



The Reader

Spring 2021

Literacy Volunteers of
Rensselaer County

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Troy, N.Y. 12180
(518) 244-4650

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www.lvorc.org

Look inside for news of
the Literacy 5K!



*Literacy Volunteers of Rensselaer County
Partners in Building a Literate Community Since 1968*

LVORC Staff Grows With Inclusion of Albany

In January 2021, LVORC welcomed Christine Katchmar to the staff as program coordinator for the newly-added Albany County adult literacy program. Christine has been working remotely and out of the LVORC offices in Troy and will continue until the Albany Public Library and its branches reopen.

Christine's extensive experience, skills and education make her an ideal addition to the LVORC team. From 2017 to 2020, Christine served as program coordinator for Literacy New York Greater Capital Region in Schenectady County, operating out of the Karen B. Johnson Schenectady County Public Library and in close partnership with the Schenectady City School District's Washington Irving Adult Learning Center. Previously, her professional career was in adult, continuing, and higher education as well

as in corporate communication, training, and professional development. She is certified in New York State as a K-12 English teacher and recently received her advanced graduate certificate in English as a second and foreign language (TESOL/TEFL). Christine has been busy reconnecting with the volunteers, tutors, and learners in Albany County who, since March of 2020, have either been working remotely or have not been able to continue their important literacy work. Once on site in Albany, her immediate task will be to work with the LVORC team to consider best practices to incorporate into the Albany program, to support and develop current volunteers and learners, and to recruit new ones. As she tells us, "I come with a passion for working with adults

to develop proficiency in and a love for reading, writing, and speaking, and I want us to restore the Albany program to its pre-pandemic strength as a resource to the Albany community."



Christine Katchmar can be contacted by email at albanyliteracy@lvorc.org and at (518) 244-4651 where messages can be left. She welcomes any interest you or someone you know may have in volunteering to tutor or teach in the Albany program.



Famous Ladies 2021



Literacy 5K at Schodack Island State Park

Famous Ladies' Tea

This year's celebration of literacy and women's history was an all-virtual event. On Sunday, March 28, local actresses portrayed ten notable women including Ruth Bader Ginsberg, Fannie Lou Hamer, Shirley Temple Black, Anne LaBastille, and Doris Day.

Literacy 5K Run/Walk

We had a beautiful morning at Schodack Island State Park for the 20th Literacy 5K Run/Walk on Sunday, May 2. Runners and walkers of all ages and abilities took part in the events. Prizes were awarded to three participants:

Fastest female: Wendy Rescott
Fastest male: Michael Ruger
Youth mile: Ryan Dolan

Proceeds from LVORC's special events make it possible to provide free literacy programs and services to adults and children in Rensselaer County and Albany County.

Meeting, Testing, Tutoring . . . In-Person or Remote?

As our partners in literacy begin to open their doors to our learners and tutors, we await word from the State Education Department as to when we are expected to return to 100% in-person instruction. Until that time, we can continue remote instruction via Zoom, Skype, FaceTime, etc. We will send out a notice when a policy decision has been made.

For new learners, LVORC is offering in-person testing and intake following CDC safety guidelines. All students, visitors and volunteers are required to make an appointment before coming to the office. Please call (518) 244-4650 to schedule an appointment. Thank you – together we can continue to make a positive difference during these difficult times.

Congratulations, New Citizens



Adil Mohammed and Siddique Bin Ali with tutors Charles Lutrey and Mary Krensczeski from the Blasch Workplace Literacy Class.

Five of our learners have become U.S. citizens during the pandemic year. With the support of their tutors and LVORC, they are persisting and showing tremendous grit and optimism during difficult times.

Congratulations to Adil Mohammed, Siddique Bin Ali, Julia Jeong, Dede Kuevi, Biljana Markov, Nang Thant, Noorzia Mayar, and Zaynab Khan.

LVORC's Citizenship Preparation class is held on Zoom on Tuesdays at 5:00 p.m. Contact Linda at (518) 244-4650 for more information.

The Office for New Americans offers a full range of services, including help with the N-400 application and legal advice. Contact: SZaidspiner@uscra-albany.org

News from the Board of Directors

Caitlin Stein-Miner, first elected as President of the Board of Directors in 2015, will be stepping down as of June 30, 2021. Caitlin has contributed her many gifts to our organization for 10 years, engaging in countless hours of planning and participation in fundraising events such as the Literacy 5K, the Famous Ladies' Tea, and the SCRABBLE Challenge. Caitlin's kindness and generosity of spirit have been an inspiration to us,

and we thank her for her leadership and dedication.



Caitlin Stein-Miner (standing, third from left) with the LVORC Board of Directors at the Literacy 5K

2020-2021 Board of Directors

Caitlin Stein-Miner, President
Christina Ryzner, Vice President
Susan d'Oelsnitz, Secretary
Shay Harrison, Treasurer

Amy Carman
Joy Milne
Laura Salkowe

There's Still Time to Contribute to the Annual Appeal

Thanks to the generosity of our individual supporters, LVORC has collected \$11,987 toward the 2020-2021 Annual Appeal. If you would like to help us to reach our goal there's still time to contribute, and donations in any amount are welcome. Checks can be made payable to LVORC and sent to Literacy Volunteers of Rensselaer County, 65 First Street, Troy, NY 12180. Donations can be made online at www.lvorc.org.

DIGITAL LITERACY AND REMOTE LEARNING

Chromebooks Boost Remote Learning Potential

A grant from Troy Savings Bank Foundation is making it possible for learners to join classes and tutoring sessions online. Ten brand new Chromebooks have been procured and are being borrowed by learners in Troy and Albany. For some learners, this is the first time they have had any digital access. For others, it

creates an easier way to connect and provides better picture and sound quality than their other devices. A limited number of hotspots are also available for those who have no access to WiFi. LVORC expects that this technology will assist learners not only with remote learning but with employment and

access to needed services such as health care. Learners or tutors who are interested in knowing more are welcome to call the LVORC office at (518) 244-4650.

Job Zone is for Everyone

If you haven't already helped your learner to register for Job Zone, please consider making this part of a lesson or series of lessons that you can do together: <https://www.jobzone.ny.gov>

Even if your learner is not actively seeking employment, you will find many opportunities for vocabulary building, reading and writing, discussion of high-level concepts, language experience stories, and goal-setting. For more information, please contact Marie or Linda at the LVORC office: 518 244-4650.



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LVORC's Events Calendar is Online at www.lvorc.org

Keep an eye on our events calendar for LVORC's upcoming fundraisers and Tutor Training Workshops. We hope we'll see you at the Fall Festival of Literacy in October, celebrating the many wonderful accomplishments of our learners and their tutors.

