

# THANK YOU Volunteers!



A few members of ALL's Tutor Support Committee (left to right) – Mitz Oates, Sharon Hartman, Carmen Richards, Mary Rose, Jane Straker, Helen McCormick, Eleanor Ackermann and Patricia Johnson.

April is typically Volunteer Appreciation Month, but at the Adult Literacy League we took time out in February for our annual Volunteer Appreciation Reception to recognize and thank the numerous volunteers and tutors who help us develop readers to build a strong and literate community.

In 2009, our tutors logged an impressive 20,000 hours of instructional time with students and other volunteers gave an additional 9,000 hours of their time helping in the office, on events, making speeches and assessing and interviewing new literacy students.

Volunteer Appreciation Reception Sponsored by:



## 42 Years of Volunteering for Literacy – Esther Meyers



The Adult Literacy League has a long tradition of outstanding volunteer service and many exemplary community servants who have made literacy their cause. For many of us at ALL, it is to Esther Myers we look for the inspiration to serve selflessly, devotedly, and with longevity. Esther — an honoree of both Bank of America and Eckerd community service awards was one of our founders in 1968, and her service has been significant and continuous since that first tutor training in Central Florida took place.

Esther has tutored students — dozens of them — with patience and success. She has served on the board of directors in every capacity and contributes generously. She was one of the originators of our Interview and Assessment Committee many years ago — and this group of volunteers who meet, greet, and prepare our students for matching with a tutor has been honored as a “best practice” in volunteer literacy on several occasions — and she still interviews students today.

Esther serves on the Tutor Support Committee providing her expertise and guidance to not only the tutors on her list, but also to her colleagues and the staff at the Adult Literacy League.

“We must never forget that we aren't just teaching people how to read — we are inspiring them to lift their eyes and to lift up their heads toward hope for a better life,” said Esther.

# Orange County Library named Library of the Year!



The Orange County Library System has been named the 2010 Florida Library of the Year by the Florida Library Association. OCLS was recognized for their innovations in technology and service. Why not make a “summer resolution” to find out what all the fuss is about?

When it comes to summer activities think of the Library! OCLS's Summer Reading Program for children and teens kicked off on June 5 and runs through August 31, 2010. Or adults can join the Adult Summer Reading Club and participate in book discussions in



The main branch of the Orange County library in downtown Orlando is a popular place for literacy students and their tutors to meet each week.

person and online. The Club started on June 12 and runs through July 31.

Also for readers, check out OCLS Book Bundles. If you are in or would like to start a book club,

these “book clubs in a bag” have everything you need! The Library also sponsors several book clubs throughout the county. Learn more at [www.ocls.info/bookclubs](http://www.ocls.info/bookclubs).

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345 W. Michigan Street, Suite 100  
Orlando, FL 32806

Phone: 407.422.1540  
Fax: 407.422.1529  
E-mail: [info@adulteracyleague.org](mailto:info@adulteracyleague.org)  
[www.adulteracyleague.org](http://www.adulteracyleague.org)

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The Adult Literacy League, Inc. develops readers to build a strong and literate community



2009 ANNUAL REPORT INSIDE!

# BETWEEN THE LINES

Expand Your World . . . One Page At A Time.

Summer '10

## Toasting the Success of Our 3rd Annual Event! Reading between the Wines



Just days after her new book, *How Clarissa Burden Learned to Fly*, was released, acclaimed novelist Connie May Fowler spoke to a sold-out crowd at the 3rd Annual Reading between the Wines held at the Sheraton Orlando Downtown Hotel located across from the Bob Carr Performing Arts Centre. Also at the event, tickling everyone's funny bone, was mystery-writer and humorist, Bob Morris, who chatted about his latest book, *Baja Florida*.

These authors, along with numerous business partners, donated their time and talents to help the Adult Literacy League raise funds to benefit the adult and pre-school students seeking to

improve their lives through literacy. Prior to the author's appearances, guests were treated to a delicious sampling of savory appetizers and rich wines, compliments of participating sponsors. Guests also had fun bidding on the wide array of exciting items for sale in the silent auction.

From left – Photo 1: (from left) Pam Brandon, Karen Lester and Katie Farmand. Photo 2: Cheryl Robb (left) is a big fan of Bob Morris (right), author of the Zack Chastain series of mystery novels. Photo 3: (from left) Terri Chastain of the Adult Literacy League shares a smile with author Connie May Fowler and Brendan Lynch, Event Chair of Reading between the Wines. Photo 4: (from left) Steve Bissinger, Leslie Golden and Trudi Bissinger.



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## Read to Me! = Reading-Ready by Kindergarten

How does a child learn to read if their parent doesn't read to them and there are no books in their home?

According to a 2006 report by the National Center for Education Statistics, children whose parents read to them during the important pre-school years become better readers and perform better in school. Sadly, however, children living in poverty are 45% less likely to be read to than their more affluent contemporaries, and the gap for other literacy-related activities is even greater. Most of these families are led by an adult reading at the lowest levels of literacy — sixth grade and below.

In Orange County, according to recent data from Head Start, 40% of children begin school experiencing significant language delays and lacking the basic pre-literacy skills they need.

For these reasons, the Adult Literacy League offers the *Read to Me!* book club, a family literacy program designed to promote interaction and reading activities between parent and pre-school child. The program helps the child to be reading-ready by kindergarten so they never need our literacy services as an adult, and they have a chance to break the cycle of poverty because they are good readers.

The program is offered to families with low levels of reading enrolled in



The *Read to Me!* book club offers free books and activities to children ages 3 to 7 from low-income homes and pre-school centers.

