Project Read Update

Project Read: the Adult Literacy Program of the San Francisco Public Library

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Our Years Together

This was read by Lilton Powell, Jr. to his wife, Clara, on June 16th at our Annual Learner-Tutor Celebration.

Thirty-two years together—oh, how the time passed by! We've seen our two children grow up to be outstanding young ladies. Now we are watching the grandchildren going through the teenage years and their parents flustered over their behavior. They come back to us and ask, "Were we that difficult?" We smile and say, "Yes, you were." Once you give in the name of love, one has to keep on giving in the name of love.

Clara and I have kept on giving in the name of love and we haven't become wealthy as we envisioned from the start, but we believe the best is still to come. One day I'll hit the Lotto and that will be a great jump start in our lives. But in the meantime we'll use the G.I. Bill and buy the home of our choice in whatever state we want. We have a promising future and a lot of life to live. I thank the Lord for you, Clara.

I haven't been the best person to live with, but Clara, you have worn the name of Powell as proudly as one can. Thank you for supporting me in my efforts at Project Read. I just want to say, "Thank You," for blessing me with your love, and as we said 32 years ago today, "Until death do us part."

Love,
Lilton

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The views expressed are those of the authors - not necessarily that of Project Read or the San Francisco Public Library.

The Flea Pet

by Neil Mills

Early one sunny morning while walking and jogging in Lumphini Park in Bangkok, Thailand, the calf of my right leg started to cramp. I stopped and sat down on a bench to massage it. I was startled to feel a wet cold nose on my left leg. It was a stray dog with a loveable face. His coat was mostly white with some brown markings on his face and back.

I petted him and said, "How are you?" in kind of a sing song voice, "You're such a nice dog." I scratched his ears. I stood up and started running again. He ran ahead of me but kept looking back to see if I was coming.

After a while, I stopped again to massage my calf. This time, he came back and lay down beside me. He was so content to just be resting and scratching vigorously at his fleas. He ran with me for a long time and then we became separated. I left the park but it was nearly impossible for me to cross an intersection of the worst Bangkok traffic I have ever experienced. As I walked on my way home, there he was again! He spotted me, came over to see me and I petted him. A nice Thai woman came out of her shop and gave him a drink of water.

I started on my way to my hotel and he was out front again looking back to see if I was coming. There was a woman selling food from a stand, and I bought him a piece of meat but he just ate one small piece. When I got to my hotel, the door closed slowly and he came in behind me. The people at the front desk told me to put him out, so I did. I called my friend Pam and she came down to see him. He was still scratching. What a loveable dog. I named him 'Flea Pet' just for fun, because he had fleas and I petted him.

Just in case he might be there the next day, I thought I would buy a flea collar for him. I guessed I would never see him again, as the year before I rescued a stray dog that was trapped in traffic and carried him to safety in the park, but he did not stay with me. I went to my room and took a hot shower.

The next day while jogging, he came up to me. I was extremely surprised to see him in the park. I put his flea collar on and we went running. When I was ready to go home, he was with me. There were two park police at the park's gate. I had no place to keep Flea Pet and I could not shoo him back into the park. Besides, I didn't want him to draw the attention of the police. I clapped my hands, hoping he would go back. He cocked his head and looked at me as if to say, "What's with you man? You like me or what?" Anyway, we both were crossing the street in this dangerous traffic and he was not good at it.

I was going to have breakfast with my friend Joel and I was late to meet him at his hotel. When we got there, the door man shooed Flea Pet away.

It has been a week now and I have not seen him in the park. He was so loveable and I wanted to keep him and love him. I look for him every day. I saw dogs that looked like him and one dog was so much like him I went over to pet it and it growled at me, showed its teeth and I jumped back in surprise. A case of mistaken identity! I am very sad. I hope someone gives Flea Pet a good home. I still think of him often.

Mose's First Book

by Mose Johnson

I read a book named *The Magic Paper*. It was my first book I've read since I started reading. It was exciting to know that I could read a whole book. Now I feel better because I can do this myself. I'm looking forward to reading the next book.

My Goals for Fall 2005

by Tim Long

This essay is about the goals I want to accomplish before the end of the fall semester. The goals I want to accomplish are: to continue with Project Read, finish class at City College, and learn how to make jewelry at the rock club and spending more time with my kids.

I want to continue in Project Read in order to improve my reading, writing and spelling. I will do this by continuing to work with my tutor. Then continuing to go to the book club and reading more books. Finally by learning how to use the dictionary better.

I want to finish my first class at City College. I'm taking a class to learn computers for vocational rehabilitation and because I want to do this for my self. This fall I'm taking introduction to computers so next semester I can take the hardware and software class. I'm doing this so I can get a job in computer repair or computer networking.

