

Board of Trustees

OFFICERS

Cynthia Forster, *President*
North Jersey Media Group

Benedict A. Focarino, *Vice President*
Passaic Leather

Emmy Bledsoe, *Secretary*
Co-Founder, Project Literacy

Marina Mlloja, *Treasurer*
TD Bank

MEMBERS

Ree Adler, Esq.

Karen Beckford Bennett - *Educator*

Rosa Bland - *Coalition of 100 Black Women*

Larry Eisen - *FIP Graphics*

Dean Walter C. Hecht - *Founding President, Project Literacy*

Thomas R. McVeigh - *Konica Minolta Business Solutions USA, Inc.*

Laszlo Moharita - *The Estée Lauder Companies, Inc.*

Corethia V. E. Oates - *Morgan Stanley Smith Barney*

Warren T. Oates, Jr. - *Retired Corporate Secretary*

Joe Pandolfi, Esq.

Harry K. Panjwani, M.D., Ph.D. - *Medical Research and Consultation*

Grace Pichardo - *Hackensack University Medical Center*

Bea Podorefsky - *National Council of Jewish Women, Bergen County*

Paul Ragusa - *Bergen Community College*

Marilyn Rosica - *Rosica Public Relations, Inc.*

Lewis "Kip" Weldon - *Cowan Financial Group*

We Need Your Support!

Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County depends on the kindness of supporters like you. Please consider making a donation, especially during the holiday season, to support our initiatives including our One-To-One tutoring program, which continues to grow each year. Presently we have more than 110 tutors helping more than 120 students who come from different backgrounds and economic situations. We accept checks and credit cards. Please contact our office if paying by credit card, or send a check to the address listed below.

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.

Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County

355 Main Street • Hackensack, New Jersey 07601

201-489-7066 • Fax 201-968-9732

e-mail: read@project-literacy.org • www.project-literacy.org

We are now on Facebook (Project Literacy of Bergen County)



PROJECT LITERACY
of Greater Bergen County, Inc.

WINTER
2011/2012

Serving Literacy Since 1987

NEWSLETTER

Printed by Konica Minolta Business Solutions Color Copiers

Awards Ceremony

Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County held its 24th Annual Awards Ceremony in June 2011. Keynote speaker was Geraldo Rivera, noted journalist and television personality, who gave an inspirational speech about the issue of literacy. The event was held at Hackensack University Medical Center. Among the honorees were: Whole Foods, Barnes and Noble, Oritani Bank, United Water, Paramus Rotary and the Lillian P. Schenck Fund. Grace Pichardo, Board of Trustees member and creator of Leap for Literacy, a dance extravaganza, to raise funds for Project Literacy, was given special recognition. Master of Ceremonies was Corethia V. E. Oates, Board of Trustees Member. County Executive, Kathleen Donovan, also spoke.



Inside this Issue:

Message from Education Program Manager..... 2

8th Annual Fundraising Gala..... 3

Leap for Literacy..... 4

Student Story..... 5

Project Literacy would like to thank the following Companies for their recent financial support:

County of Bergen
Cruise Industry Foundation
The Estee Lauder Companies
Konica Minolta Business Solutions
Le Papillon, Ltd.
OritaniBank Foundation
Sharp Electronics
TD Bank
Teaneck Rotary
United Water Foundation
Verizon Foundation

Project Literacy would like to thank the following individuals for their recent financial support:

Grace Pichardo
Chris Yegen

A Message From Our Education Program Manager Jill Wright

I started with Project Literacy as the Education Program Manager at the beginning of June. Before starting with Project Literacy, I worked as the ESL (English as a Second Language) Program co-Coordinator at the Ridgewood Public Library for over five years, successfully expanding the program from 32 to over 125 students annually. During this time I also conducted ESL Tutor Training Workshops at libraries in Bergen County, and taught ESL classes at the Ridgewood and Paramus Public Libraries. My ESL teaching experience began in 1993 and, since then, I have taught all ages from children to seniors in various settings and locations.

Since beginning with Project Literacy, we have successfully conducted one ESL Tutor Training and one Basic Literacy Tutor Training.

We also have the privilege of working with a new client, Biomet Inc. located in Fair Lawn, NJ, teaching on-site workplace ESL classes for some of this company's staff. These students are making noticeable progress in their English language skills, and the company is pleased with this progress.

Behind the scenes, we are compiling and consolidating student and tutor information into one database, which will allow us to easily access and document the progress of our students, simplifying reports and grant-writing. We continue to move forward with reading assessments of our Basic Literacy students, which identify the students' strengths and weaknesses, and assist tutors in planning their class lessons.

New Trustee Member

Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County is pleased to welcome a new trustee member, Larry Eisen. Larry is the owner of FIP Graphics in Hackensack. He is very active in his community and serves on several boards including the Hackensack Chamber of Commerce and Jewish Family Service. Larry brings a wealth of experience from the non-profit world.

