



# TEXAS Adult & Family Literacy QUARTERLY

Volume 13, No. 3

June 2009

## Success Stories

*Annual Issue Highlighting Adult Learner, Teacher, and Program Success in Texas*

*Adult Learner Success Stories (pages 1-8)*

### Fatherhood Inspires Journey to GED Success

*by Arthur Riley*

My name is Arthur Riley. After years of working on my GED, my persistence resulted in a GED diploma. I am 31 years old, married, and have a 10 year-old son. My mother raised me with lots of love and support. I never knew my father.

My journey to earn a GED wasn't easy. I've had failure, hardship, and discouragement. I've also had success, reward, and encouragement. This journey began as a high school athlete but ended due to a knee injury.

All my life I loved football. Football is a passion. Collegiate was my future. It came to an end when I was hit from my blind side going after a running play. This injury resulted in two knee operations and extensive therapy. I felt lost because next to my family, football was my love.

That same year, my grandmother died. This hurt more than my injury because another part of my life was over. These losses became too much for me, so I quit school. Dealing with therapy and learning to walk again resulted in severe depression. Some days, I wouldn't get out of bed. I became very angry. I felt betrayed by God, and I'd ask him, "Why me?" I was a failure. I failed football, I failed school, and I failed at dealing with my grandmother's death.

I began drinking and smoking pot. When it got expensive, I sold drugs. There were times I should have been caught. I realize now that God intervened because I had not forgotten him in my wrongdoing.

One day, I met Jessica. We became good friends. We began dating and soon our son, Brandon, was born. Since I never knew my father, I swore to become the best example I could for Brandon. I'd teach him not to quit and become better than me. Brandon convinced me to change.

*continued on page 2*



### My GED Journey to Success, continued from page 1

Jessica and I found employment in telemarketing. One day, Jessica read about refinery jobs in Corpus Christi. I was hired making \$8.00 an hour. I worked at digging holes, ditches, and other back-busting work. I didn't mind because I kept thinking about my promise.

Another opportunity became available and I got that position making \$14.00 hourly. I soon got another position as a Pipe-Fitter making \$17.00 hourly. I was succeeding, but something still bothered me; I didn't have a GED.

I attended GED classes briefly and took the GED test but failed. I retested without attending classes and passed everything but math. Later, I attempted the math test again, and failed. The hurt felt like it had when my injury destroyed my dreams. I felt like a failure.

One day, my wife said something that made all the difference. She said I should stop feeling like a failure and focus on Brandon. She said that those were words I said to her at a time when her strength was being tested while in college and she thought of quitting. My words helped her continue.

When my son learned that I had failed my math test, he said, "Dad, you always tell me to give 100%. Did you give 100%?" I thought about it and admitted that I had not.

I wanted to study harder than before. I heard those words in my mind repeatedly. I felt the need to try 100%. I reenrolled in school and did all the work my teacher assigned. I went to the library and worked on math. I'd wake up and think about what I'd work on dealing with math. Brandon and I even worked on his math homework.

One day, my teacher said I was ready to retest. This time, I felt different. Before, I always felt nervous. This time, I felt calm, peaceful, and relaxed. After days of waiting, I walked into the office and asked our data entry clerk if he would check scores. Each time, I had a gut-wrenching feeling when he'd say, "Nothing yet." One morning, after he entered my social security number he said, "You know what, you passed!" My knees felt like Jell-O. I had to go outside for a moment. I went back in and asked, "Are you sure?" He showed me the score. I was a GED graduate!

I felt proud, yet humble at the same time. I finally accomplished my goal. I learned that when I set my mind on something, I can achieve. It may take years, but my next goal is a college degree.

I have learned much on this journey. By becoming a college student, I will show my son that I'm not a quitter. I will teach him not to let the things that he can't do get in the way of the things that he can do. I can give my son all the toys in the world, but that's not what the journey is about. The journey is about reaching goals, in spite of obstacles. Now, I can teach my son by example and that's what I promised him. This journey is another way I can show my son that I am a successful father.

### About the Author

Arthur Riley graduated on July 7, 2008. He studied for his GED test for nine years off and on. He continues to work at the local refineries in Corpus Christi, Texas and plans to enter college in the near future. This accomplishment and all that came with it has made a tremendous difference in Arthur's life.

## In This Issue

Letter from the TCALL Director  
by Harriet Vardiman Smith 3

### ADULT LEARNER SUCCESS STORIES

Fatherhood Inspires Journey to GED Success  
by Arthur Riley 1

We Need to Learn English  
by Gabriel Ramirez 4

Free ESL Classes Lead to Family and  
Workplace Breakthroughs  
by Maria Galvan 5

It's Never Too Late  
by Silvestre Hernandez 5

Why Am I Learning English?  
by Berta Ortiz 6

Even Start Mom Learns to Dream in English  
by Veronica Galeano 6

The EcoLovegical Project  
by Jose Luis Quiroz 7

Learning English in Many Ways Leads to Success  
by Sonia Granado 7

Mom's Better English Skills Benefit Family's Health  
by Karla Renteria 8

GED Student Proud of Speedy Progress  
by Sindy Dominguez 8

### TEACHER STORIES OF STUDENT OR CLASSROOM SUCCESS

Doors of Possibilities  
by Sarah DeSalvo 9

The Unstoppable Suzan Modi  
by Nancy Meredith 10

Embracing the Dream  
by Dinah Sherrill 11

### PROGRAM SUCCESS STORIES

Building Bookcases and Community Literacy Coalitions  
by Lester Meriwether 13

How Sweet It Is!  
by Sue Barker 14

North Texas Literacy Coalition: Making a Difference  
Through Literacy  
by Valerie Hodges 16

### SUCCESS FROM STATEWIDE INITIATIVES

The Power of a "Brief Interview"  
by Vicki Angel 17

Success Out of Disaster  
by Federico Salas-Isnardi 18

STAR Reading Training in Texas - A Success Story  
With More Benefits to Come  
by Kenneth Appelt 20

Welcome to Our Library/Free Things 21

# Letter from the TCALL Director

Dear Readers,

Our annual Success Stories issue never fails to inspire everyone here at TCALL. In our role as the state literacy resource center – tucked away on a remote, rural sub-campus of Texas A&M University – we seldom have the privilege to witness firsthand the struggles and triumphs of adult learners. Unlike teachers and program leaders on the “front lines” of literacy, we can rarely observe and give direct support to adults and families as they overcome obstacles to learning, growth, and achievement in literacy programs. We envy you that privilege. But it does inspire us to work all the harder in our efforts to support teachers, volunteers, tutors, program leaders, and literacy coalitions and organizations with our library of resources, research and development activities, and with our services such as email discussion lists, professional development support for literacy educators and state leadership, and with this publication.

On this page, you will see a graphic recognition of an important milestone in TCALL’s history. December 2009 will mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of TCALL’s establishment by the Texas A&M University Board of Regents as a center of the university, with the stated purpose to “reduce the incidence of adult illiteracy in Texas”. In a staff mission and vision retreat a few years back, we decided to rephrase our mission in a more positive light – *to provide leadership and service to those meeting the literacy needs of adult learners and their families*. This fall, TCALL will celebrate 20 years of service to Texas literacy educators with a reception honoring both the anniversary and our six new doctoral research fellows at TCALL for the coming academic year. When the date is set for that reception, we will invite you all via our statewide email discussion lists. If you can’t attend in person, we hope you will celebrate with us in spirit – just as we celebrate with you in spirit when your learners and your programs accomplish great things all over our state.

Success stories in this issue of *The Quarterly* are grouped into four sections. On pages 1 through 8, you will read the stories of adult learners’ successes in their own words. For these articles, we made the editorial decision to correct typos and spelling errors. Otherwise, to honor the writers’ voices, adult learners’ words remain essentially as they were submitted. On pages 9-12, teachers or tutors write of adult learner or classroom successes of which they have been a part. Pages 13-16 feature accounts of program successes in building literacy coalitions, providing home libraries for families who live in poverty, and a chocolate-covered collaboration for English as a Second Language instruction in the workplace. The last section of articles on pages 17-20 shares successes realized by statewide initiatives. Professional development initiatives are described that support effective instruction for all adult learners – and evidence-based reading instruction specifically for intermediate-level adult basic education students. The second to the last article in that section describes the successes being realized by the Disaster Recovery Grant initiative of The Barbara Bush Texas Fund for Family Literacy, which has helped nine literacy programs recover from natural disasters that occurred in the latter half of 2008.

Finally, don’t miss the resources described in *Welcome to Our Library* and *Free Things to Send For* sections on pages 21 through 27. In this issue, we are featuring resources to support adult learner transitions to college, including a number of resources to build the math skills needed to succeed in college. And as always, family literacy resources are featured – both loan materials and free publications – available to you from our library by mail.

*Harriet Vardiman Smith*  
TCALL Director

# We Need to Learn English

by Gabriel Ramirez

Hello, my name is Gabriel Ramirez. I'm from Chihuahua, the biggest state of Mexico. It is located south of Texas, the biggest state of the United States of America. I am currently living in Cleburne, TX.

For me studying English is completely necessary for many reasons. One of them is we are here in this great country, so we need to speak English with everybody: with our neighbors, with our boss, with all the people around us. So that means, we need to learn English.

When I arrived in the United States and started to work I felt desperate because I like to speak with everybody, and I couldn't speak with my coworkers or even with my boss. I had a coworker who translated for me, but he did not tell them exactly what I wanted to say.

Two weeks after I arrived, one friend invited me to

go to school. I went to Kiesnick Learning Center for about 12 or 13 months, but they closed because most people didn't go often or stopped going. After some years, I learned about this school named CISD Adult Learning in Cleburne, Texas. I started attending ESL classes, and wish to start the GED classes when I'm ready. I hope will be soon.

If one day you think or feel like giving up learning ESL or GED for some reason, like somebody laughed at you because you are too old to study, always think about you and your family not the people who have a bad attitude.

Thanks for taking your time to read this article.

## About the Author

Gabriel Ramirez is married and has two daughters. He is going to start GED classes this summer.

## Effective Transitions in Adult Education Conference 2009

The National College Transition Network (NCTN) at World Education, in partnership with the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, is hosting the third annual national conference on Effective Transitions in Adult Education.

**WHEN:** November 16 - 17, 2009

**WHERE:** Crowne Plaza at the Crossings, Providence, Rhode Island

The Effective Transitions Conference is for adult and postsecondary educators and administrators. Workshop topics include:

- Promising practices for career pathways and ESOL/ESL programs
- Preparing students for college-level reading, writing, and math
- Building student self-efficacy
- And more

**For more information on the conference, visit the NCTN Website:** [www.collegetransition.org](http://www.collegetransition.org)

**Questions?** Contact Priyanka Sharma at 617-385-3788 or email [nctn@worlded.org](mailto:nctn@worlded.org)

**The NCTN** supports Adult Basic Education (ABE) staff, programs, and state agencies in establishing and strengthening ABE-to-college transition services through technical assistance, professional development, collegial sharing, advocacy and increased visibility for this critical sector of the adult basic education system. The NCTN Website offers a wealth of information and resources including curriculum, program development, promising practices, and research.

# Free ESL Classes Lead to Family and Workplace Breakthroughs

by Maria Galvan

At the beginning of this year, I was thinking about taking some ESL classes, but they were expensive. Then I read about ESL classes in the community education school and the best thing was they were free! My husband thought that I couldn't learn a lot because the class was free. He didn't want me to go, but I persisted to come and now I'm here writing and trying to explain why my English class is so important to me.

At the time that I began ESL classes, I applied for a job. I was really worried about getting a job. First because my English was poor; second I didn't have confidence to speak; and third I hardly understood what people said.

