

Word & Hope



Bicycles Built for...Forty!

Tutor Erin McNulty wanted to celebrate the Center's Year of Service in a way that would benefit the families of our students. She spent last summer combing garage sales and flea markets for inexpensive bikes, most of which were in need of "sprucing up" or other repair. With the help of neighbors and friends, she wound up collecting about 40 bikes!

Erin, her husband, Frank Strong, and her stepson, Alex Strong, (all avid bikers) got to work restoring them: replacing chains and pedals, fixing handlebars and giving the bikes a new coat of paint. By October, the bikes were ready and brought to the Center.

Students came with their families to the Center to pick out a free bike that was as good as new. Up to that point, some families with several children had been sharing one bike. For others, Erin's gift was the first bike in the family.

Thank you Erin, Frank, and Alex for commemorating the Center's anniversary with such a beautiful gift of time, talent and treasure.



FMSC Community Service Project

Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) is a non-profit Christian organization that provides nutritious meals to malnourished children in some 70 countries around the world. The food packs are specifically formulated to meet the nutritional needs of children. Trained volunteers prepare the packed meals in assembly line fashion.

On January 25, 2014, the Center's service project was to fully staff two sessions at the Feed My Starving Children facility in Aurora. Ninety people for each session - tutors, students, their husbands, families and community members - volunteered to help.

Each session began with an inspiring video that fired up the workers and helped them to understand the impact and importance of the work of FMSC. Then it was time to get to work! With a light but purposeful mood, the teams hand-packed and boxed meals for shipment to Guatemala. Before leaving, volunteers tasted a sample of the food that they packed. The Center also made a \$2,000 donation to FMSC for the continuation of their mission.



Walk for Women

On March 8, the Center celebrated International Women's Day. In spite of the snow, ice and unrelenting cold, 42 women, men and children gathered at North Aurora Park for a welcoming ceremony that included warm up exercises. It was followed by a mile long walk through the park, ending with refreshments of hot chocolate, mulled cider and fresh fruit. Walkers, who came from Chicago, De Kalb and other local communities, had a great time and didn't seem to notice the cold. Maybe the T-shirts and pom-poms made it seem like spring! All the walkers basked in the warmth of the group's support for the Center's mission and International Women's Day. They left feeling refreshed, invigorated and glad that they had joined with people everywhere to celebrate the contributions women make to our world.

We would like to thank Laura Martinez, member of Center's Advisory Board and co-chair of the event, for her efforts to obtain funding, to plan and organize the event, and to secure the location. Finally, we give special thanks to the spouses who helped with set up, parking and traffic control.



A tree that looks at God all day, And lifts her leafy arms to pray – Joyce Kilmer

To leave a tangible reminder and to symbolize the life and vitality that has been shared at the Center for the last twenty years, a Marmo maple tree will be planted in our backyard at the start of the fall term.

Thanks to nurseryman Ryan Doty, landscaper Ed Max and former tutor, Chris Darbo at Midwest Groundcovers, for all their help. May this tree be a symbol of the Center's past and future blessings and growth.

Save the Date

Tutor training for this fall is at the Dominican Literacy Center from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. August 20, 22, 27, and 29, 2013. Please plan to attend all sessions. To register or for more information, call or email Alison Brzezinski at 630-898-4636 or alisonbrzezinski@gmail.com.

“It’s been a great ride.”

When Sister Kathleen Ryan founded the Dominican Literacy Center 20 years ago, she asked for ESL volunteers. One of her first volunteers was Sister Ann Clennon. For two years, Sister Ann was an evening ESL tutor, while teaching seventh and eighth grades at St. Peter School in Aurora. Then she became a permanent staff member, serving as coordinator of tutor training.



Sister Ann Clennon

For eighteen years, this bubbly, efficient, fun-loving Sister has been a crucial member of the Center staff. Whether she is providing assistance with tutor tips and lesson plans, swapping recipes or sharing the misery of Chicago Cubs fans, Sister Ann has managed to remain close to everyone at the Center. After spring break, Sister Ann announced that she would be leaving the Center at the end of this school year.

