Project Read Update

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

Fall 2006 Volume 23, No. 4

Program Manager
Randall Weaver

Newsletter Coordinator
Richard Le

Staff Editors
Brian, Heather, Rhonda, Leon, and Randy

Staff Writers
Randall Weaver
Brian Castagne

Contributing Writers
Dorothy Curry
Shedrick Ferguson, Jr.
Sheila Johnson
Tim Long
Mohammed Nazam
Lilton Powell, Jr.
Mario St. Rose
Lanette Scott
Wonderful Wright

Photographers
Brian Castagne
Richard Le

Inspiring Quilts by Wonderful Wright

I would like to start by saying thank you to my tutor, Mary, who took me to the de Young Museum. We went to see an exhibit of quilts made by different Black women from Gee's Bend in Alabama.

I thought it was the most beautiful thing in the world because it reminded me that Black women had to survive by keeping their families warm and maybe their minds at peace.

And then I thought about when I was working downtown in the Financial District I had made a quilt. I called it the Ghetto Quilt. The pieces came from the garbage cans of the garment factories. I didn't finish the backing, but this has given me the inspiration to do the backing on my quilt.

I got pieces and made me a quilt. Here it is. And thank you Project Read for letting me show you my creation. Please go to the deYoung to see the Quilts of Gee's Bend before December 31, 2006.

Wonderful proudly displays her quilt.

A close-up of Wonderful's quilt.

Project Read
San Francisco Public Library
100 Larkin Street
San Francisco, CA 94102

Tel: (415) 557-4388
Fax: (415) 557-4375

projectread@sfpl.org
www.projectreadsf.org

What's inside ...

	Page
Learner writing	1-5
Articles wanted for Black History Month	5
Tutor Profile	6
Maurice - Bachelor of the Arts	7
Holiday Party & Potluck	8
Learner Accomplishments	8
Thank you	8

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

Succeeding In College by Tim Long

It is important to succeed in college in order to get a better job so you can support your needs in life. You could go to college to get certified to get a different job if you got hurt at your last job and cannot do what you used to do. This is why I'm going to college, so I can get a certificate in computer repair. Another reason to succeed in college is it will give you a lot more opportunities to succeed in life so you can make the right decisions in life. The last thing that succeeding in college will do for you is learning how to manage your time better in life. If you don't manage your time you will be late for everything and that's not a good way to run your life. To succeed in college you need to attend every class, ask questions when you don't fully understand something, take notes, and set goals and objectives for your classes.

Tim looks out over his Public Library.

Attending every class is important for students to succeed in college. Students need to be in class every day so they can get all of the material needed for the class and understand all of the work the teacher has given. The only way to learn and keep up with the lessons is to attend every class. If you are not attending your classes now, what are you going to do when you get a job? If you miss work too much you will lose your job. One class I didn't go to every day in high school was math. When I missed too many classes in a row it was hard for me to catch up with the current lessons. It was too much work to catch up so I didn't do it and I failed the class. If I had gone to class regularly I would have improved my math skills, completed the homework and passed the tests that were required to pass the class. The teacher even told me that I would have been one of her best students if I would have been in class every day. If you attend your classes every day you will learn more and get a better grade in your classes.

Another important aspect to succeed in college is to ask questions when you don't fully understand something. If you don't ask questions how will the teacher know that you don't understand something? There was a class I took in college called network plus. When a topic came up that I didn't fully understand I didn't say anything. I didn't raise my hand to ask for an explanation because I thought I would look stupid in front of all the students. I've learned that the only bad question is the one you don't ask. There are many resources to get the answers to your question, like tutors, the Internet, or the book. The best place to start would be to ask your teacher, for they know the subject very well and that is what they are there for. Today I still don't completely understand some of the concepts of networking. So now when I go to class I make sure I ask questions when I don't understand what the teacher is talking about, and I'll perform better in the class.

The third thing that I think is important for me to succeed is to take notes in every class. Taking notes in class helps me remember things that the teacher would tell us in class and that might not be in the books. In my first beginning computer class, which I took when I started college, I could not take notes well because I could not listen to the teacher and take notes at the same time. I didn't get as good of a grade as I would have if I had taken notes. I had to get someone to teach me how to take notes and to listen to the teacher at the same time. Now when I go to class I make sure that I have some paper and a pen so I can take notes in every class. If I still have trouble I have to ask if someone will help me by taking notes and then I can copy them after class. If all these things don't work I am allowed to take a tape recorder to class and tape the teacher when class is in session.

