Project Read Update

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

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Susan Hildreth Appointed State Librarian of California

On July 15th, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger announced the appointment of San Francisco City Librarian Susan Hildreth to the position of State Librarian of California.

While Susan worked for San Francisco Public Library—first as Deputy City Librarian starting in 1998, then City Librarian since 2001—she was a staunch supporter of Project Read. Throughout her career, she has firmly believed that adult literacy programs belong in public libraries.

Susan always took time out of her busy schedule to attend Project Read events. Even when we didn't ask her to speak, she was always in attendance, listening to learner and tutor presentations and just being a part of the Project Read community. Whenever she was asked to speak, for instance at Project Read's 20th Anniversary Celebration in October 2003, her comments always made tutors, learners, and staff feel appreciated and proud of the work they do here at the San Francisco Public Library.

Personally, I greatly appreciated Susan's attention to detail and connection to the never—ending pipeline of information coming from the State Library. Her understanding of library literacy programs made Project Read stronger, and also helped me in the work that I do.

I'm sure that I'm speaking for everyone - Project Read staff, adult learners and tutors—in wishing Susan all the best in her new position. We are pleased to know that a true friend of adult literacy and S.F.P.L. will be holding the important office of State Librarian of California.

Randall Weaver
Project Read Manager

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My Trip to Kuching, Malaysia

by Neil Mills

My friend told me about a nice place to visit in Malaysia, the Island of Borneo. I had heard about Borneo. I thought it was a jungle with headhunters but I was surprised on my first day. I went to Cultural Village and saw the long houses of Borneo. I met some of the people who live there. One of the houses has skull heads in it. At the next place, a man taught me how to use a blow gun. I blew it very hard and shot the dart a long way. But my friend Shah also blew the dart a little better than me.

We also took a city tour ride through Kuching, the capital city of Sarawak on the Island of Borneo. Kuching is known as the Cat City. There are cats everywhere. Even the statues in the town square are cats. They sell little cats in all of the shops. They have hand-carved wooden cats, plastic cats, jade cats, furry cats and cats made of steel. The longest river, Sarawak River, in Malaysia runs through the city of Kuching. And you can take a boat ride through the City on the river and stop at museums and interesting places.

It was a great tourist town and I was doing all the tourist things. It is a fun city to visit. I am so glad that my friend told me about Kuching.

A Musical Thought

by Lilton Powell, Jr.

Everyone has his or her special CD. My favorite is Marvin Gaye's "What's Going On." For me, the CD has an R&B swing side and a hint of Black Gospel. Whenever I feel like a pick me up or I want to meditate and relax, I just mentally click it on.

The world and all of its problems are also projected on this CD. That raises the question of how to solve them. We can look inside ourselves and find the answers. This CD is a different kind of love song. It is a love story of humankind.

Changing My Life

by Tim Therman

God is good. He blessed me and showed me that if you believe in yourself and love yourself things can happen for you.

I went into Walden House last year on October 6, after doing seven and half years incarcerated. I wanted to change my life. I wanted to try to do the right things in my life. So I made a brand new start at Walden House. I got some tools to put in my life in terms of triggers I learned how to deal with them. I also learned that it can only be one way either you want to do something for yourself or you don't want to. You can't straddle the fence. You have to realize it is all about you and your recovery. You have to say every day nothing comes before my recovery, nothing is going to stop me from going down the straight road. I have to wait on the process not when I want it to happen but let it happen. I was blessed to believe in this and was blessed to have good support groups, good teachers and good role models.

I just want to say it was hard going the distance but I seem to won the fight and I recognize today I am still a recovering addict. Even though I graduated from Walden House I still need a clean and sober environment and to remember where I came from and remember where I am going. I've been down already so the only thing left for me is to go up and enjoy life.

Louisiana Bayou by Larry Condall

In Louisiana, we sat around, cooked, and told jokes while waiting to eat the seafood gumbo. After we ate the seafood gumbo, we played baseball. We talked about church and the days ahead. The kids got their schoolwork ready for the beginning of the week.

