



A L.O.V.E. Letter

From Local Outreach Volunteer Educators



www.lovementors.org

Winter 2010

Participating Schools & Community Centers

Elementary Schools: Bartow, Bethesda Home for Boys, East Broad, Gadsden, Garrison, Georgetown, Gould, Haven, Heard, Islands, Isle of hope, Low, Notre Dame Academy, Port Wentworth, Southwest, Spencer, West Chatham, White Bluff

Middle Schools: Bethesda Home for Boys, DeRenne, Hubert

High Schools: Savannah

Community Centers:

- Aldersgate United Methodist Church/ Performance Initiatives Center
- Salvation Army Center
- Savannah Baptist Center

L.O.V.E Sponsors

Asbury United Methodist Church
Congregation Mickve Israel
Isle of Hope United Methodist Church
Messiah Lutheran Church
St. James Catholic Church
St. Peter's Episcopal Church
Savannah Christian Church
Skidaway Island Baptist Church
Skidaway Island United Methodist Church
Speedwell United Methodist Church
Trinity United Methodist Church (Pooler)
White Bluff United Methodist Church
Kiwanis Club of Skidaway Island
Rotary Club of Skidaway Island
Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation
Wal-Mart Corporation

L.O.V.E. Officers

Chairwoman—Joyce Glenn
Vice Chairwoman—Ann Tremaine
Secretary—Marby Varley
Treasurer—Dave Dawson
Training—Catherine Ruhl and Sherri Brecker
Recruitment—Wilma Tysee
Senior Site Coordinators—Marion Hofstein, Ginny Pierce and Julie Clary
Past Chairwoman—Alice Wright
Chair Emeritus—Fred Loe

Chairman Chatter—

Can you believe we are half way through another school year? I hope the year is going well for you and you are enjoying working with your students. There are several bits of news I would like to pass along:

1. We are in the process of updating our Mentor list. Site Coordinators should have received a list of the people we have mentoring at your school. Add any new people you have and remove anyone who is not presently tutoring.
2. Every year the Lutheran Church holds "A *Chocolate Affaire for Charity.*" Part of the proceeds from this event are given to L.O.V.E.. This year's event is: Saturday Feb. 13, 2010 from 11:00am to 3:00pm @ Messiah Lutheran Church. Cost: Adults \$5.00, Children Free. Please stop by and support this worthwhile event.
3. On Nov. 9, 2009 we provided training for people interested in working with students on their math skills or lack of Math skills. We are still in need of Math Tutors. If you know anyone interested, contact Joyce Glenn 598-9483 or jaglenn@bellsouth.net.
4. In this issue you will find a new series called "Meet the Mentors". We have so many great tutors and thought it might be nice to know more about you. Carolyn Szlasa is writing these articles for us. If you are asked, I hope you will be willing to share something about yourself with us.
5. We are still working on a date for the cancelled phonics workshop. We will send a notice when we get it rescheduled.
6. As always—Thanks for all you do! Remember Savannah's children need you.

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Board Briefs—

The Board met on Jan 18th and took the following actions:

1. Welcomed Carolyn Szlasa as our Publicity Chairman.
2. Treasurer's report: Dave reported our money is in good shape. At this time the Wal-Mart money is not being spent, which means we will have money left over. It was suggested we put together kits for non-readers for each of the schools. Sherri Brecker will look into putting together kits for non-readers. She will report to the Board in March.
3. The Board approved forming a partnership with "Connection Mentoring Program." (Look for more information on this program in weeks to come.).
4. Summer Camp: We will work again with Massey Heritage Camp to put together a week's camp for our students. Bill Munroe will put together a letter for mentors describing the camp and what they need to do if they have a child who would qualify to go to this camp.
5. Approved a "Thank You" to our volunteers. The ad will be in the Skinnie or The TWATL.
6. Other discussion: Marian Hofstein is researching buttons at the best cost. More information will be coming.

Joyce Glenn
Chair

MEET THE MENTORS

Meet Joan DiGiorgio—

After 33 years as an educator, the last thing Joan expected that she'd be doing in retirement is teaching children. Joan taught business education and was vice principal in a high school for 20 years. The next 13 years, she laughingly refers to as the beginning of retirement. She was vice principal in a middle school (grades 6-8) and found the children to be an absolute joy and such fun to be with each day.

Joan and her husband, Jim, moved to Savannah from Suffolk County, Long Island, New York in the fall of 2004. "Shortly after our arrival, I attended a literacy program at Armstrong University, to gain the skills needed to teach English as a second language to adults. I mentioned it to a friend, who is an active member of L.O.V.E., and the next thing I knew I was connected with a program that was in its infancy at Port Wentworth. The program, ESOL (English speakers of other languages), is in only 3 Savannah elementary schools and I am now the site coordinator at Port Wentworth Elementary."

Joan tells the story of working with a 3rd grade child, in her first year of mentoring, who was struggling to perform at a very low reading level. They were reading a simple book that had English on the first line and the Spanish translation on the second. Joan covered the line of English and asked the child to read the page in Spanish. That's when Joan learned that the child was unable to read in his native tongue. Many of the children arrive in our schools with the ability to speak English, but do not read in their native language. After meeting for 3 years, she's found it very rewarding to see a vast improvement in this child's reading ability.

Joan explains that it's an enormous reward to see the development and growth in the children she mentors. She says,

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“The children I mentor are well behaved, polite and so very excited to learn. They love their one-on-one sessions. Being a mentor to these children is a challenge and lots of fun.”

Her wish is to have more mentors in the ESOL program, enabling L.O.V.E to send volunteers into two additional schools.

Meet Dianna Phillips—

Originally from Marietta, Dianna Phillips has been a Savannah resident since 1974. She retired from teaching second grade at White Bluff Elementary school 8 years ago and enjoys investing her volunteer time educating children.

Dianna is in her second year as a mentor to first and fourth grade students at Isle of Hope Elementary through the L.O.V.E. program. She also works at the St. Mary’s Community Center as a tutor in the adult literacy program and she tutors GED students one morning a week.

Her friend, also a L.O.V.E. mentor, mentioned the organization at a meeting she was attending at her church and Dianna thought it sounded like the perfect fit. Shortly thereafter she began assisting site coordinator, Betsy Hines, who was in the process of setting up the L.O.V.E. program at Isle of Hope. Betsy says, “She helped me with photocopying, collating and organizing all the worksheets for the mentors. Dianna was a tremendous help.”

This energetic volunteer is mentoring one child for the second year. With a smile in her voice, Dianna says, “We have really connected; she looks forward to our weekly sessions and it is enjoyable to me to see her progress on many levels”. She added, “I always bring a book to share that is appropriate to the reading level of my students: We read the book together; sharing the story and having fun learning.”

Dianna’s fourth grade student is with her for only thirty minutes because of class schedules. When the children reach fourth grade, they change classes and it allows less time for her to be with the students. “I wish I had the forty five minutes I spend with the younger children. The students, without a doubt, benefit from the one-on-one interaction.”

She finds L.O.V.E. to be an excellent, organized and well run program. When she arrives at the school to work with a child, all her materials await her---no scavenger hunt to find needed materials or standing in line to photocopy worksheets for the day’s lesson. As a volunteer and former teacher she appreciates the time invested by others so that she can make the most of her time at the school and focus on the children she is there to mentor.

Her site coordinator, Betsy Hines says, “Dianna has been wheel chair bound for the past four years. She never lets her handicap hinder her dedication to helping others. Dianna is the ultimate volunteer an inspiration to all who know her.”