Two months later, on March 7<sup>th</sup> to be exact, I'd learned enough English that I had enough confidence to take my daughter to a birthday party. Was I worried? Of course I was, because all the people there were Americans (English speakers). It was our first party here in the U.S.

I was having fun at the party when I had a call. Someone called me to ask if I was still interested in a job. I said yes and he told me that I had an appoint-

ment for an interview on Monday. Could you believe it? I answered a call! I knew exactly what to say. Then on Monday I went to the interview and people there didn't speak Spanish, so I was nervous and worried about what could happen. I was wondering if I could understand everything. Fortunately I did it! On March 13<sup>th</sup> I was hired.

All thanks to my ESL class and mostly to my teacher Donna Braun, they gave me:

- ❖ The opportunity to learn a lot in only two months (I'm still learning).
- ❖ The confidence to speak in English.
- ❖ The opportunity to get a job.

I'm so thankful to my teacher and this ESL program because they helped me to reach my first goal here in the U.S. which was "to enjoy with my family many activities and to have a job."

## About the Author

Maria Galvan was born in Mexico. She is learning English in Burleson, TX through the Cleburne Adult Education program. She will be starting GED classes in the fall.

# It's Never Too Late

by Silvestre Hernandez

My name is Silvestre Hernandez. I was born in Cd. Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico. I came to the United States in 1979. When I came to the U.S.A., I did not read or write in Spanish or English. I didn't speak any English.

I thought I was too old to take a class and learn English, but then I decided, why not? I started ESL classes in 2008. The first paper I wrote in class, even I didn't understand it. Now I feel good about my writing. My first goal is to learn to speak, read, and write English well. Second, I need to volunteer in my grandchildren's school. Third, I need to talk with their teacher

and learn more about their homework assignments.

Maybe I'll be ready to help my grandchildren with their homework in a few months. After I start helping my grandchildren, I'm going to look for a good job.

## About the Author

According to his teacher, Silvestre Hernandez never went to school as a child. He entered class at 62 years old. He is particularly proud of reading and writing in English as he has not had that experience in his first language! Silvestre is learning English at the JN Long Adult Education Center in Cleburne, TX.

# Why Am I Learning English?

by Berta Ortiz

There are no limits for human beings. There are, only if he/she makes them. The need to learn English brought me to this school. Why is this necessary? There are some reasons. I live in this country, the land of opportunities. Then I need to communicate with other people. One of the most important reasons may be the main one is to become a citizen, but before this beautiful dream can be materialized, I need to work hard on it. I want to become a citizen of this country and to be part of it, learning about its culture, its language, about everything good I can learn. I wish to understand people and for them to understand me, feel like others don't feel underestimated. Next, I want to get better job opportunities. I don't want to be cleaning houses all my entire life. I know this is not bad. Any kind of honest job is good, but I know I can do something better.

Carrying on, in my future may be I can study a career and pick up my life. Also, I want to be an example for my family. They know how important education is. My example shows them "If I can do it, you can do it." I

know not everything in life is a piece of cake. Spending time with my family is really important to me. But, when I started to study English I came to school from Monday through Saturday. On my third semester I thought over a goal to obtain my GED diploma. I came to school in the afternoon and during the night schedule; fortunately that semester, I was able to get it.

This economic situation can be an obstacle in our learning. For example, I work part-time. Two times the company where I work has called me offering more hours but this would affect my school schedule. It is necessary for me to do economic changes in my life, but my decision is to continue in school. I know that I had chosen the better part. All changes that I need doing are welcomed if those allow me to improve my learning.

## About the Author

Berta Ortiz is currently enrolled in ESL level 3 with Ms. Liz Moya at Ysleta Community Learning Center.

# Even Start Mom Learns to Dream in English

by Veronica Galeano

It is a pleasure to tell a little about my life. I'm a 38 year old married woman with children. My life like the majority of us is kind of ordinary. My life started to change one day when two moms at my son's school told me about the Even Start Program. I was in an absolute depression so I decided to attend classes. I was already thinking about being absent at least one day a week. But quickly I learned to take English class seriously.

After a few months, I started thinking and talking in English by myself at home. One day, I even dreamt everything in English. It was very funny and exciting. Now that the year is almost over I can speak more English with my children and help them more. My children's teachers like to see me at the campus because they know that I am studying.

When we went to Orlando, Florida a few months ago, I spoke English to everyone. I went downtown by myself and even asked for directions, everyone understood everything that I had to say. And when I'm on the phone I don't have to ask for someone who speaks Spanish.

My goal is to start a career and to be able to help my children as best I can. I am proud of myself!

## About the Author

Veronica Galeano was born in Ciudad Juarez Chihuahua, Mexico. She has been studying English and taking GED classes in the Socorro Independent School District Even Start Program in El Paso since August 2008.

# The EcoLovegical Project

by Jose Luis Quiroz

I was reading almost all the stories. And all the stories tell the same or nearly the same. My story is different. I came to the U.S.A. to try to change the mind of the people, who don't have conscious that mother Earth is dying and a lot of people don't move a finger to stop it.

I'm a composer and song writer too. And I wrote about three hundred and fifty songs. Most of them talk about love between man and woman; but since I went to Cancun in 1987, I understood the meaning of my life. I started to protect all the creatures like flora and fauna to keep it wild, but it wasn't enough. So I was thinking that my music would be the answer, but I needed to learn English and the perfect grammar to write songs and tell the world. I'm here to protect you and help you. You're not alone anymore and this is how it was born, "the EcoLovegical Project." Only that I didn't write in English before. So I start to study and practice English with the people from the Old world. They were in Cancun to visit the Maya's archeology ruins. I met a lot of people from France, Germany, Holland, Japan, Italy, Monaco and many more places. It was because I was performing at the Fiesta Americana Inn and also at the Holiday Inn. I was playing in Panama's band,

named Tony Bananas. We played Reggae, Jazz, soft rock and folk Caribbean music and most of them were in the English language. So I understood that English is the universal language, and that is why I want to be a citizen of the world and my music can be listened to worldwide. Now I'm almost done with my project, thanks to the teachers who corrected me and to speak English fairly well, and I like to thank the Ysleta Community Learning Center staff, for being excellent people and treating me with politeness when I went to the main office.

Thanks to my family who supported me and cheered me on to keep going forward until I reach my goals. The next step is that I'm going to record a professional demo and send it to the companies who I want to suggest a different music style and ecological lyrics, to touch the human feelings.

## About the Author

My name is Jose Luis Quiroz and my artistic name is "LuQui." I was born in Juarez Mexico, but right now I'm living in El Paso, Texas. It is my sweet home.

# Learning English in Many Ways Leads to Success

by Sonia Granado

I would like to invite people to learn English. I am so proud that I am from Mexico but I'm so lucky that I live in the U.S.A. which gives me the opportunity to learn how to talk, write and read English.

I recommend people who can't go to school listen to the radio and watch TV and repeat what they say out loud. Or you can also read books. There is no obstacle which can stop you from learning English even though you don't go to school.

Also if you have children you can talk to them and they will be your teacher. For everyone that's reading this I ask, that you please don't make fun of people who don't speak English very well or don't speak it at all. This causes people to get embarrassed, making

them not want to speak English even though they can speak a little bit.

Never forget that everything is to better ourselves. Learning or speaking English gives us many opportunities. Remember speaking one language is like being a single person, but speaking two languages is like being two people. I would like to give thanks to Mrs. Bonnie Weathersby who is a very special teacher to me.

## About the Author

Sonia Granado was born in Jimenez, Coahuila, Mexico. She is learning English at JN Long Adult Education Center in Cleburne.

# Mom's Better English Skills Benefit Family's Health

by *Karla Renteria*

Hello, my name is Karla. I am 24 years old. I am married and have twins that are five years old. Their names are Stephanie and Skarlett. I came from Cd. Juarez Chihuahua, Mexico and I have been living in El Paso for five years. My children were born here in El Paso.

I will tell you a little bit about my family. My daughters were born at 32 weeks. Stephanie was born healthy but Skarlett was born with a problem in her heart and esophagus. The doctors decided to operate on her heart and two months later she had esophagus surgery, she had four more surgeries after that.

I always wanted to study English because I see doctors all the time and there are things that I don't understand. When my daughter had her heart operation in Dallas at the Children's Hospital the doctor told me that my daughter had become sick and that it was very serious to may be expect the worse. In the lobby I started talking with a lady who didn't speak Spanish. She told me about her daughter too and that kept me calm. I apologized for not speaking well and wished

that I could have understood more. She gave me her address and phone number but I didn't call.

I have been in the Even Start Program since January and I am learning a lot. I have learned new words and practiced dialogues in class that help me communicate better when I see doctors. My daughters enjoy the times that we learn together, and the home visit gives me ideas for learning activities at home.

The other day I called the insurance company and I wasn't embarrassed to use all my English! Maybe one day I will call the lady I met at the hospital that day. My goal this year is to speak, understand and write more in English and then to obtain my GED and get into college.

## **About the Author**

Karla Renteria was born in Ciudad, Juarez Chihuahua, Mexico. She has been learning English in the Socorro Independent School District Even Start Program in El Paso since January of this year.

# GED Student Proud of Speedy Progress

by *Sindy Dominguez*

I am succeeding in my educational goals because in the first week of April I started my classes. I had trouble with grammar, language and math. Now I have been here for two weeks.

The first week I was doing work from books. In the second week I took my first science practice test and I got a 450 on it. I could have gotten higher score but I didn't finish it. I was really amazed. When I got home I told my mom, my dad and my husband. This week I already took two more practice tests. I took the second practice test for science and I got a 440 on it. The other I took was a writing test. I got a 550 on it and a three on my essay. Essays had been a real headache for me because it's really hard to write thoughts or stories, and I have improved on them a lot.

Now I'm ready to register and take two of my tests. It's

been really hard because I have a five year-old son and a two year-old daughter. I'm nine months pregnant and I don't get much support from my husband. The good thing is that I have my parents that support and help me a lot because they want me to be successful. I am really amazed of what I have done in just three weeks.

I've been improving a lot and I'm proud of what I have done and I think this would be a good example that I can give to my kids.

## **About the Author**

Sindy Dominguez is a student at Austin Learning Academy and is in the process of taking her GED tests this month. She will also give birth to her third child this month, which she hopes will occur AFTER she finishes all her tests.

## **Doors of Possibilities**

*by Sarah DeSalvo*

How likely is a young, single mother of four to ever begin college? How about someone whose education has reached only the ninth grade? Tammy Clements had these odds and more stacked against her by the time she was 21 years old.

Being the sole provider for a family of five was a mountain looming before her, and there was no going around it. She knew it wouldn't be easy, but she was even more certain that she wouldn't let her children down.

Tammy was married and pregnant with her first child when she was only 15 years old. She moved to Germany with her husband and lived there off and on for the next six years. After they separated, she moved back to the States for good. Tammy's mother helped with the children as much as she could, but unfortunately poor health often limited her.

For the next 10 to 15 years, Tammy bounced from job to job—mostly as a waitress—until finally she began working the admissions desk at Trinity Mother Frances Hospital. Having a job with promotion possibilities prompted Tammy to contact the Literacy Council of Tyler (LCOT) and begin GED preparation classes.

One of the first people Tammy met at LCOT was Nancy Hill—Volunteer Coordinator at the time. She enrolled Tammy and remained a steady encouragement through the challenges at hand. The road was anything but easy for Tammy.

At one point, Tammy stopped coming to class because she was embarrassed about her struggles with math. Luckily, Ms. Hill managed to convince Tammy to come back to class. She told Tammy that it was very common for students to need extra help in math and that there was no need to be embarrassed. So, Tammy switched from a general GED preparation class into one that focused on math skills and found that the math class was exactly what she needed. In 2005, after only six months of classes, Tammy took and passed all sections of the GED.

