

November / December 2024 Holiday Newsletter

Executive Director's Column

This has been a very busy and fast-paced semester, our first semester of our nineteenth year of the operation of the Family Literacy Academy. We have had increasing numbers of students join us in both our day and nighttime GED and ESOL classes as the weeks and months have passed. In both programs, students are making progress towards their primary goals-GED students - their Florida High School Diploma: ESOL students - better comprehension of and communication with English. (see within)

One leg of the four-phase family Literacy curriculum is family activity together, including meals and celebrations (see within for some examples of this semester's PACT time events).

Dr. Rodolfich continues to encourage increased literacy in Lake Wales. (see within for his latest email and interaction with the Academy.)

As we get closer to spring, we get even more excited by the preparations for Aunt Martha's 100th birthday celebration.

We also want each and every one of you a Merry Christmas, happy holiday season, and a safe and prosperous New Year.

And let's get started.....

www.flalw.org



GED

Report

At the end of the first semester, we already have had two GED students complete successfully all tests of the GED to earn their High School Diploma Maxwell Beavis and Jeremy Rawls, while a few stand one test away, and many scrambled to get at least one test or one more test under their belt before Christmas. Most students have taken their time in class to pay attention and focus on the lessons and reading tied to the GED, many of whom will be likely to reach their goal of a High School Diploma in the second semester. Volunteers from the community continue to provide tutoring to our students tirelessly in assistance to our staff, enabling us to live up to our offer of individual attention.

We still have room for a few students, so call us at 604-8012.



ESOL

REPORT

The morning ESOL class has gotten off to a strong start. Students are represented from the countries of Haiti, Cuba, Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Mexico. All are in agreement that learning to speak the English language is essential to opening doors not only for career opportunities, but also to connect and build relationships with others.

Learning English is not easy. The English language has many exceptions and irregularities grammatically, and grammatical rules aren't always applicable. With that said, these students show up for class eager to learn and achieve their goals.

Several students have had early success in speaking/learning English by attending classes and have found jobs in our community. While we will miss them in class, we are certainly proud of them and wish them continued success.

After the holiday break we will continue our studies focusing on grammar and verbal dialog to help as many students as we can to master the very complicated English language!

This article is provided by the talented Melissa Massey, lead teacher in our daytime ESOL class. In Your next newsletter you will hear from our dedicated nighttime ESOL teacher, Sondra Annotti.

ESOL AND FOOD

An important part of the ESOL curriculum is food and nutrition because they are an important part of our ESOL students' day-to-day activity. What a benefit to our staff and GED students! Why? Well, as an example, in early November, as part of their curriculum, the ESOL program held a luncheon, featuring their students' favorite dishes as benefitted from nutrition lessons. There was a delay in dismissal on that day as the luncheon was opened up to GED students and Academy staff to experience new foods to some and delicious cooking to all! Also, it was a great opportunity for our ESOL students to use some of what is taught in class.

PRESCHOOL REPORT

There is a saying that “the best gifts come in small packages.” We in preschool have certainly enjoyed all the small gifts that have walked through our door this year.

Our year has been a fantastic mix of fun and learning. October was a time of learning about food. It is not only a need; it can be a delicious gift of enjoyment. But where does it come from? Answers such as “the store,” “the kitchen,” or “my mom” were some of the answers. So, we spent time talking about a farm and the foods that can be grown there. Then we learned that those foods were then brought to the grocery store so that we could buy them. We learned about foods that were healthy and foods we liked or didn’t like.

The students had lots of fun playing at the class grocery store center. Students were observed making decisions on what they would and would not buy. One of our students took what she bought over to the housekeeping center and started putting her groceries away in the refrigerator and cabinets. It was obvious that at home she is included in their grocery shopping trips. Hopefully, the lessons and grocery store center will have planted the seeds for growing a solid foundation for a life of healthy eating.

In December, we have enjoyed working in the Bakery Shop center. Yes, we enjoy the gifts of cookies, cupcakes, and cakes; but these are treats that should be saved for special times and not eaten often. The students practiced the work that goes into creating the desserts. It was fun to watch the students mixing, cooking, decorating, and then sharing what they made. Several students were just having fun playing with the tools that are found in the kitchen. We enjoyed lots of laughs when we found out how much noise could be made when pots and pans are hit together!

Along with all of this, we continue to enjoy the gift of reading. Each center included reading material. The grocery store had flyers, and the bakery shop had magazines filled with pictures and recipes of many Christmas desserts. Teachers spent time going through these items with the students as they played in these centers.

