

VERA campaign

The Voter Education Registration and Action Campaign (VERA) is a non-partisan effort aimed at adult literacy learners and program staff in the New England states. Its goal is to educate adult learners about voting and topical electoral issues, and mobilize them to vote in the 2004 elections. VERA is sponsored by NELRC (The New England Literacy Resource Center.)

There is currently a statewide VERA Task Force meeting to plan strategies for rolling out the campaign. You can join the VERA campaign, and get more information about it, by going on-line at www.nelrc.org/VERA. Any interested adult education program can join. The upcoming issue of "The Change Agent" will focus on voting issues and there will be a workshop on using this issue of The Change Agent at HCC sometime this Spring. This information will be posted on our listserv and our website as it becomes available.

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This project is supported by a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Education.

What is Mass AAL?

THE MASSACHUSETTS ALLIANCE FOR ADULT EDUCATION

The potential of the adult learner in Adult Basic Education (ABE) and in English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs to advance the cause of adult education in the state of Massachusetts has been too long overlooked. The Massachusetts Alliance for Adult Literacy (Mass AAL) is a statewide organization created and run by current and former ABE and ESOL students. Mass AAL's membership is in full support of the great work of practitioners in the field. We feel that practitioners, teachers in particular, are creating real positive change in the lives of individuals on a daily basis. In some communities, an adult ed program is the single most positive thing, bringing hope to an otherwise hopeless existence.

Mass AAL views adult education as a vehicle for social change. Adult ed programs can be (and some already are) designed to have a positive impact on entire communities—giving people the tools to become self-sufficient, thus allowing them to rise up the socio/economic ladder—achieving the "American Dream."

By developing the skills of the state's adult learners to enhance what they really already are, which is the single most credible, and therefore, with Mass AAL's help, the most effective voice for the field of adult education, we will begin to make incredible in-roads to achieving the goal of increased capacity and improved quality for the field. By helping the field, we will be helping ourselves. In addition, we will be gaining useful skills that will be with us for the rest of our lives.

Mass AAL is creating true student leadership by training adult learners in a number of leadership roles. One is to give them the tools to educate elected officials on the power of adult ed to create change like no other

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What is leadership?

When you picture a leader, what comes to mind? A powerful public speaker? A director? A visionary? Someone who stands in front, or someone who organizes behind the scenes? Is it about charisma or skills? Can you *learn* to be a leader?

In The Literacy Project's Community Leaders Program, we've thought a lot about these questions. We believe that everyone has the capacity for effective leadership and that we can all learn to be strong leaders. We train students in "community leadership," a model of leading that focuses on helping groups work together to make change in their communities. We believe that leadership is about learning to use our power effectively; *community leadership* encourages us to use our power *with* others, rather than *over* others. In this model of democratic leadership, leaders focus on communication, group dynamics, creative conflict resolution, critical thinking and skills of working collaboratively.

In addition to developing these "building block" skills of community leadership, we work hard to demystify the things leaders *do*. We break down into discreet steps the things we do when we run meetings, give a speech, organize a training or plan an event. Then we give participants the opportunity to practice these skills in a safe and supportive environment. What had seemed like a complex art becomes something participants feel they can really do.

Learning leadership is a lifelong practice. It requires that we be willing to take risks, make mistakes, reflect on what we've learned and continue to grow. At some point, we each have to answer the questions for ourselves: "What kind of leader do *I* want to be? How will I use *my* power?"

Materials on the web

TLP's **Community Leadership Institute Training Materials** are now posted on its website — www.literacyproject.org. These materials are organized into 7 different topics and are designed to be used as a series of handouts for participants with limited literacy skills. Topics include:

- Defining Leadership
- Communication
- Group Development
- Service Learning Projects
- Facilitator's Tips
- Toolbox
- What Worked for Us

This project was funded, in part, through a SABES/West student leadership mini-grant in 2003.

Lynne Paju is the Youth/Leadership Coordinator and Margaret Anderson is the Volunteer Coordinator at The Literacy Project. They are available to help you design your own training program for your class or group, or to provide a workshop on a number of topics related to leadership training. Please email: lynne@literacyproject.org or call (413) 774-3934, ext. 14.

The International Language Institute student leadership project 2003

The Student Leadership mini-grant awarded to The International Language Institute by SABES West in January 2003 was used to help our ESOL students become more informed and active community members. We had recognized that without adequate language skills and knowledge of the resources available to them, our students could not begin to advocate for themselves and their families.

The 2003 Student Leadership Team consisted of a group of three exceptional ESOL students—Nural Ergun, Sophal Khun, and Olga Yelizarova. They were also assisted by two computer lab volunteers, Michael Reinhalten and Larry Daniele, who helped with the technical aspects of this project and Heather Hall and Betsy Fleche, who helped with the editing and proofreading of the guide.

