

## **Literacy of Northern New York February 2019 Newsletter**

### ***Excellus BlueCross BlueShield Grant***

Literacy of Northern NY has received a \$3,500 grant from Excellus BlueCross BlueShield to teach health-related topics to our students. We are so grateful for this grant!

We have purchased the Health Stories series, which comes in three different levels. Our English as a Second Language classes in both Watertown and Fort Drum are using these materials. Students learn a range of topics such as how to call 911 and describe an

emergency; workplace safety; how to describe a medical issue to a doctor; health consequences of insufficient sleep; what items to pack for a hospital stay, and much more.



Pictured in the photo are members of Deborah's ESL class in Watertown. Standing at left are: Marisol, Miguel, Maira, and Maryem. Sitting, from left, are Kazumi, Amy, and King.

### ***Watertown Savings Bank Employees Dress Down for Literacy***

Watertown Savings Bank is a wonderful supporter of our agency. In December and January, employees at Watertown Savings Bank donated money so they could enjoy a dress down day. The proceeds, totaling \$650, were donated to Literacy of Northern New York. As a nonprofit organization on a tight budget, we appreciate the generosity of Watertown Saving Bank's employees. They do so much for our community and we can't thank them enough.

### ***Garage Sale to Benefit Literacy***

Thank you to Board Member Erika Montandon and her family for donating items for our May garage sale. Employees of Watertown Savings Bank are organizing the sale for us. WSB is a wonderful supporter of our literacy programs.

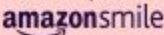
If you want us to pick up items, call the office at 315-782-4270.

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***Shop on Amazon and a Percentage of Your Purchase Benefits LNNY!***

## **Share the love**

Shop for your Valentine  
at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and  
Amazon donates.

You shop. Amazon donates.  




AmazonSmile is an easy way for you to support Literacy of Northern NY every time you shop at Amazon, at no cost to you.

When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to LNNY.

To sign up, go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), and select a charitable organization to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. Amazon will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) will result in a donation to the charity of your choice. We, of course, hope you choose us!

Bookmark [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) to make it even easier to return and start your shopping at AmazonSmile.

### ***Student Success Stories***

Our tutors work so hard to help their students achieve their goals. Sometimes, the goal is to attend tutoring sessions weekly. We know how hard that is for students – some work, others need to arrange child care, and there are those who must walk or take the bus in subzero weather. These are challenges but students persist.

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*Miguel at the Watertown ESL  
class winter lunch*



We would like to share some accomplishments and brief stories about our students.

Nadia is now working at a daycare center on Fort Drum.

Matthew passed all of the High School Equivalency sub-tests except for writing. He is retaking the writing test in early February.

Audrey arrived recently from Togo and attends classes twice weekly.

Miguel, pictured at left, regularly attends our Monday/Thursday ESL class in Watertown. A generous soul, he gives his fellow students rides when they need one and made a generous donation to our annual appeal. He volunteered to speak to the grant review committee at United Way of Northern New York last summer and told them how he has benefitted from learning to speak and understand English. Miguel cleans the whiteboard before the start of ESL class and always wheels Deborah's heavy cart down the hallway for her after class. A true gentleman, we enjoy having Miguel as one of our students.

### ***Feature Story***

LNNY Board Vice President, Carla Haas, has shared an exceptional story about her student, Edith, and her daughters. Edith is from Burkina Faso, Africa, and there was no well in her grandmother's village. Edith's daughters, Grace and Clavery, collected approximately \$5,000 to provide a well. During the Christmas break, Edith and the girls went to Seneki, the village, for the dedication ceremony. The video and story have been featured in the local media.

We have a longer article and a video of the ceremony on our web page.

<http://www.literacynny.org/photos-and-stories/>



*Edith's daughter cuts the ribbon at the opening of the well  
in Seneki.*

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### ***Photos?***

We are looking for photos of tutors and students to use in newsletters, presentations, on Facebook, and on our web page. Please send along photos. We'd love to see what you are up to! We have a publicity release form to be signed and we can send it by email.

### **Fort Drum News**

Our Fort Drum ESL classes are in full swing. We have welcomed several new students to both our beginner and intermediate classes.

We had a visitor from the Employment Readiness Program. She provided the Fort Drum ESL class with help in job searching, resume building, and interviewing. We are using the job readiness books purchased thanks to a grant from Watertown Sunrise Rotary Club Foundation. The books and our lessons help prepare our students for employment. Several of our students have been able to gain employment with AAFES Exchange, the YMCA's School Aged Child Care program, and Fort Drum's Child Development Center.

