



Voice of Literacy

www.literacysandiego.org

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Overcoming Trauma and Adversity...How to Teach

Do you remember a time when you were learning something new and had to put it into practice under real life situations? Did you perform perfectly or did you err at doing something that you could do well when you were alone? Did you sweat, shake, cry, or want to quit? Did you dislike the person or people who were near enough to watch you or who contributed to the stressfulness of your situation? And how did you feel about yourself? Were you more or less inclined to try again?

Most, if not all of us, have a story to tell, about those times when we were learning something new. While it is true that we learn from our mistakes, along the way, we also feel our "failures" and carry some of those feelings with us into the future. For some of us, those feelings stay with us like baggage that never found a destination.

In our literacy work, we promote the risk-free learning environment, where people can practice, err, and practice again without fear of ridicule. We teach at an instructional level and avoid frustration. Practice makes perfect, but when too much is made of errors, or when people are ridiculed for learning slower or just being different, then there's no learning at all. Then, often, the wrong things are learned.

Deeper still is mental health. We are not immune to matters that can affect our self-esteem and that can put us into depression. Among our friends and family are those who struggle to get out of bed in the morning because, through the night they did not rest. They struggled with themselves.

We know children who tell us that their days are filled with overwhelming anxiety and sadness. They can say what makes them feel badly. They know how schools and learning experiences can be better. They know that they are different. And they know that they're not happy and not where they should be as emerging readers.

"What were people doing all those years in school while not learning to read?" The truth is, they were just trying to survive. They never really had the chance to learn. And so, if we're lucky, we see them later, down the line, when they are better able to defend themselves, and when they have a voice that we can hear.

How to Teach: 1. Show the student how to do something; 2. Do that something WITH the student; and, 3. Let the student do it alone. Too often, we jump to #3. This is often where damage is done.

Through literacy programs, we can meet people where they are. For many of them, for the first time ever, they can work on their own pace, on their own goals, at their own starting place. In those early years, if we were not accommodating to students then, we can be accommodating to them today. The first time around, not everyone gets a fair chance.

We stand by our saying that it's never too late. And we are grateful to those who advocate for our work. They allow us to advance on our vision of literacy for all.

For more on this topic, listen to our *Literacy for All Radio Show* with Denise O'Neal and her son, Brendan: <http://wsradio.com/06-04-19-understanding-invisible-leadership-testimonials-from-life-long/>

Joe

Calendar of Events

July 18-21
Comic-Con



August 24
The San Diego Union-Tribune
Festival of Books
Venues in Liberty Station
Point Loma



September 8th
International Literacy Day



September 25-28
ProLiteracy National Conference
San Diego





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SDCOL Learner Spotlight

Mona Hakimpour, Outstanding Student - Laubach Bayside Literacy Center

**Profile submitted by tutors Chris Phillips and Anna Lewis
Laubach Literacy Council of San Diego County, Inc**

In 2011, after many long years of waiting, Mona was given permission to leave Iran and come to the United States. Being able to communicate well in her new country was a priority for her. One of the first things she did was to enroll in an Adult ESL class at Mesa College. While there, she met Maria Alvarez -- coincidentally our Outstanding Student in 2013 -- who told her about Laubach at Bayside Community Center. Mona decided to add our class to her schedule so she could more quickly achieve her goal of studying literature at Mesa.

"I am very thankful and appreciate that the San Diego Council on Literacy gave me this chance to talk about how Laubach Literacy Council of San Diego County helped me to find my way and changed my life. When I moved from Iran, I was very upset and scared. I came from an undeveloped country to the biggest country in the world, and I felt bad and hopeless. I did not understand many things and did not know what must I do. I lost my self-confidence completely, but I was lucky to find Laubach. When I started classes in Bayside Community Center, my teachers, step-by-step, helped me with their lessons and advised how to live in America. They taught me about the American culture and customs. They helped me to pass the citizenship test. I reached my biggest dream: to be an American citizen. They encouraged me to read the novels and speak about them in class. They suggested for me to go to museums to improve my knowledge. They believed in me and it affected my self-confidence. Now I can speak to everybody, I can go everywhere and do my work. I owe you and will never forget what you do for me." - Mona Hakimpour

Nearly 6 years later, she continues to attend classes 3 times weekly. We've all happily and proudly watched her gain proficiency in English, and her growing confidence has allowed her to become a real team player, actively helping her classmates, speaking up in class and comfortably voicing her opinions.

In addition, Mona -- a lifelong book lover -- is now able to enjoy novels written not just in Farsi, but also in English. She's improved her English composition skills, too, and our class is always enthralled when she reads her journal entries about her life and adventures in Iran.

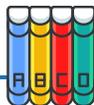
Mona has also embraced San Diego and all the wonderful things it has to offer, at first taking city buses to explore, and now driving and eagerly visiting new places.

In 2016, Mona fulfilled her dream of becoming a US citizen. She credited our class with helping her learn enough about our culture and history to pass her citizenship test easily.

She has made many friends and takes every opportunity to share her experiences. She encourages her friends to join our Laubach family and improve their lives. We all agree that Mona very much deserves recognition as our Outstanding Student this year.



**"I reached my
biggest dream:
to be an
American citizen."**



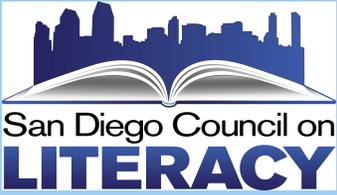
SUMMER IS HERE

Books for Children

Thank you to the amazing people in this photo for their work with the San Diego Council on Literacy, at the San Diego Food Bank, where they sorted through 4,414 randomly boxed books and created the book treasure that you see here.

Right after this photo was taken, the agencies represented here were allowed to take 400 or so books with them, each, for distribution to children who are homeless, who are in navy families, who reside in low-income housing complexes and in communities where children historically score low in reading. Thank you to the San Diego Food Bank, City Heights Partnership for Children, Community HousingWorks, the Diamond Educational Excellence Partnership, Jewish Family Services, Navy Region Southwest Child & Youth Programs, San Ysidro School District, and Traveling Stories for bringing these books to happy hands. Most importantly, thank you to Houghton Mifflin Harcourt for their tremendously generous book donation...and to the Downtown San Diego Lions Club, El Cajon Lions Club, and the Boys & Girls Foundation for the funding they contributed to this effort. People don't know just how much these books will make a difference.





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Celebrating the 10th year of...

EAT DRINK READ





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Thank you to our wonderful Eat. Drink. Read. sponsors for supporting our vision of *Literacy for All!*



BOB AND CAROL ALDEN

HELGA MOORE

THE BRENCICK FAMILY

This summer, join us at...
The San Diego Union-Tribune
Festival of Books

Where - LIBERTY STATION, POINT LOMA

When - AUGUST 24, 2019 @ 10:00AM – 5:00PM

JOIN US. GRAB A BOOK.

Admission to the festival is free.

The San Diego Council on Literacy is the beneficiary of funds raised from this event.

For more information visit:

<http://sdfestivalofbooks.com>

#grababook #bookfestival #sandiegouniontribune #letsreads