



Redlands Reads!

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE REDLANDS ADULT LITERACY PROGRAM



To become a volunteer or receive services from the Redlands Adult Literacy Program, please call Diane Shimota, Adult Literacy Coordinator, at:

(909) 798-7565 ext. 4138 or email literacy@akspl.org

The next tutor orientation is:

Saturday, June 22, 2024, at 9:00 AM in the Library Assembly Room.

All literacy services are free and confidential



Literacy Changes Lives!



Adult Learner and Tutor Encourage Others to Change Their Lives

Sotheavy Peterson said coming to the library for support saved her life! “Reading and writing is everything – if you don’t know how, life will be much harder.” Sotheavy initially came to the library seeking homework help for her three children; there she learned about the Redlands Adult Literacy Program and gathered the courage to ask for help with her own reading, writing, and computer literacy.

Sotheavy’s tutor, Joan Wells, has been a volunteer for the literacy program for 10 years and is a member of the adult literacy advisory committee. Joan serves as a literacy volunteer because, she said, “public libraries are essential to resilient communities, but literacy skills are necessary to fully benefit from library resources and succeed in life.” Tutoring an adult learner is one way Joan can connect with and give back to the community.

Sotheavy says the adult literacy program helped her gain control of her life. Reading, writing, computer classes, and improving

her language helped her to better understand her new community. She feels less of a stranger because she is able to communicate effectively with people around her.

In addition to tutoring meetings, Sotheavy and her family look forward to attending monthly family literacy programs, which are offered to adults who are enrolled in the Adult Literacy Program. Through family literacy, Sotheavy has learned how to coach her children so that they will have a better quality of life and improve their reading and writing. Every month, Sotheavy and her children learn a new skill including cooking, emotional health, honesty, and how to have fun together. These classes have helped Sotheavy and her children learn important life skills that will help them grow today and in the future.

Working with Joan has given Sotheavy the confidence to succeed in life. When she needs to fill out a lengthy medical form



Sotheavy Peterson (right) and Joan Wells

or answer a teacher’s email she is calm, because she knows that she can take her time, read the form, and communicate effectively, even when she needs to use a computer. She takes time every day to read and to write her thoughts in a journal.

Joan and Sotheavy want the community to know that while it can be difficult to take that first step, if you come to the library to ask for help you will find caring staff and volunteers who are willing and available to help you achieve your goals. The literacy program is free and meeting times are flexible. Learn more and change your life!

Literacy Program Honors its Volunteers

On April 13th, adult literacy tutors and volunteers were honored at a luncheon held at the Contemporary Club. Diane Shimota, adult literacy coordinator, thanked the attendees for all they do to change the lives of adult learners

and their families. Several learners spoke, including Lucilla Campa, an adult learner, who spoke about how the adult literacy program helped her gain the skills to earn a high school diploma.

Thank You Volunteers!



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!

Adult Learners Excel in Annual Writing Contest

This spring, twenty learners from the Redlands Adult Literacy Program participated in a statewide letter-writing contest. The contest, known as the *Writer-to-Writer Challenge*, invites adult learners in public library literacy programs to read a book of their choice and then write a personal letter to the author. The goal is for letter writers to connect the book to themselves and explain its impact on their lives.

The contest is open to all learners, regardless of literacy level, and no book is considered too easy or too short. Contestants' writing is categorized into four groups: emerging, beginning, intermediate, advanced. Then, the letters are judged by a team of literacy program coordinators as well as a panel of adult learners. Notably, it is the panel of adult learners who do the final selection of one winner and two runners-up in each category.

Writer to Writer is a valuable skill-building experience which corresponds to key adult literacy goals. First, since most learners set the specific goal of reading a book, this contest provides a fun and motivating way to accomplish that. Using the library, choosing a book, and finishing a book is a

tangible accomplishment; however, the contest takes it a step further. It reinforces the connection between reading and writing. Learners are asked to think critically about their book and then organize their thoughts into written form. Writing a formal letter – with a distinct audience and purpose in mind – is a positive step toward functional writing and an authentic means of addressing writing goals.

Leading up to this year's contest deadline, the literacy program offered two special workshops to encourage participation and build enthusiasm. The first was a contest overview where participants learned about contest rules, analyzed model letters, and began their own letter writing process. A second workshop focused on later stages in the writing process with an emphasis on basic revision and editing skills.

Everyone who completed the reading and writing process and submitted a letter to the contest deserves recognition, but special congratulations are in order for five learners from the Redlands Adult Literacy Program: **Beatrice Ortega (first runner-up); Rui Montecino (first runner-up); Marisela Casillas (second runner-up); Cinderella Tran (second runner-up); and Bertha Vidrio (honorable mention).**



Writer-to-Writer Challenge authors

Rui Montecino's beautiful letter to Malala Yousafzai, author of *Malala: My Story of Standing Up for Girls' Rights*, sums up the *Writer to Writer* experience perfectly:

"When eight-year-old Malala realized that no magic pencil could change the world, she sent a letter to God asking for strength and courage... Maybe it must have occurred to me that I had to do something to make my life here like what I wanted to be. So I walked out of my door and found a local literacy program that was a perfect fit for me... The magic pencil is the education that you have been fighting for and that my tutor has been doing. Education can change many things in the world."

The power to read and express one's thoughts in writing offers new freedom to adult learners and their families. We, the community of Redlands, benefit from their success.