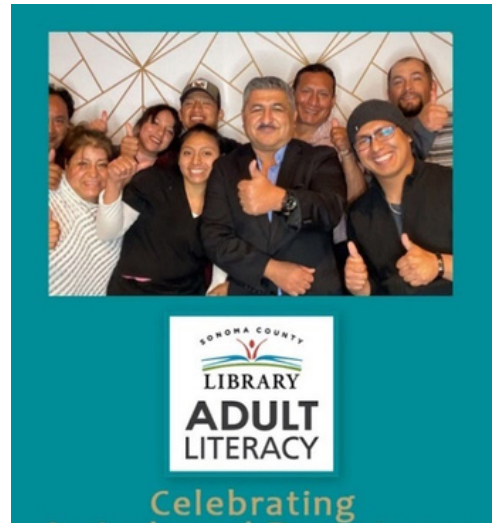


# ADULT LITERACY COMMUNITY

*Quarterly articles, features, and highlights*

WE WISH *new year* YOU A HAPPY  
2024

Thank you for being part of the Sonoma County Library Adult Literacy & English Language Partners Community of programs. Here are some favorite images highlighting 2023!



Thank You

## American Culture Corner

Black History Month is celebrated every February in the United States. It began as a week-long celebration and **evolved** into a month-long celebration in the late 1960s. February was chosen because it contains the birthdays of both Abraham Lincoln, a former President who helped **emancipate** slaves, and Frederick Douglass, a former slave and brilliant **orator**, who fought to end slavery.

### Who were they?

Sandra Day O'Connor was born in 1930 in Texas at a time when women were expected to be **homemakers**. She went to Stanford Law school and graduated at the **top of her class**.



**Sandra Day O'Connor**

She was later nominated by President Ronald Reagan as the first woman to be on the Supreme Court. The Senate voted her into the Supreme Court in a **unanimous** vote. She served as a Supreme Court Justice until 2006. She died in 2023 at the age of 93.



**Harry Belafonte**

Harry Belafonte was a singer, actor, and **Civil Rights activist**.

Belafonte was the child of immigrant parents from Jamaica and Martinique, both islands in the Caribbean Sea. His roots influenced his music. He became

famous in the 1950s when he released his first album *Calypso*. This introduced the world to the song "Banana Boat (Day-O)" which quickly became popular and recognizable.

Belafonte was also a **confidant** of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and fought tirelessly for Civil Rights. He died in 2023 at the age of 96.

## Glossary

**evolved:** change into something else

**emancipate:** to set free

**orator:** a skilled or gifted public speaker

**homemaker:** someone who stays at home and cooks, cleans, and takes care of children instead of working outside the home

**top of her class:** having the highest grades in a class

**Supreme Court:** highest **judicial** court in the nation

**judicial:** refers to a judge or court

**unanimous:** when everyone is in agreement

**Civil Rights activist:** someone who fought for equal rights of a minority group

**confidant:** a person who is close to someone else/entrusted with secrets

**cuisines:** style or method of cooking especially of a particular country

**narrow down:** select or choose from many

**novel:** new (adjective)

**initial:** happening at the beginning

**speech and language pathologist:** someone who works with people to diagnose and treat speech and language learning problems

**paraprofessional:** a trained aide who assists a professional

**automatically:** when something happens by itself without you having to do anything

**beneficial:** helpful

**proficiency:** skill, knowledge or ability from training and practice

**picturesque:** to look pretty, typically refers to a landscape

**series:** a set of television shows

# Help Us Spread the Word - New Tutor Trainings

Do you have any family or friends who want to become a tutor in the Adult Literacy Program? Our program has expanded to include English language instruction as well as literacy tutoring. Call us in advance so we can answer any questions and help with registration for one of the new tutor trainings below:

**Thursday, January 18, 2024:  
9:00 AM - 10:30 AM**

**Monday, April 8, 2024:  
9:00 AM - 10:30 AM**

**Wednesday, February 28, 2024:  
3:00 PM - 4:30 PM**

**Wednesday, May 15, 2024:  
3:00 PM - 4:30 PM**

## Día de los Muertos and Holiday Open House

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Día de los Muertos altar project or visited us during the Holiday Open House! They were both a great success. We loved learning about your loved ones who are no longer with us and getting to catch up over a cookie and some tea during the holidays.