The last important thing to do to succeed in college is to set goals and objectives for all your classes. When I started college this time I took this English class which is called 91X and combines English 90 and English 9. If we get a good grade in this class we will not have to take English 92 and instead we can go to English 93. I took this class because I wanted to learn how to read, write

continued on page 3

Succeeding in College continued.

better and to further my goals. I've been going to Project Read at the public library for the past three years to improve my reading and writing. For me it is important to set goals and objectives because it gives me something to strive for and when I finish what I set goals for it makes me feel good that I did what I set out to do. So I think we should all set goals and objectives in college so when we succeed in college we can go on in life and set even bigger goals.

I think these four things are crucial and effective to a student's success in college but there are still a lot of others. When I was in high school I did not exhibit any of this behavior and didn't graduate for I was unable to do the work that was required in all my classes. I was not able to go to college so I had to go back to school to study to pass the G.E.D. test. I also had to work at jobs that didn't pay well because I didn't go to college. So I think it is very important for people to manage their time, to get to classes every day and do all the work required to succeed in college. So what are you going to do to succeed in college?

My Book Review: *Day of Tears*

by Shedrick Ferguson, Jr.

It's a review of the book, *Day of Tears* by Julius Lester. At first I didn't think it was going to be a good book but then I started reading it and the way they had the characters and the lettering I didn't quite understand the flow. But as I started reading and realized that the capital letters were what people were saying and the italicised letters were projections of what people were thinking. After I realized that, I liked the book much more and I could follow and understand what they were saying.

I read part of this book to my granddaughter and we talked about it together. I would recommend this book.

I felt the feeling of some of the slaves that were in bondage. I have been told about slavery but reading this book for the first time I felt some tension in my body while I was reading certain parts. It helped me to understand more about slavery and my ancestors.

Stand Up for Your Rights and Your Dreams

by Dorothy Curry

In society today more people are getting stressed out about work and financial problems. I believe most of us have the power to become entrepreneurs. We just don't have the resources to find out how to get the money or a grant from the government, or we just don't have the knowledge to go about doing the work. There are really great opportunities out there for us. We just need to keep trying and one day we will succeed. There are many places that will help us. We just need to open our eyes and look and listen. And if you don't succeed the first time, don't stop trying. You might just get it the second time. There are many people to help you. You just have to find them, or maybe they'll find you!

Dorothy and her tutor Amberly use the *Easy Voter Guide* to prepare for the November 7, 2006 Election.

Accomplishing My Hopes

by Shelia Johnson

My experience with Project Read has been a blessing for me. It helps me with my self esteem. It motivates me and I am determined to finish Project Read. I highly recommend anyone that's interested in the course to join because the benefits you get from this is to help make your skills better and improve your achievements and goals in life. In church, when we have Bible study, the pastor gives out the Scriptures and we have to look them up in the Bible. Then we read them out loud. Before I was ashamed to read because I didn't know the words and I was ashamed what people might think of me. But now I read with confidence and I am understanding more of the readings. This has made me a very proud young lady. If you need help with reading I strongly recommend Project Read for anyone of all ages.

Love by Lanette Scott

Love I wanted to receive
But this I never achieved

What was given I accept
Not knowing the true concept

You see love I wanted to grab fast
So I could make it last

Then I had to slow down
As I was being treated like a clown

I realized at that time
I was worth more then just a dime

I wanted to feel complete
So I had to delete

Those who threw me off track
Because all they did was distract

From what the Lord had in store
This I wanted to explore

I wanted to know
How I can grow

Then I was blessed
And would not stand for anything less

You see God's love was already proved
Through his sprit I was able to move

Now I know what true love means
And all I have to do is lean

On my one and true Lord
Who I really adore

In my heart he holds a special space
Which no one can ever replace

LOVE

Letter to Adam by Mario St. Rose

Hello Adam Asmula,

My name is Mario. I live in Oakland California in the United States. Oakland is the city and California is the state. Oakland is a famous city because a lot of famous people come from here. People like 2Pac the rapper, the Black Panthers and many more. I like living here because the weather is very good. It doesn't get too hot or too cool.

I am a young man that's trying to live a healthy honest life. I have no kids yet but I am hoping to have some one day. Until then I am just trying to better myself as a person. Life has so many ups and downs. When you think you have it bad someone else has it worse. No one lives a perfect life in this world.

Adam, I know that life is hard in your part of the world. Hang in there, things will get better one day and you will make it better for others. Be a leader not a follower. Keep praying to God and do the right things. Help others if they are in need of help. Take advantage of all the education you can get. Life will get easier if you are educated. Believe in yourself and stay focused. Any dream you may have can come true if you work hard to make it come true. Also try to learn how to read and write. Adam Asmula, maybe one day we will meet. Take care my friend.

Sincerely,
Mario St.Rose

[Mario wrote this letter to Adam, the child he currently sponsors via World Vision.]

Mario outside the Project Read office.

My Progress by Mohammed Nazam

Emilie is teaching me about phonics and what words mean and how they are pronounced. We are learning this on the computer, which tells us the pronunciation. Phonics tells you how the word sounds, how to pronounce it, and how you can understand it.

