

## Program Views

October  
'08



*From the  
Director's Desk*

It just so happens I am writing this article on September 8<sup>th</sup>, International Literacy Day. If you had been driving along Elm Street this morning, you would have seen our staff outside on the sidewalk waving signs and handing out



Breakfast Cookies. This is the day that



Whatcom Literacy Council, in conjunction with other national and world agencies,

raises awareness about the importance of literacy, both locally and on a global scale.

It may have been a small gesture, but public awareness and visibility are key first steps toward social progress and programs reflective of an informed populace. Thank you to all those drivers and walkers who took the time to talk with us. It reaffirmed how fortunate I feel to be living and

### *Nancy Pearl Speaking at WLC's November Fundraiser!*

We are thrilled that NPR commentator and author Nancy Pearl will be our guest speaker for our 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Literacy Breakfast on Friday, November 7, at the Bellingham Golf and Country Club [starting at 7:15am]. Nancy is the author of “Book Lust”, “More Book Lust” and “Book Crush”. She will share her witty and wonderful perspective on books and the special meaning that they can have in our lives. The Literacy Breakfast is our fall fundraiser; we hope to raise \$20,000 through sponsorships and the donations of attendees this year. If you are interested in attending, please call us at 647-3264 or email Rachel at [Rachel@whatcomliteracy.org](mailto:Rachel@whatcomliteracy.org). Although there is no charge for breakfast, guests will be asked to make a minimum donation of \$50. Proceeds will assist WLC in helping more adults improve their lives through literacy.

## *Program Views, continued*

working in a community filled with a great generosity of spirit. For updated details and statistics about literacy, please refer to our affiliate's website:

[www.proliteracy.org](http://www.proliteracy.org)

In other news, we are gearing up for an exciting fall season. There are still some positions left for facilitators and assistants, so if you are interested in small group instruction, please contact me directly.

[Please see the Small Group Class Schedule below.] Thank you again, to all those volunteers who assisted us with outreach last year. Your time and service is greatly valued.

Please check out this month's Learner Spotlight. Thanks for sharing a piece of your life with us David. I know how hard you worked on this article and I appreciate your honest sentiments.

I'd also like to remind all active tutors to stay in touch with your coordinators this fall season and keep them updated of any changes in schedules, contact information, and/or resource needs.

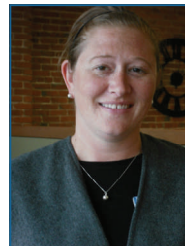
Gina Barrieau-Gonzales  
Programs Manager

*more...*

## *From the Director's Desk*

### ***New Faces On the WLC Board***

As a nonprofit agency, Whatcom Literacy Council relies on a board of directors to set policy and provide financial oversight and support. Our board members are volunteers who meet monthly to look over financial reports, program reports and discuss policy decisions. The board roster fluctuates from 11 to 14 members. We have been fortunate, having previously had board members who have served nine or even twelve years. In recent months, 3 new board members have joined the ranks of this dedicated group of people.



Jennifer Ortmyer works for The Unity Group and brings her valuable skills in human resources and business to the work of the WLC board.

Jennifer joined the board in April of 2008.

Jamie L. Horst is a Staff Buyer at Alcoa Intalco Works. Her expertise in finance will serve WLC well and her previous involvement



and passionate interest in childhood literacy will no doubt carry over into her advocacy

## Explorations in Learning

“I did my homework! I did my homework!” is heard from our office doors on any given Tuesday afternoon. These enthusiastic words come from learner Robert (Butch) Strong. He is one of three individuals who is participating in the small group, *Explorations in Learning* that I facilitate weekly. The group’s focus is on life skills that require reading and writing. Recently, we started a unit of study on telling time. The outcome of each session is a valuable lesson, not one that can be measured by a performance assessment but one that is marked by an attitude of goodwill. The following is a musing of my experience as a tutor in the *Explorations in Learning* group.



tutor Dennis Barnes & Butch

Tuesday is my favorite day of the week at work! In anticipation of that day, I am reminded of another, more famous, tutor and learner duo. Their story is told in Mitch Albom’s book Tuesdays with Morrie, in which Albom describes his weekly meetings with his dying mentor. In their philosophical discourse, during their time together before Morrie’s death, the pair discussed love, family, culture and other serious topics. Although my learners and I don’t talk about such matters, I

more . . .

### *From the Director's Desk*

for adult literacy. Jamie joined the board in September of 2008.

Chad Nickisch most recently joined our team. As the Branch Manager at US Bank’s downtown branch, Chad brings a great deal of money management expertise along with his enthusiasm for helping people improve their literacy skills.

We look forward to a long and productive association with our newest team members. They are exceptional people and yet typical of many of those in the community who lend their energy, expertise and enthusiasm to the work we do.

Rachel Myers, Executive Director

### Shine a light on . . . David Sohal

David writes:

I came to America from B.C. Canada, but I am originally from India. I went to



California to pick peaches and prunes on a farm owned by East Indians. I was always scared because I didn’t have any legal papers, and spoke no English. After working on the farm for 6 months I missed my family, so I moved to

tutor Dennis Barnes and David

do find profound meaning in the work that we do together. I am learning (yes, tutors are also learners! ) about the virtue of service.

