



# Redlands Reads!

## Working Together During Challenging Times Adult Literacy Program Serves Redlands

Adult learners, their tutors, and literacy supporters have responded with courage, creativity, and focus to challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. Adult learners seeking literacy help come armed with clear objectives: they want a better job, better education, and better access to all that Redlands has to offer - and they are willing to work for these goals.



**Maria Hernandez in a recent tutoring session by telephone**

**Learner** Maria Hernandez meets weekly with her tutor remotely. Maria reported that the literacy program has helped her improve her reading and communication at work. Maria has joined the learner book club and has been published in the Redlands Adult Literacy Anthologies and the Southern California Writer-to-Writer Challenge.

**Learner** Guillermina Rangel improves her literacy by meeting weekly by phone with her new literacy tutor. Guillermina said how proud she was of the progress she had made in her vocabulary and writing. In addition to adult literacy, Guillermina brings her grandson to family literacy meetings held over Zoom, and enjoys reading books to him.

**Diane Shimota**, the adult literacy coordinator, has adapted the tutor training program and provides ongoing support to literacy teams. Diane re-initiated family literacy and other group learning programs. One popular program is the Monday Morning Book Club, which meets weekly over Zoom using *News for You!* as a platform for improving reading comprehension and vocabulary. Tutors Jeannie Fortier, Trudy Waldron and Lauri Jones nurture each learner's literacy skills.

**Twenty-two tutors** recently met over Zoom to talk about new ways to instruct during the pandemic. These dedicated tutors shared ideas about using Google docs, Zoom, and the phone to hold weekly literacy

meetings with adult learners. Technology requires tutors and learners to focus even more on spelling, pronunciation, grammar, and clear communication.

The strength of the adult literacy program is based on local donations and volunteer support from the **Redlands community**. The investment Redlands has made in adult literacy has given new opportunities to the recently unemployed, as they seek new jobs. The skills learned in the adult literacy program have enabled adults to further their own education and help their children learn at home. Adult literacy is even more essential during challenging times, as it helps change the lives of individuals, their families and our community for the better.



**Literacy tutors meet via Zoom to share remote teaching strategies**

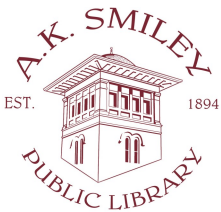
## Redlands Adult Literacy Program

Sponsored by A. K. Smiley Public Library and  
The Friends of A. K. Smiley Public Library,  
a 501.c.3 organization.  
Donations are gratefully accepted.

**For more information...**  
**Call: 909.798.7565, ext. 4138**  
**Email: [literacy@akspl.org](mailto:literacy@akspl.org)**

**Stop by: A. K. Smiley Public Library, located  
at 125 W. Vine St., Redlands, CA**

**Visit the library website: [www.akspl.org](http://www.akspl.org)**  
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The **MISSION** of the Redlands Adult Literacy Program is to provide professional and confidential tutoring in reading and writing to help learners in the Redlands community reach their literacy goals.

All participants are treated with dignity and respect.

### ***You can help support adult literacy in our community:***

- Spread the word that literacy help is available at Smiley Library—most learners find out about the program from family and friends.
- Become a literacy volunteer.
- Come to literacy events.
- Join the Friends of A. K. Smiley Public Library and purchase books at the Friends Bookstore, located in the lower-level of Smiley Library.
- Make donations to the Redlands Adult Literacy Program.

### ***Help change someone's life!***

## ***Adult Literacy Program Celebrates Learner-Led Book Club!***

Adult learners Martha Romo and Tanya Jauregui are leading the adult literacy program's first learner-led book club. When asked why she would like to start a book club for adult learners, Tanya shared that book clubs provide an opportunity for "like-minded individuals to help and encourage each other, give everyone confidence, and build community." Martha sees the book club as an opportunity for learners to lose their fear of reading without the support of their tutors.

Both learners know the power of reading. Martha shared that "every little thing you read opens your mind to new ideas or to better answers in your life." Likewise, Tanya said, "Reading gives essential nutrients to the brain and helps to expand life's journey."

The book club met for the first time only a few days prior to the library's closure due to Covid-19. The book club's inaugural book was Tuesdays with Morrie by Mitch Albom, chosen by Tanya and Martha for its themes of friendship and compassion. Book club participants were fortunate to be able to get to know one another in person at this meeting. By the time the second book club discussion took place in May, the community was under stay-at-home orders and the meeting took place through Zoom.

As leaders of the new book club, Martha and Tanya facilitated both meetings using skills that they learned through their participation in California's Adult Learner Leadership Institute. They guided a discussion of the book's themes, encouraging members to discuss how the book impacted them



**The Book Club's first meeting, March 9, 2020**

and to share stories of the friendships they have developed with other learners in the literacy program. Book club members plan to read My Brigadista Year by Katherine Paterson for their next book club discussion.

Literacy coordinator Diane Shimota shared her gratitude to the community for their support of the literacy program over the past decade. "As the adult literacy program grows and matures with our learners, program leadership also matures and provides new opportunities to support the growing aspirations of adult learners." The book club has provided Tanya and Martha an avenue to utilize and advance their leadership skills. For adult learners who participate in the book club, it has provided an opportunity to improve their reading and comprehension skills and to share knowledge gained through reading with others. Congratulations to Tanya and Martha and the book club members for their commitment to advancing their literacy.