The students continue to enjoy learning English together and sharing their cultures with the class!

### **Reading Tutor Tip**

#### **Thinking Beyond the Text: Character Analysis**

Helping our students think beyond the text is sometimes challenging. While our adult students can easily complete questions in which the answers are stated directly in the story, they often struggle with questions that require them to apply their background knowledge and thinking skills. Examining an author's word choices to describe a character's traits and emotions, and thinking about his actions and words can help students develop a deeper understanding about what the author is trying to convey about that person.

First, it is important for students to understand the difference between emotions, which are fleeting, and character traits, which are part of someone's personality. A person can feel different emotions – happy, sad, surprised, on any given day, but someone who is optimistic – a character trait – has a generally positive outlook on life despite daily trials and tribulations.

Ask your student to name a few emotions. Write each one on an index card or piece of paper. Make sure you have a list and help out if your student can only come up with two or three. **Some emotions include joy, fear, anger, sadness, disgust, surprise, shame, pity and envy.**

Talk about how authors often use many different words to describe emotions. There are many synonyms for joy. Ask your student to come up with some. This activity will help expand your student's vocabulary. Vocabulary development is an important component of reading

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comprehension. Some synonyms for joy are: happy, glad, delighted, pleased, thrilled, ecstasy, elated, exulted, rapture, bliss, etc.

You can also talk about **degrees of joy** such as pleased versus bliss or glad versus exultant. Authors choose words for a reason. If the author writes that someone is elated, it is a much stronger emotion than pleased. What is the author trying to convey about the character?

Choose two or three emotion words and repeat the activity of finding synonyms and discussing degrees of emotion.

One way to find synonyms for emotion words is to use Microsoft Word's thesaurus. (Click on the review tab and then click on thesaurus). Type in a simple emotion such as sad and you get a long list of words including miserable, depressed, gloomy, down, blue, wretched, dejected, despondent, melancholy, woeful, etc.

Or if your student quickly runs out of ideas for synonyms, ask him to use his phone (or use yours if the student has limited minutes) and go to [www.thesaurus.com](http://www.thesaurus.com). This site lists many synonyms for anger including: fury, ire, animosity, annoyance, indignation, peevishness, mad, antagonism, rage, etc. If your student is a lower-level reader, have him pick some of the shorter words he is familiar with but also include several longer ones.

We found a list of character traits online and have posted them to Literacy of Northern NY's website, <http://www.literacynny.org/resources/tutor-tips/>. Once your student understands the difference between emotions and character traits, there are some wonderful graphic organizers that help students analyze characters. We have also posted some of them to our website. The character traits reading response organizer asks students to examine a character's feelings, dialogue, and actions to determine some of that person's character traits. The analyzing characters graphic organizer asks students to examine the character's words, appearance, thoughts, actions, and what others say about him, give an example, and then figure out what this information reveals about the person. This activity requires students to think critically about what they are reading so they gain a deeper understanding of the material.

### **Modeling and Guided Practice**

It is best to model the activity first, using a short story or passage. You can highlight or underline words indicating emotion and character traits. Then model how you would use the highlighted information to fill in the graphic organizer. **Thinking aloud** as you fill in the graphic organizer helps teach your student how to do the activity when it is his turn.

Guide the student through another short story or passage, and ask him to underline key information about a character's emotions and traits. Which of her actions or words give a good insight into her character? Repeat the process until the student is able to fill out the graphic organizer without any assistance.

Authors rarely state outright that a character is stubborn, nurturing, or some other personality trait. Good readers have to scrutinize what the character says, feels, and does in order to determine what kind of person she is. Just like in real life, some characters talk one way but their actions belie their words. Or the character doesn't say much but his actions speak volumes about him. Good readers who want a deeper understanding of the text study these character clues and draw their own conclusions.

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You can find direct links to these printable activities here:

[Character Traits and Character Emotions Posters](#)

[Character Traits List](#)

[Character Graphic Organizer \(actions, feelings, dialogue, traits\)](#)

[Analyzing Character \(thoughts, actions, what others say\)](#)

### **Tip for Reading, Math, & ESL Tutors**

[www.easyteacherworksheets.com](http://www.easyteacherworksheets.com) The site targets elementary and high school students, but you can find free and excellent graphic organizers, teacher printables, and math worksheets to use with your student.

