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Adrian Rea Literacy Center

News

Member of ProLiteracy America

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Dear Friends,

Christmas and New Year greetings to each of you across our county and across our country. Our thoughts go out to you as together we give thanks to God for many blessings of this past year. We celebrate the return of nearly 100% of learners and tutors for in-person or virtual classes, and also for new learners who seek to improve their lives by studying English.

We share with you this unique issue of our newsletter. (Yes-so many words! But well worth it!) In September we received information to have our learners participate in a writing exercise during National Hispanic Heritage month. "Every person has a story to tell" was the theme. We decided to expand this experience to all learners and tutors in celebration of the uniqueness of all cultures represented at the Literacy Center. The result is the richness of these short stories, stories of love, family, country, and heritage ~ enjoy!

All of us on staff are deeply grateful for you, our friends, family, and our ARLC Board members for your encouragement, support, and monetary gifts. Merry Christmas and a peace-filled

Fondly, Sister Carleen

New Year.

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Like Like

"Just like Americans celebrate Christmas, in China, we celebrate the Spring Festival as our largest festival. This festival originally comes from an ancient Chinese legend of 'Hian' - a ferocious beast believed to feast on human flesh on New Year's day. However, people discovered that Hian feared the color red, fire, and loud noises. So red paper decorations were pasted to doors. Lanterns were burned all night and firecrackers were lit to frighten the beast away. According to legend, the Spring Festival is also called 'Guo Nian', which means surviving the Hian's attack. Red has become the most popular color for festival celebration and dressing code." XJ

"Every fall, my family went to the countryside looking for hickory trees where we would gather the nuts for our 'Christmas cake', a fruit and nut cake our mother made every year. Next, our father would crack the very hard shells with a hammer. My sisters and I picked out the little pieces of nut with darning needles. Our mother mixed the nuts and dried fruit in a batter and baked the cakes for 2-3 hours wrapped in several layers of brown paper. Then they were soaked in liquor, wrapped this time in several layers of cloth and stored in a cool place (our cellar) until the Christmas season."

"I wanted to learn more about my heritage so, a few years ago, I started tracing back my ancestors. I discovered that I am a direct descendant of six people who were on the Mayflower, arriving in this country in 1620. Learning more about their lives and the difficulties the Pilgrims faced has made Thanksgiving an even more special holiday for me." DS



We Thank You!!



The Adrian Rea Literacy Center is designated 501c3 non-profit educational program that provides one-to-one tutoring at no cost to our learners. We exist entirely on grant funding and donations. Therefore, our donors are a vital part of the Literacy Center and we are grateful for their support.

The following donors supported the Adrian Rea Literacy Center since June 14, 2022 through November 30, 2022. We apologize if we have inadvertently omitted anyone's names. Thank you for your understanding.

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Have **you** ever wondered what it is like to tutor another adult?

Here is what one of our brand new tutors says:

"At first, I was hesitant to tutor because I'm not bilingual and I'm not a teacher. This hasn't been a problem. Turns out the teachers' manuals are structured for people just like me. There are even introductory English classes prior to pairings for beginning ESL learners. When I have questions, someone at the Center is always there to offer help and encouragement. I've found the best part of tutoring is experiencing my learner's dedication and her drive to learn."



Meet our Newest Tutors!



Front row: Ron Radtke, Taylor Williams, Vicky Skampo and Linda Radtke.

Back row: Doris DeNudt, Sr. Mary Kastens, Sr. Joanne McCauley, Sr. Carleen Maly, and Vicki Schmucker.

Save the Date!!

Our next Tutor Preparation workshop will be held on Saturday, January 21st from 1:00 PM until 4:30 PM. Please call for more information and to reserve your spot!

517-264-7320

ARLC Wish List. . . Items we can always use:

- •Individually wrapped cookies or snacks.
- •Wrapped hard candy
- Disposable gloves
- •New or gently used books for children for "March is Reading
- "March is Reading Month" display

Thank you!