Classroom books are all around the classroom. Teachers read to the students often. We are thrilled when a student accepts a book that is offered to them, and they begin reading it or they pick a book on their own to read.

This holiday season we consider it a gift to be able to work with our students. We all agree, “the best gifts come in small packages.”



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



This article was provided by the lead teacher in our preschool, the very creative Robin Jolley.

CLASSES CELEBRATED THANKSGIVING



As we approached the Thanksgiving break, a few of the ESOL day class students brought up the idea of having a program-wide traditional American Thanksgiving dinner, treating it as a learning experience. Staff and GED students happily agreed, and a plan was formed. Staff provided turkeys and “fixin’s,” GED students traditional dishes and ESOL students brought their favorite dishes. Dinner was great, and the beginning of the holiday season meals was accomplished.

After a four-day holiday weekend, classes resumed until the Christmas break begins on December 19th.



ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

Our annual fundraiser is currently underway. If you haven't received your packet in the mail, please believe it is merely an unfortunate oversight on our part, easily corrected by contacting us by calling 863-604-8012. All contributions are greatly appreciated. Your participation makes it possible to help change lives and help the community and its economy through education. Thanks for your continued support.

END OF SEMESTER

December 19th marked the end of the Academy's first semester of our nineteenth year of operation in Lake Wales. On January 13th, 2025, we will resume our second semester GED and ESOL programs for our adult students, and PRESCHOOL for their children (starting at eight weeks old), as well as homework assistance for our adult students' school-age children through middle school. We encourage new students, currently enrolled students, and previously enrolled students to join us.

See you in January. In the meantime, have a safe and warm holiday season and the start of a productive new year !



Dr. Rodolfich continues to provide his community insights in the form of newsletters, which we are pleased to pass on to you. Please take notice of the following:

Newsletter

READ20

20 Minutes = 1.4% of your day



Family Literacy Academy Christmas Party

A few weeks ago Gail Crum and Dem Cowles called me about playing Santa Claus for their Christmas event at the Mary Campbell Resource Center in Lake Wales. I was a little apprehensive because children are very perceptive, and it would take a great deal of convincing for them to accept me as Santa Claus. They then made me an offer I could not refuse. They said we would be giving away books while I took pictures with the children. I accepted and recruited my two youngest children to be my elves.

We arrived at the Center fully dressed and were sent to a waiting room for the grand entrance. My children immediately immersed themselves with the resources in the classroom where we were waiting. There were so many fun activities for the children attending the event. They did arts and crafts, had a story read to them, and they were served cookies and milk. It was a wonderfully planned event with such great fun for our children. When all the festivities were nearing their conclusion, I was summoned with my elves to the gathering with the children.

When I cleared the door, you could see the excitement in their eyes. As I approached the front of the room, a small child reached out his arms, and I picked him up and started talking with all the children about the excitement of Christmas. It was an awesome feeling to see their enthusiasm about getting to meet with Santa. I finished my greetings and left for the room with the Christmas Tree for pictures. The children each filed in with their parents, and we took pictures as they received a new book to take home with them.

There is something magical about the Christmas season. The celebration of the birth of Christ and all the merriment that follows. There are many gifts that children can receive during the Christmas season, but one book stands above the rest. Use this time to celebrate, give gifts, eat well, and share the story of Christ and the promise of salvation that follows. It is a wonderful time to introduce the stories of the Holy Bible--Merry Christmas!



Board of Directors

President

Jennifer Mueller

Vice President

Terrye Howell

Secretary

Eleanor F. Wetzel

Treasurer

Allison Snyder

Advisory

Nancy Hoyt

Bolet Salud

Rob Sansome

Honorary Member

Dr. Eileen Holden



Directors

Colette Braunstein,
L.C.S.W.

Donna Dunson

Sue Frantz

Howard Kay, Esq.

Dr. Nelson Marquez

Thomas McCance

Kathy Manry-Smith

Dr. Von McGriff

John Miller

Jennifer Nanek

Dr. Wayne Rodolfich

Executive Director

Deming Cowles Esq.

Publisher

Allison Snyder



From The Lake Wales Family Literacy Academy

Thank You to our Sponsors



Mountain Lake



McCance Foundation

Jahna Foundation

Kislak Family Foundation

as well as:

- ◆ Lake Wales AAUW
- ◆ Lake Wales Noon Rotary Club
- ◆ Good Shepard Episcopal Church
- ◆ Lake Wales United Methodist Church
- ◆ Thrivent Financial
- ◆ All Veterans Center

and several generous individuals

*The Family Literacy Academy at Lake Wales
is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization*