The Leadership Team began by surveying students currently enrolled in the DOE Program in order to determine their needs and questions about the agencies, services, and organizations located in Hampshire County. Based on the results of this questionnaire, the Student Leadership Team put in countless hours to conduct research, compile information, and publish a resource guide entitled *A Newcomers' Guide to Hampshire County*. The Guide, written by and for students, focuses on the community resources and connections needed to help adult immigrants and refugees locate resources and access systems in the broader community. The resource guide is currently available in its hard copy version, both through ILI and SABES/West, and it will also soon be available online. An announcement will appear in the next issue of *Pipeline* with the URL and also on the SABES West listserv.

South Berkshire Educational Collaborative student leadership project 2003

The goal of the Student Leadership Project was to educate Latino families about health care services in South Berkshire County. The student leaders, aiming to be specific with their mission, collaborated with four health care agencies: *Advocacy For Access*, *Community Health Center of The Berkshires*, *Elder Services of Berkshire County*, and *The Elizabeth Freeman Center*.

The student leaders came to know and understand how the four programs operate. The leaders organized group meetings with representatives from each program, visited each site, read and gathered project literature and asked numerous questions about each program. The student leaders wanted to be prepared and fully informed so that they could answer any question about the programs that the community might have.

Student leaders then created a colorful brochure highlighting key facts about each program. The brochure was written in both Spanish and English and copies were distributed at each community informational meeting. A very large photograph of *Fairview Hospital*, where each program is housed, was a supportive locator visual at the four community forums. The student leaders wanted to help the community identify these programs in as many ways as possible; through their words spoken in a familiar native language, through literature in both Spanish and English, through suggestions and by offering advice.

The student leaders thought of themselves as “health care ambassadors” within the Latino community and the knowledge that they shared and their approach to sharing this knowledge had positive results.

Read more about 2003 Student Leadership Projects on Page 7.

Mass AAL board member

Donna Swain, of Orange, is the current Mass AAL Board President and is also the representative from Wmass. The organization likes to have two board members from each region and, as such, is currently searching for a second adult learner to represent the West.

There are meetings once a month for two hours. These are currently held in Boston but the organization is looking at other options. Learners are given a stipend of \$50 for each meeting and also reimbursed for transportation to and from the meetings.

For more information on the position and its responsibilities, contact Donna at (978) 544-3399 or Ernest Best at (617) 782-8956 or ernest@alri.org.

Support Mass AAL & student leadership!

Membership in Mass AAL is \$1.00 per student or \$5.00 per practitioner. Support your statewide student leadership organization! To download a membership form, go to the SABES/West web site at www.sabeswest.org. These membership forms will also be at various SABES workshops throughout the Spring.

Group meetings

- VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS GROUP
Meets: Monday, May 3, 2004
(10 a.m.—noon) at HCC: Bldg. G/
Rm. G221
Facilitator: Michele Sedor

Mass ALL

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level of education has done to date. Knowing this fact, we feel that the field of adult education should be funded in a way that would give it the capacity to have the greatest impact. This would be the best investment in our commonwealth that could be made. By increasing capacity, this will create the opportunity for more people to gain marketable skills. Therefore, we will be giving more and more people the ability to contribute to the tax base. With this scenario, everybody wins.

Ways To Become Involved

We understand that the lives of adult learners can sometimes be complicated, and that the level of involvement in our organization at this point in their lives may have to be limited. For those who fit that category you may join Mass AAL as a **General Member** and receive our **Mass AAL Newsletter** twice a year. You'll also have access to information, and activities of which Mass AAL is a part. There you will be able to pick and choose, the activities with which you'd like to become involved when they are best able to fit into your lives.

However, for those of you who see the importance for the field of adult education to be able to continue the great work that it does, on a much larger scale, and realize that the time to act is now, here's an opportunity to become involved with one or more of the Mass AAL initiatives listed below.

- Massachusetts Speakers' Bureau
- Mass AAL Regional Teams
- Mass AAL Membership Committees
- Mass AAL Board of Directors/Regional Representatives

We are placing particular emphasis on having a strong adult learner leader from your region (the West) to serve as a working member on Mass AAL's Board of Directors. Remember, no one "sits" on the board of directors. They "work" on our board of directors. Student leadership is serious, meaningful work. Remember, we're talking about advancing the field of adult literacy to create large-scale social change, by creating awareness among the public and elected officials.

There are still other ways to become involved with student leadership. Practitioners are not exempt. Educators like Bob Bickerton of the Mass. Department of Education believe in it enough to provide the resources to keep Mass AAL up and running since its inception. Because of this, Mass AAL has been a shining star among student leadership organizations around the country. We challenge other professionals in the field to be progressive enough to follow this lead and help us (with your time, and expertise) to reach our goal in giving the world more of what you do best. The word "Alliance" in our organization's name is the alliance between adult learners and practitioners, because we realize that we're all in this together.