"Everyone loves a parade. In my family we celebrate birthdays with a birthday parade! I remember as a young child on my birthday waiting expectantly at the dining room table while everyone else formed into a line. The first person in the line proudly carried the birthday cake with its brightly lighted candles. As they walked towards me they sang "Happy Birthday". The cake was placed in front of me. I blew out the candles and everyone clapped. I loved it! The tradition continues now, with my daughter and son. My two brothers also continue this tradition with their families. I have no idea how this family birthday tradition began but I absolutely love that it lives on!" CA

"In Mexico on May 5th we celebrate Cinco de Mayo. On May 5, 1862 Mexico won the Battle of Puebla over France. We celebrate Cinco de Mayo with a big parade and parties with lots of food, drink and music. We talk about what happened in 1862. My family comes to Adrian to celebrate and my wife makes tamales." JM

"For my family on Christmas Eve it is a tradition to make punch. Punch is a drink that takes tamarind, cane, apples, guava, mandarin oranges, cinnamon, and sweet piloncillo (brown sugar). We also make tamales." JA

"My ancestors came from Ireland, England, and Germany. Even though I never met her, I feel connected to my great-great-grandmother who came here from Ballymena, Ireland at age 16 in 1873. My family has the wooden trunk, a doll, blanket, and earrings which she brought with her. These treasures are being passed from generation to generation. At Christmas time my German grandmother baked Lebkuchen cookies. My mother learned how to bake them because they were my dad's favorite cookies. Now my sister carries on that tradition and bakes Lebkuchens for the holiday season." SS

"I grew up in a traditional American family. Although my DNA tells me I am 50% English/Irish with a mix of other nationalities, we did not celebrate any cultural traditions, except what came from a traditional American Protestant culture. Christmas, Thanksgiving and Easter were always celebrated with family gatherings and the traditional foods, turkey at Christmas and Thanksgiving and ham on Easter. As I've gotten older I have read and studied my Irish heritage and I'm learning to cook more Irish dishes – soda bread, shepherd's pie, scones, etc. My husband's mother was from Sweden and we do incorporate Swedish foods in our celebrations – Swedish limpa is always served at holiday gatherings. My husband bakes St. Lucia buns to give to quests who visit during the Christmas season." FK

"In the Hungarian culture, on the Feast of the Three Kings, Jan. 6, my grandmother would make biscuits (like bismarcks). In three of them she would place a quarter, a dime or a nickel. The persons who chose one of those would be one of the kings." SJF

"I am of Polish, Russian, and German heritage. My great-grandfather, on my mother's side of the family, emigrated from Russia and my father's parents came from Germany. Growing up, my grandmother used to play German music for me. I also enjoy Polish food." BL

"Cinco de Mayo is May 5th. Why isn't Hispanic History Month in May also? Cinco de Mayo celebrates Mexico's Independence from Southern France in 1862. Spanish Heritage Month celebrates the contributions of Spanish ancestors. There are not enough months in the year for every nationality. If you live in America you should have equal rights." RM

"Do you remember the last time you had dinner with your family? One of the oldest traditions I can remember is having dinner at a big table in the company of all my family, or at least most of it. That tradition, I think, is the most important because it involves most members of the family. This tradition is getting lost with the new generation. So, we have to make an effort to keep it alive." EP

"I have lived in the United States for 18 years. One of the traditions in my little town in Mexico starts on Oct. 28 and finishes on November 2nd. It is important because I can celebrate and remember my parents and other family who are not with me anymore. It is called the Day of the Dead." AM

"The state of Chiapas is a very large state that has 124 municipalities with 12 indigenous languages of different customs and traditions. The people of my town worked in agriculture. They planted corn, beans, squash, coffee, bananas, etc. for their self-consumption and to sell. The women were artisans. They would weave and embroider well-known traditional clothing from the town and still do." NM







"A tradition in my family is cookouts during summer holidays. We all bring different food. I bring whatever my sister tells me to. We enjoy watching the grandchildren play. Everyone has a good time." CM

"My mother-in-law is Italian. Her parents passed through Ellis Island as young adults (separately), and met and married in the U.S. As we know, Italians love to cook and to eat. When my stepson graduated from high school, he requested Grandma's meatballs and manicotti for his party. We spent a whole day making food, and every family member helped. Everything had to be made by hand. The food was a big hit, and everyone raved about it. I think there was more eating than talking that day, but no one seemed to mind." SD

"I remember celebrating Independence Day in Mexico. Independence Day was the end of a revolution. Mexico became free from Spain. We celebrate on September 15-16 beginning at midnight. At midnight, the President says, "¡Viva, México!" and the party begins. We watch fireworks and the next day we have a colorful parade. People wave Mexican flags. The army marches in the parade. It is a day off work for everybody. People buy tacos and enchiladas. People listen to and enjoy mariachi bands. Independence Day in Mexico is fun." CG

