

## Message from the Executive Director

OK. I'll admit it. I fell for "Game of Thrones" hook, line, and sinker. Every Sunday night, we counted down the minutes until 8:00 p.m. when we could start streaming the next episode.

There were lots of unforgettable moments. For me, the best moment was in the final episode when Tyrian stood before the most powerful leaders on the continent of Westeros. His fate was being decided. Suddenly, the dialog turned and they faced a larger question. Who should decide the fate of Westeros? Who should be king?

Tyrian thoughtfully considered the question. "What unites people?" he pondered. "Armies? Gold? Flags? Stories. There's nothing in the world more powerful than a good story. Nothing can stop it. No enemy can defeat it. And who has a better story than Bran the Broken? The boy who fell from a high tower and lived."

"Who has a better story than..." That line struck me because it's true. Student success stories unite Literacy Volunteers Fox Valley.

... Who has a better story than the Mexican student who started as a pickle packer? His hands were numb every day after work because he had been handling frozen dill pickles for eight hours. He did it so he could stay in the United States and marry the woman he loved. Now he is one of the people who handle the accelerator at Fermilab.

... Who has a better story than the Burmese student who was driven from his farm by soldiers because he is Karon, a tribe that the Myanmar government decided to eradicate? He and his family walked through the jungle for three days dodging snakes and elephants to reach Thailand where he waited eight years for a country to offer them asylum. He and his family now live successfully here in the United States. Most importantly, they live in safety.

I can tell you dozens of tales about our students, tutors, supporters, and the successes that bind them and us together. It's powerful stuff. But instead I'll let you turn to the newsletter where you can read about stories that are still being built.

Thanks for being part of Literacy Volunteers Fox Valley.



Peg Coker, Executive Director

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### TUTOR TRAINING

TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS  
JULY 16, 18, 23, AND 25  
6:30PM TO 9:00PM  
ST. CHARLES PUBLIC LIBRARY

### TUTOR TRAINING

MONDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS  
AUGUST 12, 14, 19, AND 21  
6:30PM TO 9:00PM  
ST. CHARLES PUBLIC LIBRARY

### TUTOR TRAINING

TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS  
SEPTEMBER 10, 12, 17, AND 19  
6:30PM TO 9:00PM  
ST. CHARLES PUBLIC LIBRARY

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### Literacy Volunteers Fox Valley

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Do you know which items  
go on a *Haft sin* table?  
Find out on pg. 3

## Welcome New Tutors

Congratulations to the volunteers who braved sub-zero temperatures, snow, ice, and rain to complete tutor training in January, February, March, and May.

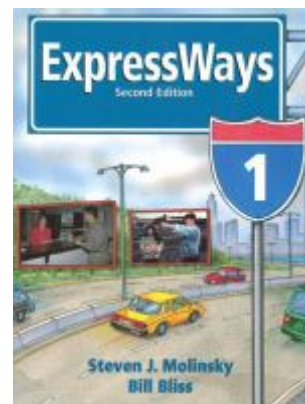
Thomas Brown	Kathryn Kurinsky	Carol Pennel
Catherine Clark	Marcia Lafferty	Katie Rowe
Joanne Dahlberg-Smitka	Elena Lusk	Kathy Rymarz
Michelle Dalton	Holly Mech	Debbie Scardina
Pamela Feyereisen	Patricia Meyer	Kelly Smaltz
Lora Fleck	Laura Mueller	Anna Sullivan
Pinki Ghotra	Wayne Mular	Audrey Tillmans
Jayne Haley	Jon Mullins	David Villwock
Jean Harvey	Dawn Olson	Maggie Villwock
Heidi Hunter	James Pace	David Zepeda
Anna Kane	William Parkhurst	Grace Zepeda
Jean Keskitalo	Reem Pashan	

## Tutor Resource

During our Spotlight interview, Marilyn Horbus said, “It has been very helpful to always focus on functional vocabulary words and immediately using them in phrases and short sentences so there are things students can use immediately in their day to day contact with others. Also, if clarity or intelligibility is an issue, focusing on vowel production in words, even modeling stretching the vowel in new words can be helpful. “

Marilyn uses “Expressways” by Steven J. Molinsky and Bill Bliss as part of her lesson. It is described as a complete four-level course that features all-skills language practice. The series incorporates cooperative learning, critical thinking, problem solving, role-playing, cross-cultural discussions, self-assessment, and community activities to promote an interactive, student-centered learning experience.