I joined the San Francisco Gem and Mineral Society to learn how to polish and shape rocks for jewelry. Since I joined, I've gone several times and each time I've cut and polished a rock. The first time I went the instructor helped me through the process. The next times he let me do it on my own. Next I want to shape some more rock and learn how to work with silver and gold.

My last goal is to spend more time with my kids. When I left my wife I didn't get to see them too much. Now that my wife and I are divorced I can see my kids as much as I want. So now we are beginning to go to places like the movies, fishing at the lakes and riding bikes in Golden Gate Park. Well those are my goals for this fall, so after these goals I'll make more for next year.

Growing Pains

by Dayana Salazar

In life people face many difficult situations and many times just feel like giving up. I have been there as well. However, I realized that in order to survive we must face our greatest fears and life challenges. When we take on scary journeys we learn to survive and grow. I have learned from my experience that it is better to be positive and to start with small steps even though it may take longer to accomplish your goals in life.

In 2002 I began my journey at City College, after a long break from education. I also was not able to read well or write at all. Yet, little by little I started to gain some confidence abilities and was able to succeed in basic classes. Along the way I joined Project Read, where I met incredible people, such as my outstanding tutors, Jason and Johnna. With this support and encouragement I have been able to understand that I have the capacity to fulfill my dreams and educational goals. For instance, this year I received A's in Algebra and Geometry and can you imagine that I was able to read those difficult word problems? To my amazement I was also asked by the math department to become a tutor for Algebra and Geometry students next semester.

Outside of my academic environment I have been reading both English and Spanish books. In addition I try to participate in Project Read's monthly book club. My readings have led me to expand my understanding of our diverse world and cultures and has given me an amazing form of entertainment. My children have begun to read more and enjoy visiting the library. I have also found that I am more comfortable dealing with my work environment at City College. Lastly, I just was notified that I was awarded a scholarship to help me with my continuing education.

Yes, I intend to carry on with my education and life learning. This summer I hope to be able to receive a certificate of Phlebotomy Technician and pass my driving exam and begin to drive a car. Furthermore, I will continue to improve my reading and writing skills so that I can enter and complete a registered nursing program. It is my intention to receive a Bachelor's degree of Nursing and to become a successful nurse.

Hopefully in the future I will have the opportunity to return the amazing support I have received from Project Read and show my appreciation by giving back to the community.

Adult Learner Profile: Maurice Roberson

by Randy Weaver and Brian Castagne

Like all Project Read learners, Maurice Roberson has overcome a wide range of obstacles as he continues on his path to increased literacy. Although humble and low-key, Maurice is clearly proud of this journey and of a recent achievement - his transition to a 4-year college. We spoke with Maurice just a few weeks after he started classes as a junior at New College of California.

Maurice describes a childhood being raised by his great-grandparents who loved him but were too old to provide the support he needed. "I grew up in a rough and tough part of Brooklyn, New York. It was very bad. I had a lot of friends and we were happy to be together, but we were on our own. We knew things weren't right - there weren't adults around looking out for us and we didn't have the resources other folks had - we were in poverty." He recalls wishing for someone to ask him about his school day, help him with homework, and make sure he was properly fed. He describes the sadness and anxiety of longing for someone to take a true interest in his life and well being.

Maurice Roberson

Maurice attended public school where he was placed in special education but did not receive the help he feels he needed to be a successful student. He said schoolwork was very difficult for him even though he tried hard.

When asked how this lack of support affected him, he says that in some ways it made him strong, self-reliant, and hungry to achieve things. It also made it hard for him to develop trust in others.

After a difficult period in his teen years, Maurice moved to San Francisco and was reunited with his mother. He quickly set his sights on higher education and began taking classes at City College of San Francisco. He soon realized that he needed extra support to achieve his education goals. He tried special small group classes sponsored by City College but discovered that he responded best to individualized attention. He came to Project Read in June 2001.

Maurice has met with his tutors Suzanne and Dana with impressive consistency over the years. He feels his hard work and the support from his tutors have made him a more fluent reader and writer. He describes being able to go for much greater periods before hitting problem spots where he feels stuck or needs to look up a word.

As Maurice was completing his program at City College, he knew he was ready for the next challenge. With his can-do attitude, increased confidence in his reading and writing skills, deeper understanding of his learning disability (and his experience advocating for the accommodations it requires), he determined to attend a 4-year college.

