bob Garfinkel, Sr. Lorraine Aspenleiter, Kathleen Hutchison, Barbara Baldwin. Absent was Joanne Kollross.

## From the Tutor's Point of View

The last issue of the "Star" featured, "The Language Experience Approach" in this column and it was well received by several tutors. Bob Garfinkel wrote the article and said he had several calls from tutors trying it out.

This issue features two letters recommending Resource Center materials. Let us keep this article going strong! If you have a technique or experience you'd like to share with other tutors, please call, e-mail, or write to Mary Anne Albert, 506 Church Ave, Casco, WI 54205, 920-837-7234, [malbert7@centurytel.net](mailto:malbert7@centurytel.net).

*My student and I finally made it to the Resource Center and picked out some books and tapes. I just want to say that the book by Longman on idioms is terrific! I wish I would have had that one last year when I was doing High School ELL English. The exercises are really good and give a person a chance to learn them.*

Kate Phillips

*Just a note to let you know that I have been really happy with "Even More True Stories" for intermediate readers. My student is in Level 4 Laubach. We do a Laubach Lesson and then every other class or so, we read a story in "Even More True Stories." The stories are usually very interesting and the language is up to date. I feel the exercises after the story are very indicative of how the student interpreted and grasped the story. Sometimes the vocabulary is a little elevated, but we read it out loud and underline words and discuss their meaning as we go. If my student gets tired of reading, I read a paragraph then she reads one. She calls the shots! I feel we have to mix it up a bit and have some variety because learning should be fun and not drudgery.*

Maureen Kinnard

## Sign up for a Committee Now!

Literacy Partners of Kewaunee County needs volunteers to help in every aspect of our organization. Committees meet every several months or as needed. Please read the committee descriptions below. Contact Bob with questions or to sign up before December 1, 2009.



### **Student and Tutor Support**

--- to search for new materials for our Resource Center, to set up in-services/workshops for our tutors, to recognize student accomplishments, and to keep tutor and student files up to date. It also tries to meet students' expectations from feedback.

### **Marketing/PR/Outreach**

--- to recruit tutors and students through advertising, notices, news articles, and more. It also works on public relations to get the word out about Literacy Partners.

### **Student Intake and Evaluation**

--- to test new students and match them with tutors. To mentor new tutors is also a function of this committee.

### **Newsletter**

--- to be reporters, proof readers, and people able to write literacy articles.

### **Resource Center**

--- to set up a user friendly system in our Resource Center to organize our materials (library experience might be helpful).

### **Funding**

--- to write grants. Computer literacy is important.

### **Recognition Day Committee**

--- to plan Recognition Day 2010.

## Of This and That. . .

----- Literacy Partners would like to welcome Susan Braun, Betsy Hintz, and Karen Robillard as certified new tutors. Welcome aboard!

----- Marion Moss, longtime veteran tutor, has joined Literacy Partners. Marion was a tutor with Green Bay Literacy, retired for a few years and is now tutoring again. Marion, we are proud to work with you!

----- If your student and family were not able to attend Recognition Day and did not receive their free books, contact Bob and arrangements will be made to get them.

----- Thank you to all who helped plan, set up, and clean up for Recognition Day.

----- There are free books for your student to keep at the Resource Center under the windows.

----- Thanks go to Dorothy Weedman, Sandy Ehren, Megan Kuehl, Kate Phillips, Sue Weisser, and Jean Hildreth for proofreading our 24 page strategic plan. Copies are available by e-mailing or calling Bob.

----- A special thanks to Jerry Waara and his student for passing the citizenship test and also for inspiring

and helping a woman from Kewaunee take the first steps toward becoming a citizen.

----- Congratulations to Marietta Kenzik (2 students), Muriel Seidl, Bonnie Johnson, Sue Weisser, Bob Garfinkel and their students for finishing a level in Laubach.

----- Thanks to Anne Laurent for starting, and bringing up to date, the Literacy Partners' scrapbook. The scrapbook will be on a table at the Resource Center in early November. Take a few moments to look at it.

----- Literacy Partners is now on Facebook! If you are registered on Facebook, go to "search" and type "literacy" and enter. Facebook has been one of the hottest public relations tools non-profit organizations have found. One literacy group attracted 400 "friends" in several weeks. Pass the word!

----- If you haven't already read the thank you letter that was included in your Recognition Day folder from Wally Amos, please do so. "Famous Amos" is not only the cookie guru, but has been a driving force in literacy nation wide.

## Our Board of Directors:

Bob Garfinkel -- President, Maureen Kinnard, -- Vice- President, Judy Delain – Secretary, Barb Porath – Treasurer, Sandy Ehren, Mary Gotstein, Sue Hingst, Marietta Kenzik, Kate Phillips, Jerry Waara, Jackie Yon, Jan Zenner

## Advisors:

Mary Novak, UW-Extension, Jill Jorgensen, UW-Extension

## Supporters:

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