



# PROJECT LITERACY

of Greater Bergen County, Inc.

# WINTER 2012/2013

*Serving Literacy since 1987*

## NEWSLETTER

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Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County hosted its 9th annual Fundraising Gala, which was held at the Stony Hill Inn on Friday, October 12. This year's honoree was United Water's Vice President, Robert Iacullo.

Project Literacy also celebrated its 25th anniversary by honoring our two co-founders, Emmy Bledsoe and Walter Hecht. Sponsors were: Estee Lauder, Konica Minolta, United Water, Karla Cino Realtors, Le Papillon, Macy's, Grace Pichardo, PSEG, and Sharp Electronics.

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Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County would like to thank the following for their on-going financial support:

- County of Bergen
- Hudson City Savings Bank
- Oritani Bank Foundation
- Lillian P. Schenck Foundation
- Van Houten Foundation
- Woman's Club of Franklin Lakes

*Project Literacy  
Wishes You  
Safe and  
Happy Holidays*



Board of Trustees, Project Literacy



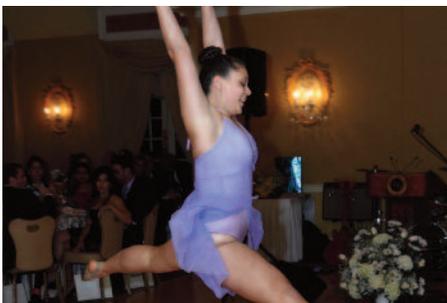
Co- Founders Emmy Bledsoe Walter Hecht



Honoree Robert Iacullo and Anita Iacullo



Family of Nourhan Albitar, our Guest Speaker



Leap for Literacy dancer



Karen Beckford Bennett, and Marina Milloja co-chairs, with Honorees Emmy Bledsoe and Walter Hecht

## Save the Date!

Best-selling author Kitty Kelley will be appearing as part of our "Authors for Literacy" series on May 16, 2013, location to be determined.

Ms. Kelley's new book is entitled "*Capturing Camelot: Stanley Tretick's Iconic Images of the Kennedys*" and once again one of her books is a bestseller! Mr. Tretick was sent by UPI to follow the Kennedy campaign of 1960, and was given extensive access to the White House. Accompanied by an essay from Ms. Kelley, this collection includes some of the most memorable images of America's Camelot.

Ms. Kelley is well known for her biographies of high profile subjects including Oprah Winfrey, Frank Sinatra, Nancy Reagan and Elizabeth Taylor.

At this event, Ms. Kelley will discuss her new book as well as her other best-sellers.

Her talk will be followed by a Q&A session and a book signing. Books will be available for purchase.

## Building Communities One Word at a Time

A Message from the President

"Literacy" is a term with many definitions. During the years of my involvement with Project Literacy, together with staff, tutors, supporters, and the general public, we have bandied it around in conversation, in goal-setting with students, in awards presentations, in requests for support. We cite facts and figures of literacy rates, both in New Jersey and our own Bergen County. We chart student achievement and look to success rates based on getting students to the next level, to the GED test, to first-time employment, to better jobs.

But sometimes I wonder if we are missing the bigger picture here. Perhaps we are not good at sharing the bigger message of what literacy can mean to quality of life. Yes, knowing words and constructing rational thought can mean the difference in taking medicines correctly or overdosing, in deciphering bus schedules and road signs, in filling out FEMA forms or job applications. This knowledge, though, can also open the door to understanding a poet's meaning in short lines of few syllables, to laughing at word play games, to connecting with neighbors, to expressing wonder in a sunset.

The hard-working volunteer tutors of Project Literacy are not only helping to build basic skills, they are really constructing richer, more meaningful lives at the same time. In our country, and certainly in our North Jersey area, we are a mixed bag of nationalities—some newly arrived and others born here. While the bonds that link us may be tenuous when it comes to age, ability, or material possessions, those bonds are drawn closer in our caring about right and wrong, in our laughter, in our desire to live fulfilling lives.