The individuals participating in *Explorations in Learning* have developmental delays. This population is under served in our community. In a 2003 census, 757 individuals living in Whatcom County were identified as developmentally delayed. 43% are adults (21 and older). Public schools are only legally responsible for the education of persons with cognitive disabilities until the age of 21.

When students with cognitive disabilities exit the public school system, they must rely on agencies that offer vocational and/or day programs to provide the needed support to participate in their community.

In the Whatcom County Developmental Disabilities Plan 2003-07 a startling trend was reported: “Adult Employment and Day Program Services for those students graduating or ‘aging out’ at 21 has relied upon funding by the Washington State Legislature. No additional funding was provided by the legislature for 2003-2005 graduates.” I suspect that the budget for such funding has not improved in recent years given our economic situation. This is a big issue with no easy solutions. *Explorations in Learning* is a small

Washington State to be closer to them. I decided to apply for a green card. I started looking for an immigration lawyer and we talked. I noticed he was wearing a gold watch, a gold bracelet and had gold rings on all his fingers and a gold chain on his tie. In fact he reminded me of a Christmas tree. On his desk was a gold paper weight of the Taj Mahal. He asked if I was from India and if I had been to the Taj Mahal. I said I had never heard of it. I was shocked this was in my own country. A friend helped me look it up on the internet. The Taj Mahal was built by a prince of long ago as a monument to his wife’s tragic death and his love for her. Someday when I go back to India I would like to see it.



effort to serve our friends with disabilities in the community. However small, it no less valuable to Butch who is learning to read the signs at work. Wordsworth said, “Small service is true service, while it lasts”

If you are interested in tutoring in the *Exploration in Learning* group and have a background in special education or experience in working with this population, please call Jessica @ 647.3264 ext. 104 or email [Jessica@whatcomliteracy.org](mailto:Jessica@whatcomliteracy.org)



# Whatcom Literacy Council

*Opening Doors. Changing Lives.*

## Small Group Class Schedule for Fall 2008

### Lynden E.L.L. Communication Skills Class for Beginners and Intermediates

**Start Date:** 10-16-08

**Day and Time:** Thursdays 6:00pm – 7:30 pm

**Place:** St. Joseph Catholic Church at 205 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Lynden

### Sterling Meadows E.L.L. Communication Skills Class for Beginners & Intermediates

**Start Date:** Ongoing

**Day and Time:** Mondays 6:00pm – 7:30pm

**Place:** Sterling Meadows Community Center at 512 Sterling Drive, Bellingham

### Roosevelt Parent Class (E.L.L. class specifically designed for parents)

**Start Date:** 10-9-08

**Day and Time:** Thursdays 6:00pm – 7:30pm

**Place:** Roosevelt Elementary School at 2900 Yew Street, Bellingham

### Talk Time E.L.L. Conversation Skills Class for all levels

**Start Date :** Ongoing

**Day and Time:** Tuesday 10:00am – 11:30am

**Place:** W.L.C. Office at 2205 Elm Street, Bellingham

### Talk Time 2 E.L.L. Conversation Skills Class for all levels

**Start Date:** 10-9-08

**Day and Time:** Thursday 1:00pm – 2:30

**Place:** W.L.C. Office at 2205 Elm Street, Bellingham

### Explorations in Learning Class for learners with developmental challenges

**Start Date:** Ongoing (Contact Jessica directly for details 360.647.3264 ext. 104)

**Day and Time:** Tuesday 12:00pm – 1:30pm

**Place:** W.L.C. Office at 2205 Elm Street, Bellingham

**Look For:** Citizenship class and Computer Lab Time in January of '09

**For registration and information contact our W.L.C. Programs Manager,  
Gina Barrieau-Gonzales at 360.647.3264 ext. 102**

Serving  
Whatcom  
County since  
1978

At Whatcom  
Literacy Council,  
we are  
dedicated to  
increasing  
literacy skills  
for adults in  
Whatcom  
County as a  
means  
of achieving  
basic survival  
skills, parenting  
skills,  
employment,  
community  
citizenship skills





**Whatcom  
Literacy Council**  
*Opening Doors. Changing Lives.*

Box 1292 • Bellingham • WA • 98227



# Whatcom Literacy Council

*Opening Doors. Changing Lives.*

## WLC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Pete Kremen	Laura Todd
Darlene McDonald	Jane Van Voorst
Glen Nardi	Alexandra Wiley

WLC Offices: 2205 Elm Street  
[N/W corner of Broadway & Elm]

Phone: 360. 647. 3264  
Rachel . . . ext 101  
Gina . . . . ext 102  
Charlotte . . ext 103  
Jessica . . . ext 104  
Dale . . . . . ext 100



Our website:  
[www.whatcomliteracy.org](http://www.whatcomliteracy.org)

Mail:  
BOX 1292 ❖ Bellingham ❖ WA ❖  
98227

## OCTOBER

Wednesday, October 15th

WLC Volunteer Primer  
Bellingham Public Library

6 -7pm

Learn more about becoming  
a literacy tutor



## NOVEMBER

Friday, November 7th

6th Annual

Literacy Council Breakfast

[See *'Notes from the Director's Desk'*

on page 1]



Wednesday, November 19th

WLC Volunteer Primer  
Bellingham Public Library

6 - 7pm

Learn more about becoming  
a literacy tutor