"She was my confidence builder every day," Tammy says, referring to her LCOT math teacher. Tammy says that her teacher was always willing to go the extra mile for her students, and that she urged them all to reach their full potential. She encouraged Tammy to go to college, reminding her that college was not all about math. Before coming to LCOT, Tammy had never considered going to college, but once she passed her GED she found the self confidence to enroll.

Just two years later, Tammy received her associate degree from Tyler Junior College. She attributes much of her success to being enrolled in the TRiO program on campus (TRiO – Touching Lives Reaching Out Increasing Knowledge Open Doors - is a program designed to help promising students persist and succeed in college-level work), which consistently gave her the tutoring she needed. Tammy not only achieved what she thought she never could by going to college, she took 21 hours her last semester and graduated Cum Laude; she was also a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. That's when Tammy learned a truth that has continued to serve her well.

"School isn't about being the smartest person in the world. It's about being the most persistent," she says.

Tammy didn't stop with an Associate degree. After receiving a scholarship, she immediately transferred to University of Texas at Tyler in 2007. Once again the TRiO tutoring program helped her in this potentially difficult transition. Tammy will be graduating from U.T. Tyler in May with a Bachelor of Arts in Human Resources Development. She has applied to graduate programs at U.T. Tyler as well as Trinity University in San Antonio.

Tammy is proud of her children. Each of them is actively pursuing their educations, careers and self development before starting families of their own. She says college was never an expectation she had set for her children, but that changed when she completed her education and learned how it transforms your life.

*continued on page 10*

### *Doors of Possibilities, continued from page 9*

Her oldest daughter is at Tyler Junior College. Her oldest son is living in Virginia and works as a trainer for a restaurant chain. Her youngest son is at the University of North Texas in Denton. Her middle son is in the Army in North Carolina, Fort Bragg. He served in Iraq for 15 months during heavy conflict.

Furthermore, Tammy reluctantly admits that she never voted in political elections until she got involved with LCOT. Now, she says she has a sense of ownership over her government and encourages everyone, especially women, to vote as often as possible.

Over the years, Tammy has gone from waiting tables to serving our community as Manager of Admissions

Services at Trinity Mother Frances. Naturally, her pay has dramatically increased since her waiting days, but so has her self-esteem.

“Doors of possibilities open with an education,” Tammy says. After hearing her story, who could ever argue with that?

### **About the Author**

Sarah DeSalvo is a journalism student at University of Texas at Tyler who has volunteered for the LCOT since April of 2005. While her summers are generally spent teaching English on mission trips overseas, during the school year she volunteers her time by helping LCOT share the stories of successful students like Tammy.

## **The Unstoppable Suzan Modi**

*by Nancy Meredith*

Even though Suzan Modi is in a wheelchair, she definitely knows how to stand up for herself. Because she had polio when she was one year old, Suzan cannot walk, and because of her disability never had the opportunity to attend school in her home city of Juba, Sudan. She found her opportunities later in life.

Suzan came to this country as a refugee in 2003 to live with her sister and brother-in-law in the Austin suburb of Pflugerville. One of her primary goals was to learn English. Her sister recommended the strategy of watching English-language TV shows and movies, but Suzan wanted more. She wanted to go to school.

### **School at Last!**

Having heard that she might get help at the Pflugerville library, Suzan set out on the hour-and-a-half one-way trip in her electric wheelchair. She found out about an English class there, and finally, at the age of 35, she was able to attend school. On that same day, she also had a close encounter with U.S. law enforcement.

Suzan has difficulty steering a straight path with her wheelchair. Her zigzag trajectory along the streets of Pflugerville prompted passersby to call the police out of concern for her safety. With her limited English, she was able to give the officers her name, but that was all. She knew how to get to her house, but she did not know how to give the address. Fortunately, her brother-in-law happened by and took charge, though

the police made him park his car and walk the rest of the way home with her.

That incident did not deter Suzan. She continued to take herself to the library for evening English class twice a week for two months, but she also carried a piece of paper with her full name, address, and phone number written on it—just in case. When winter approached, she changed to a morning class to avoid making the trip in the dark but was dissatisfied that the class met only one day a week. She wanted more.

Suzan’s next breakthrough came with her discovery of CARTS (Capital Area Regional Transit Services) availability in Pflugerville. Through CARTS, she was able to get to ARCIL, an Austin agency that referred her to computer classes. The computer classes were good, but they were not enough. Suzan still wanted to speak, read, and write English, so her ARCIL counselor arranged for her to go to Literacy Austin. Suzan met with a tutor there twice a week until the tutor resigned to be a full-time mom. Weeks went by, and Literacy Austin was unable to match Suzan with a new tutor. By this time, though, Suzan was feeling a strong need for “real” school, a school she could attend every day.

### **On to ACC**

Suzan’s brother-in-law had been working with Austin Community College’s (ACC) Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) for some time, trying to complete

the necessary paperwork to qualify her for OSD services. At last the process was complete, and Suzan was able to have OSD support as an ACC student. She attended the August 2006 two-day orientation for new GED students—but at no small price. In order to be admitted to orientation, prospective students must arrive well before the 8:00 a.m. start time. CARTS did not run that early, so Suzan took a taxi to get there both mornings—at a total cost of \$84!

She was placed in a beginning-level class, but the GED math component turned out to be a frustrating experience for both Suzan and her teacher. Suzan was suddenly faced with sixth- and seventh-grade math when, as her sister told her, her math skills were at “no grade.” The following April she transferred to my ESL class.

I have seen few students as determined to succeed as Suzan. She stayed after class three or four days a week for extra tutoring in reading, she studied at home, she took responsibility for her part in class discussions and projects. Early on, in her Pflugerville library days, Suzan had identified the phrase “you can do it” as the “language of America.... Everyone tells you you are doing good, even when you aren’t,” she

said. Ever suspicious of false praise, Suzan always made sure she did her part and earned her way forward.

### **U.S. Citizen**

I was assigned to a new location for the 2008–2009 school year, and Suzan has continued in advanced ESL class with a new teacher. Her big move this school year was her decision to become a U.S. citizen. She got the books for preparation, arranged for extra study time with her teacher, and passed her citizenship test in January of this year! Now she is watching the mail for the scheduling of her Naturalization Ceremony.

When I met Suzan two years ago, she said she wanted to get her GED some day. I have no doubt at all that she will do it—math and all.

### **About the Author**

Nancy Meredith is a part-time ESL instructor in the Adult Education Department of Austin Community College. She holds a B.A. with Honors from the University of Texas at Austin, an M.A. from Northwestern University, and a Texas Adult Education Credential. She is also Webmaster for TexTESOL Region III.

## **Embracing the Dream**

*by Dinah Sherrill*

*“Achievement seems to be connected with action. Successful men and women keep moving. They make mistakes, but they don’t quit.”*

*Conrad Hilton*

“I feel so alone. I am not smart. Home is here in Mexico where my parents are raising six of us children in a one-room house. What a joke! House? This is more like a shack! Only pieces of boards nailed together serve as walls. There is no running water and no electricity. An old burlap sack serves as the door. My only hope is that one day I will not have to live like this and can find a better life – one without fighting, poverty and constant turmoil.”

These words were taken from a student in my adult EL Civics class – a class which focuses on the beginning level English language and American history. It has been a pleasure teaching her and realizing that she has been a positive contribution to our class. She

has shared her difficult experiences, the strengths she has acquired from hardships and the hope that has been planted in her mind. For confidentiality purposes, her name has been changed to Rosa.

Rosa grew up destitute in Mexico, one of six children and the product of a broken home which ended in divorce when she was ten. Her father was away from the family the majority of the time because of his job in construction. When he was home, he offered no emotional support. Likewise her mom offered little comfort because she was always tired from working day and night cleaning rich folk’s homes and bringing in meager amounts of money just to feed her children. Watching her mom struggle, Rosa quit school with no solid academic skills when she was in the sixth grade and worked side-by-side with her mopping floors, washing clothes, and cooking meals.

*continued on page 12*

### *Embracing the Dream, continued from page 11*

Entertainment? There was none for Rosa and her brothers and sisters. Playing meant losing valuable time when she could be cleaning someone's house and making money.

At 14 she became engaged to a young man and at fifteen had their first child followed by two more children by age eighteen. She found her life had made a turn for the better when she and her husband moved into their own house much like the one she remembered as a child – one room with no electricity and no running water. It wasn't great, yet was away from the past life she remembered as deplorable.

Rosa's hopes and dreams were short-lived when, within a couple of years, she received some sad news: her husband had been killed in a motorcycle accident. "I was left with three kids, no job and no way to support them," she recalled. Her house cleaning skills were all that she knew, and at \$15.00 a week, her future looked dismal.

Some years later, Rosa met an American man who believed strongly in her dreams of having a better life; not to mention, he adored her three children. They married and faced the language challenge: her new husband knew absolutely no Spanish, and of course, that was her only language. In time, she became a permanent resident. She began English classes and sometime later, she applied for the citizenship test. Her dream was to become a part of the American society, contributing to it rather than taking from it.

With poor reading skills, Rosa avidly put forth extra effort studying American history and the English language. Her legitimate fears of repeating her past prompted her to do everything she could to prepare for the test and succeed. She listened to the radio and watched television in English. She read the newspaper as much as possible and listened attentively in grocery stores, malls, church and everywhere she could to conversations in English. In our EL Civics class, she took careful notes, asked questions and was always willing to offer her homework for critical review by her classmates. Committed, she was willing to go beyond any self-doubt to achieve her dream and in February 2009 she did just that – Rosa passed her citizenship test!

Her confident smile and the air of pride in her walk was proof of her success one evening when she came to class. Her new certificate of American citizen-

ship was the highlight that night. She passed it around to other students who were inspired by her. In fact, her success seemed to catapult other students to a new, positive dimension of learning.

Rosa always had a vision of becoming a better person, mother and wife as well as a vision of providing her children with opportunities that she did not have in Mexico. She believed that her adverse past was her biggest inspiration – she knew exactly what she did not want and willingly embraced any opportunity to rise above it.

She has told the students in our class, "If I can pass the test, you can, too!" Today, she has helped others by sharing her dream and reassured them that if they have not found a dream, to find one and believe in it.

As her teacher, I have been able to be a part of Rosa's goal and witness a miracle. She has exemplified a personal belief: why have just a plain rose, when you can water it, care for it, cherish it and experience a beautiful red velvet rose unfold and bloom into its highest potential. Embracing the dream, Rosa is that rose!

#### **About the Author**

Dinah Sherrill, M.Ed., is a bilingual instructor of 28 years. She currently teaches both bilingual adults and elementary students in the Birdville Independent School District in Fort Worth, Texas.

*Dinah\_Sherrill@birdville.k12.tx.us*

## **How are we doing?**

Please give us your feedback on this publication by completing an online reader survey.

Visit TCALL's Website ([www-tcall.tamu.edu](http://www-tcall.tamu.edu)). In the home page "What's New" box, look for a link to *The Quarterly* reader survey, which will be available through the end of June.

## **Building Bookcases and Community Literacy Coalitions**

*by Lester Meriwether*

When Margaret Doughty asked about the progress of Books for the Border in Eagle Pass last fall, I told her the story. After spending more than a year telling people about the home library concept, my church in Fort Worth (Western Hills Baptist) brought twenty-five small wooden book cases to Eagle Pass in March of 2008. The idea was simple: provide families who live in poverty a place to keep books as well as the beginnings of a home library.