### **ESL Tutor Tips & Links for Resources**

**Minnesota Literacy Council:** The Minnesota Literacy Council partners with schools, Adult Education Centers, and other community organizations and has a good selection of resources for tutors and teachers.

**\*Curriculum & Lesson Plans**

**\*ESL Pull-Out Kits**



### **ESL Pull-Out Kits, from the Minnesota Literacy Council**

#### **Available Kits:**

Phonics and Phonemic Awareness

Pronunciation

Citizenship Kit

Reading Kit

These kits provide complete activities, instructions, and materials for small-group and one-on-one instruction in four different areas: reading, phonics, pronunciation, and citizenship. They can be used for beginner to high-intermediate level students.

Each kit works on one ESL skill area, such as phonics, pronunciation or citizenship. After you download the kit you assemble the listed materials. For reading activities, all that is required is a reading text or a list of vocabulary words and you are ready to present the activity. The reading section with predicting works even with pre-beginner ESL students. You can use the Health Stories series in the LNNY office. Each Health Stories lesson has the title followed by a picture and blends right in with the reading kit.

Each of the kits is a printable PDF that includes:

A list of necessary materials

Instructions for assembly

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A tutor log  
Detailed instructions for a variety of activities  
Activity expansion suggestions  
Handouts and supporting materials

### **A Sample Activity from the Phonics Kit Where's the Sound?**

This activity focuses on phoneme isolation and helps learners to listen for where sounds occur in a word. This strengthens their ability to spell a word through sounding it out.

#### **Materials Needed:**

beginning/middle/end cards, counting markers

1. Prepare a list of words from the week's vocabulary that have a specific sound in common. The sound can occur in the beginning, middle or end of the words (supplement with words from past lessons or words that you know the learner/s are familiar with).
2. Give each of the learner/s a grid with three squares that are labeled "beginning," "middle," and "end" and a game piece, penny, or paperclip to use as a marker.
3. Tell the learner/s which sound they will be listening for. Example, "Where do you hear the /p/ sound?"
4. Say a word that has the /p/ sound. Example, "Pencil. Where is the /p/ sound? Is it at the beginning, middle, or end of the word?"
5. Have the learner/s place the game piece the box that corresponds with the location of the /p/ sound in the word. Check to see that all the learner/s have the marker in the correct box, and repeat the word several times if necessary, emphasizing where the sound falls in the word.
6. Say a new word with the /p/ sound. Have the learner/s shift the game piece to the corresponding box.
7. Repeat with several more words. At the end of the game, go back over the words and have the learner/s tell you where the sound was located.

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**Example:** During the unit on food:

Where's the /p/ sound?

peas  
apple  
shrimp  
pasta  
grape  
peppers

beginning	middle	end

### Materials Needed:

dry erase markers, erasers, mini-whiteboard

At the end of the activity, go back over the list of words and have the learner/s write them down in the corresponding boxes.

Ask the learner/s to help you spell the words verbally or invite the learner/s to write the words on a mini-whiteboard for the rest of the group to copy.

### Expansion:

1. To make this activity more challenging, change the sound each time. Identify different sounds in the same word. Example: Where's the /p/ in shrimp? Where's the /sh/ in shrimp? Where's the /m/ in shrimp? or identify different sounds in different words Example: Where's the /g/ in grape? Where's the /t/ in pasta? Where's the /l/ in apple?

Find all four of the downloadable kits here: <http://mnliteracy.org/tools/ESLPull-OutKits>

Here is the link to the **Curriculum and Lesson Plans** page.

### Curriculum units with Transition Skills for Pre-beginning and Beginning ESL students

<https://mnliteracy.org/curriculum-lesson-plans>

- Preparing adults with middle school reading levels; Mathematical Reasoning; Technology; Employment Readiness; and Citizenship.

The ESL topics include food, health, employment, community, daily activities, talking on the phone, school, shopping, transportation, and more. The pdf downloads provide you with everything you need – dialogues, vocabulary with pictures, stories, and comprehension questions.

“A Problem at the Store, A New Bed, and Mr. White Goes to the Clinic” are just some of the lessons.

The Curriculum Section also includes individual lessons and activities with topics such as Reading for Life; Pen Pal; and Hotline. These lessons can be used for both ESL and reading students.