



**CITY OF LODI  
COUNCIL COMMUNICATION**

**AGENDA TITLE:** International Literacy Day  
**MEETING DATE:** September 6, 2006  
**PREPARED BY:** Literacy Services Coordinator

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** That Mayor Hitchcock present a proclamation proclaiming Friday, September 8, 2006, as "International Literacy Day" in the City of Lodi.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** The Mayor has been requested to present a proclamation proclaiming Friday, September 8, 2006, as "International Literacy Day" in the City of Lodi. Stephanie Allen, Literacy Services Coordinator, will be at the meeting to accept the proclamation.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** None

**FUNDING AVAILABLE:** N/A

Stephanie Allen  
Literacy Services Coordinator

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APPROVED: Blair King, City Manager

Filed 9-6-06  
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*Program Accomplishments Fiscal Year 2005-2006*

*5190 Hours of Volunteer Service given by 83  
trained tutors (Dollar Value \$93, 627.00)*

*37 New Volunteer Tutors matched with Adult  
Learners*

*96 Adult Learners Received Instruction*

*256 Personal, Academic and Career Goals set and  
met by Adult Learners*

Lodi

# MAIL EXPRESS

A Publication of the Lodi News-Sentinel

## Discovering a New World Through Literacy



"ripple effect" on the community, decreasing societal problems such as domestic and substance abuse, and increasing tax dollars and civic participation.

If you would like to support literacy in your community, here are some ways that you can help:

Become a volunteer for the Adult Literacy Services program at Lodi Public Library. You can volunteer as a literacy tutor, a trainer, or help with fund-raising events. You can also help by becoming a literacy supporter in your community. Ways to help include contributing money, materials or equipment, becoming a literacy advocate, publicizing the program and recruiting volunteers, providing tutoring space at your place of business, and posting information about Adult Literacy Services in the community.

Make an investment in the future by helping an adult improve their literacy skills. Helping low-literate parents improve basic skills has a direct and measurable impact not only on their lives but also on the lives of their children. Give the gift of reading and help create a better tomorrow. For more information call 333-5554 or email [literacy@lodilibrary.org](mailto:literacy@lodilibrary.org).

By Stephanie Allen  
SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-SENTINEL

International Literacy Day will be commemorated worldwide on September 8. Here in Lodi, International Literacy Day will be celebrated with a celebration at the Veteran's Plaza, and a special proclamation from the Lodi City Council. As this 39th annual International Literacy Day approaches, what is the state of adult literacy in America? A new report from the U.S. Dept. of Education describes the status of adult literacy in the U.S. According to the report, 14% of American

adults are functionally illiterate. A recent NY Times article reported that the U.S. ranks 49th in the world in literacy.

In California, 3 million native English-speaking adults are considered functionally illiterate. Functional illiteracy means being unable to perform daily life skills like paying bills, understanding instructions on medicine bottles, or reading safety manuals.

Does this problem exist in Lodi? Unfortunately, the answer is yes. An estimated twenty percent of Lodi's adult population is classified as functionally illiterate. Illiteracy af-

fects not only individuals, but reaches deep into the heart and soul of our community.

Illiteracy often passes from one generation to the next. A child from a home in which the parents cannot read is twice as likely to do poorly in school and in life.

Over 65% of incarcerated adults read below a high school level.

Over 40% of the workforce does not have basic skills for their job. Only 15% of jobs now require unskilled laborers, creating a huge demand for better-educated and higher-skilled workers.

Adults demonstrating

the greatest need for literacy instruction are likely to have less than a high school education, to be unemployed or under-employed, to be living in poverty, and to shrink from participation in civic actions such as voting.

Fortunately, there is help available. Adult literacy programs, specifically designed to work with illiterate and low-literate adults, can and do make a difference in the lives of these adults. Participation in adult literacy programs is related to such positive outcomes as increased employment, higher earnings and voting. These positive results have a



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# The Gift f Literacy

By Stephanie Allen  
SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-SENTINEL

**C**armen has spent a lifetime working, first in the fields picking peaches and cherries, then as a cannery worker and as a school custodian at Tokay High School. While working as a custodian, Carmen earned her cosmetology license and eventually went to work at a local salon. Semi-retired now, Carmen finally has a chance to pursue dreams that were put on hold during the many years of work and raising a family. She told her husband and three daughters that "Now is my time - I want to do something for me."

Carmen, who grew up in Mexico and came to the U.S. when she was 15, attended school only sporadically during her childhood years, and reached adulthood lacking confidence in her reading and writing abilities. After immigrating to the U.S., she was also faced with the challenge of learning to speak English well enough to find work and to manage her daily responsibilities. Though Carmen learned to speak English proficiently enough to gain employment, she longed for more. She wanted to improve her ability to read and write in English, enough so that she could fulfill a secret dream. "I want to someday write a book about my experience as an immigrant and be published," says Carmen.

Carmen came to the Adult Literacy



ANGELINA GERVASI/NEWS-SENTINEL

Lodi Literacy Tutor Jan Alexander reads with her student Carmen Padilla at the Lodi Public Library.

acy program several years ago seeking help in improving her English reading and writing skills. She began working with a volunteer tutor named Carol. During their tutoring relationship, Carol and Carmen developed a strong friendship, eventually even going on a cruise together which Carmen describes as "really fun!" As Carmen's skills increased, Carol felt that Carmen needed another tutor - one with expertise in teaching writing to help her achieve her goal of becoming a published writer.

When new tutor Jan Alexander expressed an interest in tutoring a student with a special interest in writing, Literacy Coordinator Stephanie Allen knew it was a perfect fit. The two began meeting together only recently, but already Carmen feels that she has made tremendous progress. She especially likes the way that Jan gives

her understandable explanations for the corrections that she makes on her writing.

During her time in the literacy program, Carmen's self-assurance has increased dramatically - enough so that she now has the confidence to dream even bigger dreams for her future. As her skills improve, Carmen hopes to someday become an interpreter and to earn her real estate license. "These are my dreams, and I don't think I'm too old. I'm going to study all my life because I like it."

Carmen feels fortunate to have found help at the literacy program, and is grateful to her two tutors for the assistance they have given her. "I thank God for my tutors and for this program, because now I feel better about myself and I have more confidence," says Carmen. "I pray that this program will always continue. And maybe someday I can be a tutor too."

## VOLUNTEERING IS VALUABLE

By Stephanie Allen  
SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-SENTINEL

Jim Watson is a firm believer in the value of volunteerism - but he certainly never expected to find himself signing on as an adult literacy tutor. Jim's past volunteer experience included seven years coaching Pop Warner football. He also spent time as a youth basketball coach. A career change left Jim with some extra time on his hands, and he decided to look for a new volunteer opportunity. One day, while on a visit to the library, he saw a poster seeking volunteers for the Adult Literacy program. Jim admits that he had no idea what to expect when he made an appointment to speak with Literacy Coordinator Stephanie Allen, but "she explained everything, and made it easy to get started."

Jim began working with his assigned student, Dan, only a few months ago. Even so, Jim has already seen Dan make a significant amount of progress. "It is very rewarding when you can actually watch them comprehend something new during a tutoring session. That they understand what you're teaching - it's instant gratification and very rewarding."

Jim adds, "The staff at the literacy office has made it a very easy transition from being someone who hasn't taught before to becoming a successful tutor." His advice to potential tutors? "Do it! Volunteering for anything is a good way to help your community and a worthwhile use of your time."

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