Sister Ann has accepted a new position at Sacred Heart Convent, the Mother House of the Springfield Dominican Sisters. She will be responsible for the coordination of events at the Mother House and at Siena Hall, which hosts retreats and meetings. She will also assist the general council, the governing body of the community of the Springfield Dominican Sisters. Her new duties will allow her to spend more time with her dad, which makes both of them very happy.

“Throughout my time here,” she says, “I have been inspired and motivated by the wonderful tutors and students. It’s been a great ride!”

Sister Ann, we wish you health and happiness. We appreciate your unending work and supportive help. We will miss you so very much.

Wednesday Morning Lesson



It is nine o’clock on a Wednesday morning, one half hour before tutoring sessions start. However, a tutor and student are hard at work in Room 14. They are not making up a missed class or trying to get ahead of the lesson schedule. Instead, the student has become the tutor, the tutor the student.

Earlier in the year, Doris, a first year tutor, and Gloria, a first year student arrived for class. Even though Doris is not Gloria’s tutor, they struck up a conversation, while waiting for the opening meeting.

Casually, Doris mentioned to Gloria that she would love to learn Spanish. To her surprise, Gloria volunteered

to teach her Spanish. Gloria felt it was a way to repay all the kindness and opportunity that the Center had shown her.

Armed with a book that her children used from Colombia, Gloria began to tutor Doris every Wednesday morning in Spanish. They work on vocabulary and pronunciation. The Sisters always say that speaking a new language may be difficult because the speaker has to use muscles that the mouth had never used before. Doris is finding that to be so true.

Gloria came to the United States in 1997, married and had two children. She is now the sole support of her family and wants to become a sign language interpreter. Not only does she attend the Dominican Literacy Center once a week, she is also studying sign language at Waubensee Community College. To improve her language skills and pronunciation, she came to the Center.

“I am excited to learn,” says Doris. Gloria responds, “Doris is doing a good job.” Hopefully, their relationship will continue next year, when more learning will have the chance to take place.

Wish List

As an organization that relies on grant and donations to complete its mission, the Dominican Literacy Center has an ongoing Wish List. Currently we are in need of:

- Reams of new, white 8-1/2 by 11” paper
- A new 35 mm camera
- An Apple iPad
- Gift certificates to Office Max, Office Depot, Target and Menards

If you would rather donate money towards an item, donating to the Center became easier this spring with two new online fundraising sites.

- Go to www.razoo.com, type Dominican Literacy Center Aurora in the search box at the top of the page and donate to the Center. There is also a link to razoo.com on our webpage.
- Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to the Center each time you shop at Amazon when you log in with www.smile.amazon.com. Select the Dominican Literacy Center Aurora as your charitable organization.

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board provides guidance and support for the many initiatives of the Dominican Literacy Center:

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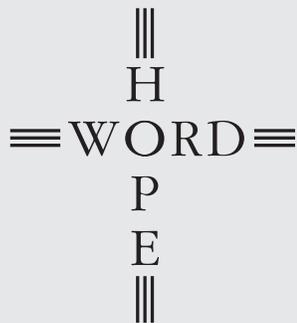


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The Dominican Literacy Center provides ...



The mission of the Dominican Literacy Center is to provide opportunities for women to receive individual tutoring in reading, writing and speaking English. We provide these opportunities through individual tutoring by trained volunteers within the neighborhood setting. The Dominican Literacy Center believes in empowerment through education, and in the dignity of each individual person.



- **free 90-minute weekly individual tutoring sessions for women in reading, writing and speaking English as a second language.**
- **customized curriculum of English-only instruction appropriate to each student's level.**
- **sessions that run from September through May, with day and evening formats.**
- **the opportunity for a student to remain in the program for three years, usually working with the same tutor during the entire time.**
- **conversation classes open to current students and "graduates".**
- **citizenship classes for both men and women.**

***For more information, call 630-898-4636, M-F 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
or see our website at www.dominicanliteracycenter.org***