Project Read Update

PROJECT READ
People Helping People To Read

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

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Project Read Turns Twenty

This year, Project Read celebrates twenty years of providing literacy services to the residents of San Francisco. Since 1983, over 4,000 adults have increased their reading and writing skills and become more productive family members, workers, and citizens, thanks to thousands of hard working and dedicated volunteer tutors.

To commemorate this twentieth anniversary, we are planning a celebration at City Hall on the evening of October 23, 2003. A team of learners and tutors are currently planning this wonderful event which will include presentations by Project Read learners, tutors, and staff, both current and past. The Friends and Foundation of the San Francisco Public Library, who were instrumental in the creation of Project Read, will also participate. We hope you will mark your calendar and join us for this celebration.

Be on the lookout for a formal invitation which will be coming your way soon.

We hope to receive both financial and in-kind support to help make this event a success. If your company might be able to donate door prizes, party materials, or even a cash contribution to help us celebrate the adult learners and volunteer tutors of Project Read, please call our office and speak with either Tara or Randy. Also, we are looking for tutors and learners who are interested in volunteering to help with this event. We need tutor-learner teams who are willing to speak about their experiences, as well as anyone who would like to help with set up, work the sign-in table, or generally help with logistics for the evening. If you can lend a hand, please call Tara at (415) 557-4388.

PROJECT READ

People Helping People to Read
Since 1983

Sharon Buchanan displays her Certificate of Honor from the SF Board of Supervisors. Tutor Jennifer Harlan beams.

Ledell Washington uses the computer on his own for the first time.

The Elections by Charlie

The words election and vote are two important words. This is the time all registered voters have a choice at the dos and don'ts. Think back in time. This door was not open to all the people, to express how they felt. Thank God all have the opportunity to go to school to learn how to read and write and vote with one's own mind.

I hope we all make the right decision and get the one that will be best for this state and for all its people.

I think the League of Women Voters' reading guide gives out the best information and is easy to understand. I am happy to have a copy.

The Story of Tiny and Teeny, the Ants by W.R. Chauncey

Tiny the ant had no friends. No one liked him because he was very small and did not have the best of looks. The other ants made fun of him. He was alone with nothing to do, so he went into the woods to look for a playmate or something to do.

Walking along with no hope of finding a friend, he saw an ant. She looked like she was bored.

He walked over to her and said, "Hi. My name is Tiny. What is your name?"

She said, "Teeny."

He said, "What a pretty name."

She said, "Thank you."

He said, "Would you like to play with me?"

She said, "Yes."

The moral of the story is that even on a bad day, a friend can be found.

Back Injuries Equal Unemployment by Timothy

Two years ago I injured my back at work. After twenty years working for a funeral home, my employer decided that my net worth was zero, and now I find myself looking for a new job.

So I went out looking for work that requires me to use my brain instead of my muscles. Applying for jobs that I feel are my strong points, I applied for cemetery sales, car sales, bus driver, and pest control. It seems once the employer finds out I hurt my back, they say, "don't call us, we'll call you!"

I have given it a lot of thought and I have decided to go back to school and study property management. I heard that there's plenty of work in this field.

I would like to thank Mary DeJesus and Project Read for teaching me the power of reading and writing. A gift I will keep for the rest of my life. So wish me luck and pray that I can get my brain out of neutral and come home with a diploma.

Take Time Out to Read by LeWarren Jackson

Since I have started going to Project Read I really enjoy it. I also have been reading a lot more than ever. Taking time out to learn the meaning of words is very exciting to me. I enjoy going to reading lab to work on my vowels and phonics. It helps me learn how to pronounce the words I do not know and the sound of the word. I thank God for my tutor Mary Ellen for working with me.

Dream Your Own Dream by Joyce Patterson

I had a dream to be myself today.
Do not destroy my dream.
Even if it sounds off the wall, let it be my dream.

I would not shatter your dream to make it mine.
God shaped me to be me, to have my own dream;
Don't expect the impossible.

My dream is to have my own house, to be by myself.
I will walk from room to room screaming,
"It's mine! It's mine! It's all mine!"

Do not come until I invite you,
And
Don't bring your toothbrush.

Learner Achievements

Janet Boston has some great achievements to report. Most importantly, she took a promotion at work. She is now supervising others, running meetings, creating agendas, writing reports, and utilizing her leadership skills in new and exciting ways.

Neil Mills's deep interest in history has led him to perform extensive research on the life of Napoleon Bonaparte. He is on the fifth draft of a writing project on "the Little Corporal." Neil is exhausted but soldiers on …

Shaneika Henderson has moved up a grade level (from 4th grade reading to 5th grade reading) in four months. Yeah!

Roy Morris got new job at United Airlines Express!

Robert Kucel read his first book, *To Catch A Mugger* by Margaret Scariano.

Maurice Roberson has completed a semester at City College. He focused on English, gaining skills in constructing a sentence or a thesis. At the same time, through the Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation, Maurice has been assisting seniors.