So literacy is truly a term with many definitions, and the tutors who make Project Literacy live through their tireless efforts are imparting much more than the language chains of words and numbers in every meeting with their students. They are connecting as people who care, people who are building our communities one word at a time, people who can show how to share the deeper meanings of sunsets, of laughter, of our basic connectivity.

*Cynthia Forster, Community & Public Relations Manager for The Record and Herald News, is currently ending her fourth year as President of Project Literacy.*

## Save the Date!



To Benefit Project Literacy  
and  
The Carmen Pichardo Scholarship Program

**January 26, 2013**

**at 7pm**

**Bergen County Academies  
Hackensack, New Jersey**

**Young dancers come together to help  
raise money and eradicate illiteracy!**

## Update from our staff

In the office, we are in the midst of our annual year-end records update. Our bookkeeper, Chris McDonald, is creating a database that includes all of our tutors and all of our students. This new methodology is enabling us to do a better job of keeping track of the progress of our students as well as keeping in touch with tutors and students when they leave our program.

This year we received two grants, one from National Council of Jewish Women and one from ProLiteracy worth over \$3,000 combined, which allowed us to update and expand our lending library. This library is now run internally and we have greater oversight of our resources.

Because the number of tutors has greatly expanded, we have now begun a “Team Leaders” program. We keep in touch with the Team Leader on a regular basis and they keep in contact with tutors who are members of their group. This has streamlined our communications and is more efficient.

We have continued to evaluate literacy students every six months to determine their progress. This helps us to determine if the tutor is on the right track to improving the student’s skills and if teaching methods are working. We are proud to say that in our most recent evaluations, our students progressed more than one grade level every six months. Most professionals who evaluate programs would deem this to be excellent progress for our students.

Project Literacy applied for, but did not receive, a grant for technological resources. We are in desperate need of a laptop for our office and new laptops for our students. Most of our students are not computer literate and we want to be able to teach them basic computer skills. We would graciously accept new laptops.

It has been our pleasure to work with all of the wonderful volunteers who donate their time.

Sincerely,  
Jill Wright- Educational Programs Manager  
Kathy O’Hara- Manager, Support Services

## Why they volunteer

Barbara Gelber is a relatively new tutor in our program. She trained to tutor ESL in the spring by completing a five-week training program. Upon finishing her training, she was immediately assigned a student and began working with her this summer.

Barbara decided to tutor with Project Literacy because she wanted to give back to her community and to pass on the ability to read. She said she cannot remember a time when she could not read and that she was reading children’s books even before she entered kindergarten, She cannot imagine an adult not being able to read.

Now that Barbara is retired, she has more time to volunteer. She said that she has always been good at helping people learn. She has the knack of being able to explain things in a manner that people can understand. Barbara has also helped her student in the subject of math, especially in the area of fractions.

Barbara meets with her student once a week and helps her with basic reading skills. She says that she cherishes her time with her student and recommends that others experience the same thrill of teaching. She says it is one of the most rewarding events in her life.

Jill Wright, Educational Programs Manager, and Kathy O’Hara, Manager, Support Services at Project Literacy, say that Barbara is the quintessential tutor. “Barbara is warm and patient with her student,” said Wright.

Project Literacy wishes to extend our thanks to each and every tutor who dedicates the time to helping others learn how to read, write and speak English, as well as those who work on the subject of math.

# Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County

## Mission Statement

Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization established to increase the level of public consciousness on the issues of adult literacy and to serve as a catalyst for literacy initiatives.

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## We need your support!

At Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County we are celebrating our 25<sup>th</sup> year throughout 2012. We started out small in 1987, but have greatly expanded our size and scope over the last quarter of a century. We have helped thousands upon thousands of adults to learn how to read, write and speak English. We know that when we help the individual, we are also helping their families and society as a whole. We are very proud of the work we do at Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County.

We are also proud of the fact that we receive funding from many corporations and foundations, as well as money raised from events such as our annual Gala, Leap for Literacy and Authors for Literacy series. But it is you, the individual, that keeps our agency going. We depend on the kindness of our donors.

We are very aware that there are many wonderful charities that do good work and ask for donations. However, in this holiday season, we hope that you will think of us and make a donation to Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County. All donations are 100% tax-deductible. We wish each and every one of you a wonderful holiday season!

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