AALL The News

Arizona Association for Lifelong Learning
Spring 2015 Edition

Letter from the President:

AALL is a membership organization that pursues the mission to improve opportunities for educational growth by promoting and inspiring lifelong learning and adult literacy in Arizona. Our priorities exist within the following goals: 1) To enhance communication within the adult education community, 2) to create networks between the adult education community and stakeholders, 3) to develop the adult education profession, and 4) to advocate on issues impacting adult education.

Our newsletter highlights your activities as a response to this mission and these goals. We thank you for utilizing your membership to raise awareness and strengthen the profession of adult education in Arizona. As a statewide professional association, we are only as strong and effective as our membership’s contribution. You make all the difference!

Here are some noteworthy current events to recognize in the profession this spring.

Awareness Activities

AALL was proactive in responding to action alerts to request continued national support for the State Adult Education Grant Program. We know that the need to raise awareness for adult education never expires. Your voice and your student’s voices help determine the value of adult education.

AALL is pleased to have sponsored nearly $5,000 in statewide awareness activities so far this year including the Queen Creek Statewide Adult Education Ambassador Leadership Training, the Pima College Adult Education Ambassador Leadership Training, the Phoenix Indian Center Inter-Generational Integrated Technology Project, the “Ambassador Day at the Capitol,” and Arizona Adult Literacy Week (AALW) activities.

In collaboration with the Arizona Department of Education- Adult Education Services and Arizona State Library, AALW activities were a success! Excellent projects that highlighted technology and literacy today were recognized with awards. AALL was pleased to present Central Arizona College with the AALL Award for their project LEARNING IS LIKE... A LESSON IN FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE AND SIMILE.

The contribution that AALL membership makes to awareness outreach, student ambassador training and adult literacy week makes the profession visible and valued in our community.

Developing the Profession

AALL is excited to offer a unique professional learning opportunity this May 15th at our Spring Conference. Together with Biosphere 2, the AALL Conference Planning Committee is creating a hands-on learning experience designed to energize and inspire teachers to include science as an integral part of reading, writing and ELAA classrooms. We hope you will join us for Igniting Inquiry Among Adult Learners, www.az-aall.org/2015-aall-spring-conference.

Also, stay tuned for our 2015 AALL Awards Conference to be hosted at Northland Pioneer College this fall. Join your colleagues as we open the discussion on the new WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) legislation, and what it means for Adult Education in Arizona.

So, enjoy the newsletter! Enjoy the stories of your impact! Enjoy your AALL membership!

~Kelly Stewart,
AALL President
What do these students have in common?

~Blair Liddicoat, Associate Dean, Instruction and Community Development, Rio Salado College

Student A inspired a family member to return to school.

Student B takes two busses to get to class.

Student C plans to attend college and study construction management.

Student D is a single parent and holds down two jobs, with a goal taking accounting classes in college.

Student E is a Syrian refugee, with an advanced degree in his country, who has applied for political asylum in The United States.

Student F engaged in over 100 hours of supplemental online leaning in addition to her regular in-person classes, working toward a goal of becoming a nurse.

Student G and his brother walk three miles to and from school each day.

Student H was a high school chemistry teacher for 15 years in her country and hopes to earn a Master’s Degree in Chemistry in The United States and become a high school teacher.

Student I has both project management and computing degrees and has worked for ten years as an editor for Beijing Television. After getting a journalism degree in this country her goal is to become a television news reporter or editor.

Student J was a successful neurologist and professor in her home country.

Student K had a thriving dental practice in Syria, which he left three years ago. His dream is to become a practicing dentist in this country.

So can you guess what these students have in common? They were part of the twenty-four Rio Salado College- College Bridge Pathways students who were inducted into the National Adult Education Honor Society (NAEHS) on February 17, 2015 in the Rio Salado College Conference Center. This was Rio's College Bridge Pathways twenty-first NAEHS Induction. Would you like to meet these amazing students? It's too late to meet them because the induction has past. However, I'm sure you have a similarly amazing group of students in your program who are just waiting to be inducted into the National Adult Education Honor Society. What is that you say? You don't have an NAEHS charter. That is easily solved. Go to naehs.org, read all about it, and get started. Give me a call if you have questions or need a little push.
Zen Life Yoga helps busy adult students learn to manage stress, focus, and gain confidence.

Linda was a dentist in Venezuela. Now living in Arizona, she becomes so paralyzed with fear when speaking in English she can’t get through a job interview. Ruben frequently works 60 hours a week and is also attending classes to prepare to take his high school equivalency exam. Maria has three children and is the primary caregiver for aging parents. Her days are filled with activities involving the kids, medical appointments for her parents, and advanced English classes. According to recent research, all of these adult learners can benefit from yoga.

Linda Heller of Queen Creek’s Zen Life Yoga Studio spent a recent morning with students in the Queen Creek Adult Education Program. Thanks to her yoga class, these students and their classmates now have the basics for mediation techniques and yoga poses to help them manage stress and build confidence. Heller is not at all surprised by the research connecting the benefits of yoga to adult education. “Simply breathing correctly can do many things, including helping stressed people fall asleep more easily or reducing the fear of speaking in public.” she says. Queen Creek’s adult learners agree.