Why Eagle Pass? Eagle Pass is the seat of government for Maverick County. Like adjoining Dimmit and Zavala Counties, this rural county is one of the seven poorest in Texas. Add Hidalgo, Presidio, Starr and Willacy and you've got the Texas focus of a national community development on the twenty poorest counties in the country. Together for Hope is a twenty-year effort to get those twenty counties off that list (see [www.ruralpoverty.net](http://www.ruralpoverty.net)). That's what got me to Eagle Pass in 2007 – looking for a way to connect a literacy project with a larger community development process. Community development begins with input from the community. I spent time interviewing community leaders in Eagle Pass – from program leaders in early childhood to adult learning, political leaders, librarians, and those in the faith community. A tornado in April of 2007 had created new channels of cooperation among persons in Eagle Pass as well as with outside groups. In fact, the weekend of our family reading fair was preceded by two days of rehabbing a house damaged by the earlier storm.

The bookcases are simple in design – two twenty-inch shelves approximately two feet high. We assembled twenty-five units after consultation with AVANCE of Eagle Pass. They gave input in book selection – mostly Spanish. The focus of the project is parents reading to children – not second language learning. AVANCE's process of home visits also provided a simple way to measure the use of the home library. We even sought input from the families about the colors of the bookcases: red, blue, green and tan were selected.

On Thursday and Friday of that spring break week in 2008, we spent the days putting up sheet rock in a house less than a mile from ground zero in that devastating tornado. The wind whipped the metal structure of the elementary school so severely that an adjoining site was chosen for new construction. In the evenings we painted the bookcases and did other preparation for the family reading fair.

The big day arrived with a parade! Families left the downtown area - site of the International Friendship Parade - just in time to arrive at the Fellowship Hall of the nearby Methodist Church. The weather was perfect. Sixteen of twenty-five invited families participated. Grandparents and parents, children of all ages, and one dog launched the first Books for the Border family reading fair.

After the families registered their attendance they selected one of the brightly colored bookcases. Then the children painted their names or flowers or other designs on the bookcases. A few Dora the Explorer stickers were included as well. The goal was to personalize the bookcases so that they would be "owned" by the families. Next the families selected their books. Finally, everyone's attention was focused on the center of the room where parents and children were simply reading. No one was in a hurry to leave. AVANCE prepared refreshments. The volunteers from several churches helped with painting and reading. Smiles on faces indicated that the first Books for the Border family reading fair was a success.

In the months following the first Eagle Pass event, a similar event was held in Starr County. Like Maverick County, this border area is comprised of much poverty. Three hundred people participated in the family reading fiesta. Volunteers from First Baptist Church, Tyler, provided home libraries to seventy families. Subsequent family reading fairs in Eagle Pass (2009) and Progreso have resulted in many more families receiving books and bookcases. Summer events

*continued on page 14*

*Building Bookcases...*, continued from page 13  
scheduled for Mission and El Paso will result in scores more families encouraged to read at home with new resources.

### **Back to Eagle Pass**

Margaret Doughty had been working with District 19 State Senator Carlos I. Uresti's office in Eagle Pass to stimulate literacy. At a January 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of community stakeholders, Margaret challenged the people of Eagle Pass to begin a literacy coalition. They did just that. Rev. Harlene Sadler (pastor of First United Methodist Church in Eagle Pass) volunteered to serve as the leader. She convened a second meeting in March – the day before the second family reading fair. At the meeting I mentioned that Literacy ConneXus had submitted a request to Dollar General to fund six additional family reading fairs

in Eagle Pass this year. Rev. Sadler offered that the events would take place with or without that funding. Sounds like a coalition to me. Community leaders have rallied around the simple gift of home libraries to families in Eagle Pass.

Literacy Texas will provide a workshop to encourage family reading fairs in any community: *Books for the Border and Beyond...* The workshop will be a featured session at the Literacy Texas annual conference to be held July 27-28 in Austin. (See [www.literacytexas.org](http://www.literacytexas.org))

### **About the Author**

Lester Meriwether is the Executive Director of Literacy ConneXus – a faith-based organization that encourages congregations to help persons with literacy needs. He is also President of Literacy Texas. His passions include reading to his granddaughter and building bookcases.



*Making room for reading at home means painting my very own bookcase!*

## **How Sweet It Is!**

*by Sue Barker*

In the long running hit TV show, "I Love Lucy," Ricky wanted Lucy to work for a week, so she and Ethel got jobs at a candy factory. They were totally inept, especially at wrapping the candy, due to the speed of the conveyor belt. This resulted in the famous scene of two ladies stuffing chocolate in their mouths, blouses and hats in order to make production. Later, Mr. Willie Wonka and his renowned candy factory hid five golden tickets in delicious Wonka Bars to see who would live happily ever after.

Now that you have candy production and delicious chocolate on your mind, allow me to tell you about the

most recent successful collaboration between Northeast Texas Workforce Development Board (NTWDB), Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), Northeast Texas Community College (NTCC) Adult Education Program and Sweet Shop USA.

The aroma of rich, hand-dipped chocolate fills the classroom. This English as a Second Language (ESL) training site is located in Sweet Shop USA., Mount Pleasant, Texas. A "Willie Wonka Wonderland" is the educational setting. Employees receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/ or TANF eligible employees are learning to speak, read and write

English. They join a team of two NTCC Adult Education instructors to begin afternoon classes. Teachers, clad in Sweet Shop USA company hair nets, (bonnets) with freshly washed and sanitized hands, begin their presentation of lessons tailored for Sweet Shop USA Workplace ESL.

Sweet Shop USA was founded in 1972. Mr. Jim Webb became involved with the company in the 1980s. By 1990, Mr. Webb and wife, Krista owned the company, located in Fort Worth, Texas. Sweet Shop USA production went well until a tornado, in 2000, destroyed their plant. The Webbs rebuilt only blocks away. After finding out that the Fort Worth river bed was to be relocated and their property condemned, once again, the Webbs were forced to move. The good news is that the company was relocated to Mount Pleasant, Texas. They found the “perfect property, the right labor mix and a good, friendly atmosphere,” stated Mr. Webb. NTCC’s Whatley Center for the Performing Arts, combined with the scholarship endowment for every local graduating senior, made an impression. Another bonus was NTCC’s design to provide further training for new employees hired from the local workforce. That is where NTCC Adult Education Department, NTWDB, TWC Self Sufficiency Fund Training Program and Sweet Shop USA developed a partnership providing educational training services. The project provides training to eligible, new and incumbent workers in a candy manufacturing environment.

The company, with over 100 employees, ships approximately 8,000 boxes daily. Shipments of seasonal products go to upscale department stores throughout the United States and Canada. Wholesale catalogues are sent to some 900 vendors with on-line sales doubling in the past year. Ms. Webb works daily at the plant serving as the Operations Superintendent. She also designs the creative packaging and presentation of the product. From the selection of the ingredients to the tying of the package bows, Krista is an integral part of daily company operations.

Workplace ESL provides an introduction and practical application of specific job related vocabulary. Upon completion, employees are able to:

- demonstrate an increase in understanding of workplace vocabulary.
- demonstrate an increase in reading comprehension for workplace instruction and policy.
- demonstrate an increase in verbal communication comprehension.

- demonstrate an ability to write basic workplace communication.

Participants are baseline and progress assessed with BEST Plus and Best Literacy to determine educational gains. Adult Education books and training materials are numerous. Customized lists of workplace terms created by the employer are emphasized and taught throughout the course. *ESL Workplace Plus Books, Skills That Work: Math and English/Spanish Dictionaries* are also a part of classroom instruction.

Other courses taught throughout the funding cycle are:

- Workplace Reading, Writing and Math
- Basic Computer Skills
- Food Safety and Personal Hygiene

Workplace Reading, Writing, Math, and Food Safety/ Personal Hygiene courses are taught on-site at Sweet Shop USA. Basic Computer Skills course is taught at the Mount Pleasant Independent School District (MPISD) Even Start program, another excellent and established partnership, located just blocks away. Employees participate with hands-on instruction at the newly built MPISD Even Start computer lab which contains twenty computers for employees to implement their new skills.

If this Willie Wonka workplace project interests you, drop by Sweet Shop USA for delicious, free samples and visit the retail showroom where taste and presentation are exceptional. Put on your bonnet, sanitize your hands, take a tour of the factory and see how Lucy and Ethel did it. And, don’t forget to sit in on an excellent ESL class while you are there. NTCC and Sweet Shop USA look forward to seeing you soon. And in the words of Mr. Jackie Gleason, with one of his best national trademark catchphrases, “How sweet it is!”

*NTCC Adult Education Department is a division of NTCC Student and Outreach Services.*

### **About the Author**

Sue Barker serves as Program Director for Adult Education at NTCC. Ms. Barker, M.S., taught school for thirteen years. She has worked for NTCC since 1987 when she established the Franklin County Library Literacy Program. Ms. Barker and her husband Ronny live in Mount Vernon and have two children: Karen McClard, husband Matt and son Hayden, reside in Dallas and Cole Barker resides in Georgetown, CO.

# North Texas Literacy Coalition: Making a Difference Through Literacy

by Valerie Hodges

In 2001, North Texas business leaders and public officials recognized the need for collaboration and cooperation to address regional issues and ensure North Texas remained globally competitive in the future. Their vision prompted the creation of the North Texas Future Fund (NTFF) to identify and confront critical issues in the region, and illiteracy emerged as the primary target.

The NTFF recognized the need for cohesiveness in a regional literacy program in order to advance toward a literate population, and specifically, a qualified *literate* workforce.

After many years of research and much discussion, in January 2009, the NTFF launched its regional literacy program—the North Texas Literacy Coalition. This was the easy part.

Coalition building in North Texas is easy because it is a region blessed with visionary leaders who recognize that the coming together of leadership to reach a consensus around regional initiatives can mean real change for North Texas. Launching a program in the name of a coalition is perhaps a success, but the real story lies in the hearts of the people who give their time, leadership and resources to bring an effort of collaboration and cooperation to fruition.

So, what does success look like in a region consisting of 8,990 square miles, 12 counties, 6.6 million citizens, and 147 incorporated municipalities? In North Texas, it is estimated that 500,000 people are functionally illiterate. Each year, an additional 60,000 in need of literacy services are coming into North Texas. Current literacy providers, operating at or near capacity, are serving an estimated 25,000 people annually. While disparity between existing capacity and need is indeed great, significant work is being done to respond to those who need literacy services. The North Texas Literacy Coalition is working to strengthen existing literacy providers; facilities and volunteers are being recruited for new literacy instruction classes; workplace programs are being developed to increase workers' skills and value in the workplace, thus strengthening the family and the community; and, lit-

eracy resources and networking opportunities are being made available through a regional literacy website ([www.northtexasfuturefund.org](http://www.northtexasfuturefund.org)).

Success is making a difference in one life at a time. Success is empowering a single mom to better provide for her children; success is enabling the displaced worker with the skills to complete a job application and improve his or her job opportunities; success is the corporate giver that values an investment in community and people; success is the local library that allocates limited resources to ensure a reading enhancement program; and success is the diverse mix of business leaders, public officials, and community agencies that come to the table, roll up their sleeves, and stay the course even though no end is in sight. While we may not be able to say 'mission accomplished' in eradicating illiteracy in North Texas, we can celebrate success in building a regional coalition that is far-reaching enough to empower the remotest corner of the North Texas region through literacy.