Check out these photos of our altar and the Open House spread:



2023 Día de los Muertos altar



2023 Open House spread

## A Tutor Looks Back:

### One Year in the English Language Partners (ELP) Program



Susan Sipe

#### **What motivated you to join the ELP program as a tutor?**

A friend of my mother's in Oklahoma worked as a volunteer for many years teaching adults to read. She inspired me to want to open up the world to others through reading. Our library program for learning English is not the same, but I find it to be just as beneficial to the participants here in Sonoma County.

#### **What do you like about tutoring an English language learner?**

Having a special relationship with someone I would not have known without this program.

#### **What has been your biggest challenge as an ELP tutor?**

The biggest challenge for both of us is just getting to the library for our sessions. I am retired from work so I only need to be available. But my learner Consuelo works two jobs, helps with her young granddaughters, and is sometimes exhausted. Her dedication inspires me.

#### **What have you and your learner accomplished that makes you the most proud?**

I am most proud that she is enjoying our sessions and wants to make up sessions we miss.

#### **Has tutoring changed your life in any way?**

I know a lot more about the courage it takes to live in a new country where you don't know the language — how hard such people work, plus the support they give to other family members here and in the home country. I am humbled to think how easy my life has been in comparison.

#### **Has tutoring had an impact on your adult learner's life?**

To me, it seems she has more confidence. She can read more rapidly, and her understanding of vocabulary has grown. She enjoys reading more when we read together.

#### **What is your advice to English language tutors?**

Be patient with yourself as you figure out what to do with your learner. Don't try to correct all mistakes: Focus on a few things so your learner is not discouraged. Build the relationship with trust and respect.

At first, my learner used only present tense for conversation. She told me a short story each week and I wrote it down. Little by little, I am showing her how to change each verb to past tense. Reading helped quite a bit as she had the past tense words from the text to practice.

#### **What is your advice to English language learners about achieving their goals?**

Progress is made by practicing every day. Whatever the challenge, we can make progress by staying focused and not giving up. Look back a year to see how much you have achieved!

**What is your advice to English language learners about anything they should *not* do?**

Don't give up. If your sessions are not what you want, talk to the Adult Literacy staff. Be willing to speak up and make adjustments, but don't give up.

**You are a retired speech therapist. How does your experience help you tutor an adult learning to speak English?**

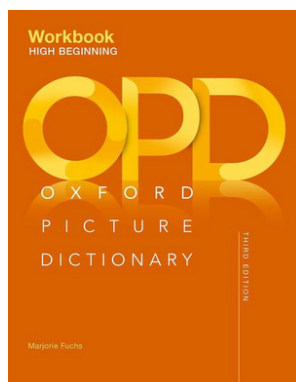
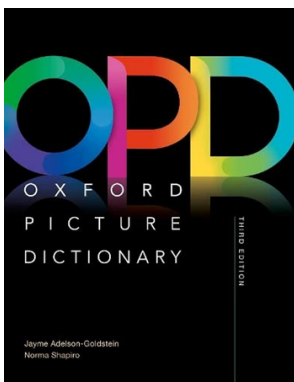
I thought I would have some tools I could use from speech therapy, but I didn't find them useful. My career experience helped me to be unafraid to try something new. From my work with adults and children, I learned that every client is exceptional, has her own way of learning, and responds in her own way to teaching methods and rewards. The challenge is to find what works!