"My childhood stomping grounds began in small-town America during the 50's. I remember well my sister and I around the RCA radio to hear the adventures of cowboys, gunfighters, pioneers, and lawmen. The tales captured my imagination of what life in the wild west might be like. It was my foundation to develop and imagination and dreams about the world beyond our reach without a screen. We also read many books and proudly used our World Book Encyclopedias to expand our horizons. To this day, books are my friend." KK

"My Dad was the youngest of 13 children. He grew up on farms and grew up with many of his siblings' children. He had a happy childhood and always smiled when he shared memories about his childhood. He loved to be around his family. The more people the better as far as my Dad was concerned. He talked fondly about his Mom's cooking, everything from scratch. We had family reunions every summer I can remember. The food was plentiful but the following dishes had to be brought every year – macaroni and cheese, baked beans, fried chicken and butterscotch pie. I loved family reunions and was so happy to see my Dad with all his family. Over the years, as life goes on, his siblings passed away and my Dad as well 12 years ago. The reunions kept going until this year when the last of my Dad's siblings passed away at the age of 95. I'm hopeful the younger generation can continue the family reunion in the future." LC

"November 2, The Day of the Dead, is a celebration in which deceased loved ones are remembered, putting a picture of that person on the offering table or altar, with your favorite food and drinks. The Day of the Dead represents the return of the souls of the deceased who return home to the world of the living to be with their families and share those smells and flavors of their favorite foods." CDC

"Venezuela is a very beautiful country and has fun traditions. The National dance of Venezuela is the Joropo, which is danced with the typical costume called the Liquilique. We also celebrate Carnival in February, Holy Week, Easter, and different parties to venerate the patron saint of Venezuela, the Virgin Coromoto. In Venezuela we hear different music according to the States and the months. In December we hear the Gaitas (Zulia State), and the Aguinaldos, a tribute to the child God. Our national food is the Pabellon Criollo (shredded meat with white rice, fried ripe plantain and black beans). In December we celebrate Christmas and the end of the year having dinner with Hallaca, similar to a large tamale stuffed with meat, olives, raisins, egg and wrapped in banana leaves accompanied by chicken salad and ham bread and the dessert is sweet Papaya. The neighbors exchange the hallacas. Venezuelans are happy people despite adversity." YM & MG

"In Mexico the tradition is to play soccer. In my family the tradition is to eat Mexican food on September 15. Another nice tradition is to give the first name to the first son of the father." RB

"When I was a kid I helped my mom make bread and tamales. I put them into the horno, the outside oven. The bread stayed in the oven about 5 minutes and the tamales 1 hour. I remember the tamales had a really nice flavor. I miss those tamales! We would make an altar out of marigolds to remember Grandpa and other friends who had died earlier. I miss my mother who died six years ago. I miss my native country and Dia de Muertos. It's a nice remembrance, praying for those who have passed on." AB

"I am from Morelia, Mexico. I love my city. It has many beautiful gardens and flowers." GL

"I was born in Alabama on March 22, 1968. I am the first of two girls. I have a twin sister. I am 4 minutes older than my sister. Her name is Nina. We do not look alike. She still lives in Alabama." TD







"I have lived 23 years in the USA. I'm accomplishing the American dream during this time. I have formed a family, my husband and my daughters. To be able to accomplish my dream I had to leave my family back home in Mexico. On September 16, 2022, I thank God that I was able to see and hug my dad after 18 years. I thank God for that gift!" FR

"Every summer our family would pack up the car and head to the cottage on the Georgian Bay in Thornbury, Ontario, Canada. My friends thought we were such a cool family because we'd live in a different country every summer. Thornbury was different than Adrian: the candy was different, the way you bought milk was different, electricity was called 'hydro,' our neighbors said, 'eh,' and 'z' was 'zed.' I loved all the differences."

"I am very proud of my Mexican culture. I like to cook and eat Mexican food. One of my favorite dishes is guacamole. You can buy guacamole in many stores, restaurants and other places like Taco Bell. Nothing, however, tastes better than guacamole made from scratch with fresh avocados, spices, and mild to hot sauce served with tortilla chips. ¡Que sabroso! (How delicious!)" SMLV

"My grandmother on my mother's side was 100% Irish and staunchly Catholic. My grandfather was a convert after studying Catholicism for 6 years. Being raised Catholic, my mother was fully committed to raising her family Catholic including sending all five children to Catholic school through grade 12, no matter how much scrimping and saving it took. My favorite Catholic tradition is attending Midnight Mass at Christmas every year. There is magic in the air when snow falls outside and the church is softly lit with candles just waiting for the birth of Christ. Such joy when the choir breaks into song!" BG