Celebrities Come Out To Support Project Literacy

Project Literacy is honored that many celebrities such as Cousin Bruce, the legendary rock group The Drifters and Charles Grodin (sponsored by *Rosica Public Relations, Inc.*) were able to support our cause by speaking passionately about the issue of literacy and raising funds for our organization.



8th Annual Fundraising Gala

Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County held its 8th annual fund raising Gala at the Stony Hill Inn on October 14th. The event raised over \$70,000 for our agency. The guests had a wonderful time, dancing to the music. They also had an opportunity to learn more about our organization by listening to the words of two of our students who gave inspiring speeches. Miss NJ, Katharyn Nicolle, also attended and spoke. Her platform for the national Miss America pageant is literacy. The theme of the evening was "Enchanted Forest." Estee Lauder, Verizon, and TD Bank were recognized for their continued support of Project Literacy.



Purchase with a Purpose



Subscribe to *The Record* and help
Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County
at the same time.

Your 7-day subscription to *The Record* will cost you \$29.95. (13-weeks)

{ But it will translate into a donation of \$20 to help
Project Literacy help others. }

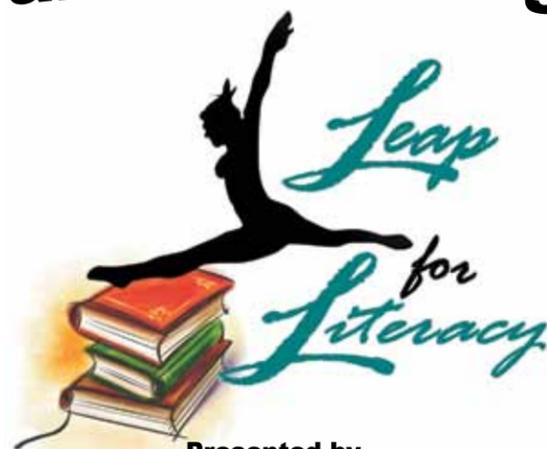
Your four-day subscription of \$19.95 will mean \$10 in literacy aid.

Just call 1-888-473-2673

to start your subscription and mention Project Literacy.



A Dance Extravaganza



Presented by

Dance Theatre of New Jersey & Dance Fusion

January 28, 2012 • 5:00 PM

**Bergen County Academies
Hackensack, New Jersey**

To Benefit Project Literacy & The Carmen Pichardo Scholarship Program

Student Story

(The following words were spoken at the June 2001 Awards Ceremony.)

My name is Ganace Sookdeo. I grew up in a rural district in my native country, which is Guyana, South America. Guyana was formally a British colony where English is the first language. The educational system is very high in my country. However, for people like me who grew up in the rural country, formal education was not necessary. We were farm people who needed to work the land. Because of these circumstances, I did not get a formal education. I only went to school for about three years. My father was more interested in me looking after the cattle, sheep and goats than schooling. When I came to this country, I saw many opportunities around me, but I couldn't grab any of them because of my inability to read and write.

I have spent over fifty years of my life not knowing how to read and write properly. I can testify to the fact that it was real difficult to live that way. Everywhere I went, I had to ask someone for help. When I had to fill out forms at doctor's offices or for job applications, I had to ask someone to do it for me. Many times when I went to those places, I would pretend that I was looking for my eye glasses and then I could ask for help. Doing that was embarrassing because I was always neatly dressed and trying to look good and feel good about myself, but when the time came to ask for help, I felt like a dead dog. Most times I was lucky to find someone, but not all the time.

Then I went to a company to ask for a job. They gave me an application to fill out and I took it home. I had my son fill it out. I took it back, and I got the job. However, sometimes when they gave me work I had problems because I needed to read and write. Because I did not want to lose my job, I decided to get educated.

When I started at Project Literacy, I did not know anything about mathematics. I did not understand nouns and pronouns. Project Literacy gave me a wonderful tutor named Daniel. Then I had Carol. They were always patient, understanding and never gave up on me. Because of their help, they convinced me that I was capable of passing the GED and then go onto college. I passed the GED last February!

The people involved at Project Literacy, I see them with their hands stretched out far and wide and rescue people like me.

The Problem of Adult Illiteracy in Numbers

- In the U.S., 30 million people over age 16 (14 percent of the country's adult population) don't read well enough to fill out a job application.
- The United States ranks fifth in adult literacy skills when compared to other industrialized nations.
- More than 60 percent of all state and federal corrections inmates can barely read and write.
- Low health literacy costs between \$106 billion and \$238 billion each year in the U.S. — 7 to 17 percent of all annual personal health care spending.
- Low literacy's effects cost the U.S. \$225 billion or more each year in non-productivity in the workforce, crime, and loss of tax revenue due to unemployment.
- Elderly people who cannot navigate health information have a 50% higher chance of dying earlier than those who are able to comprehend prescription bottles, doctor appointment slips and hospital forms, according to the journal, Archives of Internal Medicine.