**Any stories you'd like to share about the past year working with your learner?**

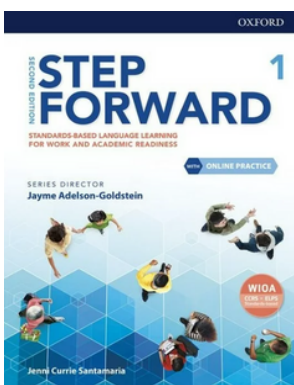
Consuelo and I work as equals, even though her mother and I are the same age, and I have children Consuelo's age. She has so much to teach me about Mexico: her customs, foods, and recipes. When we have a language barrier and I can't understand her, she whips out her phone and finds a picture, a word, or a video to help me. I have learned about special occasions such as quinceñeros, Día del Niño, and Día de la Candelaria, and delicious food such as los molcajetes, panbazos, and Rosca de Reyes. Have we already been together a year? It has flown by so quickly. I am enjoying our time together and eager to see what the next year brings us.

**Some of Our Favorite ELP Resources:**

**Oxford Picture Dictionary and Workbook**



This workbook (left) and Oxford Picture Dictionary (right) are good jumping-off points when you start with a learner. Go to a page in the Oxford Picture Dictionary and the same page in the workbook. You'll see that the workbook provides tutoring activities based on the topic you're studying in the Picture Dictionary.



**Step Forward Workbook Series**

What we like about this series is that its easy-to-use workbooks come with free access to online audio files. They go along with the workbook exercises and

give learners an opportunity to hear different voices.

**See something you like or want to try with your learner?**

Contact our office via email, phone, or come in Monday - Friday, 10 AM - 3 PM and browse our resource collection yourself.

We can be reached at [literacy@sonomalibrary.org](mailto:literacy@sonomalibrary.org) and (707) 544-2622

## Get To Know Tutor Jack Magrisso



**Jack Magrisso**

### What do you enjoy in winter?

Read books or listen to music in my living room sitting by the fire. Take a brisk hike in the woods or by the ocean.

### What are your hobbies?

I garden and love to grow tomatoes. I also play keyboards (such as a portable organ/synthesizer/stage piano).

### What is your favorite food?

I like eating and cooking all types of ethnic **cuisines**. My favorites are Mediterranean food including Italian, Spanish, Greek, and Turkish; but Asian cuisines of all types and Mexican foods are also delicious. And baking (and eating!) desserts of any kind are a must.

### What kind of music do you like?

It's hard for me to **narrow down** since I like so many different types of music: blues, American folk and roots music, rock of all genres, ethnic folk and world music, and classical. But if I have to declare one, it's jazz: from New Orleans style and swing, to be-bop and free jazz, to fusion—you name it.

Tutor Jack Magrisso recently retired to Sonoma County from Michigan with his wife Liz: "I thought being a tutor would be a wonderful way to serve my new community and challenge myself to do something **novel** and useful." Jack tutored children in reading many years ago, but he never had the experience of working with adults.

Jack explained two reasons he likes being an Adult Literacy tutor: "First, I like working with another person who has an equal voice and interest in shaping the tutoring experience, so that learning goes both ways—I'm *learning* as much as tutoring." Second reason: "Participating with someone who is eager and excited about learning. Juliana, the wonderful woman I tutor, always amazes me with her insights and her desire to expand her knowledge about everything!"

Because Jack is new to tutoring, he said: "I had **initial** doubts about my ability to help Juliana become a fluent reader and writer of English. Thankfully, I've had the continuing support and wisdom of my wife Liz." (Liz is a tutor in our English Language Partners program, who has previous experience working with adults as a **speech and language pathologist**).

As Jack has learned, achieving a new goal may seem overwhelming: "Break it down into smaller steps, and take one step at a time. Even if it seems impossibly difficult—like you're climbing a mountain—before you realize it, you will reach the top."

As for other new tutors, Jack's advice is: "Listen carefully to the person you are working with. Allow the learner to guide your approach by working with the various materials and techniques that are in line with their goals. Be flexible; those goals will change as the learner improves."

What has been their proudest moment as learning partners? "Juliana's recent essay about the memories of her father is something she is very proud of. The fact that she entrusted me to help her has been the high point as her tutor."