"I went to Rosary High School, an all-girls Catholic High School in Detroit. I had to ride two busses to get there, and one bus only came once an hour, so if you missed it, there was a long wait or a 3½ mile walk home. My freshman class was very big, about 205 girls. I only knew one other girl in my class, and my older sister in the sophomore class. I was very nervous and lonely for my friends from my local school. But I soon made friends and I loved the teachers and nuns who taught my classes. My favorite parts of school were my art classes, drama and choir. I enjoyed being in my high school musicals and performing for choir concerts. I just recently celebrated my 50th class reunion – what a trip down memory lane!" JH

"Born in Glasgow, Scotland on February 13, 1917, my father entered the United States without papers when he was about six years old. His mother had simply walked across the Canadian border in Buffalo, New York with her three sons to join her husband who was working in Detroit. My grandfather had come ahead, secured a job and then sent money back so his family could join him in the states. After serving in the US. Navy, my dad received his citizenship as did all veterans who needed papers. I came along after my father married a U.S. citizen and am considered a 'Baby Boomer' since I was born in 1946 just after World War II ended. Then he went to night school and earned his high school diploma when I was around four years old. As I grew older, I began to pay more attention to the stories my father told about Christmas in Scotland. Because his family had little money, they often shared one apple or one orange. However, on Christmas morning each brother got his very own apple and orange for himself. Dad said it was the only time he had them 'All to himself'. Now, as an adult in my 70's, whenever I eat an apple or orange, I always feel fortunate to have one 'All to myself'." GL

"My inspiration to tutor comes from energy and determination that emits from the learners I have met and tutored. But, what was my motivation to even start tutoring? That came from my mother's experience. My mother arrived in Michigan in the late 1940's from Mexico. Although she was a very intelligent woman, her life was restricted from fully enjoying her surroundings and job opportunities due to her limited skills communicating in English. Somehow she found her way to an adult learning program. My mother's tutor helped her develop her reading comprehension skills. The more my mother learned, the more confident she became to communicate with co-workers and new friends. My mother began reading the newspaper and watching the news and became a better-informed citizen. My mother's positive learning experience is my driving force to tutor."

"I am from the Ukraine. I moved to America nine years ago. Of course, my first year living here was very hard. I learned to live, how a baby learns to walk, step by step. Now I am happy, but I need to continue to study about my new life. I love to eat apple pie and I'm very surprised ... Why don't Ukrainian people make apple pie? People in Ukraine have lots of apples but I don't remember eating apple pie in Ukraine. My favorite Ukrainian cake using apples is Sharllotka." NN







"For the last 25 years my family has hosted an Easter egg hunt just before Easter. What started as a small egg hunt for six children has turned into a giant festival with 35-40 children hunting for over 1,000 eggs that I scatter. The hunt is followed by lots of food and fun for all. This year, after cancelling in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19, we celebrated by making our 2022 event even better. We added a gaming truck to the bounce house and obstacle course and included an adult egg hunt, where pairs are joined at the leg and arm and hunt with oven mitts. It is a fun way to thank our Lord for the blessings he has given us."

"In Puebla there is an ancient tradition in which every March 12 residents of the municipalities of San Andrés Cholula, Nealtica and San Nicolás de los Ranchos walk to the navel of the Popocatépetl volcano to celebrate the existence of "Don Goyo". Offerings, food crosses adorned with flowers and dressed in traditional costumes of the region, are placed on the slopes of the mountain in gratitude for the benefits provided by the fertile lands, but also as request for good rains, good harvests, and health for all. Its pre-Hispanic origin is completely related to agriculture and considered as a ceremony of gratitude for the water that the volcano will provide for the valley of Mexico, Tlaxcala, Puebla and Morelos that will benefit the agricultural season." ER

"I came to the United States when I was 20 years old. My goal was to help my parents come to America and live near me. By the time I was 30, I had my citizenship. In those 10 years I studied hard to be able to pass the citizenship test. You see my father was a laborer and worked 6am to 7pm. My mother worked at home sewing for a large company from 4am to 7pm. I was the oldest of 10 children and we all wanted a better way to live from day to day. I came to the Adrian area along with 2 younger brothers. We worked hard and sent money back to our parents. Over the next 10 years we were able to get our entire family to the USA. We have our parents to thank for teaching us good work habits and what it means to be from a loving family. I am proud to be part of a Wonderful Latino Family!" BA