What is a success story without a real hero? The NTFF's North Texas Literacy Coalition was proud to honor a few of its regional literacy champions in April at the inaugural North Texas Bridge Awards for Literacy Advocacy. Here are this year's award recipients: **J.R. Labbe**, Fort Worth Star-Telegram, one of Fort Worth's 'community assets.' Ms. Labbe has worked tirelessly promoting adult literacy with the Rotary Club of Fort Worth and by serving on the Adult Literacy Advisory Board of the United Way of Tarrant County and was the first president of the Tarrant Literacy Coalition; **John and Rosetta Walz**, Coordinators for English Equals Opportunity; **Literacy Instruction for Texas (LIFT)**—in a 12-month period, LIFT served more than 8,000 adults in its classes. In addition, the program provides GED training in 13 North Texas locations with more than 700 low literate adults participating; **Rotary Club of Fort Worth**—adopted literacy as its major issue and sponsor of the Tarrant County Corporate Spelling Bee supporting the Tarrant Literacy Coalition; **Chesapeake Energy Corporation** supports numerous programs that aim to increase adult literacy including supporting the Fort Worth Public Library Foundation, Literacy for Life, the

Rotary Club of Fort Worth and the Forest Hill Public Library; **Verizon Communications**, with the vision of **David Russell**, the Verizon Foundation's nationwide advocacy of literacy was brought to the forefront of regional issues supported by the North Texas Future Fund. Verizon provides *ThinkFinity*, a free program that offers literacy distance learning. In North Texas, Verizon has donated leadership and resources as well as encouraging Verizon employee volunteerism to combat the growing literacy problem in the region.

While the North Texas region continues to face enormous challenges in its fight against illiteracy, we can

be encouraged by the dedication and commitment demonstrated by members of the North Texas Literacy Coalition. Today, our region is responding to the call—working together in collaboration to identify real strategies to exponentially reduce illiteracy in North Texas. This is what success looks like in North Texas.

#### **About the Author**

Valerie Hodges, Vice President Administration, North Texas Commission and North Texas Future Fund, is responsible for the North Texas Future Fund literacy program including the North Texas Literacy Coalition.

## *Success From Statewide Initiatives* (pages 17-20)

### **The Power of a “Brief Interview”**

*by Vicki Angel*

During the 2007-2008 program year, I was part of a cohort in the State Initiative: Effective Instruction for All Adult Education Students including those with Special Learning Needs. The guidelines for a “Brief Interview,” its purposes, as well as possible questions to ask in the interview were covered through this Initiative. I have found the “Brief Interview” very helpful in working with the students in my classes.

There are a few guidelines for the interview. The instructor should conduct the interview with each student, as soon as possible, after the student has enrolled in their Adult Education program. The interview is to be one-on-one between the instructor and the student and should be no more than ten minutes in length.

One purpose of the interview is for the instructor to connect with the student. Another purpose is to have the student realize that you are forming a partnership with him and that he will take an active part in the entire process of learning. The instructor and the student will be co-investigators in this process. Each student has gained some knowledge of how he learns best through his educational experiences. This interview is a beginning of the search for the best method by which the student learns.

During one session of the initiative, working in groups, we developed possible questions for an interview

based on a particular area of investigation. Then the questions from each group were shared with all the participants, and each participant could use whichever questions he felt were most helpful. He could also edit the questions or add additional questions of his own. Then each participant took part in a mock interview with another participant, one playing the part of the instructor, and the other playing the part of the student. Then each pair exchanged roles and had another interview. After both interviews, the pair discussed the various questions asked, as well as the benefits from the interviews, and shared other questions they thought might be helpful.

Last spring I was able to interview one of my new students during the orientation process. Through the interview, I discovered that she wanted to become an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). The instructor of that training program at our local community college was a personal friend of mine, so I called him and asked to set up an informational meeting between him and my student. As a result of that meeting, she found out that she could take a noncredit First Responder course at the community college while she was still working on her GED through our program. She studied with us during the day and began attending the First Responder course at night. This past fall, she completed her GED while enrolled in the Emergency Medical Technician program. After she obtained

*continued on page 18*

### *The Power of a Brief Interview, cont'd from page 17*

her GED, she was able to take her test for certification as an EMT. She passed her test and is now a Certified EMT. Her next step is to begin the Paramedic program. The interview helped me to discover her goals and assist her in finding a method to achieve them.

Following our most recent orientation, I was able to interview most of our new students. The questions from the interviews gave me insights into the students that I might not have discovered otherwise. The interviews enabled me to assist my students more effectively in their learning process. The interviews showed the students that our program was interested in each one as an individual and served as a motivational factor in their success in our program.

The "Brief Interview" was only one part of the Initiative, among many useful tools and strategies presented to enable us to help our students achieve their goals. I would encourage anyone who is able to participate in this training, to do so. I will continue to

use the interview as a first step in helping my students to become co-investigators in discovering the path to successful learning.

### **About the Author**

With a background in teaching math at the community college and secondary level, Vicki Angel joined the Bowie-Cass Adult Education Cooperative in Texarkana six years ago. She works with ABE and GED students and also assists students in preparing for the Texas Higher Education Assessment and the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery tests. Vicki has completed the Master Teacher Institute and is a Special Learning Needs Resource Specialist. She is currently a participant in the Training of Trainers of Effective Instruction for all Adult Education Students including those with Special Learning Needs. She is also a participant in the Teacher Credential Program. She has a B.S. in Math from Sam Houston State University and an M.S. in Education from East Texas State University at Texarkana with a specialty in math.

## **Success Out of Disaster**

*by Federico Salas-Isnardi, TCALL Adult Literacy Specialist*

September 2008 was a calamitous month for Texas communities battered by hurricane Ike along the Gulf Coast and by flooding along the Rio Grande, while in far south Texas, coastal towns were still reeling from Hurricane Dolly's landfall in July. Thousands of families were directly affected and many more were affected indirectly as a consequence of devastated communities. A number of adult education and family literacy programs suffered the impact of the weather disasters. In the midst of the bad news, TCALL received a welcomed phone call: former First Lady Mrs. Barbara Bush who loves adult and family literacy as much as she loves Texas, had instructed the Barbara Bush Texas Fund to identify literacy programs affected by the storms in order to determine how to best help them recover. Thus, the Barbara Bush Disaster Recovery Grants for Texas Literacy Programs were born.

Nine programs, Brazosport College, Clear Creek ISD, College of the Mainland, Literacy Advance of Houston, Lone Star College, Lyford ISD, Pregnancy & Parenting Support Center in Galveston, Presidio ISD, and the Region V Education Service Center, were award-

ed funds ranging from \$8,300 to \$20,000 to engage in disaster recovery activities. The projects selected included funding replacement playground equipment; money to replace computers and books where rains damaged the supplies in buildings that had lost their roofs; funds to set up a mobile reading lab to take parent/child reading classes to the community in Galveston; transportation assistance and GED testing scholarships, and recruitment activities to attract new students to areas affected by attrition caused by student displacement.

The awards were limited to recovery activities but the programs that received them have so far been very successful using the money provided to get back on their feet to the extent possible. The short stories below are some of the successes resulting from these efforts.

The Disaster Recovery funds have touched many lives; among them, Logan, a 20 year-old wife and mother of two young children. Her husband worked for a coastal refinery when he was laid-off due to Hur-

ricane Ike. As a result of the lay-off, Logan and her family were forced to move in with her father-in-law. Logan enrolled in the adult education program at Region V Education Service Center and began attending class regularly. Thanks to the Barbara Bush Texas Fund for Family Literacy, Logan received a gas card to assist her in alleviating some of the expense associated with traveling to class, and was one of the first local students to earn a GED in 2009. Logan is a very intelligent young woman and now plans to enroll in nursing school. Logan's husband is now working, and the adult education staff has provided grant and scholarship information to assist Logan in making the transition to college.

Both Literacy Advance of Houston locations suffered significant damage; the roof was torn off one of their sites and rainwater partially flooded the other site. While insurance covered the structural damage, it did not cover the loss of computers, bookcases, chairs and desks, instructional materials, and office supplies. The Disaster Recovery Funds helped this organization get back in business at a faster pace.

In Clear Creek ISD, the Recovery Grant has impacted dozens of lives. After Hurricane Ike, the program had a waiting list of over 50 students, many of whom moved from Galveston to Corpus Christi ISD. With this grant, Clear Creek opened a new class to serve these students who otherwise would have continued to wait and grown more frustrated. One particular family of five brothers moved to this area from Galveston. They had lost their jobs due to Ike and were not able to attend school to learn English. Now they are coming to class every Tuesday and Thursday evening and have been able to find jobs in the area.

For many parents, the Lyford Even Start Program

offers a place where their children can learn in a nurturing environment while they attend ESL/GED classes. The school suffered severe damage during September flooding, but thanks to the recovery funds, after spring break, the infants and toddlers were able to enjoy the spring breeze with their parents as they took part in the Parent/Child activity time. By then, the maintenance department had finished making the repairs to the infant/toddler play area. Play time is a wonderful opportunity for parents to interact with their young ones. It is the beginning of a lifetime of learning.

Two programs serving Galveston Island received funding and have formed a partnership to help stretch these funds further. A coalition of community partners is working with College of the Mainland (COM) to offer adult literacy services to the residents who remain on the island and are working to rebuild it. At St. Vincent House, a multi-service community center, COM will offer ESL and GED classes to low-income parents.

Outreach has been provided by the Pregnancy & Parenting Support Center, another grantee. Through the funds, they have acquired space on Galveston Island. But the miraculous part is the power of the name. With the Barbara Bush Texas Fund award, they were able to find a partner who could provide them with this space for less than \$0.30 a square foot, utilities included. Students will be able to access primary health care, emergency food support, parenting classes and essential support for infants, including formula and diapers at the same location as they attend classes.

For more information on the Barbara Bush Texas Fund Disaster Recovery Grants, contact Federico Salas-Isnardi at TCALL ([fsalas-isnardi@tamu.edu](mailto:fsalas-isnardi@tamu.edu)).



*As Ike battered the building, water leaked around the windows of Literacy Advance's headquarters on Wilcrest in Houston. Damage to the walls was significant and mold invaded carpet, furniture, and supplies.*



*Thanks to the Disaster Recovery Grant, the classrooms at the same location now have new student desks and chairs. The comfortable but old padded chairs were damp and moldy.*

# STAR Reading Training in Texas - A Success Story With More Benefits to Come

*by Kenneth Appelt, TCALL Program Manager*

In Texas, 56% of the students enrolled in adult education statewide during the 2007-2008 year were in ESL classes. Some of the programs along the Rio Grande River can be almost entirely ESL. When national leaders encouraged Texas to begin the STAR evidence-based reading institutes, many program and state leaders in Texas wondered if STAR would really be beneficial for Texas. Because the STAR training focuses on Adult Basic Education (ABE) students reading at the intermediate-low and intermediate-high levels (4–8.9 reading grade level equivalency), there was reason for doubt.

However, 27% of Texas students are assigned to intermediate-low and intermediate-high ABE classes, and the statewide completion rate for students in these classes averages about 35%. These students must improve their reading ability to move on to Adult Secondary Education classes or vocational training and certification programs. Texas decided to try STAR during the 2008-2009 year and monitor the cohort as a pilot study to examine the relevance of the training for Texas teachers and students.

The Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning (TCALL) was asked to manage the STAR Institutes in Texas and conduct the pilot study. TCALL is a Center within the College of Education and Human Development at Texas A&M University, housed in the Department of Educational Administration and Human Resource Development.

The Texas STAR pilot includes 13 programs and 3 professional development centers. STAR was introduced to program directors during the July 2008 Texas AE Administrators Institute. We recruited programs willing to meet the STAR recommendations of closed enrollment, administrative participation, and commitment to implementation. The trainings were planned for Houston, so we recruited most heavily in that area; however, 6 of the 8 service regions in Texas have participants. Both large urban programs and smaller rural programs are represented. Texas professional developers (GREAT Centers) were also recruited to become an integral part of ongoing support of implementation through technical support and participation in future training.