We have started to look at the news on the Internet, and how to use the Internet, as well as email. It is important to use the Internet so that you can learn about jobs, what's going on in the news, and to find stuff. Project Read helps us learn things, and this is another important thing I am learning.

Project Reads gives me a place to have an education, to learn how to read, an opportunity. An opportunity to present yourself and be yourself. They encourage you to go up in the world.

Mohammed working on phonics with his tutor Emilie.

Big Girl by Lilton Powell, Jr.

I am a Big Girl Now !
I have your heart & soul,
There's no other way to have you my man !

A man needs a woman !
A woman needs a man !
Adam's rib a woman is born !
Adam & Eve had no childhood !

Snow White & Cinderella had their Prince ! Big Girl!
Our romance an internal flame !
Boiling passion into the future !

Big Girl You are more than a mother to be !
Big Girl Part of me says, Big Girl look into my eyes !

Life movements occur !
Life light forces, flashes, Thunder, Lightning,
Divinely Meshed !
I look into your eyes, Big Girl Twinkle, Twinkle !

Life light forces zoom into me !
Fills me to the top of my head !
Back out of my eyeballs back into you Big Girl!

Without touching, Yet Touching !
You're a Big Girl Now !

Newsletter Articles Wanted to Honor Black History Month

Project Read would like to dedicate a few pages of our winter 2007 newsletter to Black History Month, so we are asking adult learners to contribute their original stories about an event or person connected with Black History. Subjects might include:

- a short biography of a famous African-American
- a description of an important event in Black History
- a personal memory relating the history of African-Americans

In order to get the newsletter printed and published by early February 2007, we will need all submissions sent to the Project Read office by January 15.

Thanks for helping us honor Black History Month. If you have any questions, please call Richard Le at (415) 557-4388.

Photo collage courtesy of *Time Magazine*.

Tutor Profile: Chris Balme by Randy Weaver

Project Read volunteer Chris Balme recently marked his 2nd anniversary as a tutor. Chris is typical of many Project Read volunteers; a young professional who relocated to the City after college and was looking for a way to contribute to his newly-adopted community.

Chris grew up in and around Boston. He attended the University of Pennsylvania and received a Bachelor's Degree from the Wharton School of Business. Like many young people just graduating from college, he took a bit of a right turn, not following a path in business, but concentrating on his passionate commitment to education. Coincidently, he also discovered a passion for the West Coast, taking another right turn and moving to San Francisco where he began work as a freelance tutor for school-age children. He soon realized that there were many families who could not afford paid tutors so he made a commitment that for every five paying students, he would help one child with no charge to the family.

Chris and Mose read and discuss *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*.

Chris recalls that his first exposure to the program was seeing the Project Read outreach van driving through his neighborhood. He soon realized that tutoring at Project Read would be a perfect complement to the work he was already doing with school-age children.

Chris completed tutor training in July of 2004. Originally he thought that he wanted to work with a learner who was also a parent. At that time, there were no learners waiting who had children in the home so instead, he was matched with Mose, a retired African-American man a few years older than Chris. As Chris says, "At first I was very nervous because I had never tutored an adult before, not to mention someone who was older." Even though he felt well-prepared, thanks to his tutor training and the specific information about Mose which he received from the Project Read staff, he was still wondering where he would start as their sessions began.

Since Mose was a beginning reader, Chris decided to begin working with the Language Experience Technique. This turned out to be an excellent approach for Mose because as Chris says, "He had a lot of stories to tell, and he felt honored that someone was actually interested in hearing them and writing down all he had to say." Mose showed great motivation and began coming into the computer lab on his own, in between tutoring sessions, to work on his skills. Chris says, "He obviously wanted to be here, unlike the way kids sometimes feel about school."

After a period of working with Language Experience stories, flash cards, and some workbooks, Chris and Mose were looking for something different that would bring a new spark to their sessions. Mose decided that he really wanted to begin reading entire books. He and Chris paid a visit to the Project Read collection and chose one of the small novellas written at an easy-to-read level. Now, Chris and Mose began to dive right into these books at each tutoring session. Mose would locate difficult words in the story and they would work on them together, breaking them down, discussing meanings, and building basic vocabulary and word recognition skills. Chris says that Mose does not always pick easy books. "He likes to challenge himself," says Chris. They recently began reading a version of *Gentleman Prefer Blonds* which contains some very difficult words, but Chris reports that they still manage to get through two chapters each week.

Chris really enjoys spending time with Mose, and like many Project Read tutors, he believes that he has learned a lot from the process of being his tutor. For one thing, Mose has given Chris a better understanding of his community. Chris was relatively new to San Francisco when he met Mose, who as a long-time resident, was able to fill him in on local history going all the way back to the 1960's.