All of the students reporting feeling relaxed after the yoga class with Heller. For adult education student Elena, the class “was a great experience. I plan to breathe the way Linda taught us the next time I have to speak in front of a group in English. I can see how much the breathing will help me calm the butterflies in my stomach.”
What a privilege it was to be able to drive the Pima College vehicle to the Arizona Adult Literacy Week Awards Ceremony! On the trip to Rio Salado, the vehicle was shared by Catalina Llamas (a winner in the individual story category), Olga Garcia Crook and Rosalina (who together represented one of the group category winners, Ocotillo Family Literacy), and one of the judges and members of the planning committee for the event, me. Catalina stayed in Phoenix to participate in the visit to the State Legislature.

It was a wonderful to be able to experience, first hand, the excitement of seeing the winning entries displayed on the large screens at the Rio Salado Community Center. Catalina’s story was met with, at times, gasps of disbelief at her struggles and journey to where she is today.

Olga and Rosalina were there to represent and accept the award on behalf of the entire class of students at Ocotillo Family Literacy. Each of the parents in the program contributed a slide in the winning PowerPoint entry that told the story of their dreams for their own development as a student and parent, as well as their dreams for their children.

End of MPAEA NAEHS Project

~Blair Liddicoat, Associate Dean, Instruction and Community Development, Rio Salado College

Since 2002 National Adult Education Honor Society (NAEHS) inductees from the eight, now nine, Mountain Plains Adult Education Association (MPAEA) member states have been eligible to receive recognition by MPAEA at their annual conference awards ceremony. Arizona was very active in this from the start and, as a result, three Arizona NAEHS inductees have been honored accordingly every year. We have received word from the MPAEA Board that they are stopping this, effective with this year’s conference. This ends AALL’s responsibility for selecting Arizona’s three state inductees for MPAEA acknowledgement. Whereas it was wonderful for NAEHS inductees to get this additional recognition from MPAEA, this was secondary to the students being inducted into the NAEHS by their programs. AALL encourages Arizona Adult Education Programs to continue with their yearly NAEHS Inductions, and for those programs that do not have an NAEHS Charter, AALL urges you to start one so you can honor your special students.
Queen Creek Unified School District’s Adult Education Program Hosts
Statewide Ambassador Training

~Diane Jackson, Queen Creek’s Adult Education Program

Student Leaders and Staff Prepare to Present the Big Picture of Adult Education to
Arizona Elected officials, Business and Community Leaders with the Help of Mayor

Did you know that more than 800,000 adults in Arizona need basic education while only 20,000
attend classes each year? Did you realize that about 20% of all diplomas awarded in Arizona are high
school equivalency diplomas (formerly known as GED)? Nationally, about 12% of all diplomas are high
school equivalencies. A high school graduate earns about $9600 more per year than a high school dropout,
which translates to a tremendous boost in revenue for state and local tax coffers. Additionally, there are
some 250,000 Arizona residents who need

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As part of their training, the student leaders had an opportunity to meet with Queen Creek Mayor Gail Barney, and to share stories and facts with Vice Mayor Julia Wheatley.

According to the Student Ambassadors, the meeting with Vice Mayor of Queen Creek was invaluable. “We had a chance to actually practice sharing the big picture and our stories with an elected official which was amazing. We are so grateful Vice Mayor Wheatley took the time to come and meet with us, said Ambassador Maybelin Rodriguez.

Consider the stories from these Ambassadors, which are representative of thousands of adult learners in the state:

• Regina is a single mother of two and employed as caregiver. She works from 3 AM – 3 PM, but still manages to attend high school equivalency preparation classes two days a week. Why make such a sacrifice? “I have to,” she says. “I want to get my high school equivalency and go to college to provide a more secure financial future for my family. I also want my kids to see that I can do this.”

• Hanan is a native of Iraq. At 23, she has lived the refugee life, moving to 6 different countries before ending up in the US. She hopes this is her last stop, and is determined to improve her English and go on to college.

• Laura has a PhD from her native country of Kazakhstan. She is taking English classes to be “a doctor as I once was.”

• And, Francisco was in military school until the sudden death of his father changed everything for his family. His credits would not transfer, so he is enrolled in a high school equivalency program with a goal of going on to college.

• Then there is the adult learner whose husband has a terminal illness. This student must risk leaving her husband alone for a few hours to take English classes in preparation for the sad day when he will no longer be there to translate for her.