(Ernest Best, a former adult learner, is the Executive Director of Mass AAL. Students and practitioners are encouraged to contact him with questions by phone at (617) 782-8956 or by e-mail at ernest@alri.org)

Off the shelf

Now available at SABES/West . . .

LEADERSHIP

These resources are available at the SABES/West Resource Library:

- ⇒ “Adult Student Support: Increasing Student Involvement and Expanding Learning Opportunities.” Florida’s Adult Literacy Resource Center, FL.
- ⇒ Community Leadership Institute Training Materials. The Literacy Project, Inc., MA. 2003.
- ⇒ VALUE Leadership Training. Voice for Adult Literacy United for Education, Inc., PA.
- ⇒ Student Leadership, SABES. (This is a folder of various articles and materials relating to adult student leadership.)
- ⇒ SABES/West also has a variety of materials on training techniques, leadership in general and conflict resolution. For more information on any of these materials, contact Michele.
- ⇒ The following website also offers a wealth of information about leadership in general: W.K. Kellogg Foundation. www.wkkf.org/SearchSite.aspx?SearchString=leadership
- ⇒ The website of VALUE (The Voice for Adult Literacy United for Education), the national adult learner leadership organization, is <http://literacytent.org/value/index.html>.

VERA*(Continued from Page 1)*

For more information on the VERA campaign, you can contact Carol Bower, Director of N.E. SABES, at cbower@necc.mass.edu or (978) 738-7301. You can also contact Michele Sedor for information on the regional events concerning this campaign.

Important Notice!

Construction has begun on HCC’s new business center. During construction, access to some areas between Buildings C (aka Forum) and G (our offices) will be restricted. Visitors parking in Lots A-E must access the exterior patio and stair areas via the first floor of Building G. There is no direct access from Lot F. Other parking lots are not affected at this time.

Student leadership mini-grants for FY’04

SABES/West awarded three student leadership mini-grants for FY’04. Below are descriptions of these projects. Projects will be completed by June 30, 2004 and project reports and products will be available through SABES in Fall’04.

- ⇒ MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS/NORTHERN BERKSHIRE ABE PROGRAM (NORTH ADAMS).

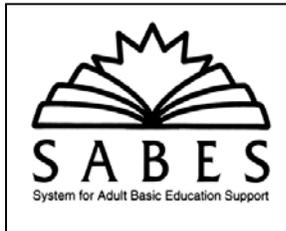
Students will learn about PowerPoint and will plan, create, and present a PowerPoint presentation on the Northern Berkshire ABE Program and “the adult learner.” This presentation will be used for outreach and orientation efforts.

- ⇒ PATHWAYS TO FAMILY SUCCESS/FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM, HALO (HOLYOKE)

Students in the family literacy program will work with interns from the University of Massachusetts to prepare and present monthly PACT (Parent and Child Together) activities at the Holyoke Boys and Girls Club.

- ⇒ READ/WRITE/NOW (SPRINGFIELD)

Students will engage in a participatory action research program around the topics of citizenship and civics education. They will conduct research, write a booklet and demonstrate to their fellow classmates and others how the government of the United States is structured and works to protect its citizens.



Four-month calendar of events at a glance...

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

SABES is an approved PDP provider. Educators will receive, upon request, official documentation in the form of a Certificate of Completion for each qualifying training. **All trainings are offered FREE of charge** to ABE practitioners. If enrollment is limited, registrations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

3-Option Registration:

Telephone: (413) 552-2586 / 552-3282 FAX: (413) 552-2067 E-mail: sabeswest@hcc.mass.edu

DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS of these and other events can be seen on the SABES' website www.sabeswest.org

PRE-REGISTRATION is required for all SABES' activities. Low registration results in the cancellation of workshops. Please register at least 1 full week prior to the date of activity.

CANCELLATION POLICY/INCLEMENT WEATHER: Call Holyoke Community College's Hotline (413/552-2600 x1418) for information on closings and delays due to inclement weather. The Hotline is accessible 24 hours a day and is updated at 6 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. for each questionable day. In addition, HCC's website (www.hcc.mass.edu) will post notice of closings and delays. Local radio and television stations also carry closings and delays.

For inquiries specific to SABES' events, call the SABES' General Message Center (413-552-2586 x3282).

PARKING for SABES' events is assigned to A-E & Q Lots, unless otherwise indicated.

GENERAL

- *New Staff Orientation*

Meets: Wednesdays, April 14, 21, 28, and May 4, 2004 (5 p.m. – 9 p.m.) at HCC: Bldg. G/Rm. G221
NOTE: You must attend all sessions.