Maurice began an exhaustive search for a college with an administration and faculty that would understand his specific needs and provide the ongoing support to help him succeed. Maurice was tenacious in his search – he visited campuses, met with admissions staff, spoke with financial aid officers, and got feedback from those around him. He maintained a steady focus through the long and frequently frustrating application process and was accepted at three institutions, Holy Names University, Patten University, and New College.

After careful consideration, Maurice chose New College of California. Maurice tells us that conversations with his English teacher from City College as well as frequent discussions with our own Leon Veal helped him determine that New College was the best fit. Leon graduated from New College 2 years ago and has established a rich collaboration between our programs. He was able to give Maurice valuable insight into the New College Weekend BA Completion Program. Leon continues to provide counsel to Maurice and checks in with his academic advisor, former San Francisco Supervisor Harry Britt.

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Maurice continued

After his first week at New College, Maurice is enthusiastic about his classes and ready for the challenges ahead. He is devoting more time to studying and is working harder than ever – particularly on the often difficult vocabulary he is encountering in these rigorous classes.

When asked what he feels most proud of in his life, Maurice describes the positive choices he made and continues to make. He says these decisions have moved him along a path of education and personal growth and away from the negative things he often sees around him.

What's next for Maurice? He says that he plans to maintain his positive approach, keep getting stronger, finish his Bachelor's Degree, and begin a career in the field of counseling. He also said that he is going to make sure he maintains his devotion to playing basketball. He credits the physical activity, discipline, and social interaction with reducing his stress and increasing his positive outlook and can-do attitude. He told us "without basketball I would go crazy."

Maurice Roberson

About four years ago, a young man, Maurice Roberson, came to Project Read with a dream of going to City College. Like many adult learners with learning difficulties, Maurice faced a great challenge ahead of him. Not only did Maurice have a learning difference that would make his goal a little more challenging for him, but also he was still in the early stages of building his literacy skills. I remembered once asking him what his goal was. Somehow his reply has always shown that not only was he a special person, but one who would fight to succeed. That was four years ago. Today, Maurice has graduated from City College and has started at New College of California in its Weekend Bachelor Completion Program. I see another success in his horizon at New College. Next year when Maurice graduates from New College, he will be able to add some new tools and strategies to the learner tool box for other adult learners to take and use. From myself and many learners, I say congratulations Maurice on the job well done!

By Leon Veal, Outreach Coordinator

Nemo's Adventures: A review of *Finding Nemo*

by Robert Kucel

The story begins when Nemo is about six years old and takes a trip with his classmates. Before the trip, Nemo's father tells Nemo not to go to the drop-off because he may get captured by divers. The drop-off is where the divers are.

Then Nemo's friends see the bottom of a boat, and challenge Nemo to swim as close as he can, but Nemo swims real close to show his friends that he is not scared. Nemo gets caught in the diver's net. The diver swims to the boat, gets on, and they speed off. The diver takes Nemo to his store and puts him in the fish tank.

Then the diver calls his friend the dentist and tells him that he's got a rare fish. The dentist says bring it by. The next day, the diver delivers Nemo. Now Nemo finds himself in a scary place with other fishes.

Nemo thinks the other fishes might beat him up, but all the fishes are very friendly. In a little while, Nemo asks the fishes what they are talking about.

The fishes tell Nemo that the dentist wants to give his niece, Darla, one of the fishes. The last fish that he gave his niece died. Nemo gets very scared because it might be him. Nemo knows that if he plays dead the dentist will not give him to Darla. The dentist is about to give Darla Nemo, but he doesn't see Nemo moving and throws the bag onto the table.

When the bag lands on the table it hits something sharp. Nemo sees the opened bag, jumps out, and flies into the sink. He goes through the pipes, down into the sea.

Nemo swims until he sees his father and tells him the story. His father is happy that his son is safe. The End.

TIPS FOR TUTORS

Form Poetry Can Engage Even the Reductant Beginning Writer

Adult learners who are reluctant to even begin to write will sometimes respond well to being given a very precise structure into which to place their written thoughts. Form poetry is just that, a formal structure in which language is used in a very specific way. But if you are someone who is struggling daily with spelling and grammar, this can be a fun and non-threatening way to begin to get your thoughts down on paper.

Alphabet Poems: This is a simple pattern that is a fun way of expressing one's feeling about oneself, a friend, or even a tutor. It's simple; you just use the letters in someone's name as the beginning of a phrase that describes that person. For example:

Reader of novels
A lover of music
New homeowner
Daily commuter
Young at heart

Try it with any proper name or other noun.

