

ALAMEDA READS NEWSLETTER

Winter-Spring 2015

ANOTHER SERVICE OF THE ALAMEDA FREE LIBRARY

(510) 865-2454

alamedareads@alamedaca.gov

Alameda Reads Celebrates

On September 23 Alameda Reads celebrated the 30th year of work for adult literacy in California. The celebration was at held the Main Library. A table at the library entrance included examples of materials used in the program. Learners, families, tutors, staff, and volunteers honored learners' achievements by sharing selections from pieces that were submitted for a new Alameda Reads book titled "I Believe". Many posters containing quotes from the book decorated library walls.

Mark Lasartemay read his story at the celebration.

I was raised in Alameda and graduated from Encinal and UC Davis. Although I was able to pass English in college, I felt that I needed to improve my writing skills. As a result, I discovered Alameda Reads.

I was one of many chosen to read a personal story at the Alameda Library. Initially, I refused because my story was so personal and sensitive but eventually, I agreed. During the readings, I found myself holding back tears on several occasions because the stories were so devastating and personal. I could tell that the people reading were sincere and hurt by life experience just like me. I am eternally grateful for Alameda Reads, especially Sue Mark, for giving me confidence in myself.



A tutor introduces a learner's reading



Alameda Reads display at the Main Library

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ALAMEDA READS

Sue Mark
Program Director

Barbara Papik
Program Assistant

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Wednesday: 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Thursday: 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM

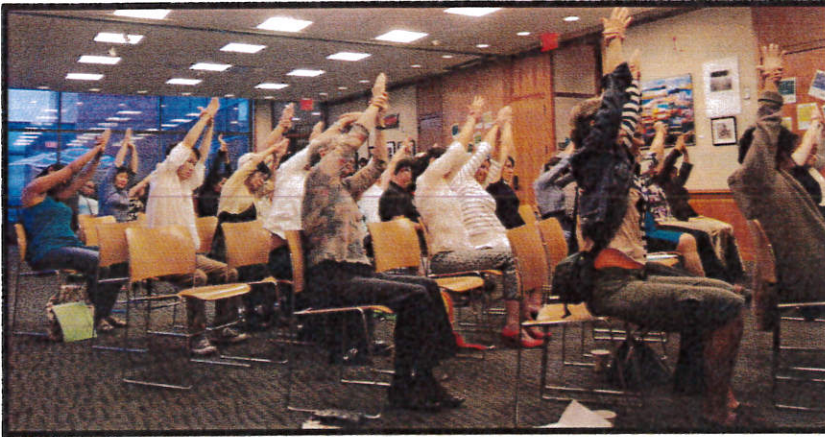
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Alameda, CA 94501

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www.alamedareads.com

Lianne Donovan attended the celebration and was inspired to become a tutor.

Sue Mark began the evening with a brief explanation of the program's literacy services and the achievements of Alameda Reads participants. The audience then participated in a yoga activity led by Amy Prevedel, who often uses similar exercises with learners to enhance the creative writing process.

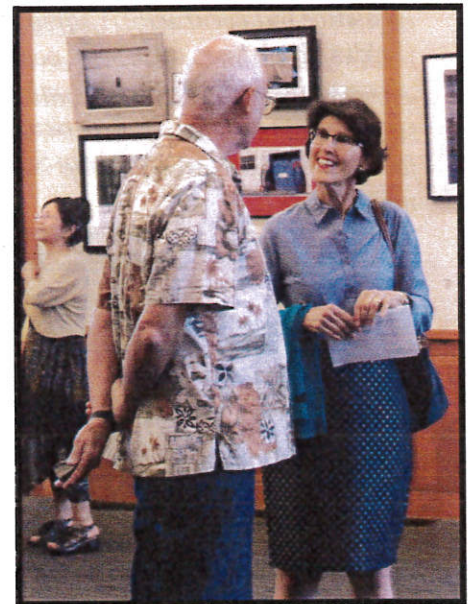


Attendees participating in a relaxation exercise

Alameda Mayor Marie Gilmore also proclaimed September "Adult Literacy Awareness Month" at the September 16 City Council meeting to honor Alameda Reads and the 30th anniversary of California Library Literacy Services. Several Alameda Reads learners and volunteers attended the announcement at City Hall.

Carmen Chu shared her feelings about the experience.

