



REDLANDS ADULT LITERACY PROGRAM

**Announces the
2024
Community Read**

Harvesting Dreams

by Erica Alfaro



SAVE THE DATE:

**Erica Alfaro
Speaks in
Redlands**

**Saturday,
March 9, 2024
2:00 PM**

**The Contemporary
Club**



**Literacy Changes
Lives!**

Redlands Adult Literacy Program



Adult Learners Share Their Stories

On September 24, 2023 the Redlands Adult Literacy Program hosted a Celebration of Authors. Adult learners read their published works from the anthology, *Our Stories, A Collection of Writings, Volume 6* to an audience of 150 which included tutors, learners, their families, and the community. It was moving to hear the adult learners read about how their lives have been changed by their courage in joining and working hard at improving their literacy. You are invited to read *Our Stories*, which is available at A. K. Smiley Public Library in the adult literacy collection.

Let us introduce you to a few of the learner-authors:

Mila Gutierrez, who joined the adult literacy program in early 2023, wrote "Life in Two Countries" for the anthology. Mila was born in Mexico, but moved to the United States when she was a teenager. Mila came to the literacy program because she wanted to improve her writing for work and to read books and health articles. Working with Frank Allen, her tutor, Mila has already read several books and has improved her writing. In the anthology, Mila wrote, "I have learned that no matter where you call home, the key is to enjoy learning, and to love and respect each other, and most of all, that everything is going to be okay."



**Mayor Eddie Tejada Proclaims September 24, 2023
Adult Literacy Day in Redlands
Left to Right: Nathan Gonzales, Mayor Tejada, Raul
Becerra, Susan Hodges, Diane Shimota, Paul Barich**

Sotheavy Chev is a mother of three young boys, who wrote "I Did My Best" for the anthology. Sotheavy learned about the adult literacy program when she brought her sons for homework help at the Young Readers Room at the library. Sotheavy wanted to improve her writing, learn basic computer skills, and read with comprehension. To achieve these goals, Sotheavy has worked diligently with her tutor, Joan Wells, and has participated in several computer literacy classes. As a busy mother, Sotheavy wrote about her worries, but concluded with the following: "I told myself I did my best. Hard times come and go. Now I'm ready to tackle another day."

Raul Becerra spoke for many adult learners when he wrote in his work "Follow Your

Dreams": "I am a hard worker....I want to improve my reading and writing skills. I am nervous when I have to read in public. It is very hard to live in our world if you cannot read. My dream is to improve my reading skills." With support and encouragement from his tutor, Susan Hodges, Raul overcame his fears and read his work at a recent City Council meeting. Raul inspires all of us to reach towards our dreams.

Our Stories includes works that will make you laugh, bring tears to your eyes, and realize how fortunate we are to live in this community. If you would like to hear and see the adult learners read their anthology works, please visit the library website: www.akspl.org/literacy.

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

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

Visit the literacy web page:

www.akspl.org/literacy

Follow us on Instagram: *friendsofsmileylibrary*
Facebook: *Friends of A.K. Smiley Public Library*



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 by using the donate button at www.akspl.org/literacy.

Help change someone's life!

2023 Program Achievements

As adult learners work towards achieving their reading and writing goals, volunteers with the Redlands Adult Literacy Program witness the learners' sense of success and confidence grow. This growth is supported by the learners' hard work with their tutors and involvement with other aspects of the literacy program, including:

Reading: Some adults begin their literacy journey lacking knowledge of the alphabet and related sounds. After a few months, many of these learners are on the road to mastering this foundational skill.

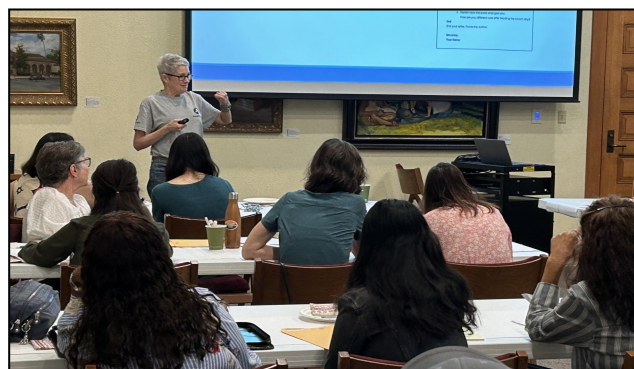
Most learners set a goal of reading a book. Last year, the majority of learners who set this challenging goal have done so. Small group reading classes provide read-aloud support for learners beginning to read books and learner-led book clubs provide book selections with high interest at appropriate reading levels. Several adult learners have proudly reported that they been able to read books independently.

Writing: The publication of an annual anthology provides an opportunity for adult learners to work through the writing process and ultimately publish their works; over 35 adult learners published their poems, stories, or letters this year.

Computers: Computer skills and digital literacy have become a requirement of life in this decade, whether the need is to communicate through email with teachers and school administrators, or to read work schedules and text supervisors at work, adults need to be able to read, write, and communicate with others online.

Computer classes provided by the adult literacy program address this need by providing classes designed to meet the immediate needs of the learners.

Workshops: Writing workshops were reinstated this year through a state grant that funded AmeriCorps member Ann Sandin. Ann presented two writing workshops for tutors and learners in 2023. The goal was simple: reinforce the connection between reading and writing by encouraging learners to write about their lives. Learners attended the workshops ready to write. They wanted to see their own ideas – their own stories – on paper. What *was* needed was structure, and the workshops were a perfect place for this. Learners had an opportunity to experiment with a step-by-step approach to



Ann Sandin, AmeriCorps member, leads Writing Workshop

the writing process. Basic grammar and spelling strategies were discussed. The workshops also succeeded in connecting reading with writing.

In 2024, these successful programs will continue. Some learners are already reading the 2024 Community Read, *Harvesting Dreams*, by Erica Alfaro. Reading Erica's inspiring story about her struggle to complete her education will unite the adult literacy and Redlands communities. We hope you will join us on March 9, 2024 at the Contemporary Club to hear Erica and celebrate the life-changing impact of literacy!