

Lincoln Literacy News October 2012

Get Your Word-a-Day Calendar Out! Scrabble Scramble is Coming!

Join us for the Fourth Annual Scrabble® Scramble fundraising tournament. This unique and exciting event is the only team Scrabble tournament in town. Having team-mates takes the pressure off and makes it even more fun.

This year's Scrabble Scramble takes place on Sunday, November 4, from 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. at the UNL East Campus Union Great Plains Room. Don't miss a chance to be part of the fun! Your \$25 entry fee is a tax deductible contribution to Lincoln Literacy. If you have a business, you can be a sponsor starting at just \$100, and get lots of good publicity.

For more information, or to enter now, go to: [the Lincoln Literacy website](http://www.lincolnliteracy.org) (www.lincolnliteracy.org).

New Schoolyear, New Faces, New Burst of Energy!

Lincoln Literacy is serving more adult students than ever, and fortunately we have a lot of great volunteers and staff to do it. By the end of September last year, we had served 711 adults. At the same date this year, the number had reached 791, and it is still climbing!

To meet all this demand we are offering classes days, evenings, and weekends, as well as our traditional one-to-one matches. In addition to volunteer tutors to deliver the lessons, the classes require staff to organize and serve on-site to coordinate and deal with any challenges that arise in van transportation, child-care, or classroom situations.

Fortunately, we have a great group of new team members on our staff. Though we are sad to lose Nick Svoboda to Southeast Community College and Nizar Zhaiya to full-time interpreting, we are delighted to welcome two new staffers.



Sandra Rojo

Sandra Rojo, who started out as an English language learner with Lincoln Literacy, has risen through the ranks of van driver and receptionist to become an English Language Program Coordinator, taking over Nick's responsibilities at Everett Elementary, American Lutheran, and West Lincoln Elementary, as well as helping with classes at Roper Elementary. In the years we've known her Sandra, an immigrant from Mexico, has become a fluent English speaker, a U.S. citizen, a leader in her community, and a mom. We're very pleased to have her working with us in this professional capacity.

Natalia Ledford, our new refugee Workforce Readiness English program coordinator, first became interested in the lives of refugees while a student at Lincoln High. Of course, many others were curious about the tall, lanky Sudanese students who became part of the Lincoln High family at that time, but Natalia went out of her way not only to get to know and befriend them, but to document their lives in a video she made. What started as a high-school journalism class project turned into an NET-produced and broadcast documentary "Paths of the Displaced." Her second documentary, filmed in Africa and the U.S. concerning orphan survivors of Rwandan genocide, is now in its final production stages. In the meantime, Natalia has founded a student organization called Education for the World, toured the U.S. raising funds for Rwandan refugee scholarships, lived and worked in Kenya, Guatemala, and elsewhere. We welcome her dedication, energy, and creativity in our refugee programs.



Natalia Ledford

In addition to new staff members, we are extremely pleased to have new AmeriCorps members giving a year service with Lincoln Literacy.



Carrie Knapp

Drawing from the ranks of our own volunteer tutors, we are overjoyed to have **Carrie Knapp** take on the challenges of a year of full-time AmeriCorps service with us. Carrie's fascination with languages and cultures led her to return to UNL in pursuit of a Master's Degree in Second Language Acquisition/ELL. For the past two years, she has been a one-on-one tutor at Lincoln Literacy and says she loved the experience so much she was motivated to take up fulltime work with us.

Carrie is also a longtime visual artist, who notes, "When I'm not at Lincoln Literacy, I can be found in my basement studio, surrounded by pets and collage-making supplies."

Elektra Wrenholt, a music educator with a taste for international musical collaborations and a passion for teaching English, is a recent graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She grew up in Lincoln, but has set her sights far beyond. As an undergraduate, she worked as an instructor in the Institute for International Teaching Assistants and has been a member of the Ashanti African Roots ensemble. We are delighted to call on her enthusiasm and talents for a year of full-time service.



Elektra Wrenholt



Joy Nealeigh

Additionally, we're very pleased to have **Joy Nealeigh** spending a year as a part-time AmeriCorps member with us. Joy had a transformative experience as a member of a mission team that went to India in 2007 to build a school for low-income children. Her aims became focused on empowerment through education. She later took part in leadership training and service projects in South Africa. In her service work with Lincoln Literacy, she helps adult learners but is especially focused on educational activities for the children of our refugee and immigrant students in the FLAIR (family literacy) program.

Tutors: Learn! Share! Opine!

If you are a volunteer tutor with Lincoln Literacy, you will not want to miss the...

2012 Tutor Town Hall

6:30 - 8 p.m.

Thursday, October 11

First Lutheran Church, 1551 S. 70th Street

Come share light refreshments, fellowship, and best practices AND learn about Lincoln Literacy's new volunteer tutor training program - one that you can strengthen by contributing your experience, wisdom, and tips to in a video interview opportunity. More on that in a moment, but first, here's what you can gain from the meeting:

Both new and seasoned tutors are sure to find helpful techniques for lesson planning in a presentation by our 2011 Tutor of the Year and community leader Kathie Uhrmacher.

Though there will be time to share questions and inspirations, we invite you to also submit best practices or lesson plans to share with others in advance, during or after our Town Hall. (We KNOW how creative so many of you are.) Following this event, we want to develop an online vault of tried-and-true lesson plans to share with all tutors.

Now, about that opportunity to help with training. To compete in the current volunteer-recruitment environment, we have found it necessary to completely renovate our training program. (To put it baldly, other organizations seeking volunteers have been eating our lunch!) But every change is also an opportunity, and in this case the window is wide open to record and offer an unlimited number of training videos to our new volunteers as well as review opportunities for continuing tutors. We'd love to get you on tape talking about what works, what to avoid, what maybe to try in certain situations. If you want to give it a shot, we'll have a video camera ready to go at the Tutor Town Hall. So, check with your agent and your stylist, and come on down! Then, check back on our web site to see you and your fellow stars.