At first I was nervous because we had to wait in the City Council Chamber. It was my first time there. Then Sue Mark went up and talked about Alameda Reads. She started to sit down but the mayor called her back and read the proclamation. It was exciting to be honored as part of Adult Literacy Awareness Month and Alameda Reads.



An attendee talking with Vice Mayor Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft

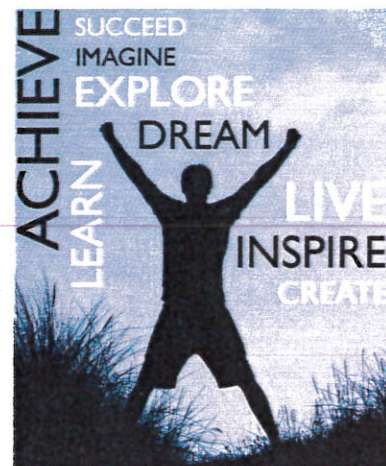


Display of posters from "I Believe" project



Alameda Reads learners have accomplished great things in 2014!

- ★ Took a business class
- ★ Applied to and registered at Laney College
- ★ Read five books
- ★ Worked on writing and reading a novel
- ★ Took the CAHSEE test
- ★ Applied for and received a promotion
- ★ Improved writing business reports at work
- ★ Took the TOEFL exam
- ★ Prepared a business proposal
- ★ Prepared for the notary test
- ★ Joined a union and completed work training
- ★ Received promotions



Volunteers were key to the success of our anniversary celebration:

- Created posters with excerpts from participant writing
- Placed posters in the library and set up the Literacy Month display
- Attended the September 16 City Council Meeting where proclamation was issued
- Helped set up for September 23 event
- Read at the September 23 event
- Created or contributed to the newsletter
- Served on the Leadership Team



A huge 'thank you' to all of our volunteers.

YOU help make programming happen at Alameda Reads.

Joe Brandt
Carmen Chu
Lynne Dennis
Lianne Donovan
Jordona Elderts
Lisa Ginardi

Mary Kay Hardwick
Allison Harris
Billy Lee Jones
Akiko Journeay
Mark Lasartemay
Helen Lopez

Isabel Nijenkamp
Cecile Pecoraro
Lou Pinkoff
Patricia Prinz
Diane Puntenev
John Quick

Mariana Rueda
Hawa Roba
Kathy Rush
Katherine Yamawaki
Kai Zhang

Have an hour to spare? Want to learn a new skill? There are many ways you can help Alameda Reads. **Please let us know if you are interested.**

Excerpts from "I Believe" Library Poster Project

I BELIEVE

I just want to say that in this world we shouldn't all be the same. We should be *different* to make it more *interesting*. Also, you should *never feel ashamed* of any millimeter of yourself.

- Ahn

I BELIEVE

My *determination* to learn came from my mother. My mother didn't know how to write and read in her old age. But she *kept going* to the community center to learn to write her name from the *first steps*.

- Anonymous

I BELIEVE

Suddenly I was responsible for another human being and my life was no longer about me. This is when I began to *understand* the real *meaning* of my life. I had a *purpose*.

- Cecile

I BELIEVE

I believe life is a *balance*, sometimes you *give* and other times you *receive*. It doesn't matter who it comes from.

- Berenice

I BELIEVE

My experience is that you cannot be 100% right all the time. You have to *listen* with your *heart* and mind to make the best decision you can. Sometimes you need a *friend* or someone else you respect to guide you.

- Colquitt

I BELIEVE

I strongly believe *education* is the key to make people successful. It gives us *knowledge*, a better life, and an *open mind* to listen and to become a good person.

- H.L.

I BELIEVE

Something I have worked hard for that I feel proud of is *overcoming* life's pitfalls. I am on an *adventure* day by day, learning and doing new and old things. Now that's *life* and we are all proud to be a part of it.

- Anonymous

I BELIEVE

If you want what you never had, you got *to do* what you never did. If you are *lucky* enough to learn this, you can do something to *improve your life* and the lives of those around you.

- Lou

Tutor & Learner Spotlight

Interview with Kathy Rush (tutor) and Evelyn Sonway (learner)

Alameda Reads (AR): Can each of you tell us a little about yourself that you want to share?

Kathy: I'm Kathy Rush and I'm a retired Naval officer. I am originally from Virginia. I've been in Alameda a little over two years now and with the program for two years.

