

Reaching Out (Tips for Tutors)

The lesson I learned while attending meetings about a building for non-profits is that it is important for groups to work together for the cause of helping others. The same is true of literacy programs like ours. Our web site is a helpful resource for tutors from other groups to use and we have tutors who are both knowledgeable and experienced; who are willing to share their knowledge with others. We already share tutors and students with the Charlotte County Literacy Program and we have worked with Linda Page at the Buckingham Library to help prepare students who are not yet ready to take a GED class or test. Several tutors have been provided space to teach at the Prince Edward County Library and we have been invited to participate in a program at Buckingham County High School. Tri-County Life Learners has partnered with others for a common cause and in the future, we will look for opportunities to work with others.

Cumberland Regional Adult Education is offering free adult education classes in Prince Edward, Amelia, and Cumberland Counties. Beverly Hill is the Regional Coordinator of that program. They have just begun a night class in Farmville and a day class at the YMCA. Longwood University is supporting the program by providing student tutors. We will begin to partner more with Cumberland Regional Adult Education's program.

Our focus should continue to be one on one instruction (ninety minutes per week). We will continue to work with early and beginning readers. When our students reach appropriate levels then we will recommend that they begin attending a class in Farmville or Cumberland. If Cumberland Regional Adult Education has a student who needs a one on one setting then we can be of help to them.

Some of our students are both fragile and extremely self-conscious. Our tutors are able to provide a comfortable atmosphere as well as time (sometimes several years to help a student with his/her progress). Our setting continues to be ideal for students who are uncomfortable with others in the room. We have a core of dedicated tutors who are committed to the pursuit of literacy. However, if we do not have enough tutors for our students, it is important that we recommend students without tutors to the Cumberland Regional Adult Education program. At the time of this writing, all of our tutors have at least one student and several have two and three students. All of us should be looking for new tutors for Tri-County Life Learners.

I have expressed a willingness to help Longwood tutors when needed. I want to be able to seek advice from Beverly Hill and her colleagues; and want them to feel comfortable reciprocating the process with us.

At this time, students who live in Cumberland County who are close to the Prince Edward County border are coming to Farmville office for lessons. In the future, I will refer new students from Cumberland to Cumberland Regional Adult Education or the Cumberland Library. Cumberland Regional Adult Education has a program in place where they can provide immediate assistance to new students.

It is important for literacy groups to work together for a valid purpose. I see a new connection with Cumberland Regional Adult Education as a means for improving our service to adult learners. I like a quote by Talmud, "Much have I learned from my teachers, more from my colleagues, but most from my students." That is the blessing of working in a literacy program,

all of us continue to grow and learn from those we connect with. Tri-County Life Learners is part of a large group working toward a common goal. To attain that goal of literacy, we will continue to look for ways to partner with others. At the start of a new school year, it is our goal to reach as many adults who need assistance in these trying times.

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