

*sch**l&tutors* *on wheels*

Moving People Forward Through Literacy

FALL 2016 NEWSLETTER

Constantine's Corner

Greetings to all,

For the past two months, I've been learning about STOW, getting to know tutors and meeting students; thank you all for making me feel so welcome. In this short time, I have been awed by the tutors' love for the work to which School and Tutors on Wheels is dedicated. I have been touched by the students' stories, each one different, and the impact the tutors have made on their lives.

As Thanksgiving approaches, I hope we discuss the true meaning of this holiday with our students. As we know (but sometimes forget), Thanksgiving is not about food and football, but about how thankful we are for all we have been given and all the good that we still can find in the world, even in this time of conflict and strife. I encourage tutors to talk about gratitude to their students and ask them to express as best they can what they are thankful for. While we are all unique, we all have been given a chance to make a difference in this world for which everyone, whether we give or receive, of can be thankful.

I wish you all a Thanksgiving filled with love, peace and gratitude for all we have.

Constantine

News and Announcements

❖ Tutor In-Service Training

On October 25th, School and Tutors on Wheels held an in-service training on how to use three of our programs, English No Problem, Side by Side, and Practical English. In addition, we had a brief, but important discussion on citizenship tutoring issues. We had remarkable and unexpected attendance at 55 tutors – thank you all for giving us an evening of your time!

Overall, the in-service training was a success. The tutors had the opportunity to share information, tutoring tips and ideas on using tutoring materials. Tutors agreed that they found the training very helpful, that they had the chance to learn about other text books besides the one they were using. Also, they got more ideas on how to use their text book scripts and assessments content.

The overwhelming consensus for the next in-service topic is citizenship test information and preparation. We anticipate holding the training in April, and will make certain that the venue is large enough to accommodate what we expect to be an even larger group!

❖ New Tutor Resources Webpage

Have you visited the STOW website recently? If not, take a look at the new and growing "Tutor Resources" page.

On the left, there are documents with links to conversation groups, citizenship study guides, games and puzzles and other resources for you and your students. Note: we have posted some Thanksgiving worksheets that might be helpful.

On the right, there are helpful website links. Soon, we will be posting worksheets and other tutoring aids. Please let us know what resources would be helpful to you and we will do our best to make them available.

Stay tuned – more to come! You can find our Tutor Resource page at:

<http://schoolandtutorsonwheels.org/core/resources.php>

Tutor Tips

From Literacy Volunteers of Chippewa County - <http://www.lvcv.org/tutor-tips>

➤ How to Say a Question:

Practice saying questions with students until they learn correct inflection. Say a question and have them repeat it after you.

➤ Bingo Cards:

With one (or more) students, create bingo cards with words in each square that are being studied. Instead of pulling a "letter/number" to match a square, pull a definition card. Or pull a card that states verb, noun, etc. to match a square. Another option is to practice sight words this way.

➤ Free Flashcards and Ideas:

Especially for earlier readers, check out the website for children's author Jan Brett at www.janbrett.com. Download flashcards on many topics (e.g. math operations, color practice, Dolch Word Lists for sight words). Snoop around for ideas and delightful artwork.

➤ Puzzle Creation:

A student studying citizenship liked a homemade American history puzzle. The puzzle included answers to who, what, when, where, and why questions given by the tutor. Example: The tutor named a person and what the person did. The student had to pick out the when and why answers that were related.

Support STOW while shopping on Amazon!

School and Tutors on Wheels is registered with Amazon to receive a portion of any purchases done under our name.

Here's how:

1. Go to <https://smile.amazon.com/> and login to your Amazon account (create one if you don't have it).
2. You'll see a search box; enter School and Tutors on Wheels and you'll see a list of agencies.
3. Find School and Tutors on Wheels (3rd one down on my screen) and click on the select button. You only have to do this once - it remembers your charity - but you have to go through the smile.amazon.com site, not the regular amazon.com website.

There's no difference between the two as far as making purchases, but only if you login to the smile.amazon.com page will it designate us to receive .5% of your purchase. If you use Amazon as much as I do, it will add up quickly! Please contact me at cbitsas@schoolandtutorsonwheels.org with questions.

➤ **Placemat Idea:**

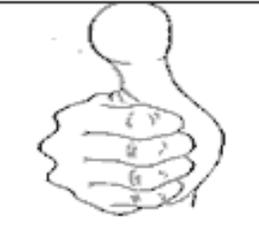
Create a placemat with pictures that trigger key concepts on the material being studied. Emphasize who, what, when, where, and why.

➤ **More Tips for Tutors from Other Tutors:**

- Remember to incorporate the 4 language components: reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- Use props whenever possible (figures, balls, plastic letters, etc.)
- Read books and ask student questions about the pictures
- Have some fun with the learning (Hokey Pokey, Simon Says)
- Write a word from the Picture Dictionary on a slip of paper – see if your student can look it up.
- Remember: Just because they can sound out a word doesn't mean that they comprehend the word. To check comprehension, ask questions or get them to show you that the word was understood!
- Create your own stories using new vocabulary words.
- Help your student create personalized picture dictionary using pictures cut from magazines or the newspaper. With a lower level student, just a word and picture can be entered. As skills improve, have the student add a sentence or two using the word in a sentence.

Nonverbal Knowledge

Nonverbal and verbal communication are normally inseparable, which is why it may seem so difficult to use the telephone in a foreign language. It needs to be taught and practiced situationally, in the right contexts, and with plenty of cultural input and awareness. Here are some examples of how nonverbal communication has different meanings in different cultures:

			
Perfect	Thumbs up	Stop	The 'fig'
Commonly – everything's all right perfect France – worthless Japan – money Germany – rude Malta, Greece, Brazil – obscene	Commonly – all OK Australia, Iran – rude Nigeria – very offensive Japan – five Turkey – political rightist party	Commonly – stop, enough (person, car, action) Turkey – You get nothing from me W Africa – You have 5 fathers!	Turkey, Greece, Tunisia, Holland – obscene Russia – you get nothing from me Yugoslavia – you can't have it Brazil – good luck

Taken from "Aspects of Nonverbal Communication", Steve Darn. The Internet TESL Journal.