Evelyn: My name is Evelyn Sonway. I'm from Liberia. I've been here for 10 years and in the program for five years. I think the program helped me a lot. It helped me with my driver's license, citizenship, and most other stuff. I have a daughter, Miriam and I live in Oakland. I'm using the program for reading and writing. I think I've learned a lot in these five years thanks to my tutors.



AR: What made you get involved with the program?

Kathy: We moved here from Alaska. I had a hard time finding a job and I wanted to get involved so I volunteered. I volunteer at the hospital as well. I saw the information about the Alameda Reads program in the paper. I contacted them and got involved with the program that way.

Evelyn: When my daughter was in pre-school, this lady used to come to my house and teach my daughter. I told her I was going to night school and she told me about the Alameda Reads program and gave me the number. I called and that's the way I got into the program.

AR: What are you hoping to accomplish as you continue with the program?

Kathy: From my perspective, when Evelyn gets something it's so rewarding. Evelyn is a hard worker, she wants to be here, she wants to learn. We work not only on Alameda Reads materials but also on stuff that she needs to make it through the day like a grocery list.

Evelyn: I have accomplished a lot. When I look for a job, I can fill out my application. I'm thinking I may want to be a nurse. And sometimes I say I want to write my story, too.

AR: What is it you are the proudest of that you've done through the program?

Evelyn: A lot! At my first job in this country, people thought I can't even talk because I didn't understand. Now I can read. I can't write that much, but I can go anywhere and I can talk. Some people can't understand me, some can, but that's fine. I hope to learn more of that.

Kathy: When we did the reading for the group two times ago and Evelyn read the story that she had written in Amy's class, I watched Miriam's face. It brought tears to my eyes because when she finished reading,

Miriam ran up to her and said, "I love you, Mom." I was very emotionally moved by that because one of the things we had talked about is that she wanted to be able to read to Miriam and to help her.

Evelyn is shy. To see her overcome that and get up in front of people, to read her story, and to have Miriam receive it as she did was so moving. I was so excited and I felt so proud of her. The interaction between her and Miriam was a very good stepping stone to help Miriam understand how important education is. That's something Evelyn has really been very vocal about with her. She's been in sessions with us and she's seen how hard her mother works. She is appreciating her own opportunities now, and the fact that her mother is going through this to better herself and to better her.

AR: What would you say is your biggest challenge??

Kathy: I think probably time.

Evelyn: That's right.

Kathy: Evelyn works full time, she's a mother, she takes care of her home, and sometimes when we get here, she's tired. But she comes and she works when she's here. I think that having that dedication speaks so highly of her wanting to do this.

Evelyn: Sometimes by the time I come from work I'm so tired. But I have to be here because I'm trying to gain something. Even if I'm tired I always think if someone is trying to help me out and I don't show up, they might think I don't need help. So even when I'm tired I'm still going to be here because I want to do this; it's very important to me.

AR: We want to thank you very much for sharing. Are there any last comments you want to make?

Kathy: I encourage people to get involved in the program on both sides of the fence. I learn things too. We talk about Evelyn's country and customs. It's been very much a two-way street. You're not just teaching someone how to read and how to write but learning from them what their culture and customs are.

Evelyn: I just want to say I thank the program for everything they've done for me. If not for this program, I can't be where I am right now so I'm thankful to all my tutors--the first one, Kathy, and the program.

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Alameda Reads Small Group Learning

All tutors and learners are welcome to all classes.

Please call 865-2454 to sign up.

READING PRACTICE

ONCE A MONTH

Saturdays, 10AM - Noon

January 10, February 14, March 7, April 10

**Room 138
Alameda Free Library**

BOOK CLUB

ONCE A MONTH

Thursdays, 6:30 - 8:00 PM

January 15, February 19, March 19, April 16

**Alameda Reads Office
2203 Central Avenue**

Welcome New Tutors!



Every year we train 15-20 volunteer tutors. People from the community want to volunteer for many reasons: to share their joy in reading, to help others, and to give back to Alameda. Our program exists through the hard work and dedication of our volunteer tutors.

We thank you!

New Tutors, Fall 2014

Kendra Cerises
Bill Cox
Rosie Kane
Jennifer McNerney
Diane Puntenney

New Tutors, Spring 2015

Back Row (left to right):

Jon Martin, Tom Boeckling, Jeffrey Lucas, Karen Churchill, Pamina Loewald

Front Row (left to right):

Nathanael Miller, Lianne Donovan, Jenny Schaffer, Rachel Piggott

Read Write Learn

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