## Get To Know Learner Lupita Ochoa



**Lupita Ochoa**

### **What is your favorite TV show?**

My favorite TV is the Food Network because they have shows about cooking new recipes. I love to cook for my family, especially fish and chicken, which are healthy.

### **What is your perfect day?**

My perfect day is when my family is together: We play cards and games. We go on vacation together. We went to Tennessee to see my son.

### **What is your proudest moment?**

When I stopped eating sugar and carbs two years ago.

### **Who has inspired you the most?**

For me, it's Mother Teresa of Calcutta, because she helped a lot of poor and sick people who did not have any family. I respect people who donate money and open their homes to their friends.

Lupita's biggest challenge when she joined our English Language Partners program a year ago was "overcoming my fear about making a mistake. It was scary. I am feeling more confidence now about practicing English."

She was motivated to talk with family members in English: "I wanted to communicate with my daughter-in-law and son-in-law in English since they are both Americans. It's easier now, and I feel more comfortable either talking to them or sending text messages." Lupita raised her children in the U.S. after coming from Mexico as an adult.

Another goal for Lupita was speaking and understanding English for work: "I can read a note in English and speak more English with my housecleaning clients. Before it was a little difficult but now I understand any instructions my client gives me."

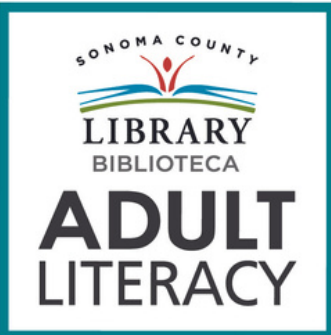
Lupita shares advice for other English language learners: "Don't believe it when people tell you that you cannot learn. I am listening and speaking in English more, but it's especially difficult when people speak fast."

Right now she is reading *The Search* (*La Busqueda* in Spanish) about positive thinking. "When I was a child, my family always said: You can't do anything – they were poor and did not have a vision for the future. This book gave me the belief that I can do it."

Lupita says her favorite tutoring activities are: "I like it when my tutor uses videos, a whiteboard, and games for remembering new words. The videos on YouTube are for grammar, which is very difficult, such as verb tenses. Janice is a wonderful tutor."

She also recommends reading subtitles in English for any TV show: "I can listen and read the words in English at the same time. I made more progress doing this."

Most important to Lupita "Have fun and enjoy the tutoring — enjoyment is everything. You need good communication with your tutor, and laugh and have a good time."



**DISCOVER • LEARN • SHARE**

**SONOMA COUNTY LIBRARY  
ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMS**

**In 2022-2023...**

helped

**163 ADULTS**

improve reading, writing & English skill

served

**68 FAMILIES/112 CHILDREN**

with resources & books for all ages

**85 VOLUNTEER TUTORS**

worked 1-to-1 at library branches

community volunteers gave

**7,000 +**  
service hours

Thank **YOU** for supporting adult literacy  
& English language learning at  
The Sonoma County Public Libraries



# Student Writing

## The Women's March for Immigrant Rights

by Luisa Isidro with translation help by tutor Laura Schatzberg

For eight months the group *Almas Libras* planned a three-day march from Petaluma to the San Francisco Federal Building. Our goal was legislation guaranteeing rights for all undocumented people living in the United States. The 'Law of Registry'\* has existed for many years but the government has buried and forgotten it.

My personal challenge was to walk for all three days. I prepared myself mentally, keeping in my mind that this march will cause a change in the life of immigrants from different races and from different countries. I was full of hope and emotion thinking, "I can achieve this. I can make it happen."

For five months, to prepare my body and mind, I walked three times a week, weather permitting. Slowly I increased the time and looked for new places to walk. This motivated me to increase my stamina. Every day I prepared my water with fruit to drink in small portions, which is very important so as not to dehydrate. I also practiced stretching before and after to warm up and cool down my muscles.

When the day of the march arrived, oh what emotion! I was chosen to be one of the security leaders for a day. I liked being a support person so I did it for all three days.