Tutor Jennifer Harlan says, "When I met **Sharon Buchanan** nine months ago, she knew how to write the alphabet and her name. Since that time, she has:

1. finished her first book: *Dear Long Lost Monica* (47 pages)
2. written her first Christmas cards
3. enrolled in City College's adult learning program
4. learned addition and subtraction, and is now working on multiplication as well.

Her progress is truly amazing and inspiring!"

Step by Step

by Hoover Chan

Dear Reader,
You all know that in order to be involved with Project Read you have to attend the orientation that Leon holds. I don't know about you guys, but he kind of inspired me to get involved with the program. I asked myself what do I have to lose? If he could do it, I could do it too. When I started with Project Read I could only read at about a third grade level. But now I am proud to say my reading is getting much better. If you guys didn't know, I was in the accomplishment section of the last newsletter. Yes, I got me a great job with benefits, that's pretty awesome, especially these days when jobs are not abundant.

I was tired of my old job. I was in the Project Read computer lab searching for a more challenging and better paying job at Monster.com and I found one that sounded too good to be true. My tutor Jill went on the Internet and printed out a whole heck of a lot of information about jobs. Then we discussed it in our next couple of sessions. But I was procrastinating so one day she had to kick me in the behind. She said throw it out there and see if you get any bites.

In a couple of days I asked Mr. Brian for help to get my résumé and cover letter ready. It took less time than I thought it would and, with a little help, I copied and pasted and sent them to the company through the Internet. If it wasn't for him I'd still be typing away one finger at a time and would have to break out the sleeping bag and camp out in the lab.

That was a week before Christmas. I didn't think that I could get the job because there are so many people out there who are more qualified than me. And I thought I waited too long. Guess what? A week after Christmas I got a phone call from the company and the guy asked are you still interested? I couldn't believe my ears when I heard that. I was jumping for joy. After that I asked him what do I have to do? Well, he said first things first, fill out the application, then interview, ride along with a company representative, take a drug test, and go to Minneapolis for two weeks of training.

So it took me about a week to finish filling out the application because I wanted it to be perfect. And I have to say thanks to Tara for digging up background information from the past for me.

So another week passed and he called me back and said your appointment is a week from today. That just gave me a little over two weeks to practice on the interview. And I have to say thank you to Michele for taking time out from tutoring Shedrick to help me prepare for the interview.

I traveled down to Sunnyvale for my interview and I was early for once. I took a deep breath, crossed my fingers, and knocked on the door. The door opened and two sets of eyes were gawking at me and I wasn't prepared for that. But I guess my foot was already in the door. So another hour later and I was done. I felt kind of good but didn't know anything yet.

I took a whole day off from my other job, went to have lunch and to see a matinee after that. It was called Lord of the Rings and it was a three hour show. You won't believe it but they called me right in the middle of the movie. I was so distracted from the phone call that I couldn't concentrate on the movie. After the movie I called them back and he said your next step will be a ride along.

Everything was moving so fast that it seemed like only yesterday that I was still hunting for a job on the computer.

Next thing I knew I was negotiating my salary. After that he sent me to take my physical and drug test. That was going to be my last step to get into the company. I got a phone call on Saturday that I was "good to go" meaning I was in.

I guess good things do come in step, just like reading and writing. Best of luck with your goals and thank you for reading this. Stay tuned for Part Two: The Training Week in Minneapolis, the Freezing City.

Financial Literacy Tools

Every adult faces challenges when trying to comprehend the details of money management—checking accounts, mortgages, retirement accounts, and so on—but for adults with low literacy skills, financial information can be even less accessible. During the coming year, Project Read will collaborate with Susan Clark (creator of the popular *Easy Reading Voter Guide*) to produce easy-to-understand money management materials and instructional curriculum for use by tutor–learner teams. The project is being funded through a federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant administered by the California State Library.

Like the *Easy Reading Voter Guide*, this project will be completely learner-driven. Focus groups of adult learners will meet regularly to discuss their concerns and challenges regarding money management. An advisory committee of financial professionals will provide guidance and input. Ultimately, easy to read and comprehend materials will be created for use by learners, tutors, and the general public. Also, web-based instructional curriculum will be made available to learners and tutors working with library literacy programs throughout California.

The Financial Project Committee writes:

Hi Project Read learners.

We're trying to introduce a new easy way to help you learn how to save, use bank accounts, and find information to help you with your financial issues. We are working on a project to make it easier for you to know where you can get help.

"I am learning how to save and I am going to aim high." *Wonderful Wright*

"This is a great way for me to be able to learn and then to teach the information I get out of the program." *Shaneika Henderson*

"I'm excited about helping people learn about money." *Neil Mills*

Other committee members include: Janet Boston, Cornell James and Roy Morris.

If you would like more information about this project, or if you would like to participate in the planning and focus groups, please call Randy Weaver, Project Read Manager, at (415)557-4388.

