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**Journeys Reading and**

**Awards Ceremony**

**May 22, 2014**



**Kraemer Grant Awards**

**Shilo Yahya, Franklin Learning Center**

*Sponsored by Nancy Thornbury*

*“Both staff and volunteers at the Franklin Learning Center have been particularly impressed with Shilo’s focus, drive, and organization. As a student, he almost embodies what it means to take control and ownership of one’s education.”*

**Yer Ha Vue, Metro North ABE**

*Sponsored by Donna Escobede*

After moving to Minnesota from Laos in 2009, Yer enrolled in ESL classes at Metro North ABE with the goal of earning an Associate degree in accounting. After four and half years, she has completed her ESL classes and received her GED at the end of last year. Thanks to Yer’s hard work and the support of the teachers at Metro North ABE, Yer is one step closer to reaching her goal.

**About the Thomas M. Kraemer Memorial Education Grant Fund**

The Thomas M. Kraemer Memorial Education Grant Fund was established with the memorial donations given to the Minnesota Literacy Council in memory of Tom Kraemer, who, at the time of his accidental death in 1995, was the President of the Board of Directors of the Minnesota Literacy Council. He had also previously served as a Basic Reading tutor. The Kraemer Fund’s goals are to provide funds to adult students who are pursuing their education beyond adult literacy programs and who are in need of assistance in paying various costs related to pursuing that continuing education. The first grants were made in 2000 and have been made periodically since as funds have been available. 2014 is the second year that grants have been presented at Journeys.

**Outstanding Volunteer Award**

**Giuliana Lozana, PACE (Parents and Children in Education)**

*Nominated by Sally Stockey*

A volunteer of over three years at PACE in Shakopee, Giuliana personifies the possibilities of success in having former students become volunteers. A college graduate from Peru, Giuliana came to the United States eager to learn English and quickly advanced through her GED and ELL classes and now volunteers three days a week at the Valley Green and PACE locations. Giuliana is married with one child, runs her own jewelry business, works part time in the Shakopee school district, and top of it all, her coordinator notes that *“Giuliana’s caring nature propels her to put out extraordinary effort in helping students learn English.”*

**Marie King, Robbinsdale Adult Academic Program**

*Nominated by Susanna Johnson*

For fifteen years, Marie King has volunteered at the Robbinsdale Adult Academic Program with low to intermediate ESL students in one-on-one tutoring sessions. Marie is extremely flexible, being able to improvise, change plans, and adapt to changing situations. She knows exactly what resources to use when she finds out a students' needs and can connect with students in any way possible. Her coordinating teacher notes that she is the *“most dedicated volunteer [she] has ever met”* and *“that students who spend one-on-one time with Marie have much more confidence in their speaking and listening ability!”*

**Bruce Remak, Metro South ABE**

*Nominated by Gina Carpenter*

Bruce volunteered with a multi-level ESL class in Richfield for five years, where he took on a leadership role by developing weekly lesson plans and directing other volunteers in one-to-one or small group tasks with students. He brought energy and enthusiasm to his volunteer work and built great rapport with the students. Under his leadership student persistence and retention increased as well as enrollment numbers. One of the unique aspects of Bruce’s teaching style is his ability to get students up on their feet and actively participating in class though fun learning games, real-life examples of the topic of each class, and field trips to a nearby nature center.

**Al Maleson, Neighborhood House**

*Nominated by Allie Riley*

After attending training at the Minnesota Literacy Council, Al began co-teaching an ESL class and spearheaded a citizenship class, which he has maintained singlehandedly for nearly a year. He brings a pride and practicality to the teaching of citizenship which means both he and the students take the material seriously and get a lot out of it. He and the staff at Neighborhood House have learned together over his time of piloting citizenship here that some students may need more English practice before taking citizenship. Instead of removing them from his class, he has provided invaluable tutoring for preliterate level students who may not have otherwise received tutoring.

**Coral Burge, Open Door Learning Center- Arlington Hills**

*Nominated by Mary Zamacona*

Since she began volunteering more than a year ago, Coral has immersed herself in ESL, math, and computer skills classes. She leads a team of volunteer math teachers and brings together a multi-level classroom with thoughtful and meaningful mini-lessons. As an intern for the garden project, which provides a hands-on opportunity for students to practice their English skills, Coral created and facilitated visual lessons for all levels of ESL learners week after week. She also works patiently as a one-to-one computer skills tutor, helping adults gain the skills they need to find employment in today’s world. She has a passion for learning and is willing to jump in to any class situation as an assistant or a leader.