Facilitators: Patricia Mew and Christine Polk

ESOL

- *ESOL Beyond Basics*

Meets: Fridays, May 14, June 4, June 19 and 25, 2004 (1 p.m.— 4 p.m.) at HCC: Bldg G/Rm. G221.

NOTE: You must attend all sessions.

Facilitators: Nicole Graves and Peg Johnson, Center for New Americans

WRITING

- *Tips and Tools for Learning Disabled and Beginning Writers*

Meets: Friday, April 2, 2004 (1 p.m.–4 p.m.) at HCC: Bldg. G/Rm. G221.

Facilitators: Michelle Brown and Susanne Campagna, Read/Write/Now.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

- *Introduction to Curriculum Development using Curriculum Frameworks*

Meets: Part I, April 16, 2004 (9:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m.) at HCC: Bldg. G/Rm. G221.

Part II, May 19, 2004 (2–3 hours in the morning—specific time TBA) at HCC: Bldg. G/Rm. G221

Presenters: Merilee Freeman, Curriculum and Assessment Coordinator, SABES/Central and Patricia Mew, SABES/West

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

- *Student Leadership Celebration (statewide event)*

Meets: Friday, May 21, 2004 (9 a.m.-2 p.m.) at Devens.

DIRECTORS/ADMINISTRATORS

- *Countable Outcomes*
Meets: Monday, April 26, 2004 (1 p.m.—3:30 p.m.)
at HCC: Bldg. G/Rm. G221.
Presenters: Nicole Graves and Theresa Miller
- *Program Design Refresher*
Meets, Monday, April 5, 2004 (9:30 a.m.—3:30 p.m.)
at HCC: Bldg. G/Rm. G221.
Presenters: Theresa Miller and Dori McCormack.

ASSESSMENT

- *Item Writing Workshop for ABE (ELA and Math)*
Meets: Thursday, May 20 from 9:30 - 4:30 at HCC: Frost Bldg./Rm. 309 with a breakout session for one of the groups in G221.
Presenters: Stephen G. Sireci, Co-Director of the Center for Educational Assessment in the School of Education at UMass Amherst, Principal Investigator in the Adult Basic Education project with Massachusetts DOE, and Associate Professor in the Research and Evaluation Methods Program at UMass Amherst;
Mercedes Valle, Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Educational Assessment in the School of Education at UMass Amherst; and
April Zenisky, Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Educational Assessment in the School of Education at UMass Amherst.



Changes in SABES' Staffing

Please join us in welcoming **DORI MCCORMACK** to the SABES team at Holyoke Community College. As an Associate Coordinator, Dori will primarily be providing workshops and support in the areas of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. Dori's previous experience as an ESOL teacher and recently as the Educational Coordinator for the Franklin County Sheriff's Office will be a valuable asset to the region's work. If you have any questions for Dori or just want to wish her good luck in her new position, she can be reached at (413) 552-2393 or dmccormack@hcc.mass.edu.

....and goodbye to **LISA DEYO**, who has been with SABES a little over three years as an Associate Coordinator in the areas of Community Planning and Organizational Development. Lisa is moving to Kabul, Afghanistan for two years where she will be working with Management Sciences for Health. Lisa will be the Literacy Advisor on an integrated literacy and health project that will train community health workers in rural areas. We wish Lisa well and will miss her presence and wealth of knowledge of adult education. She can be reached at lisa_deyo@yahoo.com.



FY'03 student leadership grants

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The Literacy Project's community leaders program

The Literacy Project's *Community Leadership Institute* is a 12-week training program that provides leadership training and community service experiences to learners and other community members interested in getting involved in their community. The program relies on experiential learning techniques - using games, activities and authentic opportunities to practice skills within a supportive group setting, and through a community service project the participants choose for themselves. Participants learn and practice skills used to effectively work with a group, from dealing with conflict to facilitating meetings or running an activity. Through small group community service projects, participants get to apply their learning in new ways- and carry out a project from the planning stage to the evaluation stage. Past group projects include a FY'03 Leadership mini-grant workshop on STD's and safer sex, promoting volunteerism in the community, working with a teen program and organizing a student alumni speakers bureau.

SABES General Message Center

(413) 552-2586 x3282

FAX : (413) 552-2067

SABES/West Staff

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msedor@hcc.mass.edu

Community Planning/Organizational Development - TBA (413) 552-2069
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Technology/SMARTT — Nancy Karella (413) 552-2510
nkarella@hcc.mass.edu

Stay connected!

SABES/West Web Site

www.sabeswest.org

SABES Listserv

Interested in staying in touch with training events, job postings,
DOE alerts, or tidbits of classroom strategies?

Sign up for listserv by sending e-mail to nkarella@hcc.mass.edu.

**The Pipeline
Of WMass.**

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