I was emotional and I learned a lot and I told myself I could do it. I felt positive about my leadership and my connection to the other women. I felt confident and compassionate and that I was there for them. At night, relaxing after the long day's walk, women came to talk to me and sometimes they talked about their personal issues.

And better still, I achieved my purpose — a great success, because I didn't tire, my body wasn't sore. I only had two blisters on my foot. I was happy with myself. I was thankful to God for all the participants because the fact that we were a small group meant that we were not confident we could reach our goal alone, but united with other organizations we were able to make a good impression.

Our group, *Almas Libras*, showed that we are women free to make decisions unrelated to our gender, and we can empower each other.

\*The Law of Registry is formally known as The Renewing Immigration Provisions of the Immigration Act of 1929. A proposal to update the 1929 act was presented to the Senate by California Senator Alex Padilla this year. The original law states that any person in the U.S. for seven or more years is entitled to have their status legalized.

## Celebrate Your Work Together

All entries generated from tutor reports -  
THANK YOU!

- My learner reported that she read a library book to her granddaughters this week. The 8-year-old told her: Grandma, you are getting better at reading English!
- We had a huge breakthrough...my learner finished reading *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*. It was the first chapter book he has ever read! A great accomplishment.
- Not only did she get the **paraprofessional** job, but she was able to write a letter requesting a better salary, which worked.
- My learner passed her citizenship test and now her three children are **automatically** citizens too! A very exciting day.
- My learner has registered to vote and has received her first mail-in ballot.
- She was so proud of seeing her story published in last year's student writing book. She is working hard on her story for this year's edition.

## Get to Know the Conversation Class Facilitator



**Janice Eurgubian**

Interviewed by Leticia Soria

"The Adult Literacy Program has given me the opportunity to grow as an educator and help others become more confident communicators." Janice embraces her volunteer roles as an English Language Partners tutor and English Conversation Class facilitator. She has been working with an adult learner for almost a year and this past July, she joined the group of class facilitators: "Working with a group of adults over Zoom was going to be a new experience, so why not jump in and try it."

Janice's 30 years of expertise working as a speech and language pathologist with Petaluma City Schools has been **beneficial** when facilitating classes. "I need to ask questions in a way that everyone, no matter their English **proficiency**, has an opportunity to participate."

Her favorite thing about being a class facilitator is "watching a conversation take off. It's exciting and rewarding to see the participants asking questions; sharing insightful stories and ideas; smiling, laughing, and helping one another."

Janice learned valuable advice about achieving one's goal from the adult learner she tutors: "Ignore the voice in your head that says you can't do it. You can. Believe in yourself. It just takes doing. And don't be shy about making mistakes. Native English speakers make mistakes all the time." Janice adds, "I am incredibly inspired by the adults who participate in this program. Their willingness to learn, the life stories they share, and the encouragement they give to one another, motivates me to be a better person."

When asked about her hobbies, Janice shares: "I'm incredibly grateful to the Sonoma County Regional Park system and walk daily along one of its many **picturesque** trails." During her walks, Janice enjoys "listening to inspirational music, historical podcasts, or audiobooks." Her idea of a perfect day involves "time with my grandchildren and friends, working on a home project, preparing and eating a healthy but satisfying meal and yes, I'll admit it, watching an episode or two of a Netflix **series**."

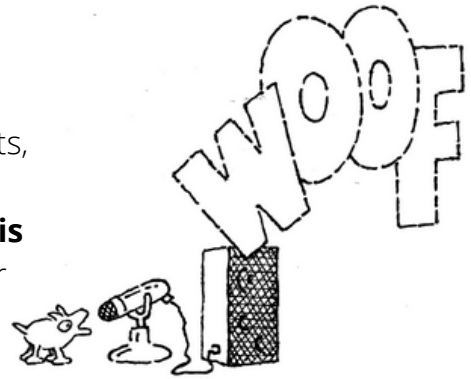
# Idioms

Each newsletter, we will bring you a new English idiom.