**Candace Thomas, Literacy Volunteers of SW Minnesota**

*Nominated by Charlotte Harris-Hoffstrom*

Candace has been involved with Literacy Volunteers of Southwest Minnesota since 2011. From serving as the Board Chair, to training volunteers, to tutoring both GED and ESL students; Candace’s knowledge, dedication and passion shines through her work with the program. *“Every learner who works with Candace develops an increased learner persistence and self-direction in their education, which is a huge accomplishment.”*

**Outstanding Volunteer Award- Honorable Mention**

**Cathy Lindsay**, Hubbs Center

**Jim Tohal**, Mankato ABE

**Karin Lindberg**, Metro North ABE

**Anna Komor**, Franklin Learning Center

**Danielle Morgan**, International Education Center

**Outstanding Learner Award**

**Lilia (Lupe) Elias Cuevas, PACE**

*Nominated by Sally Stockey*

*“Lupe is a leader amongst her peers. Others will seek her out to explain their point of view. She takes it upon herself to advocate for her fellow students whether its understanding a concept in English or Math or assisting fellow students get resources to help them succeed in life. Lupe is able to set a tone in the classroom (and the program in general) that we are all here to learn and it's important to help each other do that…” “There are years that there are not any student leaders. When there are no leaders amongst students, a teacher is often fighting against the mindset of not being invested or thinking that the teachers do not care about students as individuals. Lupe has made such a difference in our program that the student learning rates have been positively affected. More students ask questions and participate than previous years. It makes such a difference in the teaching life of the classroom teacher”.*

**Adel Mohammed, Metro North ABE**

*Nominated by Jenne Nelson*

After fleeing Iraq with his family, Adel joined Metro North ABE in May of 2013. Since starting in Level 3 ESL, he has taken advantage of every offering his program has to offer and obtained his GED and secured employment. He has now come full circle and is a volunteer tutor in English and math.

*“Adel encourages students and helps them believe that they can learn English without the help of translation into their first language. A level 1 student in the class he volunteers with was trying to convince Adel to tutor him using some Arabic so he would understand better. Adel explained that while he could occasionally use a little bit of Arabic to explain a difficult point, it was better if he learned English via English. Adel told the questioning learner how he had studied French in France without the assistance of a teacher who knew Arabic, and how it was a way to learn a language on a deeper level than translation.”*

**Chung Hee No, Neighborhood House**

*Nominated by John Ashby*

*“Chung Hee arrives early every day for class. She uses that time and break time as an opportunity to connect with students of all levels and backgrounds. When she is in class, she also encourages other students to participate and advocate for themselves. She does so in a supportive and respectful way that contributes to an overall positive classroom environment. Chung Hee further demonstrates leadership by checking in with students she hasn't seen in a while, or holding her classmates accountable for their attendance. Despite having already retired, she remains very goal oriented in her English progress, and that commitment inspires other students to set similar goals for themselves. Chung Hee is currently working her way towards her GED Diploma, with the intention of going to college to study art.” “The teachers at Neighborhood House are certain that Chung Hee will continue to achieve her goals and inspire others.”*

**Shilo Yahya, Franklin Learning Center**

*Nominated by Nancy Thornbury*

*“Shilo’s determination and success are inspirational for many students. He came to the United States in 2012, and he started attending the South Campus program as an ESL student in March of that year. After less than a year, he moved up to a pre-GED class; finally, by the end of 2013, he completed all of his GED exams! His South Campus teacher Linda Carideo notes that* “finishing the GED is a pretty amazing accomplishment for most students, but it is even more impressive for a second-language student. Shilo was determined to have his GED by the end of 2013, and he did it!” *When studying at the Franklin Learning Center, Shilo has also impressed everyone with his drive and work ethic. Now that he’s finished with his GED, he plans to attend college to study pharmacy. He has recently been meeting with advisors from several local colleges, and he has also been in contact with pharmacists who work in the field. For the many ESL students who have GED and college as their goal, Shilo’s success shows that they can do it too.”*

**Lucia Dominguez, Franklin Learning Center**

*Nominated by Nancy Thornbury*

*“When we think of leaders, we think of people who don’t give up in the face of a challenge, and this description certainly fits Lucia. Getting a high school diploma was something she always wanted to get, and she was determined to reach that goal. Having many family and work responsibilities, Lucia were not able to come to school except on weekends. So she signed up for Saturday tutoring at the Franklin Learning Center, attended almost every week for almost three years, and successfully passed all of her GED tests by last December. Lucia was one of the first people in her family to complete a high school diploma, but we feel certain that she won’t be one of the last. Her husband Juan currently is making great progress in his own GED studies at FLC, and Lucia has also encouraged other friends and family members to try out the Franklin Learning Center and other schools. So even though she’s very modest and low-key about her accomplishments, Lucia leads by inspiring others to be persistent in the pursuit of their goals.”*

