

Spotlight on Workforce Instruction

By Jenny McIntosh

Literacy Source is a great place for students who are striving to enter or re-enter the workforce, keep their jobs, and build self-sufficiency. Students can choose from an array of instructional opportunities, ranging from Vocational ESL and Computer classes to one-on-one and small group instruction to employer-based ESL classes. These classes have been especially active this past fall, with a growing number of students coming to Literacy Source through Washington state's WorkFirst program, which supports job-seeking parents in meeting employment-related educational goals. Isabel Childs, who coordinates Workforce instruction, has enjoyed working with this unique group, which has grown from 8 to 15 students since last fall. "I have been so impressed by the dedication of our Workfirst parents this quarter," she says. "They are a wonderful group, very conscientious and hard-working. While juggling a lot of responsibilities including young children at home, school, and volunteer jobs, they still come regularly and have great attitudes. I admire them and their contributions to our programs." This edition of *Bridge to Literacy* highlights the stories of a few of these students, focusing on their experiences and successes at Literacy Source.

Tutoring Spotlight: Tylisa and Jeannie

By Katie Pickard

For WorkFirst student Tylisa Porter, being paired with a one-to-one tutor has been an important step in progressing towards her goals. Like many students at Literacy Source, a lack of individualized instruction has been a hurdle in her education. A match with tutor Jeannie Sparks in October of 2009 provided a productive and fun way to make it over this hurdle and motivate Tylisa to focus on her goals. I met with Tylisa and Jeannie before a recent tutoring session to talk about their experience together and find out how tutoring has made difference.



What have some challenges been in your education, at Literacy Source or in the past, Tylisa?

Tylisa: Math and reading – they've been a struggle. They've just been hard.

What are you working on at Literacy Source?

Tylisa: Math, reading.

What are some of your learning goals?

Tylisa: To learn more. Be better at things.

Jeannie: I know she would like to get her GED.

Tylisa: Yeah. And my goal is taking care of my daughter. Do better on my own. Get a job.

What do you do in your tutoring sessions?

Tylisa: Spelling. We use little letters and she gives me spelling words. It's different.

Jeannie: Usually we have a spelling pattern each week – short vowels, long vowels.

Tylisa, what do you like about working with Jeannie?

Tylisa: I feel more comfortable with her. I can talk to her and she breaks the questions down.

Jeannie, now I'm going to ask you a few questions. Why do you volunteer at Literacy Source?

Jeannie: I just really enjoy reading personally, so I enjoy teaching it – seeing Tylisa progress.

What are some of the greatest challenges and success you've had volunteering here?

Jeannie: Tylisa's making weekly progress. She's really committed to learning. I see growth every week. I don't think there's been anything that's been hard.

What has been most rewarding?

Jeannie: We've developed a really great relationship from day one, we're friends – plus the staff has been really supportive.

What is your favorite aspect of tutoring?

Jeannie: I think customizing the lessons and trying to find materials and lessons that I think would benefit her the most and that she will relate to the most. Instead of just going through a program that has been prepared, she'll write a story and I'll have her read it. Plus we just have a fun time – we do a lot of joking around. I think Tylisa does a good job – she'll bring in materials. We don't just stick to what I've brought.

That's so great to hear! So Tylisa, do you feel like you're learning? Do you feel like Literacy Source is worthwhile?

Tylisa: Yeah, I feel more successful at reading, spelling. I feel better. I get more help. I like it. If I was somewhere else, I would slack. You don't get help. It's only one teacher and everything you do you have to do it on the computer. I like the teachers [at Literacy Source].



Student spotlight: Charif

By Jenny McIntosh

Hardly a day goes by at Literacy Source without seeing Charif's smiling face. A dedicated student and a hard worker, Charif has taken advantage of several programs Literacy Source offers, including ESL classes, Community Club, Citizenship, Community Engagement Workshops, and tutoring. His enthusiasm and participation in classes are an encouragement to instructors and students alike. "Charif always inspires great conversation in my Community Club class with his charismatic personality and ability to make people laugh. He is very serious about learning but approaches it with a lighthearted attitude," says instructor Katie Pickard. Charif moved to Seattle from Djibouti with his wife and 2 children in April 2009 and loves his new home so far, especially the climate and the people. Since enrolling as a student at Literacy Source in September 2009, Charif has already taken great strides toward his goals of learning English, sharpening his computer skills and preparing to become a United States citizen.



"I like to study English to understand the people of America and how they live, to become a citizen of America."



Salah Garasow, WorkFirst student

"I like [Literacy Source] because they have different programs. If you like computers, you can study computers, if you like English you can study English, if you like math you can study math. If you like to learn you can learn."



Tsegereda Ghidey, WorkFirst student

"Literacy Source is good. School I like. Reading, speaking, writing, listening. Like, very, very good. Teachers good. Teachers tell me again, again, maybe I understand. Three years, this country. Before, different. No good. Now I'm listening to you. Speaking, reading, writing a little bit. A little bit."



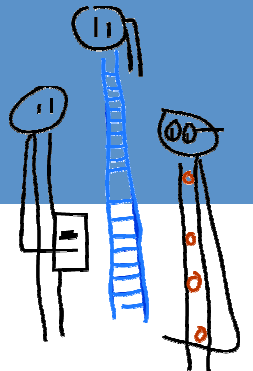
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BRIDGE TO LITERACY

Fall/Winter 2009



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We offer free classes, workshops, tutoring, and learning resources for adults who want to improve their basic reading, writing, math and computer skills; learn English; study for a high school diploma or GED; or prepare to become citizens. Call 206-782-2050 to register for the next **New Student Orientation**.

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