Inspiring Stories

Olga and Gloria: The Long (and Bumpy) Path to Citizenship

Ten years ago, Olga found herself needing to find a job in Mexico. Jobs were hard to come by; Olga says, "they had ads that said they only wanted women who were single, didn't have children and were 18 to 25 years old." Unfortunately, Olga didn't fit the profile, or have a relative who could help her get in the door.

Olga realized that Mexico would not provide her with the opportunity that she needed to live a better life, so she made the difficult decision to leave her family behind. She had friends in the Chicago area, so Olga gathered all her resources to make the trip.

Olga's first jobs were challenging; demanding and unreasonable employers, very long hours, physically hard work and overwhelming job responsibilities. Still, she kept her eye on the life she came here to live.

Olga realized that she needed to learn English to find better employment and benefit from all that her new home had to offer. She found School and Tutors on Wheels and began her studies. After starting with another tutor, Olga was paired up with Gloria.

Gloria, was a professional who ran the Spanish and Portuguese operations of the Lions Club international. In her work, she travelled around the world supporting the Lions Club's extensive charity work. When she finally decided to retire, she knew that she needed to continue contributing to the community. Her sister told her about School and Tutors on Wheels, where she was (and still is) a tutor; Gloria was immediately drawn to our work. Having immigrated from Cuba, she understood the challenges that immigrants face trying to integrate into the community; learning a new language, adapting to a new culture, and exploring a new community.



Olga was married to a naturalized U.S. citizen. Olga decided that she, too, wanted to also become a citizen, so the two of them focused on Olga's dream. She was a very dedicated student; between lessons, she watched YouTube videos on learning English and English-speaking TV. She and Gloria and Olga poured over the 100 questions to truly understanding the questions and their answers. "I believe that it was so important for her to grasp the concepts and ideas behind the questions so that she really had the knowledge instead of just reciting the answers," Gloria expressed. "To do so, I would explain the question and answer and discuss the meaning and purpose of the questions in a way she could understand. I think that this made it more relevant to her and easier to grasp the idea behind the question." Olga agreed. "Other people learn differently, but this was the best way for me to learn."

When they both felt she was ready, Olga applied to take the test. It didn't take long for her to receive her test date. She was nervous, but felt confident that she could answer anything they asked her. When the examiner came out to get Olga, "I said 'Good morning' to her, but she just looked at me without saying anything. She took me into the room and made me sit at the other side of the room. I was so far from that I couldn't hear her very well. She didn't look at me once." Despite this, she passed the civics and history portion with flying colors. Olga thought that she made it, but then came the personal questions...

The examiner asked her if she had ever gambled. She said “no”; she learned that she should say no to the personal questions. But when the examiner asked her what the meaning of the word “gambling” was, she drew a blank. The examiner didn’t pass her, noting on the test form that she needed to learn English better.

Now, Olga hadn’t told Gloria that she had received her notice to test because she, “...wanted to surprise her. She kept on asking me whether I received the test date, and I kept telling her I hadn’t.” She was so disappointed that she did not pass, but just as disappointed that she could not surprise Gloria, the person that gave her the help to succeed.

When Olga told Gloria, they studied the meanings of the personal questions so that she fully understood them, rather than giving a stock answer. The date of the second test came; she was met with the same unwelcoming reception as before. But she was prepared, and passed the test easily. She was walking in the clouds!

When she got home and looked at her test paper, and couldn’t believe her eyes. “The examiner told me I passed, but the box that was checked said I didn’t.” She was kept on going over the testing session in her mind; she could swear the examiner told her she passed! She told Gloria the news. “I was shocked that she didn’t pass!” Gloria exclaims. “It was back to the drawing board.”

A week later, Olga received a letter from Immigration. When she opened it, she had her second shock: she had a ceremony date! Olga was skeptical, but decided to attend the ceremony anyway. The day of the ceremony, with both letter and test in hand, she went to the Immigration office. She gave her name, fully expecting the she would not be on the list, but they passed her through. So far, so good, she thought. But she still had the feeling that, “Any time now, they were going to tell me I didn’t belong there and kick me out.” but the ceremony went on without a hitch. Olga could not shake the feeling that she really didn’t pass the test, so when her husband congratulated her with her certificate in hand, she shrugged her shoulders and brushed it off. When Olga’s picture was taken she barely smiled, still convinced that “it was all a mistake.” Then it finally hit her – She was a U.S. citizen!

The next time she saw Gloria, she told her that she went into the ceremony still convinced that she hadn’t really passed the test, but the certificate Olga showed Gloria proved that she did. But her learning wasn’t done. “I wanted to keep learning English so I could really become an American.”

Today, it’s clear that, as Gloria expresses, “We are more that tutor and student; we share a bond that is stronger than that.” Olga agrees with a heartfelt, “yes, we are so close!” And, as they continue their studies, they do so with a deep sense of friendship.

Quotes from Students at Tuesday Morning Brookfield

Brookfield students share their thoughts about School and Tutors on Wheels:

- *Since I started the program, I feel more confident in speaking and reading.*
- *At School and Tutors on Wheels I lost my fear to speak in front of people.*
- *Being able to speak English makes me feel better because when I go to the doctor I don’t need an interpreter, I can help my children with their homework, and at work I can communicate with everybody.*
- *I now feel comfortable anywhere – in my community, at my children’s school and at the doctor’s office.*

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