How to prepare seafood gumbo:
4 crabs
1 pound okra, chopped (frozen is okay)
2 pounds shrimp, cleaned and deveined
1-2 pounds turkey necks
1 pound chicken gizzards, cleaned
1 pound smoked sausage (hot or mild), precooked
1-2 onions, diced small
1 bunch celery, diced
1-2 green peppers, chopped
1 bunch green onions, chopped
2-3 tomatoes, chopped
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon black pepper
1 teaspoon Acæent seasoning
1 large teaspoon of filé gumbo

For the roux:
½ cup oil
1 ½ large teaspoons of flour

1. Take the live crabs and pre-boil them for 15-20 minutes. Remove and clean them.

2. Start boiling gizzards in a pot ½ full of water. Boil for 1 hour on high heat.

3. Add crabs to the pot with the gizzards. Also add the turkey necks. Turn heat to medium.

4. Begin the roux. Add the oil to the pot and let it get hot on medium heat. Add the flour slowly and stir quickly and continuously. Let it get to a dark brown color and thick.

5. Add onions, celery, green peppers and green onions. Cook for 10-15 minutes on low heat with continuous stirring. Add black pepper, salt and Acæent seasoning.

6. Add sausage, roux, tomatoes and okra to the gumbo pot with the gizzards. Cook for 30 minutes, simmering with the lid on.

7. Add the filé gumbo at the end. Simmer for 15 minutes.

8. Add the shrimp at the last 5 minutes.

Serves a lot of people.

Two Exciting Learning Opportunities

California Literacy, Inc. Annual Conference
October 14 – 16
at the Hyatt, Fisherman's Wharf

This three-day conference will feature workshops for both tutors and learners. Saturday, October 16 will be devoted to learner workshops and a Writers' Luncheon. This conference can be a bit pricey; however, Project Read hopes to offer a number of scholarships for a few adult learners wishing to attend the conference on Saturday, October 16th. More information concerning this conference will be available at the Project Read office as the date gets nearer.

California Voices Project
August 10th & October 6th

This is an exciting state wide project which will give adult learners the chance to voice their concerns prior to the November election. On August 10th, California Voices will host four regional community forums linked by video conference. San Francisco Public Library will be host to one of these forums. Adult learners from Project Read and neighboring literacy programs will be invited to participate in a discussion of the important changes necessary to make California a better place to live. Then on October 6th, issues developed in August will be used as a starting point for a dialog with elected officials and politicians who will be assembled at the San Francisco Public Library for a second video conference. We hope that many adult learners from Project Read will choose to take part in this rewarding project.

Thank you letter from Don Jue

I would like to write this article as my way of saying thanks to Trudy Patch my tutor for all these years of help she has given me. I know that sometimes I frustrate her to no end, but she still had the patience to hang in there with me. I also admire the way she serves on a board and still has time to tutor me and one other person. Every time we meet she greets me and asks how I'm doing and; sometimes I feel down or have a problem and Trudy seems to always pick me up and tries to help me find ways to solve my problem: whether it is finding something on the Internet or finding other ways to research my problem. I have an eleven year old daughter and if it wasn't for all her help I don't know how I would ever help my daughter with her homework. She is always trying to encourage me to do my best. I would have to take my hat off to her for all she has done for me in my quest for knowledge. I think if there was ever a hall of fame for tutors I think she would be up there. I have been thinking the last couple of years for a good way to thank her for all she has done for me and now I can't think of any better way than to see her honored in a newsletter.

Tutor-Learner Celebration 2004

Duane speaks to the crowd

John reads a special thank you to Renee

John and Kelly

Heather and Tim

Shedrick wows the crowd

Alberto

Bob

Carlos reads the program

Juan and Marti

Ron and Kenny

Diana and Brian

Adrian West

Jeanne and Rose

Vivian and Bianca play chess

Suzanne and Maurice

Randy and Leon

Clara, Lilton and Lisba

Benny and Erin

Queen Aime

Shedrick, Gail and Leon

Vivian and Suzanne

Thank you letter to Steve

I am so lucky to have you for a learner. I look forward to seeing you twice a week. I learn as much from you as you learn from me. The birthday card that you gave me was the best. It meant a lot to me because I knew that you must've read lots of cards before you picked that one and it said some pretty nice things.

You are busy and you work hard. You do a lot for all of the people around you including me. You dedicate hours each week to improving yourself (not everyone does that) as well as having a full time job and a family to take care of. You work so hard at learning that I have to work hard to keep up. The questions that you ask force me to think.

Sometimes I don't know the answer, or I do a terrible job of explaining, or I come up with something hokey to work on. Thanks for sticking with me and being understanding. I'm not always sure that I should be explaining anything to anybody, but you've been supportive.