You will find copies in the regular collection at the St. Charles Public Library.



## HAPPY NEW YEAR – 1398

Think of a holiday that combines all that is Christmas with the freshness of Easter and the celebration and colors of the Fourth of July. Got it?

Well, that is close to what the Persian holiday, Nowruz, means to approximately 300 million people around the globe. Celebrated on the first day of the first month of the Iranian calendar, it coincides with the spring equinox, coming around March 21.

And it has been celebrated since 3,000 BCE. The United Nations General Assembly officially recognized Nowruz in 2010.

The holiday symbolizes new life. The name itself means “No”-new - “roux” –day.” The 13-day celebration encompasses the rebirth of nature and welcoming of new beginnings. And, yes, those 13 days ARE the holiday and ARE vacation days from work!

From a practical standpoint, Nowruz is marked by cleaning - think spring cleaning to the max. Included is clearing out things that are no longer useful and cleaning house, top to bottom. When the holiday fun begins, it begins with new clothes and plenty of symbolic treats.



The thirteenth day of the holiday is marked by going out into nature. Sizdah Bedar means “getting rid of the thirteenth” and refers to the old. The items on the Haft sin table represent giving back to nature and welcoming in the new.

The Haft sin table features items that are mindful of age and wisdom, love, prosperity, spring, rebirth, health, and sweetness. Fresh grass sprouts are cast into water marking rebirth. The sprouts are also braided, symbolizing the hopes of young women looking for husbands.

And included in all the celebrating are family and friends. “See everyone and then see them again.” I visit you and then you visit me. And we share food, music, and dancing.

What could welcome spring better than that?

## Trivia Bee Toasts Literacy

This spring, LVFV's annual Trivia Bee for Literacy treated attendees to the fine dining experience. FONA, which stands for Flavors of North America, was transformed into *L'Abeille*. Guests were met by the maître d'hôtel and given the menu du jour. The company's proprietary scents wafted through the air and provided an aroma of haute cuisine. Director of Literacy Volunteers Fox Valley, Peg Coker, kicked off the competition by talking about the purpose of the Bee—our students. She shared a story about a recent post she had seen showing people with different modes of transportation—a car, a bike, on foot, and in a wheelchair. Each might feel that they are lacking something, but to someone with less, it is a huge gain. What may seem like a small achievement for a native speaker, like having a parent/teacher conference, might be very daunting for someone with limited English. Tutoring helps students achieve more at work and in the community. Events like the Trivia Bee help raise the funds necessary for the training, tutoring, testing, and more that enable adults to learn English in the Fox Valley.



Team Spirit winners, "Beast and the Taco Belles"



The coveted Bee caps & trophy.

For the teams involved, the day is just as much about friendly competition as it is supporting the community. Thirty-two teams of three answered 50 restaurant-themed and general knowledge questions.

This year's winners were:

**FIRST PLACE:** "Would You Like Answers With That?" **Team Chris Denault**, sponsored by **Nameplate and Panel Technology of Carol Stream** (43 pts.)

