



## Family Literacy Academy at Lake Wales

Newsletter

February  
2019

### Executive Director's Message

February begins the push to the end of the semester - our students are beginning to register gains in the war to pass the GED or gain more confidence in their use and comprehension of English. Tests with the Peabody Language Assessment of our young students show good, in some cases, remarkable, growth in learning.

We had two new GEDs, and had one student come within one point, to leave us at 95 GEDs to date, with at least 6 possible by the end the semester. We celebrate Rosa Muniz Briones for obtaining her citizenship, and for her diligent attendance in daytime ESOL class.

February was the time for the Lake Wales Arts Festival, giving opportunity to the Family Literacy Coalition to sponsor the Children's tent and the chance for the local schools to join Early Learning Coalition, United Way's Success by Six, the Care Center, the

Library, and the Academy in providing the children of the community exposure to reading and the Arts (with hands-on projects).

It has indeed been an active month! Let's begin...

### Santana Najera Gets a GED

Congratulations go to Santana Najera for acing her math test and gaining her high school diploma. She has been attending the night time class, along with her husband, Martin. This is great news for Santana and her family.

Santana and Martin brought their two daughters to class. Brenda is in kindergarten at Babson Park Elementary and Crystal is in day care getting ready for Kindergarten. Both attend our children's program at night. Santana currently manages the Frostproof McDonald's. Martin works for a landscaping company, and is working towards his GED. Best wishes, Santana, and hope you can find time for a class at Polk State!

Visit us at: [www.flalw.org](http://www.flalw.org)  
or call (863) 604- 8012

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## Natasha Earle is our 95th!

Great news for Natasha Earle and the Academy - on Thursday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, Natasha passed her final exam (math) to earn her high school diploma (GED).

Natasha came to us from Jamaica, where she left school at the end of Jamaica's equivalent of 11<sup>th</sup> grade. She came to the US four years ago to join the West Lake Realty Company. She ended up marrying into the family and joining the Academy at night two years ago. She has been a quick and dedicated learner, overcoming her reticence to testing. She and her husband have a child who is two years old; her other daughter has just come from Jamaica to join the family (she is in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.)

Natasha intends to continue in the Gravel family business for now, but with encouragement from Howard Kay may eventually pursue law school, a long-time prospect for her. A real estate lawyer may be a boon to the family!

Natasha gives the Academy and the math guidance of Mr. Burch, Howard, and Sue credit for the rapidity with which she gained her goal of completing high school.

Congratulations and best of luck, Natasha!

## Family Literacy Coalition

### Literacy Week Through The Arts

We want to thank the City of Lake Wales Commission (and City Clerk Jennifer Nanek for taking the extra step in making this happen) for its recognition of the value of the arts in education and for proclaiming February 18<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> Literacy through the Arts Week. Mayor Fultz signed the Proclamation and presented it to us at the February 19<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting, speaking very favorably about the length of service the Academy has provided the community.



As part of the “Literacy Week through The Arts”, Success By Six donated books to each of the local elementary schools’ media centers. It culminated in the Family Literacy Coalition hosting the Children’s Tent at this year’s Lake Wales Arts Festival, with the help of members of the Coalition, Academy staff, Board members and volunteers from the community, including students from the high school.

The actual Saturday and Sunday of the Lake Wales Art Festival was a great opportunity for child participation in the Arts, thanks to all the advance preparation of all these people. The major focus was on providing children attending the Festival a chance to make Lake Wales more beautiful (in accordance with the book read in the community on “Read for the Record” Day in October - *Maybe Something Beautiful* by F. Isabel Campoy and Theresa Howell. Illustrated by Rafael Lopez)

Each child was given the choice to paint from a number of canvases depicting various Lake Wales sites outlined in advance by community members. The canvases will be combined to form a mural, which the City has agreed to hang in City Hall once it is finished.

Other activities included puzzles and books by Success by Six, and reading aloud by Early Learning Coalition and free books provided by the Care Center (savored by all!)



**The next Coalition Meeting will be  
March 27th, 2019**

## ROSA GETS CITIZENSHIP

Rosa Muniz Briones, one of our daytime ESOL students, (you met her last month in our newsletter) passed her citizenship exam, becoming the latest citizen of the US - and Lake Wales! Congratulations to Rosa and thanks to our utility volunteer, Nita Propst, who helped Rosa prepare for her exam.