Some programs that we tried to recruit could not see

how they could have teachers attend three separate two-day trainings during the year without disrupting classes significantly. Some programs worried about how the travel expense would impact their professional development budget, yet all of the programs knew that they needed to improve the way reading instruction was being delivered to students. They needed to improve student gains.

The three STAR institutes took place in October 2008, January 2009, and April 2009. Although TCALL is just now receiving the post-training questionnaire responses, they have been overwhelmingly positive. Both administrators and teachers have felt that the information gained through diagnostic testing is critical to planning appropriate reading instruction to meet the needs of each student. They also commented on the excellent instructional strategies used in the four major components of reading: alphabets, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. They also report good responses from students and feeling more confident about delivering appropriate instruction in reading.

Finally, when asked about the applicability of STAR reading diagnostic testing and instructional methods for ESL students, their responses have again been very positive. They feel the testing information will help target instruction so that the students can make gains more quickly. The instructional strategies in alphabets, vocabulary, and fluency were mentioned as being very useful in instruction that provides support for ESL students.

In the 2009-2010 program year, Texas will invest in the next step in the national STAR Reading initiative --STAR Trainer Certification for up to four candidates who have successfully completed the state's recently-concluded STAR Training initiative. These four individuals will attend a national Training of Trainers event in August, and complete all certification requirements within a 12-month period. Trainer Candidates will be required to conduct the STAR reading training within Texas during that 12-month period, creating a great opportunity for evidence-based professional development for another group of Texas teachers. For more information about STAR Trainings available around the state in 2009-2010, contact Ken Appelt at TCALL ([kappelt@tamu.edu](mailto:kappelt@tamu.edu)).

# Welcome to Our Library. . .

TCALL Student Worker Ashley Matus, Librarian Susan Morris, and Student Worker Jenna Burden (not pictured) are ready to fill your order for Clearinghouse Library resources. Call them at 800-441-READ (7323) or email [tcall@tamu.edu](mailto:tcall@tamu.edu) to request materials by mail or information on the Library's services.

## ADULT LEARNER TRANSITIONS TO COLLEGE

***Adult Learners in Higher Education: Barriers to Success and Strategies to Improve Results.*** Bosworth, Brian, et al (March 2007). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. This report synthesizes the research literature on the challenges facing adult learners in higher education today and on emerging strategies for increasing the number of adults over 24 who earn college credentials and degrees. A key finding is that traditional higher education programs and policies—created in an era when the 18- to 22-year-old, dependent, full-time student coming right out of high school was seen as the core market for higher education—are not well-designed for the needs of adult learners, most of whom are “employees who study” rather than “students who work.”

***The College Transition Toolkit.*** Goodman, Sandy and Rao, Deepa and Spohn, Jessica and Zafft, Cynthia (2008). Boston, MA: National College Transition Network. The College Transition Toolkit is a comprehensive guide to program planning and implementation that draws on the expertise of practitioners from the New England ABE-to-College Transition Project and around the country. The College Transition Toolkit CD contains detailed information to help adult educators and administrators plan for the needs of students interested in pursuing postsecondary education and training. The CD contains a flexible, navigable, HTML version of the toolkit that enables you to move between chapter topics, accompanying documents, and online resources of immediate interest to you. The chapter topics include program models, partnerships and collaborations, recruitment, assessment, counseling, curriculum and instruction, planning, and using data for program development. The toolkit also provides templates that you can download and adapt for use in developing your college transition program, links to a variety of online resources, and supplementary printable resources. CD-ROM is available on loan from the Clearinghouse Library to Texas educators ONLY.

***First in the Family: Advice About College from First-Generation Students.*** Cushman, Kathleen (2005). Providence, RI: Next Generation Press. Written for high school-age students who will be the first in their family to go to college, this book emphasizes the “three Cs” of the college journey: conversation, connections, and confidence. Most

of the students who share their stories in this book have completed their second year of college, and are going on for more.



***Learning Success: Being Your Best at College and Life, Third Edition.*** Wahlstrom, Carl and Williams, Brian K. (2002). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning. Book is written for the growing number of part-timers, parents, working students, commuters, and other nontraditional students, as well as for traditional on-campus students. The authors' goal is to help students be the best in college by showing students how to master the academic and personal skills needed to succeed in higher education -- how to manage their time, improve their reading and note-taking skills, handle finances, work toward their career goals, and so on. It is also shows students that the skills one needs for success in college are the same skills one needs for success in life. This book describes the three keys to success in college and life: staying power, mindfulness, and technology literacy. Third Edition (also known as “Media Edition”) includes an interactive CD-ROM that reinforces and extends the texts content. Set of book plus CD-ROM is available on loan from the Clearinghouse Library to Texas educators ONLY.

***Learning to Learn: Thinking Skills for the 21st Century, Tenth Edition.*** Heiman, Marcia and Slomianko, Joshua (1992, 2004). Somerville, MA: Learning to Learn, Inc. Learning to Learn (LTL) is a system of learning and reasoning strategies based on research conducted at the University of Michigan on the thinking skills of successful learners. High-achieving students were asked to verbalize their thinking when they did academic work. A pattern of skills common to successful learners was discovered. It was found that successful learners: ask themselves questions about new information; break tasks into small, manageable parts to help get things done; focus on goals to stay on track towards results; and get feedback on learning progress to find out what they know – and what they need to know. Of these skills, the most important one is the process of asking questions. Without it, very little learning occurs. This tenth edition of the LTL textbook (2004) is

*continued on page 22*

## HOW DOES THIS MAIL ORDER LENDING LIBRARY WORK?

Books and other resources described in the Library section may be requested for a 30-day loan. We will mail each borrower up to five loan items at a time (just two for first-time borrowers), and even include a postage-paid return address sticker for mailing them back to us! Borrowers must be affiliated with a non-profit program providing adult or family literacy services. Annotated bibliographies of our entire library of resources are available in hard copy by request, and the library can also be searched in 'real time' on our website ([www.tcall.tamu.edu](http://www.tcall.tamu.edu)). Call 800-441-7323 or email [tcall@tamu.edu](mailto:tcall@tamu.edu) to check out materials described here or to request hard copy listings of even more resources.

### *Welcome to Our Library, continued from page 21*

used with entering college students, but could be used to prepare adult learners for the demands of postsecondary education. Loan set also includes a two-hour LTL video (1992) that can be used to train faculty new to LTL and as an instructional support in the classroom.

***Policies to Promote Adult Education and Postsecondary Alignment.*** Strawn, Julie (September 28, 2007). Washington, DC: Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy. In October 2006, Council for the Advancement of Adult Literacy and the Dollar General Corporation jointly announced the launch of the independent blue-ribbon National Commission on Adult Literacy. The Commission will examine all components of the adult literacy enterprise in order to make recommendations on how to effectively chart a productive and comprehensive future course for adult education and literacy service in America. This Policy Brief was written by senior analyst Julie Strawn of the Center for Law and Social Policy for the third meeting of Commission on August 20, 2007. As introduced by its author, the publication focuses on "helping adults with lower skills and/or limited English proficiency earn postsecondary credentials that open doors to family-supporting jobs." It examines obstacles to moving toward this goal -- with major attention to lack of alignment between federal and state adult education efforts, job training services, and postsecondary education policies. It also draws attention to the financial, personal, and family challenges that prevent adults from seeking and completing programs. Numerous policy and action recommendations are given for Commission consideration.

***Reconnecting Disadvantaged Young Men.*** Edelman, Peter and Holzer, Harry and Offner, Paul (2006). Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press. The United States is home to 2 to 3 million youth age 16 through 24 who are out of school and out of work. Why are so many young people "disconnected," and what can public policy do about it? And why has disconnection become more common for young men — particularly African-American men and low-income men — than for young women? Edelman, Holzer, and Offner offer analysis and policy prescriptions to solve this growing crisis. They carefully examine field programs and research studies and recommend specific strategies to enhance education, training, and employment opportunities for disadvantaged youth; to improve the incentives of less-skilled young workers to accept employment; and to address the severe barriers and disincentives faced by

some youth, such as ex-offenders and noncustodial fathers.

***Together for Success: A Road Map for Post-Secondary Students With Learning Disabilities.*** Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (1994). Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: Learning Disabilities Association of Canada. This handbook is intended to provide guidance and assistance to students with LD who thought that it would be impossible for them to continue schooling at a postsecondary level; and to help these students gain independence, self-worth and success in their lives. It includes an overview of LD, and sections on: self-advocacy; self-disclosure; support services; focus groups; dealing with stress, anger and frustration; transitional planning for high school students; and students' rights and responsibilities.

***Transitions to Postsecondary Learning: Course Starter Kit.*** Eaton, Howard and Coull, Leslie (1998, 2000). Vancouver, BC, Canada: Eaton Coull Learning Group, Ltd. 48-minute video features eight real-life secondary students with specific learning disabilities and/or ADHD who have made successful transitions into college, university, or vocational institute. They openly discuss the challenges they have faced and how they have attained success through self-advocacy and positive self-efficacy beliefs. Other instructional materials included in this Course Starter Kit include the Discussion Guide, Student Work Guide (workbook), and a Self-Advocacy Handbook for Students with Learning Disabilities and/or Attention Deficit Disorder. Set of DVD or VHS video plus three books is available on loan from the Clearinghouse Library to Preferred Borrowers ONLY. Ask us how to become a *Preferred Borrower*.

## EMPOWER MATH RESOURCES FOR GED AND COLLEGE SUCCESS

***EMPower Math Resources.*** EMPower is designed to give adult learners and out-of-school youth mathematics skills for daily life. EMPower combines insights from educational research and classroom practice. This comprehensive curriculum works in adult and workplace education, alternative high schools, correctional settings, and GED/high school equivalency programs. Students who need help transitioning to college also benefit from EMPower's dynamic approach. Rather than focusing on memorizing formulas, students develop useful mathematics skills through

engaging exercises that relate to their lives. They investigate concepts, work collaboratively, share ideas orally and in writing, and discover multiple ways to solve problems. The full curriculum comprises eight non-sequential units emphasizing whole numbers, fractions, decimals, percents, proportions, geometry and measurement, algebra, and data and graphs. The teacher book plus student book sets described below are available on loan from the Clearinghouse Library for Texas educators ONLY.

**Everyday Number Sense: Mental Math and Visual Functions.** Schmitt, Mary Jane and Steinback, Myriam and Donovan, Tricia and Merson, Martha (2006). Cambridge, MA: Key Curriculum Press. Students solve problems with whole numbers using mental math strategies with benchmarks of 1, 10, 100, and 1000 to compute. Number lines, arrays, and diagrams support their conceptual understanding of number relationships and the four operations.

**Keeping Things in Proportion: Reasoning with Ratios** Schmitt, Mary Jane and Steinback, Myriam and Donovan, Tricia and Merson, Martha and Curry, Donna (2005). Cambridge, MA: Key Curriculum Press. Students use various tools—objects, diagrams, tables, graphs, and equations—to understand proportional and non-proportional relationships.

**Many Points Make a Point: Data and Graphs.** Schmitt, Mary Jane and Steinback, Myriam and Donovan, Tricia and Merson, Martha (2005). Cambridge, MA: Key Curriculum Press. Students collect, organize, and represent data using frequency, bar, and circle graphs. They use line graphs to describe change over time. They use benchmark fractions and the three measures of central tendency—mode, median, and mean—to describe sets of data.

**Operation Sense: Even More Fractions, Decimals, and Percents.** Schmitt, Mary Jane and Steinback, Myriam (2007). Cambridge, MA: Key Curriculum Press. Students extend their understanding of the four operations with whole numbers as they puzzle over such questions as, “How is it possible that two fractions multiplied might yield a smaller amount?” and “What does it mean to divide one-half by six?”