**SECOND PLACE:** "Know-It-Owls" of **Batavia Public Library** (42 pts.)

**THIRD PLACE:** **St. Charles Noon Kiwanis** (41 pts.)

**BEST TEAM NAME:** "Maître D'Tectives" of **Aurora Police Department**

**TEAM SPIRIT:** "Beast & the Taco Belles" of **St. Charles Breakfast Rotary**

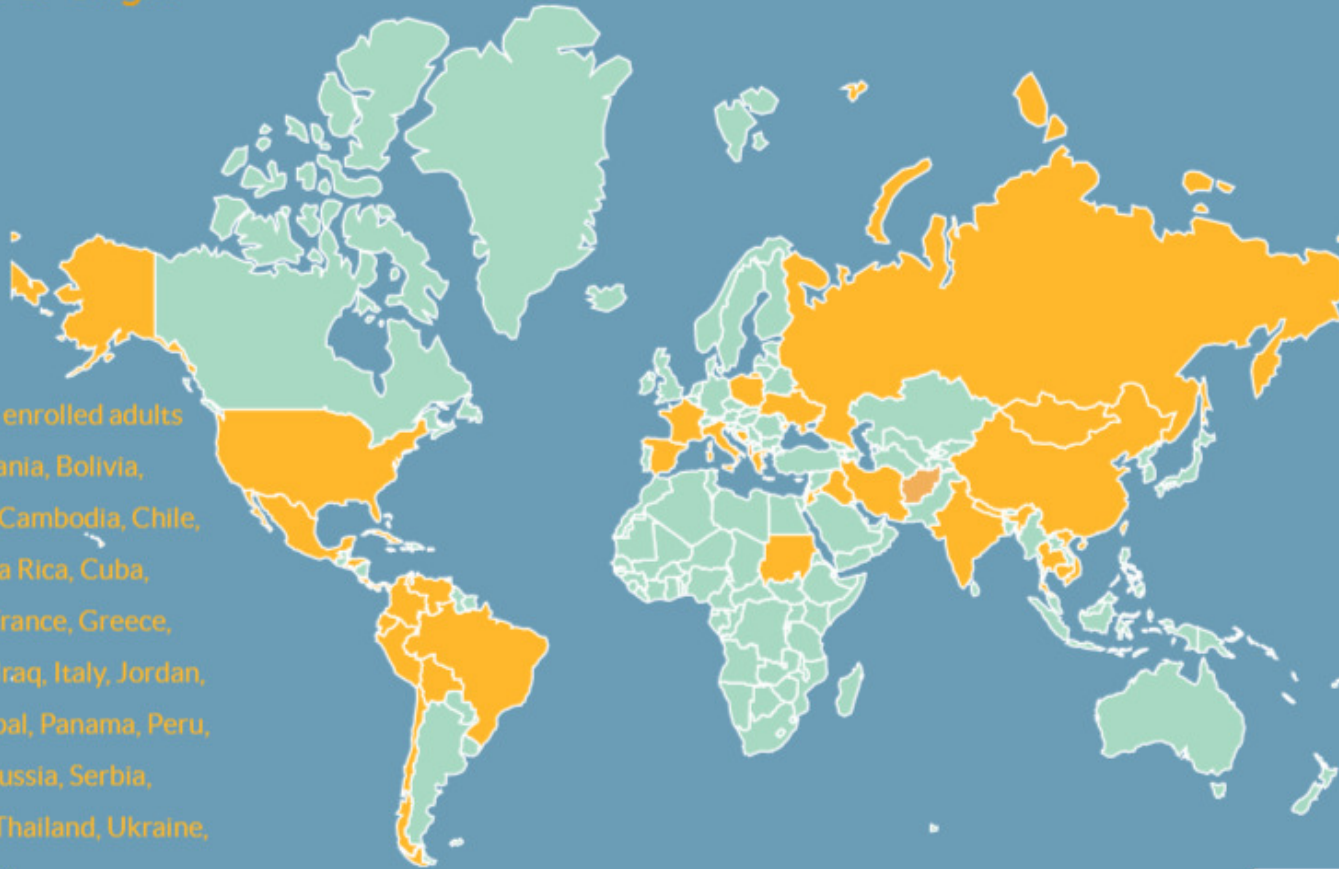
The rounds of questions are punctuated by breaks for breakfast treats and trips to the silent auction. Some new prizes this year included luxurious vacation packages to idyllic spots in the Midwest, such as three nights at the Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee or two nights at the French Lick Springs Hotel in Indiana. Foodies had their pick of delectable baskets and gift certificates to local restaurants like The Balmoral Restaurant for afternoon tea or Heritage Prairie Farm for a sustainable certified organic pizza party. Those looking to try something new might be interested in tickets for indoor skydiving or a piano lesson at the Dottie Mantsch Music Studio!

LVFV would like to thank all of our wonderful sponsors, hosts, volunteers, donors, and competitors. We hope to see you again next year!



# New Students Enrolled in FY 2018

## Countries of Origin



In fiscal year 2018, we enrolled adults from Afghanistan, Albania, Bolivia, Bosnia, Brazil, Burma, Cambodia, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Greece, Honduras, India, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Mexico, Mongolia, Nepal, Panama, Peru, Poland, Puerto Rico, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Sudan, Taiwan, Thailand, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Vietnam.