## Meet One of Our Volunteers

One of the strongest features of the Academy's instruction efforts is our volunteer staff. One of our most dedicated volunteers, Carol Myatt, is available during the day class on Tuesdays and at night class on Thursdays. Her story follows in her own words:

"Like many of the students at Lake Wales Family Literacy Academy, I returned to school as an adult. My youngest child was 5 and for the next 8 years, I studied hard, earning first a Bachelor's degree in Behavioral Sciences, and then a Masters of Education in Special Education.

My teaching career spanned 20+ years in grades K-8, and 3 different states, always as a special education

teacher. Also, for 5 years, I worked as an educational consultant with a private company in MA. My job was to assist under-performing schools to use data to reform educational practices and strategic interventions for student in need.

My favorite subjects to teach are reading - both decoding and comprehension - and writing in various formats. The Academy has provided me an opportunity to do both. I am honored to work with such highly motivated adults who are studying hard to improve their lives and those of their children. As an immigrant and an adult learner myself, I appreciate how difficult it is to keep everything in life moving forward in a positive way. Lake Wales Family Literacy Academy provides the additional support to assist people to achieve their goals and I am thankful to play a small part."

Carol Myatt

Just a note, Carol... You play a significant role, not just a small part, in affecting our students' progress in meeting their goals. You are very generous with time, both in class, and in preparation. We can't thank you enough !!

## COOKBOOK

### The Academy Cookbook is done!

Funded by grants from Florida's Natural and Thrivent Financial, it is a compilation of recipes provided to the Academy by our students, staff and volunteers-- as well as Academy supporters.

It has been a true labor of love, initially overseen by Linda Brown, and finished by Gail Crum and volunteers Nita Propst and Kathy Lettman.

It is an array of international offerings - some of them exotic and all of them carefully explained and easy to follow!

It has been a long time in the making, and has indeed been a wonderful group effort!

The book is entitled:

### *"If You Give A Family A Cookbook"*



**BY**

**The Family Literacy Academy  
at Lake Wales**

## ***IF YOU GIVE A FAMILY A COOKBOOK***

If you give a family a cookbook, they will want to read it.

If they read the cookbook, they will want to make a recipe.

If they make a recipe, they will read to follow the directions.

If they follow the directions, they will have to use their math skills to measure the ingredients.

If they measure the ingredients correctly, they will have a delicious dish.

If they serve their dish to their family, they will all sit down together and talk with one another.

And if they enjoy this family time, they will want to open the cookbook and try more recipes together.

***Based on "If You Give A Mouse A  
Brownie", written by Lauren Numeroff***

## Meet One of Our Daytime GED Students

Venisha Wade joined the Academy in November, 2018, to satisfy the request of her employer (the State Department of Consumer Affairs in Bartow) that she obtain her GED. This was fortuitous timing; while preparing for meeting the Departments' wishes, Venisha can explore eventually following her longtime interest in nursing. Venisha has been diligent in her studies; her teacher advises that she is making steady progress. Her attendance is near perfect. Venisha has two older children - a daughter at Hillcrest Elementary and a son at Frostproof Middle/ High School.

We welcome Venisha, and wish her the best as she pursues her studies.

In her own words, Venisha adds:

"I'm glad I joined the GED class, where the teachers and tutors help me with everything I need to know how to attain my goal of getting my GED. That will help me better myself and my family. Thank you

for everything you all are doing for us."

## READING Tips

*Reading is an essential part of our family's success, in order to obtain their GED or master English, and start their children on a path of life-long learning. Below are some tenets for our class - and the community.*

*We hope these ideas help you and your children on your journey toward a life and love of reading. The possibilities, the adventure, the knowledge await!*

- *Make reading aloud routine (not boring)*
- *Make reading together special*
- *Fill your home with books*
- *Visit the library regularly*
- *Ask others to read to your children*
- *Let your children see you reading*
- *Let your children chose their books*
- *Create a weekly "Family Reading Time"*

# Our Sponsors are



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as well as:

- ◆ McCance Foundation
- ◆ American Association of University Women/Lake Wales
- ◆ Kiwanis Club of Lake Wales
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- ◆ Good Shepard Episcopal Church
- ◆ Thrivent Financial

and several generous individuals

*The Family Literacy Academy at Lake Wales is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization*

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### **Free GED & ESOL Classes:**

**Evening Classes: Mondays & Thursdays,  
4:30 – 8:00 p.m.**

**Dinner, Childcare and Tutoring provided**

*Classes held at:*

**Janie Howard Wilson Elementary  
Daytime Classes: Tuesdays, Wednesdays &  
Thursdays, 9AM-Noon.**

**Childcare & tutoring provided**

*Classes held at:*

**Mary Campbell Community Center  
(Highland Manor)**