

news



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A Message from the Director Richard A. Peterson

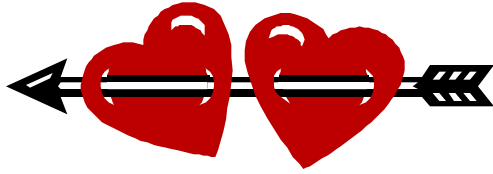
Year End Donations: Up!

For the past three years we have had to raise money during some lean economic times. Businesses, families, and philanthropy all felt the pinch. Project: LEARN was fortunate though. We did not have to cut back our services; in fact, since 2001 our enrollment actually grew a little. We were able to work through this challenge the way we always have in the past: very careful spending. Anyone reading

this knows well our reputation for modesty. We recycle, re-use, and in some cases, re- re-use. It's just in our nature to be careful about every dollar we spend.

Here is some good news, though: our year-end contributions are higher than they've been in the past three years. Though unexpected the increase sure helps us get off to a good start this year, and it might mean that we're looking at an economic upturn. That would be most welcome, for Project LEARN and all of us.

But more to the point, I wish to thank all of our donors this year. Even though we thank every donor individually I think it's a good idea to say thanks to the whole family of Project LEARN supporters. It is tremendously gratifying to know that we have such a generous community of support. We Thank You!



Tutor Tips
by
Barbara Watson

Happy New Year everybody! By the time you get this newsletter we will be well into the second month of 2004 already. How were your holidays? I hope they were safe, happy and healthy.

By now you should have gotten back into a regular routine of meeting with your student. With that in mind, did anyone do the activity that was suggested in the December's newsletter of keeping a holiday journal?

Well, as I said I would, I assigned this to my class. Much to my surprise none, not one of them, did the assignment. They were all very open and up front about why they didn't do it but still the end result was, "I didn't do it." All of them could verbally tell me what they had been doing, which for some it did include studying past class work. A couple of them said that they had attempted but just couldn't get it down on paper where it made sense.



So, what conclusions should I draw from this experience? Was the assignment too difficult? Was it the spelling, although they were given instructions not to be concerned about spelling?

After discussion with my students I've come to the conclusion that it was a combination of all those things. Because we had done some writing assignment in class and as homework, I thought that they were ready to go out on their own. Obviously not. (I think here is where I need to step back and take my own advise.) So, now my work is cut out for me. I'm not totally discouraged because it did help me to define the areas of reinforcement needed by my students.

CONFIDENCE BUILDING

Part of the problem was that they were afraid of getting it "wrong". They didn't want to turn in something that wasn't right in their own eyes. So, we will work on self-esteem and confidence building. I want them to be comfortable enough to just put their thoughts on paper. The rest we'll work out together.

SPELLING

We will continue to work on spelling using Focus on Phonics, flash cards, word attack drills and other spelling reinforcement ideas.

FINDING TIME

The challenge of finding time to study when things are especially busy and chaotic is really up to each individual. However, we will review study habits that were taught in the orientation class. Sometimes, every now and then, we need to be reminded of certain things. This obviously is one of those things.

Well, as you can see, things don't always work out the way we plan. I thought I was going to have a better report to give to you. But if you and your student did the assignment I hope you had better luck. Send me a note or give me a call to let me know your results. If you have any suggestions please pass them on.

So, until next time my nose will be to the grindstone...

...Happy Tutoring!

**Mark your
Calendar!!!**



*Project: LEARN Annual Meeting
Saturday, March 6, 2004
Noon to 2:00 p.m.
Project: LEARN Center, 2nd Floor*

Although we have to conduct some business at this gathering it has traditionally been described as a fun and festive event. This is a potluck gathering. Everyone brings a covered dish to share. After enjoying a taste of all the wonderful foods people bring in, a short business meeting is conducted to elect new officers, say good-bye to the ones that are finishing their term, announce the Friend of Literacy Award which goes to someone outside of the Project: LEARN family who has shown extraordinary support for this program. And, of course, there's always the mixing and mingling and meeting other dedicated volunteers and students.

And don't forget...

*Volunteer and Student Annual Recognition
Dinner and Ceremony
Friday, April 23, 2004
6:00 to 9:00 p.m.
(Place to be announced)*

*I know this is February but April is just around the corner. Now is the time to start thinking about nominating your student to receive special recognition. If during the 2003 year your student has made significant improvement/progress, moved up a level, finished a skill book, passed the practice GED test, or passed the GED test, or whatever you feel has been a significant improvement for your student, send in his or her name. Along with the name submit a short paragraph on why you feel your student should receive special recognition. All nominations must be received by **April 1, 2004.** Send to: Barbara Watson, Project: LEARN, 2728 Euclid Avenue, Suite 200, Cleveland, OH 44115-2412*

A Long History in a Short Month

Black History Month gives us a chance to look at what Black people have done over the years. It is important to know that Black history did not begin with Christopher Columbus and the slave trade. There is a long, full, and rich Black heritage in the world. While Blacks have been active all over the world much more of what they have done can be seen in Africa. Here is a brief timeline giving a few of the events in Black history that happened before America.

- *Scientists have found the oldest tools and artifacts used by humans in East Africa. Some were 2½ million years old.*
- **1970 BC – 300 AD** (2270 years) *The Nubian Kingdom was a highly advanced culture having a royal government, technology, and a written language. They lived in the upper (or southern) Nile River Valley in what is now Sudan and Ethiopia. In 742 BC a Nubian king ruled over Egypt for 100 years.*
- **1400 BC** *East Africans began making steel in carbon furnaces.*
- **500 BC** *Scientists have found iron tools and art from Tanzania to Nigeria that date back 2500 years.*
- **100 BC – 1100 AD** *The Bantu speaking Africans in west and central Africa used these metal tools and their farming skills to migrate (grow and move) further and further south. They finally reached what is now South Africa about 1000 years ago. This 6000 mile Bantu move was one of the largest and longest migrations in human history.*
- **250 BC – 500 AD** *Strong cultures grew up in the Niger and Nile River Valleys in cities*

like Jennè and Timbuktu. They traded gold, ivory, African animals, and slaves between all of central Africa and north into the Sahara desert.

- **400 AD** *One religious leader named, Ezana changed to the Christian religion. He then made Axum the first Christian state in the history of the world. Later it became Ethiopia.*
- **300-1076 AD** *The Empire of Ghana was strong. The king of Ghana controlled 250,000 square miles (about the size of Texas) with farming, the gold trade, and the army of 200,000.*
- **1087-1464 AD** *Mali was another larger and powerful African empire. There were two kings that lead Mali to great riches. King Sundiata Keita turned the large army of Ghana into farmers. This helped the empire grow in people and trade. A later king Mansa Musa added back the army and gained more land and trade. On his trip to Mecca he took so much gold dust that it changed the economy of Egypt for ten years.*
- **1468-1529 AD** *The Songhai Empire was the largest in the history of West Africa. The first ruler, Sunni Ali Ber took over Timbuktu and the university there. Songhai then became a center of learning and trade. A second strong leader, Askia Muhammad, expanded the army, farming, and trade, which added much land to the empire. In 1492 (the same year Columbus sailed) Songhai was over 830,000 square miles along the 2500-mile Niger River Valley. It went from the Atlantic Ocean to what is now Nigeria. This is about a quarter the size of all the United States today (The southern states from Texas to Virginia and Florida)*

As you can see Black Africans have added a great deal to the world over a long time. It is good to

have a month to think about some of these wonderful contributions.

Robert Bivins