ALL's programs and to the pre-school children enrolled in the following community centers:

- Bithlo Head Start
- Frontline Outreach
- Winter Park Day Nursery

## More Adults Accessing Literacy Services than EVER Before!

Throughout 2009, the Adult Literacy League had too many students waiting, in too many places, for far too long... and it was time to take strategic action! With generous financial support from Dr. Phillips, Inc. we increased the number of tutors trained, streamlined the intake and assessment process and provided a variety of immediate learning opportunities in a variety of locations.

We started out with six small-group classes and now offer 27 classes per week! And rather than service less than 200 student-tutor pairs who meet weekly, we now serve 372 pairs weekly.

We have doubled the number of tutor trainings offered and that has enabled us to reduce the waiting list from 150 students to less than 100 students. And, thanks to Mariela Tolentino, our Intake and Assessment Specialist, we have reduced the time needed to enroll a student from several months to several weeks! With all our great classes, every new student can get started on a brighter future immediately!



The Friday morning ESOL class was over capacity until we received a program expansion grant from Dr. Phillips, Inc. which enabled us to add more classes and train more tutors.

## Bank of America receives Outstanding Business Partner Award at Florida Literacy Conference

In May, Bank of America was recognized by the Florida Literacy Coalition as an Outstanding Business Partner for the numerous ways it supports literacy throughout the state.

The Bank of America's Neighborhood Excellence Initiative has recognized the work of literacy organizations such as the Adult Literacy League as well as other literacy groups in the state by honoring them each with the \$200,000 Neighborhood Builder Awards. Bank of America in Central Florida has also recognized the efforts of Adult Literacy League literacy volunteers, Esther Myers and Joe Pankowiecki, with a "Local Hero" award. This award comes with a \$5,000 donation to the honoree's organization.

In addition, Bank of America in Central Florida provided outstanding training to volunteers, trainers, and tutors in "Money Matters!" an outstanding financial literacy curriculum to help low-level readers build their financial literacy skills. Currently, over 50 ALL tutors are actively engaged in assisting their students to improve their financial literacy along with their reading, writing, and English language proficiency. This means more adults with bank accounts, learning to save money, building retirement plans, and using credit wisely!

**Bank of America**



## ALL around the Community



Top photo: Clifford the Big Red Dog, with UCF intern, Erika Varnado, at the UCF Book Festival. Bottom photo: Rick Sickles of Orlando Kiwanis, with ALL Read to Me! volunteer, Janet Correa and ALL's Lisa Warren and Sherry Clark.

### UCF Book Festival

The Adult Literacy League was pleased to participate in the inaugural UCF Book Festival held in April. More than 25 exhibitors including books-sellers, publishers, authors, appraisers and many other non-profits who also support literacy and literary activities participated. Here UCF intern, Erika Varnado, joins Clifford the Dog to promote reading at our booth.

"Participating in events like the UCF Book Festival helps us get the word out about the importance of literacy to our community's economy and well-being," said Joyce Whidden, ALL Executive Director.

### What's the buzz? The bee is back!



The Young Lawyers Section of the Orange County Bar Association presents the inaugural Lawyers for Literacy Spelling Bee on October 7 at 6 p.m. at the Sonesta Hotel in downtown Orlando. A fun evening of spirited competition among the sharpest legal eagles will benefit the students of the Adult Literacy League. Want to compete or sponsor? Call Daryl Gottlieb of Fisher, Rushmer, Werrenrath, Dickson, Talley & Dunlap, PA at 407/843-2111.

### Want to know more about literacy?

ALL's Family Literacy Director, Sherry Clark, and Community Relations Manager, Lisa Warren, recently spoke to the Orlando Kiwanis Club about the importance of reading to children during the pre-school years. If you belong to a civic or faith-based organization and would like a literacy presentation for your club, please give us a call at 407-422-1540.

## Sponsor A Child in Read to Me!

Your \$500 investment (\$42 per month) will:

➤ Enable the Adult Literacy League to train a parent to be the first and most effective teacher in his/her child's life.

➤ Provide a pre-school child from a low-income home with *Read to Me!* lesson units for 30-36 weeks a year. Each unit consists of a free, age-appropriate children's book and learning materials for the parent and child to use together at home.

➤ Ensure that the child's parent increases the amount of time he/she reads to his/her child, and the child receives books and learning materials to use and enjoy at home.

**End result:** Your partnership makes it possible for a pre-schooler from a low-income, print-impooverished home to gain the literacy skills needed to enter school prepared to succeed. This program does not receive any governmental support, and depends solely on the support of individuals and the community to enable us to serve 330 children.

To sponsor a child for a year, or a portion of a year, please visit our website: [www.adultliteracyleague.org](http://www.adultliteracyleague.org) or call 407-422-1540.

## I'm Reading a Good Book!



**Heidi Bedell**  
Vice President, Starwood Vacation Ownership

*The Book Thief*  
by Markus Zusak

"This is the most engaging book I've read in over a year. I'm sad I'm almost finished!"



**Perlis Buckner**  
Adult Basic Education Student

*More Stories 3*  
by Caroline Blakely



**Maria Ines Delima**  
Adult Literacy ESOL Student

*Letting Go Of Your Bananas: How to Become More Successful by Getting Rid of Everything Rotten in Your Life*  
by Dr. Daniel T. Drubin



**Jennifer Dirscherl**  
Director of Community Relations and Employee Events, SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment

*The Boleyn Inheritance*  
by Phillipa Gregory



**Tony Jenkins**  
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*The Power of Social Innovation*  
by Stephen Goldsmith  
"It is a fabulous read and covers topics such as Civic Entrepreneurship, Community Wants and Assets, Igniting Civic Progress and Breaking Down Protection Barriers."