

Partners in English Language Learning (PiELL)
2011 Tutor Brunch and Annual Meeting
June 11, 2011
Time: 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Place: Nevada County Supt. of Schools Office
The Houser Room
112 Nevada City Hwy, Nevada City, CA 95959

Myra Arstein, President of PiELL, welcomed board members, tutors and guests to our annual meeting and tutor brunch. Among the guests recognized were: Aurora Mortensen, Promotora from Sierra Nevada Children's Services; Susan Reynolds, tutor trainer; David Arstein, PiELL webmaster; Jenny Enkhjargal, student; and Ellie Christensen, student. She also recognized Donna Cobb for her efforts as our Program Coordinator and thanked student Margarita Wietstock for her assistance as our student liaison. This is the first time our annual meeting has been combined with our tutor brunch in an effort to cut down on meetings and to help tutors and guests know more about what PiELL is all about. Myra thanked everyone who provided food and supplies for the brunch.

An attendance roster maintained by our Program Coordinator, Donna Cobb, was recorded.

Myra explained to those in attendance that voting members are active tutor volunteers and board members.

Introduction of Annual Minutes

Nancy Guenther read the summarized minutes of the January 22, 2011, Annual Meeting of Partners in English Language Learning. Copies of the complete minutes were made available to those in attendance. Myra made a motion to approve the minutes as read. Motion passed.

Introduction of Bylaws

Susan Murai, Joanne Weatherly and Kathy Mollet served on the Bylaws Committee. Susan explained how the Bylaws were modified and brought up to date and in line with PiELL's objectives. Copies of the bylaws were made available to those in attendance. In the updated Bylaws, the movement of the Annual Meeting to June was included as well as updated responsibilities of the Executive Committee and board members. These Bylaws, after a third reading, were approved by the Board in April, 2011. Myra made a motion to formally approve the Bylaws. Motion passed.

Annual Financials

Kathy Mollet, Treasurer, had a family emergency and couldn't attend today's meeting. In her stead, Myra Arstein presented the financials, providing a Profit & Loss Previous Year Comparison sheet for 2010, a Balance Sheet for 2010, and our Budget for 2011. Total expenses for 2010 were \$21,475.89 and total income was \$21,886.07 for a net income of \$410.18. Our projected net income for 2011 is \$1,947.19. Our total income to date for 2011 is \$8,734.18 and our net income to date is positive by \$417.68 over our budgeted net income to date. Our only paid employee is Donna Cobb, our 12 hour a week Program Coordinator. Donations are down over a year ago, but income from Scrip and grants has improved our financial position. Our United Way grant was increased by \$1000 and is now \$3,500. In addition, Kathy Mollet has been able to obtain several small grants. All in all, our financial outlook is positive.

A handout of PiELL financials and Scrip information and materials were made available to those in attendance.

Nominating Committee

Joanne Weatherly and Susan Murai serve as PiELL's nominating committee. Susan Murai explained that due to moving our Annual Meeting from January to June, there will be a one time extension in the terms of board members and the executive committee of 6 additional months. All the current board members and officers will run again. Susan introduced the proposed Slate of Officers and Board of Directors and Myra asked for nominations from the audience. Having none, Susan presented the following members for the term of June 2011 through June 2012 as follows:

Executive Officers

Myra Arstein	President
Joanne Weatherly	Vice President
Nancy Guenther	Secretary
Kathy Mollet	Treasurer
Bev Stout	Past President

Directors

Louise Beesley
Tod Buis
Judi Kreinick
Susan Murai

Myra made a motion to accept the slate of Executive Officers and Directors as presented. Motion passed.

The Annual Meeting portion of our program was concluded at 12:20 p.m.

New Resource Materials

Louise Beesley, our librarian, introduced the new books that have been purchased for our library in response to tutor requests. They include:

- Across the U.S. – Level 4
- Spectrum Writing – for several grade levels – 3rd grade would be a level 2 or 3
- Slangman – American slang – suggested tutors run off copies of pages to use
- Stories Plus – stories and comprehension exercises
- Aprende Inglés – covers things like restaurants and tipping
- Dual language books
- English Grammar: Step by Step, Levels 1 and 2
- Exploring English – emphasizes speaking and uses short stories
- Longman Photo Dictionary which includes a

Tutor and Student Speakers

Tod Buis introduced Keith Schoendoerfer who spoke about his experiences tutoring Hoi and Tho, a couple in their early 50's who are from Vietnam. He has been tutoring them since 2006. Hoi received his U.S. citizenship last fall and Tho will probably receive her citizenship next fall. Although they can read pretty well, they have struggled producing the sounds we use in English. Consequently, lessons include a lot of conversation and practice making the sounds they need to speak English. One of the tools Keith uses is movies. He will give them a movie to watch at home and they discuss it during their next class. This was their idea and it has really benefited them. Idioms have been hard and sometimes they are impossible to explain. Hoi also goes to Lisa Stine's class once a week. They don't use a book per se, but to study for their citizenship exams they use materials in Vietnamese that the U.S. government provides. They are very good. Yet they need to be able to speak and understand English to pass the oral exam for citizenship.

Margaret Glaeser's student, Ai Ming, also used materials that Margaret downloaded from the internet to study for her citizenship exam. Margaret's student is from China and she finds the past tense and English vowel sounds to be a particular challenge.