## **Bark is worse than one's bite**

(Not as bad or difficult as a person appears to be)

On occasion Mr. Hopkins speaks harshly to his students, especially when they fail to complete their homework assignment. Nevertheless, they all know that his **bark is worse than his bite**. He threatens to keep them after school and to tell their parents, but he's **not really as bad-tempered as he appears**.



# What's Cooking?

Have a favorite recipe or food related story to share? Send it to [literacy@sonomalibrary.org](mailto:literacy@sonomalibrary.org)

## **Ponche Caliente**

By Jessica A.

For many generations my family and I drink Ponche Caliente; it is a symbol for Christmas.

### **Ponche for Christmas**

A warm winter punch that is both sweet and tangy and often served during Christmas.

**(20 cups of water = 15 people)**



### **Ingredients:**

- 3 sticks of cinnamon
- 1 cup Hibiscus dried
- 1 peeled and chopped sugar cane (cut into chunks)
- 1 cup regular sugar
- 8 pods of tamarind (shelled)
- 12 quartered Mexican guavas
- 12 Tejocotes (whole - a mix between an apricot and a crab apple)
- 15 prunes (chopped)
- 2 cubed green apples
- 1 cone piloncillo (unrefined sugar with a smoky caramel flavor)
- 1 orange (sliced for flavor)
- 1 cup walnuts (toasted)

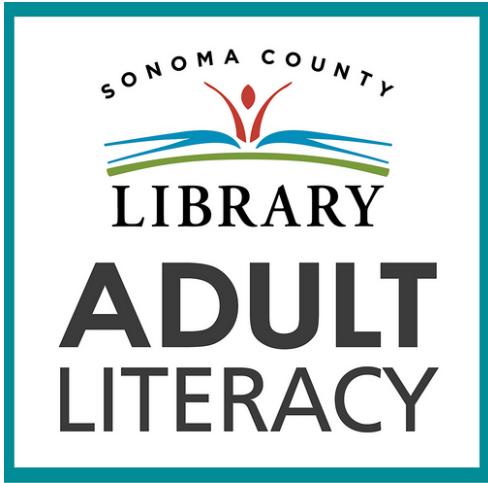
### **Directions:**

Cut off the ends of the sugar cane and score on both sides. Boil for 8 minutes and peel off the skin.

Boil 20 cups water and add hibiscus. Remove from heat and let steep 20 minutes. Add everything else in this order: cinnamon; piloncillo; sugar cane; tejocote; hibiscus with water and orange.

Simmer for at least 15 minutes. Serve in a cup and enjoy!

This story was originally featured in our 2017 Sonoma County Library Adult Literacy Collection: Bringing Our Stories to the Table.



## Adult Literacy Office

Our office is located inside the  
Central Santa Rosa Library, 2nd floor  
211 E Street  
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

## Adult Literacy Hours

Our office is open Monday - Friday  
10 AM - 3 PM  
You can reach us at (707) 544-2622 or  
[literacy@sonomalibrary.org](mailto:literacy@sonomalibrary.org)

### How to Submit Your Work

Submissions to the Adult Literacy Community newsletter are welcome! We cannot guarantee publication, and materials cannot be returned. Please include your name, address, and phone number. Student writings and photos can be sent by email to: [literacy@sonomalibrary.org](mailto:literacy@sonomalibrary.org)

### How to Get Involved as a New Tutor

Call to preregister for an upcoming new tutor orientation:

**Thursday, January 18, 2024:**  
**9:00 AM - 10:30 AM**

**Wednesday, February 28, 2024:**  
**3:00 PM - 4:30 PM**

## Ongoing Classes Open to All:

Join our Conversation Classes for practice speaking English at all levels. Classes take place on Zoom on the following days:

Wednesdays 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Thursdays 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

Find and register for classes at

[sonomalibrary.org/conversation](https://sonomalibrary.org/conversation)

Upcoming Library Holidays 2024:

January 1 - Library Closed - New Year's Day

January 15 - Library Closed - Martin Luther King Jr. Day

February 19 - Library Closed - President's Day

March 31 - Library Closed - Cesar Chavez Day