“Helping decision makers see the faces behind the programs is crucial,” says Queen Creek Ambassador Instructor Diane Jackson. “When people in power are asked to make strategic decisions about resource allocation, we want them to have the facts about adult education, and we want to them to see the faces of the thousands of students so positively impacted by those programs.”
Phoenix Indian Center’s AALW’s Family Biography Event & Luncheon

~Olivia Hendricks, Adult Literacy Lead, Phoenix Indian Center

In celebration of the 2015 Arizona Adult Literacy Week, the Phoenix Indian Center Adult Literacy held a Family Biography Event and Luncheon. Students picked a grandparent, uncle, aunt or other family member and interviewed them with a list of questions about their life, ie: birthplace, occupation, marriage and family. Each student then presented a written biography and shared photos on a poster board. This gave students a chance to gather and analyze information while utilizing their literacy, technology, and communication skills. Students were awarded with a Certificate of Participation Award. We ended the event with a luncheon. Subs, chips, sodas and cookies were purchased. The event was open to staff and guests of the Phoenix Indian Center. In addition, to help spread awareness, all students were required to inform five people about our program, distributing fliers containing program information and our next orientation date and the Governor’s Proclamation. Overall, the event was a success and students who participated enjoyed the event.

Students collaborated together to generate questions they answered their family members. This project required all students to gather and analyze information by either reading information or communicating with their family member. Students were required to use their computer skills as well as their literacy skills by typing their biography. This was a fun activity and helped student learn a little bit more about their family lineage. Each student got a chance to share their experience and how literacy has affected their ability in this project and how adult education has affected their life. Students were actually excited about actually going out and sharing our program with other individuals who are interested in taking classes. This gave them the chance to share their experiences in our program.

Did You Win?

~Blair Liddicoat, Associate Dean, Instruction and Community Development, Rio Salado College

Being an AALL member provides you with a number of benefits. One lessor known benefit is that AALL selects one member every year to receive a scholarship that covers all the costs to attend the annual Mountain Plains Adult Education Association (MPAEA) Conference. This year that benefit is expanded because the MPAEA Conference is part of the much larger national Conference on Adult Basic Education (COABE) Conference being held in Denver on April 21-24, 2015.

I mentioned this benefit is generally not widely known by our members. As AALL’s Scholarship Chair it is my responsibility to change that. This short article will help in that regard. However, I can state with certainty that one AALL member is very familiar with this benefit since she was selected to attend this year’s COABE Conference at AALL’s expense. Congratulations to AALL member, Alicia Schwartzmann. If you are at the conference, say hello to Alicia when you see her, and reflect on how great it will be next year when you win AALL’s MPAEA Conference scholarship.

By the way, AALL has other general scholarship money available to its members. Check out the scholarship page on AALL’s website for more information. I know some of you are already doing this because we have awarded several scholarships recently.
On February 24th, thirteen (13) PCCAЕ ambassadors and seven (7) staff travelled to the state capitol to visit lawmakers with the purpose of building relationships and raising awareness of the importance of adult education in Arizona. Students met with Senators Bradley and Cajero-Bedford, and with Representatives Ackerley, Friese, Gabaldon, Mach, and Wheeler. During floor introductions we were proudly recognized by Senator Bradley in the Senate; and on the House side, 4 representatives, Friese, Gabaldon, Mach, and Wheeler, stood together as a team to acknowledge PCAAЕ’s presence and program. According to Dean Regina Suitt, this was the first time adult education students and staff were honored in this special way.

Given the heavy caucus schedule of the day, students had both small and large group meetings with legislators. One particular highlight was when, for scheduling convenience, representatives Friese, Mach and Wheeler met with all students in the gallery. This allowed for lawmakers to hear more stories and questions from a greater number of ambassadors. During this meeting, ambassador Jeannette Vindiola exhibited her remarkable talent for facilitation skills.

In the spirit of statewide cooperation among adult education programs, PCAAЕ’s meetings were shadowed by new student ambassadors from Rio Salado who are planning their trip for April.

In short, our new ambassadors met the proposed goals of:

- practicing public speaking skills in meetings with people in power
- sharing their stories for change
- Observing government in action and hearing how legislators work to directly affect laws in support of education

Regarding the role of ambassadors going forward, students are already beginning to spread the word of this event as a recruitment tool to attract future student leaders. They will share their experiences at upcoming HSE 101s, at new student orientations and at other local events. In fact, recently ambassadors and student leaders applied their skills at the El Rio Learning Center at a meeting with Councilwoman Regina Romero regarding bus service issues in their area. Their newly acquired tools and confidence made this particular meeting a huge success that is leading to concrete changes.

On behalf of all PCCAЕ ambassadors, we’d like to thank AALL for its gracious and generous support of this important civic education and leadership-building event.
Register now for the opportunity to join your colleagues on May 15th at Biosphere 2 near Tucson and Oracle, Arizona as together we explore how to bring valuable science and career curriculum into our classes. “Career and college ready” & “contextualization”—these will no longer be just buzz words as your experience what lessons can be in your classroom and leave with ideas you can use.

The full-day conference will begin with a common learning lesson on basic concepts and then break into separate learning strands inspired by Biosphere 2 topics where participants will be guided by Biosphere 2 trainers in parallel learning paths. Experience the lessons as students and as teachers as you discuss with fellow English language, math and language arts teachers the relevance of what you experience and the applicability of it to our classes and students.

**Registration Costs:**
- AALL Member: $75
- Student Member: $35
- Organizational: $75
- Non-member: $110

REGISTER ONLINE NOW!

**Newsletter Credits**

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