You are a really kind and open minded person too. You have such a great attitude and sometimes I don't, talking with you has helped me a lot. I've never had anyone to give me any kind of fatherly advice, so I appreciate being able to talk to you about things. I look forward to our lunches, it's a nice way to reward our hard work. I like talking with you about sports, life and the world.

Thanks for being such a good friend.

Your Friend, Diana Hayes

A Dedicated Tutor, Michele Robinson

by Randall Weaver, Project Read Manager

Michele Robinson has been a volunteer tutor at Project Read since the fall of 1997. Since she began tutoring, she has worked with two adult learners and been very active in the program—attending many continuing education workshops, speaking at Project Read social events, and even acting as an advisor to Project Money our financial literacy project. Recently, Michele spent a few minutes discussing her experiences as a Project Read tutor.

"What I was looking for (in 1997) was something different from my day-to-day life which at that time I realized was really corporate and really IT professional." She was searching for a volunteer opportunity and she knew she wanted to work in a tutoring capacity. Michele found Project Read by calling the San Francisco Public Library and asking about tutoring services. She says that one of her expectations about volunteering was that she would be able to meet some different kinds of people. This was one reason she decided to volunteer with Project Read, and this particular expectation was "met completely," she says.

Another expectation that Michele had as she began as a volunteer tutor, was that the program would be more rigid and that there would be a specific lesson plan that everyone was expected to follow. She says, "I was surprised at how wide open it was and how the project facilitates interaction, which I think is great. I went into my first (tutoring) relationship with Carlos thinking that I'd have a more formal curriculum with him, and learned quickly that I couldn't—it didn't work." She soon learned that despite her best laid plans, she had to be able to switch gears when something wasn't working.

Michele has many memories concerning the achievements of her two learners. "I remember really early on at one of the events downstairs, Carlos was reading something he had found in the AA literature. We practiced it, and I recorded it, and it was a really big deal for him. He read it well, and the audience was so appreciative." She also recalls when Shedrick, her second learner, was reading his first novels, *Call of the Wild* and *Island of the Blue Dolphins.* "While he was reading them both, it was just so much fun to see him be so grabbed by a book—fighting to get through it and enjoying it so much."

Over the years, Michele has managed to stay highly motivated as a tutor. In explaining how she has done this, she says, "…part of it is the progress that both those guys have made, and part of it is running into a brick wall, shifting and discovering something brand new—when something stops working, having to find something new and kind of reinventing the relationship in that way." She also thinks that having two learners has helped her remain motivated. "Having the mix of the two of them has been really good for me," she says.

In March, Michele decided to sharpen her skills by re-taking Project Read's tutor training course. After spending 15 hours with the new tutors in the training, she thought of some helpful tips for the new volunteers. She says, "One thing I did notice was that people were expecting to be *a teacher,* and that's not it at all. You're a tutor and a mentor and someone who is discovering things along with them." She said as she looked at the group of new tutors at the training she couldn't help thinking, "It's going to be interesting to see how they react." She also suggests that tutors "loosen up." As she puts it,"If you do something wrong, usually the person's going to tell you."

Michele says that over the past few years, her experience as a tutor has helped her to discover what she really enjoys in life. "My time here, I think more than anything else, has made me decide to get out of the corporate world. When I was becoming dissatisfied, I said to myself 'okay, what do I like?' And I thought I like the way I feel when something dawns on Shedrick, and that's what made me think of getting out and finding something that is more meaningful to me—there's a possibility that it could be teaching."

In July, Michele will be moving to Spokane, Washington to be nearer to her family. She plans on staying involved in adult literacy, either as a volunteer, or perhaps returning to school to obtain a graduate degree to help her find a position in the field of adult education.

Thinking back on her time at Project Read, Michele says, "I really, really have enjoyed the community of Project Read—the staff, tutors, and learners—it really has become a significant part of my life."

All of us at Project Read want to wish Michele good luck and all the best in her new life in Washington. Thank you, Michele, for your hard work and dedication over the past seven years.

Learner Accomplishments

Congratulations to Iris from her Project Read partner Vivian Altmann!

On Thursday June 17th, 2004 at 5:05 pm, Iris Barnett proudly read the final paragraph of Alexander McCall Smith's *No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency.*

I had enjoyed this book so much when we read it in the book club that I thought it might be a good first novel for Iris to try and tackle.

We took it slowly at first, with Iris reading a chapter or two out loud to me each week when we met. But by the time we had gotten halfway through the book, Iris began reading chapters on her own at home (without the tape!). When we met each week, we'd quickly recap what she'd read at home and then continue reading out loud from there.

