

Piscataway Newsletter – Spring 2010 Literacy



Senator Smith reading *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat*, a story about the importance of recycling to elementary students, during 2010's Read Across America Day.

I was recently given the opportunity to participate in 2010's Read Across America Day in celebration of beloved children's author Dr. Seuss' birthday, and to bring awareness to the importance of child literacy. This experience reminded me of the significance of encouraging and motivating the youngest members of our community the joys and benefits of reading, and reminding our adolescents and adults that it is never too late to improve and develop their own literary skills.

Literacy is a fundamental block in which we build upon as we grow. Parents and teachers play an extremely important role as the motivators of young children and adolescents, as they provide guidance throughout their development. One way in which we can strengthen the reading skills of our children at home is to encourage daily reading and writing. In promoting the development of vocabulary, children are more likely to excel in a variety of areas that contribute to their overall literacy level. The values of literacy at the level of secondary school are undeniable; it is here that students learn comprehension skills that will prepare them for college and the workforce. If you should seek information regarding the importance of literacy at all age levels, and how New Jersey is encouraging our youth to develop strong reading skills, please visit the State of New Jersey's Department of Education website at www.state.nj.us/education or www.state.nj.us/njreadtokids. Here you can find additional suggestions on how to get your children motivated to read and write, as well as tutoring opportunities and libraries near you.

In addition to childhood and adolescence, literacy may be further developed during adulthood. Continuing education programs throughout our community have made reading and writing an important focus for adults by teaching them invaluable skills. Within the past decade, the necessity of advanced levels of comprehension and writings skills has grown tremendously, and such continuing education programs allow for adults to expand their horizon of opportunity. Adults within our community may be embarrassed by their lack of reading and writing skills but this is not something to be ashamed of. The Literacy Volunteers of New Jersey provide many resources for those who may not have gained such literacy skills during their youth. Additionally, the Literacy Volunteers of New Jersey are currently recruiting tutors, librarians, and group conversation leaders to expand their adult literacy programs. Volunteering for such a position not only brings joy to those you are helping but is a fulfilling experience that can give

you a deeper connection to your community. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, area offices are located in Bridgewater and Sayreville. More information can be found at www.literacysomerset.org and www.lpnj.org.

The State of New Jersey's Department of Labor and Workforce Development is committed to helping New Jersey adults prepare for their GED exam and improve their overall literacy skills. Currently, the Department offers programs in adult basic education, English as a second language, and General Educational Development (GED) test preparation. The New Brunswick Board of Education has partnered with the Department and offers these courses locally. To learn more about class offerings, fees, and schedules, please call (732) 745-5300. Furthermore, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development offers computer skills training as well as adult high school courses. Locally, the Middlesex County Vocational School District and Middlesex County College offer a variety of courses. More information, including locations throughout the county, may be found by calling (732) 257-3300 ext.1925 or Middlesex County College at (732)548-6000. If you are interested in furthering your educational career or are looking for additional workforce training, please visit the Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Career Development webpage at <http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/>.