"My paternal grandparents were proud of their heritage as citizens of the United Kingdom. My grandfather's family was from Scotland and he proudly carried the last name Macbeth (a former king of part of Scotland). My grandmother's family was English. One particular tradition she gave our family was what is know as 'Sunday dinner', aka 'Sunday Roast'. In the UK, Sunday dinner was always roast beef, potatoes with onion gravy, veggies and Yorkshire pudding. Today it is our standard Christmas Day dinner. Yorkshire pudding may not be what you would immediately think. It is a side dish that is similar to a popover, but could also be compared to a mini souffle. Yorkshire pudding is made from a batter of eggs, flour, milk and salt that is baked at a high temperature until the top 'pops'. The trick is in keeping the top from deflating before serving it with a generous amount of gravy. Mmmm ... delicious!" PP

"Since both my father and mother were of Irish descent it only made sense that St. Patrick's Day was a special day at home and at school. Uniforms were the standard attire at my siblings and my school. However, thanks to my oldest sister's creativity we proudly stood out from the rest of the class on March 17th. My brothers wore large, green satin sashes emblazoned with 'Erin Go Bragh' along with fancy, green ties while my sisters and I wore green, tinted saddle shoes and green ties, topped off with green glitter in our hair. Of course, the day would not be complete without a proper jigs dinner of corned beef, cabbage, potatoes, and Irish soda bread made to perfection by our mother. Although our St. Patrick's Day traditions have changed through the years our pride and love for our Irish heritage has not."

"I am of Mexican origin from the smallest state of the Mexican Republic (Tlaxcala). I grew up in a very small town surrounded by very humble people but with very good principles and human values. You learn that a person who keeps his word is worth more than a person who signs a piece of paper and then you never see him again. For personal situations and to know the American dream and have a better future for my family, I decided to emigrate. This task has not been easy because the first obstacle is the language and the different customs. I arrived alone. Then my family visited me and, on that visit, we decided that my daughter would stay with me. My wife returned to Mexico with our son. After a while and for reasons of the COVID pandemic that were experienced throughout the world, my wife returned with our son and now we are together. The children are very happy and have different life opportunities here in this country, but the task is not easy because now they are learning another language. As parents we have to continue to improve ourselves and learn in the same way that they do. Currently my wife and I are taking courses in English to continue writing our story in this book called life." ABM







"The Day of the Dead is celebrated throughout Mexico. It is celebrated in the month of November. The first of November is the day for all saints and the second of November is for the deceased. On November second in the morning you need to put a glass of water on the altar so that when they arrive at night they can refresh themselves from their long journey and a little salt to purify their souls so they can enter into your house. In our culture on that day you cook all the appetizers that your loved one liked and you put them on the altar so that they can have dinner with you at night and enjoy the food. Places in Mexico where these celebrations are very important are Patzcuaro, Michoacán, Guanajuato, Aquascalientes and Tuxtepec Oaxaca." MD

"I am going to write about Christmas – a very beautiful family tradition. In December we start decorating our Christmas tree and on the 24th we get up early. My children help me prepare dinner. We go to mass. After mass we all have dinner as a family, eating our delicious and traditional pozole with tostados. After we have dinner, we open a few presents, watch movies and play lottery or bingo." AB

"On Christmas Eve someone prepares a traditional punch. The family gathers together. Everybody brings a dish of food to share. This is traditional food for the day. The food is chicken with molé, rice, tamales and many others. Everybody brings a present for someone. We open the presents, we eat, talk, and have a lot of fun." MP

"Both of my parents are first generation Americans. My dad's parents were born in Ireland and my mom's parents came to the USA from Poland. Each Christmas we would celebrate the holiday with my mom's siblings (2 sisters and 2 brothers) and their families. We looked forward to our Christmas meal and favorite recipes. I can remember a wood stove that helped keep things warm. A sacred part of this gathering was a forgiveness prayer which my grandfather began. The joy and smells of favorite foods are held in our memories." SVC

"I lived with my parents in Mexico. At the age of 6 years I started going to school 7 days a week. I was the only student to graduate from 8th grade. The classes started at 8am. I took a break at 11:30 for lunch. I finished my classes at 1pm. After classes, I took care of animals every day. I had chickens, dogs, sheep, and horses. Also, sometimes in the afternoons I had sports with my friends." HM

"I come from an indigenous family called Triqui, which is located in the northeast region of the state of Oaxaca, Mexico. I have 8 brothers and sisters. I now live in the U.S. along with my brother, sister and cousin. We'll never forget where we come from." ADJ

Completing our fifteenth year of service!



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