Sharon Coats pointed out that as infants we have the ability to make and hear the sounds necessary to speak any language, but we lose those abilities very early on so that hearing and producing another language's sounds can be difficult.

Tod showed one of our new small digital recorders that were purchased through a grant. Tutors can use these recorders in several ways. They can record sentences on them and the student can then repeat the sentences and their responses can be recorded. In this way, the student can play back their own responses and can compare them to what the tutor has recorded. If they hear themselves, then they will know what they need to correct. Judi Kreinick suggested that a tutor coffee would be a good place to train people in the use of the digital recorders. A show of hands confirmed that many of our tutors would be interested in using these devices as a teaching tool.

Lindsay Miller, and her student, Jenny Enkhjargal, spoke about their journey. Lindsay has been tutoring Jenny since 2006. Jenny had been in the U.S. for two years before she began studying with Lindsay. Jenny is from Mongolia and speaks Mongolian as well as Russian, which she learned in order to get her drivers license here in the United States, and some Korean. She still has difficulty making some English sounds. She and Lindsay also do fun things in their classes like cooking and jewelry making. She goes to her tutor with questions and problems and they have become good friends. Jenny successfully completed cosmetology school. Jenny now plans on taking on-line college classes. She wants to go to graduate school through the University of Phoenix and obtain a degree in Business Administration. Note: Nancy maybe Lindsay would share the questions that she asked of Jenny (they put a lot of effort into their presentation and I'd like to emphasize that – if you don't have time to do so, I'll make sure it gets into our website story of this event.

Success Story Discussion

Tod talked about the importance of establishing and maintaining objectives in order to help our students be successful in their quest to learn English. It is important make sure our students have reached an objective before moving on and to remind our students of how far they have come. Student success stories were solicited from the tutors and students present.

Ellie Christensen, Joanne Weatherly's student, said that when she first came to the U.S., she felt lost. She went to Lisa Stine's classes and then she got Joanne as a tutor. She focused on watching Joanne's mouth while she struggled to make correct sounds. She listened to English music and watched movies using English subtitles. attended Sierra College last semester and got A's in both of her courses. She also recently got a letter in Spanish but realized that she was reading it in English. Her brain was making the switch without her realizing it.

Other success stories:

Tod's student, Uriel, is working to understand spoken English at native speeds. He also was able to communicate with his landlord about renewing a lease. Uriel was able, with repeated listening, to follow a story told live to an English speaking audience (a recording) and was very pleased with himself. Tod's student's co-workers speak English and Tod's student can now initiate conversation. He looks forward to coming to class.

Ellen Hagan's student, Ellie, has a long term goal of improvement in conversation. A short term goal was that Ellie needed to communicate better with a particularly difficult person in her work environment. They practiced specific sentences she could use with this person using correct tone and intonation. It worked because she is now on "good terms" with this person. They understand one another now.

Keith Schoendoerfer's students, Hoi and Tho, travel to Vietnam every February. For maybe the first 3 years, Diane, Tho's sister, negotiated their time off with their employer.

Hoi and Tho wanted to do this negotiation on their own. So for a couple of sessions, Keith acted as the “box” and they play acted the negotiation. From that point on, I think they felt more comfortable discussing time off and schedules with their bosses.

Nancy Guenther’s student, Martha, needed to be able to ask and answer questions at the doctor’s office. So for several sessions, they worked on questions the doctor might ask and the questions Martha wanted to ask of her doctor. Martha is now able to go to the doctor and to physical therapy sessions without a translator.

Shari Coats has two success stories to share. Mini is much more comfortable now when she has to call Shari at home to cancel one of their lessons or change it somehow. She can leave a very intelligible message on voicemail or with Shari’s husband, and when she speaks to Shari on the phone, she very clearly pronounces the “T” at the end of “can’t”, because the first time she called to tell me “I can’t meet you tomorrow,” I had to ask her “you can or you can’t?”

Mini seems more comfortable about stopping a lesson to tell me things like “I need more practice with this” or “Can we have a longer lesson next week?” or something else. Earlier in our time together she seldom volunteered anything and even had difficulty answering questions.

Goal’s for the future include: going to a local store with Mini and letting her interact with employees in English after first practicing possible conversations and phrases. Working on understanding “native speed”, gradually working towards helping Mini understand a faster rate of speech, maybe using one of the digital recording devices PiELL plans to have available.

Becky Schulz’s student had a goal of going to the post office and ordering stamps and mailing a package. They practiced vocabulary and dialogues beforehand including “flammable” and “hazardous” so she could answer the postal worker’s questions concerning the package.

Myra’s student Lupita Torres could read and write well, but couldn’t hear English sounds very well. They practiced talking on the phone which led to real improvement.

Myra’s student, Margarita Wietstock, said that she appreciates the patience of her tutor. She now understands more and she can write and speak more correctly.

Door prizes including games and a gift certificate to South Pine Café were awarded.

Myra then spoke about new partner sources such as the Family Resource Center next to Hennessey School. Aurora Mortensen, from SNCS, spoke about her program which helps mothers with children. She does things like arranges doctor’s appointment, transportation and provides translation services for Spanish speaking mothers.

The Annual Meeting / Brunch concluded at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Guenther
Secretary
Partners in English Language Learning

June 11, 2011