Chris is very thankful that he has gotten to know Mose over the past two years. As he says, "If I hadn't been matched with him as a tutor, I might not have had the opportunity to meet someone from a different cultural background and learn so much from the experience."

When asked what he would say to someone contemplating becoming a tutor at Project Read, Chris says, "I'd tell them that it's fun! It doesn't feel like work and it's a positive relationship because the learner really wants to be here."

Maurice Roberson - Bachelor of the Arts by Brian Castagne

Saturday August 26, 2006 was a spectacular day for Project Read. Maurice Roberson was awarded his Bachelor of Arts degree in Humanities from New College of California.

Former San Francisco Supervisor Harry Britt, Maurice's academic advisor, was the keynote speaker. He spoke movingly about the strength of the learning community built by this year's graduates. He remarked how they had supported and transformed not only each other but the New College faculty and staff as well. In the middle of his speech, Harry become visibly and audibly emotional and began speaking of a New College alumni in the audience who he felt was an extraordinary person. He described how this individual overcame many obstacles to complete his Bachelor's degree and has dedicated his life to combating the systemic issues that lead to low level literacy. He was of course talking about our own Leon Veal. He spoke of Leon's work with Project Read and in particular how Leon introduced Maurice to New College and provided ongoing support and guidance. Harry then spoke of what an exceptional person Maurice is and how proud he was to have been involved in Maurice's ongoing personal growth and the journey toward his college degree.

We recently spoke with Maurice about this new chapter in his life. Maurice tells us that graduation was, "the proudest day of my life. I've been waiting for it for years. Knowing that I had achieved something that no one in my family ever did. I made my mark by staying focused and never giving up on my dream of completing college. To put on the cap and gown felt wonderful. I was recognized and seen amongst the other students as a normal human being for once instead of feeling unnormal - like you know that you are less than a person and won't accomplish anything and will always be second best. I'm really happy to get to this point in life. It's a feeling that no one can ever take away. That you worked hard all your life and you met your pot of gold. It was even better than I expected it to be - even better. I say work hard, never give up, dreams do come true, dreams are real."

When asked how he felt working with other students and staff at New College: "Happy feelings. Joyful times. Pleasure. I felt this was exactly the place I needed to be with those people. They are outstanding people. You could talk to, rely on, go to them for advice and you'd get good feedback. No negative energy or harsh tones in their voices."

On Harry Britt's keynote speech: "I was touched by what Harry said. I was shocked, didn't expect to be noticed and acknowledged by him and to hear that I touched him in many ways and that he considered me hardworking."

On what Harry said about Leon: "Leon is the bomb! Leon rocks. I was touched that Harry mainly focused on Leon's challenges and that he still prevailed no matter what. Gave it his all and achieved so much."

When asked what he would like to say to his tutors and others who supported him in achieving this goal: "To all the people that are in power at the San Francisco Public Library thanks for putting together a program like Project Read and thanks for all of your help. To all of my tutors and Harry – you helped me work really hard and never give up. Some people in life will brush you off, beat around the bush, lollygag you – but not them. Their words, their time, and their patience helped me to be a better person. They stood by me no matter what and stuck in there with me at the down moments. They told me to always keep on reading even when school is out. Always try to better your reading by picking up newspapers, reading signs, and picking up the dictionary. I saw that they had good hearts and souls by what they do, by always taking time out and just sitting down and giving someone your full attention and opening your arms and opening your heart - I would like to have that one day."

Maurice with Harry Britt.

Mark Your Calendars for this Year's Holiday Party & Potluck Decemember 7, 2006

Project Read members and staff will again come together to celebrate the holiday season with a festive party and potluck on Thursday, December 7th 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, gift certificates for a bookstore, and movie passes.

So mark your calendars for the evening of Thursday, December 7th. Invitations will be mailed to everyone in November. We look forward to seeing you there!

Learner Accomplishments

Mose Johnson has finished reading *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* by Anita Loos. He tells us "this is the 5th book that I have ever read on my own." He also tells us "I read the Project Read Spring 2006 newsletter at home and then brought it in and read it to my tutor Chris. He was surprised. He said I have improved a lot. I'd say that I'm doing alright."

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, Renee Feldman, Susan Fink, JoAnn Lopez, Terri Ryan, Bruce Suehiro, and Mary Hilton for providing invaluable support to the staff and fellow tutors. ☺ Mohammed Nazam, Emilie Cole, Leona Whytus, and Carol Keener for speaking at the September 2006 Tutor Training.

PROJECT READ
People Helping People To Read
Friends of the
San Francisco Public Library
100 Larkin Street
San Francisco, CA 94102

Tel: (415) 557-4388
Fax: (415) 557-4375

projectread@sfpl.org
www.projectreadsf.org

San Francisco Public Library

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
Paid
San Francisco, CA
Permit No. 9030