**Outstanding Learner Award- Honorable Mention**

**Emire Ersahin**, Metro North ABE

**Jeanette Strom**, Metro North ABE

**Chris Kleindl**, Southwest Metro ABE

**Outstanding Community Partner Award**

**Cary Weatherby, Companies to Classrooms**

*Nominated by Mary Jo Bayliss*

In 2005 Cary started Companies to Classrooms, a program designed so companies can donate outdated office supplies and equipment. Cary connects with businesses throughout Bloomington and the Metro area who may have things to donate and arranges pick-ups, drop offs all while managing the existing inventory. *“I can think of no other person or organization who has found such a unique way to contribute to her community. Companies to Classrooms is the kind of thing that people might think of and say - "somebody should do that"- but Cary actually did. She is innovative in that she has the business savvy to connect with companies, foster and retain relationships, and make the magic happen.”*

**Kate Barrett, St. Catherine’s University**

*Nominated by Rachel Johnson*

*“St. Catherine's Occupational Therapy Program brings a number of students to MORE each semester, through their professor, Kate Barrett. These students work in groups of three with a class of MORE's learners, multiple times during their OT coursework in the semester. They provide services that help us meet learners' needs holistically, as they address mental, physical, emotional and academic needs. This holistic service is a core of MORE's mission. The St Kate's students go beyond the traditionally accepted definition of OT and teach learners techniques (using interpreters as needed) for managing a variety of critical needs in their everyday lives, including stress management, finances, family life, natural disasters, nutrition, and many more... This semester, a total of 9 students from St Kate's will be working with at least 45 learners over three class periods to teach strategies for family life and stress management.”*

**Becky Booker, Spring Lake Park - Blaine - Mounds View Fire Department**

*Nominated by Polina Huffman*

Since 2009, Becky Booker has been coming to Metro North ABE twice a year to present to their ESL and ABE learners about the causes of fires and what learners can do to prevent them. She not only tells them about fire safety but provides simple solutions that learners can implement themselves and has students practice calling 911, which can be a frightening situation for many learners. Outside of her presentations, Becky also conducts Home Surveys at learners’ homes which have prevented many fires and potential tragedies. “*Everything that Becky has to tell us and show us is unique and innovative to our program.”*

**Community Partnership Award- Honorable Mention**

**Chandler Christian,** Reformed Church, Chandler, MN

**Volunteer Service Awards**

**1000 Hours**

**Randy Peterson**, Southwest ABE- Worthington

**Gail Anderson**, West ABE

**Tim Chmielewski**, Central MN ABE

**Pat Claycomb**, Metro South ABE

**Bonnie Lewis**, Metro South ABE

**Joan Schramm**, Central MN ABE

**Laura Louis**, Metro North ABE

**Amy Hetland**, Metro North ABE

**Richard Wriskey**, Metro North ABE

**Glen Hanggi**, Metro North ABE

**Janet Hanggi**, Metro North ABE

**Dennis Buland-** Metro North ABE

**Emily Pripas**, Metro North ABE

**2000** **Hours**

**Morgan Weiss**, Metro North ABE

**Sandra Juntilla**, Metro North ABE

**Jack Harris**, Franklin Learning Center

**Gladys Biltonen**, Metro North ABE

**Judith Free**, Metro North ABE

**Jennifer Oschwald**, Central MN ABE

**Ellen Hastings**, Metro South ABE

**John Harnett**, West ABE

**3000 Hours**

**Aggie Smitten**, Central MN ABE

**4000 Hours**

**Phil Byrne**, Hubbs Center for Lifelong Learning

**5000 Hours**

**Robert Sorman**, Metro North ABE

**Keith Lindstrom**, Metro South ABE

**Curt Cameron**, Hubbs Center for Lifelong Learning

**Clem Engen**, Franklin Learning Center

**19000 Hours**

**Judy Halverson**, Franklin Learning Center

**About the Minnesota Literacy Council**

The Minnesota Literacy Council shares the power of learning so all Minnesotans have the opportunity to be successful students, workers, family members and community citizens. Literacy-rich preschools and summer reading programs start Minnesota’s youngest readers off on the right foot. Free English, GED preparation and job-readiness classes prepare adults for post-secondary education and careers. Support in program best practices, educational technology, volunteer training and national service hosting strengthens over 400 community-based literacy sites across Minnesota.

**About the Loft Literary Center**

Incorporated in 1975, The Loft Literary Center is one of the nation’s leading independent literary centers. The Loft supports the artistic development of writers, fosters a writing community, and builds an audience for literature. For more information about the Loft, please call 612-215-2575 or visit [www.loft.org](http://www.loft.org/).

**About Journeys**

*Journeys: An Anthology of Adult Student Writing* is an annual publication by the Minnesota Literacy Council that includes stories of hope, loss, and struggle, alongside poignant reflections of everyday life written by Minnesotans whose voices are rarely heard. Some are written by immigrants or refugees writing in their second or third language, while others are sharing their writing for the first time after years of frustration and anxiety attributed to low literacy skills. The book is available for purchase at this event and online at [www.mnliteracy.org](http://www.mnliteracy.org).