Cinquains are five-line poems that can be written about almost anything. They follow a very simple pattern:

Line 1 – a one-word title or name of something or someone (noun)
Line 2 – Two words describing the subject in line 1 (adjectives)
Line 3 – Three words describing the action of the subject (verbs)
Line 4 – A sentence expressing a feeling you have about the subject
Line 5 – One word that repeats, or renames, the subject in line 1

For example:

Cicada
ugly noisy
drumming sawing praying
sad and regretfully lonely
Singer

Besides just being fun, cinquains can be a great reinforcement when teaching the parts of a sentence—verbs, adjectives, nouns, etc.

Mark Your Calendars for the Annual Holiday Party and Potluck

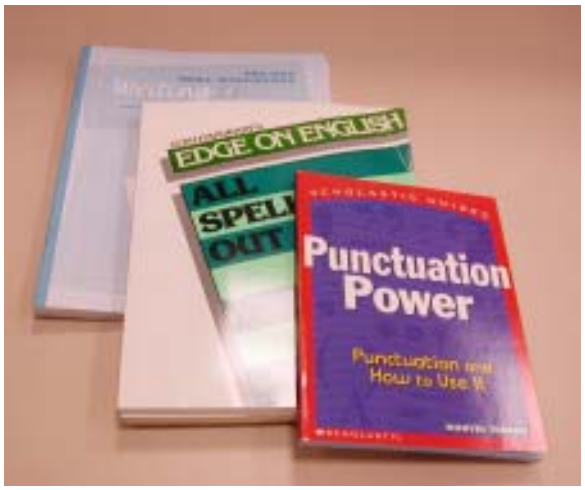
Thursday, December 8, 2005

Project Read members and staff will again come together to celebrate the holiday season with a festive party and potluck on Thursday, December 8 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Don't miss this opportunity to sample some amazing home cooking and spend a fun evening with other tutors and learners. We will also have some special door prizes and FREE raffle gifts donated by local businesses. We are looking for some fabulous goods or professional services that can be given away during the evening's free raffle. Please consider asking your employer to make a donation for this event. Here are some examples of previous donations: magazine subscriptions, tickets for brunch at a local hotel, 3 free hours of professional organizing, gift certificates to a bookstore, movie passes, etc.

So mark your calendars for the evening of Thursday, December 8th. Invitations will be mailed to all of you in November. We look forward to seeing your there!

Project Read Staff

Free Instructional Workbooks Available for Tutors



If you are looking for a more structured approach to teaching basic skills such as phonics, spelling, writing & grammar, and even math, come by the Project Read office and look at our collection of recently purchased workbooks. These materials are being offered FREE to active tutors—you can write in them all you like—they'll be yours to keep and use with your adult learner.

Available titles include: *Patterns in Spelling* (levels 1 through 4 for beginning to intermediate learners), *Spellbound: Phonic Reading and Spelling*, *All Spelled Out* (levels A through D also for beginning to intermediate learners), *Punctuation Power, Writing It Down: Writing Skills for Everyday Life, Writing Me: A First Writing Course for Adults, Writing to Others, and Write All About It* (intensive grammar for more advanced learners). In addition we have a series of math workbooks called Number Power covering simple addition all the way through beginning algebra.

These materials were purchased using funds from our California Library Literacy Services grant which annually helps to enhance and expand Project Read's services to tutors and learners.

Thank you

☺ John Gildersleeve and Erin McAleece for leading the Wednesday Night Readers meetings. ☺ Friends of the San Francisco Public Library for their generous support. ☺ Tutor contacts Vivian Altmann, Suzanne Stassevitch, Terri Ryan, JoAnn Lopez, Richard Sikes, Erin McAleece, Susan Fink, and Gail Shen for providing invaluable support to the staff and fellow tutors. ☺ Thank you Mario St. Rose, Marianne Oest, Mose Johnson, and Chris Balme for speaking at the September Tutor Orientation. ☺ Ingrid Nystrom and the staff of Stacey's Booksellers for providing 20% discounts to Project Read volunteers in celebration of National Volunteer Week.

Welcome New Tutors!

Gail Abrams
Janis Bohan
Ben Botts
Rigel Christian
Katie Holzemer
Carol Keener
Jonathan James
Edward Joaquin
Relia Johnson
Michele Mazeris
Greg Miller
Pat O'Connell
David O'Neil
Sheila Ryan
Danan Sherman
Rachel Styer
Tom Wray

Thursday Math Workshops

by Susan Fink

Puzzled by percents? Frazzled by fractions? Dismayed by division? Drop by the Project Read office Thursday evenings from 6:00-7:30 pm for tutoring in math. Whether you're preparing to take the GED or balancing your checkbook, come in for the help you need and have some fun, too! Learners and tutors welcome.

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