In this way we got through the book much more quickly than I had dared hope and Iris got to finish reading her first novel ever!

Iris and I both have a great sense of pride and accomplishment. I'm especially proud of Iris' growing ability to recognize new words, her good comprehension skills, and her eagerness to start reading the next novel in the series!

Dayana Salazar

- On May 4th, 2004, Dayana received her U.S. citizenship during a ceremony at the Masonic Temple. Her tutor, Jason, applauded wildly from the balcony.
- Dayana passed the Advanced Editing and Grammar Review class at City College of San Francisco.
- Dayana earned 2 scholarships from City College.
- Dayana's daughter, Melissa, read *The Secret Life of Bees* and loved it. Mother and daughter attended the Wednesday Night Readers book club together. Melissa will be making a presentation about the book to her classmates at summer school.

Maurice Roberson

- Maurice passed the written test for his California Driver License.
- Maurice has fulfilled all of his math requirements at City College of San Francisco.

Congratulations to the following learners who have recently earned a Project Read Computer Lab License:

David Oakes
Tasha Thomas
Sheila Williams
Steven
Melissa Rapoza
Tim Therman
Tim Long

Tips For Tutors:Visualization Exercise for Writers

For this writing exercise, your learner will use a personal photograph he/she brings to the tutoring session, and write for twenty minutes about the memories it provokes.

This kind of visual writing prompt can trigger things that a writer otherwise would not remember. Most memories of events, places and people tend to be more abstract. So having something tangible helps the writer move away from that abstraction. Also, the photograph relates to a specific event or person, which moves the writer away from him/herself and closer to telling a story. Many beginning level writers tend to concentrate on the facts when telling a story (*This happened first, then this, then that, and finally this*). But if the writer is responding to a personal photograph, they may be more likely to think of descriptions that give details and shapes to the memories. It can also help the learner get in touch with his/her own emotions.

After writing for twenty minutes, the learner can share what they have written with you, and then you can begin the feedback process. Remember; start with what you liked about the writing. Later you can take the piece home and look more closely for patterns of errors that can be worked on in future tutoring sessions.

(Adapted from Facilitating a Writing Workshop for Beginners by Eric C. Wat & Joyce Nako, Bruggemeyer Memorial Library)

Farewell to Tara

As many of you know, Tara recently left her position here at Project Read and relocated to the East Coast to pursue new challenges and be nearer her family. Tara performed a dizzying array of duties to support our program and we are feeling the loss acutely. We miss many things about Tara ranging from her steely attention to detail to her unguarded and infectious laugh. We know you join us in wishing her all the best in her new life.

- The Project Read Staff

Important Message

Project Read is actively recruiting volunteer tutors and adult learners. Please help us spread the word about our services. Tell your friends, coworkers, and family members about your experience at Project Read. You are always the best ambassador for our program because you can speak firsthand about the work you do.

Thanks for your assistance and your continued commitment to Project Read and your community.

Thank you

☺ John Gildersleeve and Renee Snyder for leading the Wednesday Night Readers meetings. ☺ Friends of the San Francisco Public Library for their generous support. ☺ Tutor contacts Barbara Angus, Frances Culp, Susan Fink, John Gildersleeve, Jane Ginsburg, JoAnn Lopez, Cathy Morgan, Terri Ryan, Richard Sikes & Patricia L. Stone for providing invaluable support to the staff and fellow tutors. ☺ Patricia Coyle for proofreading this newsletter. ☺ Marti Goddard, Susan Fink, Elizabeth Hughes, Erin McAleece, Vivian Altmann, Queen Aime Kurbally, Jeanne Kane, Rose Johnson, and family and Juan Elias for helping at the Tutor-Learner Recognition Celebration. ☺ Hoover Chan, Anjolie Chidambaram, Benny Hill, Erin McAleece for speaking at the May Tutor Orientation. ☺Vivian Altmann, Pablo Dela Cruz, Marco Jordan, and the Exploratorium for presenting a very hands-on "Messy Science" workshop at our June Families for Literacy workshop. ☺ Jeanne Kane for presenting two highly engaging writing workshops for learners. ☺ Doris Osenda for office support. ☺ Shep Maher and Michelle Moghudassi for assisting with tutor recruitment.

Welcome New Tutors!

Kevin Burns
Rebecca Northern
Laure Oliver
Jess Sanet
Lam Voong
Laura Wall
Katelyn Wheeler

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