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## Tutor/Student Spotlight

**Hakimeh Albohamal**, student

**Q: Where are you originally from?**

A: Iran. I have lived here for five years.

**Q: Did you come directly from Iran to the United States?**

A: No. We stopped in Vienna for six months. There are still people waiting to come. Not my religion but other religions. I hear some people have been waiting one year. The way is closed now.

**Q: Then you are a religious refugee?**

A: Yes

**Q: Did you know any English when you came to this country?**

A: No. When I came here it was hard for me because I was pregnant with my daughter. I should look for a doctor but it was hard for me. I didn't understand. I go first to World Relief on College Avenue. The college has transportation so I had a class and I had a tutor but when my daughter was born, I stopped. My husband again went to World Relief and I had another teacher for 3-5 months, but we moved here (Batavia) and it was too far for her to go. Here, my husband went to the Batavia Library to ask for a tutor and we found Marilyn.



Hakimeh Albohamal, student

**Q: I understand you and your tutor studied for the U.S. citizenship test and you passed! How was the test?**

A: I was a little nervous for the citizenship test but I did good. I don't remember the questions they asked.

**Marilyn:** But we studied all 100 of them! (laughs)

**Hakimeh:** (smiles) My teacher so helped me!

**Q: So now you can celebrate American holidays like Independence Day with new understanding. Do you still celebrate Persian holidays?**

A: Yes, we just finished celebrating Persian New Year. We celebrate every year just like they do in Iran. I make the wheat grass for my children. We buy a small fish, apple, and eggs. We put everything on the table. We go outside.

**Q: If someone was thinking of asking for a tutor, but wasn't sure, what would you tell them?**

A: I would say, it's good for you. It's good to learn. Here you need English. When I came here, it was hard for me. If someone speak with me, I couldn't understand. If someone called, I couldn't understand. If you can't understand, you can't live.

## Marilyn Horbus, tutor

### Q: Where are you from?

A: I'm from Illinois; the Oak Lawn area. My husband worked at Fermilab so we decided to move to Batavia. We have been here since 1980. I worked in the school district for 30 years as a speech/language pathologist. We love it here.

### Q: Why did you decide to be a tutor?

A: I became interested through news articles about Literacy Volunteers Fox Valley. I worked with small children from other countries and thought it would be a nice follow up to work with adults. The preparation class is excellent and there are lots of good resources whether people are teachers or not. I've tried to talk many of my friends into doing it. The students are delightful to work with.

### Q: How many students have you had?

A: I think four altogether. All have been from the Middle East. One ended up going back to her country so that was short-term. I have had one other Iranian student, one from Jordan, and one from Iraq, but Hakimeh has been my longest. She stuck with me!

### Q: Tutors often say they learn a lot from their students. What have you learned from Hakimeh?

**Hakimeh:** She learned I am busy, busy! (laughs)



Marilyn Horbus, tutor

**Marilyn:** Yes! I've learned how much she has to do, how hard she works to learn English, to take care of her children. I have learned about the religious persecution issue in Iran. You hear about it, but having someone who has been personally involved has been interesting.

### Q: Now that Hakimeh has passed the U.S. citizenship test, what's next?

A: The "Rules of the Road!" She is ready to drive! Initially, I had to come up with ideas and suggestions. The resources at the library are helpful. But now she tells me what she wants to do. I try to keep her up on local things that she can do with the children and she is open to that. They go to the library.

### Q: If someone was thinking about being a tutor, but wasn't sure, what would you tell them?

A: Talk to a current tutor. Hear a personal story. Get the specifics. Yes, I am a speech/language pathologist, but you can do it too.

## We Want to Hear from You!

Know someone who deserves the “spotlight” or have an article you would like to see in this newsletter?

Send your suggestions to [info@lvfv.org](mailto:info@lvfv.org).

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## Want more information about Literacy Volunteers Fox Valley?

For more information about:

- Being a tutor
- Being a student
- Making a financial donation
- Sharing your ideas

Visit our website [www.lvfv.org](http://www.lvfv.org) and click on **Contact Us**. We look forward to hearing from you!

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