**Over, Around, and Within: Geometry and Measurement** Schmitt, Mary Jane and Steinback, Myriam and Donovan, Tricia and Merson, Martha (2005). Cambridge, MA: Key Curriculum Press. Students explore the features and measures of basic shapes. Perimeter and area of two-dimensional shapes and volume of rectangular solids provide the focus.

**Seeking Patterns, Building Rules: Algebraic Thinking** Schmitt, Mary Jane and Steinback, Myriam and Donovan, Tricia and Merson, Martha (2005). Cambridge, MA: Key Curriculum Press. Students use a variety of representational tools— diagrams, words, tables, graphs, and equa-

tions—to understand linear patterns and functions. They connect the rate of change with the slope of a line and compare linear with non-linear relationships. They gain facility with and comprehension of basic algebraic notations.

**Using Benchmarks: Fractions, Decimals, and Percents** Schmitt, Mary Jane and Steinback, Myriam and Donovan, Tricia and Merson, Martha and Kliman, Marlene (2006). Cambridge, MA: Key Curriculum Press. Students use the fractions  $\frac{1}{10}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$ , and  $\frac{3}{4}$ ; the decimals 0.1, 0.5, 0.25, and 0.75; and the percents 50%, 25%, 75%, 100%, and the multiples of 10% as benchmarks with which to describe and compare all part-whole relationships.

**Split It Up: More Fractions, Decimals, and Percents** Schmitt, Mary Jane and Steinback, Myriam and Donovan, Tricia and Merson, Martha and Kliman, Marlene (2005). Cambridge, MA: Key Curriculum Press. Building upon their command of common benchmark fractions, students add  $\frac{1}{3}$ 's,  $\frac{1}{8}$ 's, and  $\frac{1}{100}$ 's, and their decimal and percent equivalents, to their repertoire of part-whole relationships.

#### OTHER RESOURCES ON MATH FOR GED AND COLLEGE SUCCESS

**190 Ready-to-Use Activities That Make Math Fun!** Watson, George (2003). San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons; Jossey Bass. Instructional resource provides 190 high-interest, ready-to-use, reproducible activities to help students master basic math skills -- including whole numbers, decimals, fractions, percentages, money concepts, geometry and measurement, charts and graphs, and pre-algebra -- for use with students of varying ability levels. Activities are presented in a variety of formats, such as puzzles, crosswords, matching, word/number searches, number substitutions, and more.

**Fear of Math: How to Get Over It and Get On With Your Life.** Zaslavsky, Claudia (1994). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. In this book aimed at students suffering from “math phobia,” the author shows how the “school math” that students dread is probably a far cry from the math really needed in life, and that students probably know better than they suspect. A variety of reassuring methods drawn from many cultures are offered for tackling real-world math problems. The author also attacks the myth that women and minorities are less competent at math.

**The Glass Wall: Why Mathematics Can Seem Difficult** Smith, Frank (2002). New York, NY: Teachers College Press. Smith analyzes why some people find the world of mathematics compelling while others find it so difficult. He contrasts the “physical world” (our familiar world of objects and events) with the “world of mathematics” (a completely different domain of experience), and the barrier that can exist between those worlds for some learners. Smith argues that, because the language used to talk about these two

*continued on page 24*

### *Welcome to Our Library, continued from page 23*

worlds is not the same, many people find themselves “behind the glass wall, on the outside looking in”. Chapters discuss: What is Mathematics? Making Sense of Mathematics; The Meaning of Numbers; and Getting Beyond the Glass Wall.

**NEFE High School Financial Planning Program.** National Endowment for Financial Education (2001). Greenwood Village, CO: NEFE. This “hands-on” course provides learning materials to teach students to: identify and prioritize their personal money management goals; develop a budget; track their income and spending to stay within their budget; comprehend the impact of time on the value of money -- especially important in achieving savings goals; understand the cost of using credit; and protect their cash assets as they begin to accumulate money. Created with teachers for easy classroom implementation, the six-unit mini-course can be completed in as few as 10 classroom hours. These materials are available at no cost to public and private schools as a public service provided by NEFE, in partnership with the Cooperative Extension Service and America’s Credit Unions. Interactive learning activities are also available online: [www.nefe.org/hsfppportal/index.html](http://www.nefe.org/hsfppportal/index.html)

**Teaching Math to Adolescents and Adults.** Leaf, Beth Ann and Thistlethwaite, Linda L. (2000). Macomb, IL: Central Illinois Adult Education Service Center. This manual was designed for adult educators working with students at all levels of mathematical ability. The strategies and accompanying problems are based on the math standards developed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, with a slight revision of those standards to make them more relevant to adult learners. One chapter focuses on the importance of having adult learners make connections between math literacy and real life. Another chapter focuses on helping adult learners to view math learning more positively. The rest of the book offers eight specific math strategies, with example problems at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels of mathematical ability. The strategies in this manual have ties to Howard Gardner’s concept of multiple intelligences.

## FAMILY LITERACY

**Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships.** Henderson, Anne T. and Mapp, Karen L. and Johnson, Vivian R. and Davies, Don (2007). New York, New York: The New Press. Countless studies demonstrate that students with parents actively involved in their education at home and school are more likely to earn higher grades and test scores, enroll in higher-level programs, graduate from high school, and go on to post-secondary education. Beyond the Bake Sale shows how to form these essential partnerships and how to make them work. Packed with tips from principals and teachers, checklists, and an invaluable resource section, Beyond the Bake Sale reveals how to build strong collaborative relationships

and offers practical advice for improving interactions between parents and teachers, from insuring that PTA groups are constructive and inclusive to navigating the complex issues surrounding diversity in the classroom.

**Enhancing Early Emotional Development: Guiding Parents of Young Children.** Wixson Gowen, Jean and Brennan Nebrig, Judith (2002). Baltimore, MD: Paulh Brookes Publishing Company. During their first two years, children form attachments with caregivers that profoundly affect their emotional lives. This engaging book helps professionals who work with families of young children nurture those crucial bonds, giving parents the support and guidance they need to identify their children’s needs, enhance interactions with their children, and address any factors that may prevent them from building a strong relationship with their infant or toddler. Readers will get an in-depth look at children’s emotional development at five stages from birth to 24 months, examine challenges to effective parenting, and learn from realistic vignettes that demonstrate appropriate interventions.

**Families at School: A Guide for Educators.** Thomas, Adele and Fazio, Lynn and Stiefelmeyer, Betty L. (1999). Newark, DE: International Reading Association. The authors describe an exemplary program in which parents and children use literacy to strengthen their reading and writing abilities while building stronger family relationships. Parents in the Family Learning Program at Niagara Falls Secondary School – many of whom have had negative school experiences – learn about early childhood development, discuss children’s literature and reading strategies, and create literacy activities to try with their children, as well as focusing on parenting and developing their own literacy abilities. This guide offers ideas and activities and can serve as a model for other family literacy initiatives.

**Father Need: Why Father Care is as Essential as Mother Care for Your Child.** Kyle D. Pruett (2000). New York, NY: Broadway Books. Drawing on more than two decades of highly acclaimed research at the Yale Child Study Center, and backed up by true stories from actual families, Fatherneed is the essential how-to guide for women and men who wish to promote engaged fathering. This book will help enable fathers to give their children the skills they need to develop into happy and healthy adults. Dr. Pruett specifically addresses what a father can do to prepare his marriage, his house, and his emotions for his child’s needs, from infancy through the toddler years, childhood, adolescence, and young and mature adulthood. With advice to fathers ranging from how to speak to toddlers so that they listen, to how to avoid the common tendency to reinforce gender stereotypes in young children, to how to maintain a connection with an increasingly autonomous teenager, Fatherneed is a good resource for all dads-including divorced fathers, fathers of adopted children, stepfathers, and fathers of special-needs children-as well as moms who want kids who are meaningfully connected to their fathers.



*"I have thoroughly enjoyed receiving these materials which are of great help always. All have in some way been useful."*

Maria Almanza, ESL Instructor  
Carver Learning Center  
Navasota, TX

## Free Things to Send For. . .

### ADULT LEARNER TRANSITIONS TO COLLEGE

***Helping Adult Learners Make the Transition to Postsecondary Education.*** Alamprese, Judy (2005). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education. Adults moving from ABE programs into higher education often face considerable challenges. Many need help strengthening their academic skills, as well as developing their study and time management skills. Many need assistance navigating enrollment and financial aid systems and other aspects of college life. In response to these challenges, ABE programs within and outside community colleges have begun more actively to assist adult learners in their transition to postsecondary education. This Adult Education Background Paper discusses the challenges ABE programs must address in developing and implementing transition services, provides examples of emerging efforts, and discusses the implications of this transformation for policy and practice.

***Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE/ESOL Classroom.*** Oesch, Martha and Bower, Carol. Boston, MA: National College Transitions Network and System for Adult Basic Education Support. This curriculum helps practitioners equip learners with career planning skills using lessons and activities correlated to the SCANS competencies. It is designed for classroom instruction and/or counseling and geared toward all levels. Section I includes 5 lessons on The Cultural Context for Career Awareness. Section II includes 12 lessons on The Self-Exploration Process. Section III includes 6 lessons on Occupational Exploration. Section IV includes 24 lessons on Career Planning Skills. Some of the career planning skills covered in Section IV are reality checking, goal setting, problem solving, college awareness, college vocabulary, being a smart consumer of education, comparing schools, the admissions process, placement tests, navigating college, college success skills, self-advocacy, financial aid, financial planning, and planning for career and education. Appendices provide additional resources on lesson planning, the SCANS Competencies, Multicultural Career Education and Development, and Career Awareness Resources. The accompanying CD includes reproducible handouts for use with the lessons. Clearinghouse Library disseminates free copies of the print curriculum guide and CD to Texas educators ONLY. Materials are also available online: [www.sabes.org/workforce/integrating-career-awareness.pdf](http://www.sabes.org/workforce/integrating-career-awareness.pdf)

***Is it Time for the Adult Education System to Change Its Goal from High School Equivalency to College Readiness?*** Cain, Alice Johnson (April 2003). Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. This article was featured in the first and only issue of "Focus on Policy", a NCSALL publication intended to translate research findings into implications for policy. According to a comprehensive research review by Portland State University's Steve Reder, the adult education system should change its goal to successful transition to postsecondary education. Reder concludes that a high school diploma or GED is no longer sufficient for success in the workforce. This article summarizes the main points and policy implications from that review.

***Mapping Your Financial Journey: Helping Adults Plan for College.*** National College Transition Network (2006). Greenwood Village, CO: National Endowment for Financial Education. Booklet explains in plain language some of the basic financial ideas and skills that benefit every adult. It also covers some ways to fund adult education to make the most of their college experience. It's not meant to include every financial issue, but rather to help adults get started on a path toward managing money that will last a lifetime. Clearinghouse Library disseminates free copies of the booklet to Texas educators ONLY. Materials are also available from the National Endowment for Financial Education. [www.nefe.org](http://www.nefe.org)

***A Model for Adult Education-to-Postsecondary Transition Programs.*** Cain, Alice Johnson (April 2003). Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. This article was featured in the first and only issue of "Focus on Policy", a NCSALL publication intended to translate research findings into implications for policy. This article describes a program designed to help adult education students and GED graduates prepare to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. Beginning in 2000, the New England Literacy Resource Center (NELRC) assisted adult education program graduates to prepare for, enter, and succeed in postsecondary education. The NELRC project consists of 25 transition programs in the six New England states, serving more than 700 students in community-based organizations, public schools, community colleges, and prisons. The project is aimed at GED graduates and high school graduates who have been out of school for several years. Free instruction is provided in pre-college reading, writing, and math skills as well as com-

*continued on page 26*

*Free Things to Send For...*, continued from page 25

puter and Internet skills. Each program collaborates with one or more local postsecondary institutions to provide mentoring and other assistance that helps non-traditional adult learners succeed.