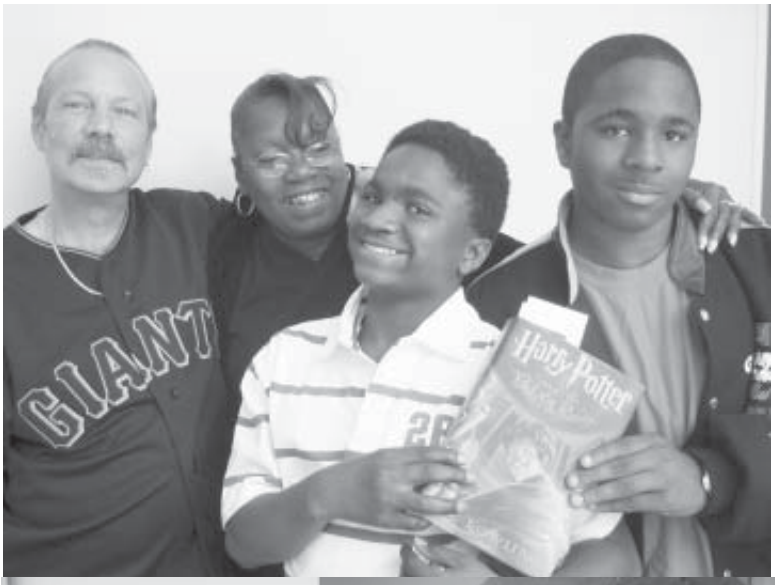
Family Literacy

The Project Read Families for Literacy Program continues to put on exciting workshops each month. During the past few months we have explored great children's books such as *Where the Wild Things Are*, *Green Eggs and Ham*, *Ferdinand*, and *Words with Wings*.

We have engaged in lively conversations, played word games, created intricate toy train track layouts, turned the computer lab topsy-turvy, collaborated with PBS Ready to Learn and KQED TV to show easy ways to use TV and video as learning tools, gone wild with folks from the Exploratorium to construct some wacky mechanical critters, and built home library collections of great children's books and easy-to-use study guides. Oh yes, and we chowed down on some very tasty pizza.

If you are a member of the families program, make sure you come to one of our monthly workshops or at least stop in to see Brian. He'll be happy to help you snag excellent books for your own home library, along with our unique study guides and other materials to help make reading a fun and natural part of family life.

Ethel and family with the new Harry Potter



Alberto makes his selection

Larrel and his mom, Dorothy, share food and a laugh

Amjad discusses Ferdinand

Fun with Public Speaking

by Neil A. Mills

One day in Project Read, Leon told me about the public speaking workshop coming up. I thought I would like to attend but I was a little apprehensive. I had given many talks in 12 steps programs but I had no formal training and I thought I might learn how to be a better speaker. I was a little apprehensive because I do not take criticism very well. I thought maybe this will make me a better speaker and also I could learn how not to have such a thin skin from the feedback from the group.

When I got to the workshop, I met two really nice people, Emma and Norman Pefley who were giving the workshop. They were very kind and considerate and made me feel very comfortable immediately; it was fun from the start. One part of the hour we paired off and I spent it with Roy. He talked to me spontaneously for five minutes, he told me about his day. He was very natural and not nervous. He did a good job.

Our assignment for the second and last class was to give a talk for five minutes on a topic of our choice. I woke up in the middle of the night and started to think what I would talk about. I could talk about myself but I had done that so many times in the 12 steps programs and I wanted to learn something new, so I chose Napoleon Bonaparte. I worked very hard on it and I think it came off very well.

"Janet talked about her experience with the World Trade Center disaster. She is a natural speaker and we were all on the edge of our seats."

Neil , the author of this article

Seema and John with facilitators Emma and Norman

I would personally like to thank Emma and Norman for their time and a fun work shop.

Sweet

As many of you know through direct experience, the M+M dispenser has been our computer lab mascot for over three years now. What you may not know is that Kit Castagne has loaned the dispenser to us ever since Kit was five years old. We recently honored Kit's unselfish support of our program with a certificate handcrafted by Warren Kennell and signed by City Librarian Susan Hildreth and our very own Randy Weaver.

Sadly, a week after this recognition, the M+M dispenser suffered injury. After he had amazed us by surviving thousands of arm pulls, it came as quite a shock when his arm went down and didn't bounce back up. If anyone is particularly handy, come see us about restoring him to good health so that he may continue dispensing sweet service to our community.

Thank You!

Andi Trindle Walker and Second Wind Productions for their generous donation of theatre tickets to *Nora.* Cae Bernard, Fran Culp, Larry Schrupp, and Carol Inglis for help with office coverage. * Annie Nguy for superior organizational skills, office coverage and support. * Janet Boston and Liane Wong for sharing their experiences at the May tutor training. * Doris Osenda for office support. * Ingrid Nystrom and all the staff at Stacey's Bookstore for honoring Project Read volunteers during National Volunteer Week with 20% off coupons for books in stock. * Mary Hilton, Mark Rogers, Neil Mills, Wonderful Wright, Cornell James, Erin McAleece, Deborah Pardes, Monica Rutt, Shedrick Ferguson, Suzanne Stassevitch, and Patrick Grady for serving on the Anniversary Planning Committee. * Sarah Goldstein, Seema Hossain, Brian Leonard and Lilton Powell for sharing their experiences at the July Tutor Orientation. * John Gildersleeve and Renee Snyder for facilitating Project Read's monthly book club, Wednesday Night Readers.

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