***Paying Double: Inadequate High Schools and Community College Remediation.*** Alliance for Excellent Education (August 2006). Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. Issue Brief argues that too many students are not learning in high school the basic skills needed to succeed in college or work. As a result, the nation loses more than \$3.7 billion a year: \$1.4 billion to provide remedial education to those who have recently completed high school, and almost \$2.3 billion the economy loses as remedial students are more likely to drop out of college without a degree, reducing their earning potential. Although this Brief addresses the failings of high school education, the issues of having sufficient skills to succeed in the transition to postsecondary education or work apply to learners working toward and earning the GED as well.

***Returning to Learning: Adults' Success in College is Key to America's Future.*** Pusser, Brian, et al (March 2007). Indianapolis, IN: Lumina Foundation for Education. Report includes findings of the Lumina Foundation's Emerging Pathways project and discusses the need to develop the untapped potential of the 54 million working adults who have not completed a four-year degree. The report calls for colleges to, among other things, provide more convenient and affordable access for adult learners and to work to get older students out of non-credit programs and into courses that lead to degrees and certificates.

***Supporting Adult English Language Learners' Transitions to Postsecondary Education.*** Mathews-Aydinli, Julie (September 2006). Washington, DC: Center for Adult English Language Acquisition. This brief focuses on one type of adult learner transition — from adult ESL programs to postsecondary education. This transition is especially important as statistics show that the income gap between individuals with and those without postsecondary education is growing rapidly: It doubled between 1979 and 1999 and continues to grow rapidly. The majority of jobs that pay enough to support a family require skills that cannot be obtained with just a high school education. It concludes with a description of program features that administrators might consider when supporting English language learners' transitions to post-secondary education.

***Transitioning Adults to College: Adult Basic Education Program Models.*** Zafft, Cynthia and Kallenbach, Silja and Spohn, Jessica (August 2006). Boston, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. Paper describes five models that the staff at the New England Literacy Resource Center at World Education, Inc., categorized through a survey of adult education centers with transition components from around the United States. This

NCSALL Occasional Paper describes the five models — Advising, GED-Plus, ESOL, Career Pathways, and College Preparatory — and themes and recommendations that others contemplating adult transition services might find helpful. It also chronicles the experiences of four states (Connecticut, Kentucky, Maine, and Oregon) in their efforts to institutionalize transitions for adults. Clearinghouse Library disseminates free copies of the paper to Texas educators ONLY. For online access, visit the NCSALL website. [www.ncsall.net](http://www.ncsall.net)

***Using Beyond the GED: Making Conscious Choices About the GED and Your Future.*** Fass, Sandra and Garner, Barbara (November 2006). Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. This 4-hour seminar introduces teachers and tutors to "***Beyond the GED: Making Conscious Choices about the GED and Your Future***" (a separate Clearinghouse Library title, also available free to Texas educators), which is a set of classroom materials designed for use in GED classrooms. The materials provide learners with practice in graph and chart reading, calculation, information analysis, and writing, while they examine the labor market, the role of higher education and the economic impact of the GED. For online access, visit the NCSALL website. [www.ncsall.net](http://www.ncsall.net)

## FAMILY LITERACY

***Bringing Family Literacy to Incarcerated Settings: A Instructional Guide.*** Hudson River Center for Program Development, Inc. (2001). Glenmont, NY: New York State Education Department Office of Workforce Preparedness and Continuing Education. Created to assist anyone interested in implementing a family literacy project within an incarcerated setting, this guide includes a description of various program designs, assessment strategies, comments from parents who have benefited, and a blueprint for implementation. Resources and sample forms are provided. Clearinghouse Library makes free hard copies available to Texas educators ONLY. For online availability, see Canada's National Adult Literacy Database website. [www.nald.ca](http://www.nald.ca)

***Developing Early Literacy: Report of the National Early Literacy Panel: A Scientific Synthesis of Early Literacy Development and Implications for Intervention: Executive Summary.*** Lonigan, Christopher J. and Shanahan, Timothy (January 2009). Jessup, MD: National Institute for Literacy and National Center for Family Literacy. Summary of longer report of the same title serves as the basis of several powerful, research-based recommendations to the early childhood community — educators, caregivers, Head Start providers, and parents — on promoting the foundational skills of life-long literacy. "Literacy skills start developing the moment we're born and it is literacy that enables a person's ability to participate in society. This new report shows the scientific validity of earlier and more targeted investments in literacy development," said NELP chairman Dr. Timothy

Shanahan. Some of the key findings of the report reveal the best early predictors of literacy, which include alphabet knowledge, phonemic awareness, rapid naming skills, writing (such as writing one's name), and short-term memory for words said aloud. Instruction on these skills may be especially helpful for children at risk for developing reading difficulties. More complex oral language skills also appear to be important. In addition to presenting findings on which early measures of a child's skills predict later decoding, reading comprehension, and spelling achievement, this report identifies a wide-variety of interventions and instructional approaches that improve a child's early literacy skills. NELP researchers also looked at the role of environment and at child characteristics that may link to future outcomes in reading, writing, and spelling.

***Empowering Parents School Box: A Tool To Equip Parents for the School Year.*** U. S. Department of Education (September 2007). Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Education. The U. S. Department of Education has developed a publication, "Empowering Parents School Box: A Tool To Equip Parents For the School Year," that contains three booklets: What Parents Need to Know, Taking a Closer Look, and Learning Checklists; a brochure: Examples of Resources; a poster: Empowered Parents Stay Involved With School; a bookmark; and a door hanger. The school box provides tips on working with children from birth to high school; guidelines for taking advantage of free tutoring opportunities; steps for selecting a high-quality school; ways to get involved in children's schools; information about financial aid and scholarships; and resources for improving learning. Includes success stories of schools where parent involvement made a difference. Clearinghouse Library makes free hard copies available to Texas educators ONLY. For online availability, see U. S. Department of Education website. [www.ed.gov/parents/academic/involve/schoolbox/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/involve/schoolbox/index.html)

***Family Math Fun!*** Nonesuch, Kate (2008). Duncan, BC: Vancouver Island University. Family Math Fun is a manual of family numeracy activities, ready to use in early literacy programs, day care centres, primary grades and Adult Basic Education/Literacy programs. Patterns, recipes, and hand-outs all included. The manual includes math for the whole person: Spirit, heart, body and mind are all connected in the activities. When these are in balance, math becomes part of our whole lives, not a beast or a barrier. Activities for the whole family. Clearinghouse Library makes free hard copies available to Texas educators ONLY. For online availability, see Canada's National Adult Literacy Database website. [www.nald.ca](http://www.nald.ca)

***Involving Migrant Families in Education: ERIC Digest.*** Martinez, Y. G. and Velazquez, J. A. (2000). Charleston, WV: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. Children of migrant farmworkers, more than other children, confront a number of risk factors for school failure (Menchaca & Ruiz-Escalante, 1995). Some of these

factors—including mobility, poverty, and lack of access to schooling—were recognized and described as early as the 1940s. School-level data, however, indicate that educators frequently attribute school failure to a lack of parent involvement ("parents just don't care"). This Digest describes parent involvement in the education process from the perspective of parents and educators and offers strategies to enhance the experience of schooling for migrant students and their families.

***Literacy Begins at Home: Teach Them to Read.*** National Institute for Literacy (2006). Jessup, MD: National Institute for Literacy. This brochure encourages parents to teach their children to read and provides checklists of helpful practices and benchmarks by age group (toddlers, preschoolers, kindergarteners, first graders, second graders, and third graders). It can be used with the Shining Stars booklet series (available from TCALL as a separate title). Free copies are available from [edpubs@inet.ed.gov](mailto:edpubs@inet.ed.gov) or can be downloaded from the website.

***Supporting Early Literacy in Natural Environments: Activities for Caregivers & Infants and Toddlers.*** Syverson, Angela Notari, et al (2006). Seattle, WA: Washington Research Institute. These materials include activities for adults to use with infant or toddler-age children to develop early language and literacy skills. The activities address awareness of books and print, sounds and rhymes, and use of language. Parents/caregivers can use the activities during play and daily routines. The materials may be copied and shared as long as they are not sold. Clearinghouse Library makes free hard copies available to Texas educators ONLY. For online availability, see WRI website. [www.wri-edu.org](http://www.wri-edu.org) The WRI site also offers this resource in Spanish.

***Supporting Early Literacy in Natural Environments: Activities for Caregivers and Young Children.*** Syverson, Angela Notari, et al (2006). Seattle, WA: Washington Research Institute. Materials include home and community activities for adults and preschool children that encourage early language and literacy development. Each activity includes: 1) description; 2) hints for making the activity fun and developmentally appropriate; and 3) a brief self-evaluation form that cues parents and other caregivers to notice their children's skills, and also cue adults to examine and grow their own interactions with their children. The materials are specifically designed to address the three key skills of language development, phonological awareness, and general print awareness, and are appropriate for children with disabilities as well as children who are developing typically. Level 1 activities are designed for developmentally younger children; Level 2 activities include a stronger focus on print; and Level 3 activities focus on more complex language use. The materials may be copied and shared as long as they are not sold. Clearinghouse Library makes free hard copies available to Texas educators ONLY. For online availability, see WRI website. [www.wri-edu.org](http://www.wri-edu.org) The WRI site also offers this resource in Spanish.

**Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy & Learning**

College of Education & Human Development  
Department of EAHR  
Texas A&M University  
4477 TAMU  
College Station, TX 77843-4477

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
COLLEGE STATION  
TEXAS  
77843  
PERMIT NO. 215

**Change service requested**

**Texas Adult & Family Literacy Quarterly** is the publication of the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy & Learning (TCALL). The publication is free to adult educators, literacy providers, and others interested in adult and family literacy.

**The Quarterly** is dedicated to advancing knowledge in the field by addressing topics of concern to adult and family literacy practitioners, adult learners, and scholars. The audience includes teachers, students, administrators, program coordinators, researchers, literacy volunteers, and in general individuals interested in the fields of adult and family literacy.

**Editor:** Peggy Sue Durbin

**Editorial Board:** Harriet Vardiman Smith, Ken Appelt and Federico Salas-Isnardi

**Organizational Sponsorship**

**The Quarterly** is published by TCALL as an activity of The Texas Adult & Family Literacy Clearinghouse Project, a state leadership project in adult education funded through Texas Education Agency and supported by Texas LEARNS. TCALL is a University Center at Texas A&M University, College of Education and Human Development, Department of Educational Administration and Human Resource Development.

The contents of **The Quarterly** do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy & Learning, Texas A&M University, Texas Education Agency, nor Harris County Department of Education.

TCALL publications are copyrighted © and trademarked ™ as the property of the Texas Education Agency and Texas A&M University. See TCALL Website Legal Notices for details.

**Subscriptions and Correspondence**

All editorial correspondence and submissions should be sent to the attention of Editor Peggy Sue Durbin at the return address above, or send an email to [pdurbin@tamu.edu](mailto:pdurbin@tamu.edu). Please see the TCALL website for specific submission guidelines regarding criteria and article format. Send requests for FREE subscriptions to the Center Email address below.

**Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy & Learning**

800-441-READ (7323)      979-845-6615      979-845-0952 fax

Center Email: [tcall@tamu.edu](mailto:tcall@tamu.edu)

Website: [www-tcall.tamu.edu](http://www-tcall.tamu.edu)

**Harriet Vardiman Smith**

TCALL Director  
[hsmith@tamu.edu](mailto:hsmith@tamu.edu)

**Dr. Mary Alfred**

TCALL Principal Investigator  
[malfred@tamu.edu](mailto:malfred@tamu.edu)