



# LitBits

249 Highland Avenue, Rochester New York 14620-3036 • (585) 473-3030 • www.literacyrochester.org

## Accountants Outsmart Attorneys in Brain Game 2005

*Judy Emerson, Program Coordinator and Marie Jolkovski, Volunteer*

Mengel, Metzger, Barr, LLP became the first accounting firm to win the Literacy Volunteers of Rochester (LVR) Brain Game. The Clarion Hotel was the setting on October 6 for the lively trivia game played by thirteen teams of attorneys and accountants who competed for the championship. The fifth annual game raised \$9,000 to support the programs of Literacy Volunteers.

Brain Game contestants answered questions about art, geography, local history, science and music. When the going—and the questions—got tough, they appealed to “lifelines” in the audience for help. Tim Walsh, the expert LexisNexis Lifeline, came to the rescue as did the subject experts: Peter Giopoulos for art, Dick Wiener for geography, and Eldred Chimowitz for science.

Art and music support came from the Memorial Art Gallery, which provided copies of artwork, and Bonnie Martin who played music for the popular third round questions. Bonnie also helped create a festive atmosphere before the game with some wonderful piano selections.

Emcees for the evening were Holly Maynard and Evan Dawson of WHAM-TV 13. They kept the game moving

at a lively clip. John Heveron, Jr., CPA, served as judge.

LexisNexis provided underwriting for the event, and Constellation Brands and Messenger Post Newspapers were Silver Patron supporters. Nixon Peabody, the 2004 champion, was a Patron supporter. Many organizations and individuals contributed to the program.



*2005 Champions: Susan Lebbon, Alan Rich, Mary Paul and Steve Berardi of Mengel, Metzger, Barr, LLP. Brain Game photographs provided by Kris Lepel.*



*Bonnie Martin, pianist*

The Literacy Volunteers committee of the Board of Directors and community volunteers led by Peg Warrick and Jon

Lazenby took care of arrangements.

Thank you to all who participated and worked hard to put this event together.

Can you answer this question from the game? *What happened at Susan B. Anthony's home on Madison Street in 1872? A. She met Elizabeth Cady Stanton B. She died. C. She was arrested by a federal marshall for voting. D. She had tea with Frederick Douglass.*

*[Answer: She was arrested.]*

## Literacy is Freedom – 2005-2006

*Jane LeBlanc, Development Director*

The theme of this year's Annual Giving Campaign is “Literacy Is Freedom,” helping people help themselves by learning to read, write, and speak English.

Participation in American democracy and the political process depends on education. It also means economic opportunity, family support, and

community involvement. Literacy is essential in today's world.

Our Annual Giving Campaign invites all members of the community to support the “Literacy Is Freedom” Campaign. Please give generously: we serve nearly 600 adult learners (and the waiting list is growing) who are at least 18 years

and older.

Remember that it costs approximately \$250 to support one student for one year of tutoring. Would you consider supporting one student or possibly more?

Our goal for this year's campaign is \$40,000. Please help us reach this goal.

## From the Executive Director - Bob Mahar

### *“No Family Left Behind”*

For the past few decades, there has been an increased emphasis on the needs of youth and children, including their education and their physical and emotional well-being. There have been a number of programs that include mentoring for youth. Most recently a study was completed for the Rochester City School District entitled a “Call to Arms.” The study made a number of recommendations, including a call for the recruitment of 10,000 volunteer mentors to assist students in the Rochester City Schools.

Schools and communities across the nation continue to respond to the federal “No Child Left Behind” Act which is designed to improve basic skills of all students. However, our community and many others need to become more aware of the impact of parental literacy on both the performance and the potential of children.

According to a 1999 U.S. Department of Education study,

“...the single most important factor in the development of literacy in a child is the literacy level of their mother or primary adult caregiver.”

And even more significant are the areas that are impacted by literacy;

- More than 40% of individuals at the lowest level of literacy are living in poverty
- 70% of the U.S. prison population are high school drop-outs and estimates are that nearly that percentage is functionally illiterate.
- Individuals at the lowest level of literacy are more likely to be getting public assistance, be unemployed or underemployed, have lower lifetime earnings, and have more difficulty accessing health care for themselves and for their families.

The evidence also shows us that there is a direct correlation between the enrollment of adult learners in literacy and adult education programs and the education of their children. As their parents become engaged in learning, so do their children. As parents value reading and education more, they become stronger

advocates for their children’s education, and the school performance of their children improves.

LVR recently partnered with Family Resource Centers (now a part of Crestwood Children’s Center) on a grant proposal for a family literacy project to provide health literacy information to adults and their children. If funded, the grant will also provide some health literacy education for health care providers.

We need not debate “No Child Left behind” vs. “No Parent Left Behind” (youth vs. adult education). Rather we all need to work together to ensure that there is “No Family Left Behind.”



## LVR Students Cross Digital Divide

*Judy Emerson, Program Coordinator and Russell Hayes, Volunteer*

The definition of literacy has expanded to include the ability to use a computer. In LVR’s 2005 strategic plan, offering computer literacy became an action item.

Russell Hayes, an information technology student at Rochester Institute of Technology, began a project in June 2005 to bring additional computer literacy to LVR students. Over the summer, Russell investigated existing computer literacy curricula to see how it applied to adult students. From this study, he designed a short pilot course and invited a number of Basic students to learn computer skills.

As a follow-up to the pilot class, he designed a second course, which began on October 20. Classes will run in the evening for six weeks. Russell teaches techniques such as identifying hardware (floppy discs and compact discs), turning the computer on and off, keyboarding, writing a letter, and investigating Internet search engines. The class is limited to 10 participants and is held at The Academy, an agency with computer availability for groups.

LVR has crossed the digital divide.



*Scott Yantz (center) and Sam's Club employees, Mary DeCiantis and Dave Miller*

## Wal-Mart Foundation Supports Literacy in Rochester

Thanks to LVR volunteer and student Scott Yantz, Sam’s Club of Henrietta, on behalf of the Wal-Mart Foundation, has donated \$1,500 to Literacy Volunteers of Rochester.

Scott has solicited Sam’s Club’s support for LVR for a number of years. Many thanks to Scott and to Sam’s Club.

# Leading the Way

Jane LeBlanc, Development Director



John Laurence, President of the Board of Directors addresses the gathering.

The LVR leadership, including members of the Board of Directors, advisory board, veteran tutors, and donors were invited to attend the first ever President's Reception. More than forty people gathered

on September 20 to hear John Laurence, President of the Board of Directors, share the Strategic Vision for the agency for the next four years. The President's Reception was held in the DeLand Rooms of the Green Lantern Inn in Fairport.

One point in this vision includes a Donor Recognition Society, for those who give \$250 or more annually, and those who have made a planned gift, as in a will. We are asking for sugges-



Rose-Marie Klipstein and Jim Tiefenthal



Former student and Tutor, Boris Vodotinsky explains his connection to LVR.

tions to name the Society. If you have an idea, please call Jane LeBlanc at 226-8933, ext. 16. We hope to make the President's Reception an annual event for the group.

## From the President – John Laurence

*“If you're happy (and proud) and you know it, clap your hands”*

My apologies to the old children's song, but it fits exactly into my comments this time.

We should all be proud of the work that Literacy Volunteers does, the mission that we serve, and the results that we achieve. Now, I would ask, if you're proud of what we do, to talk about it with your friends, relatives, co-workers, and other acquaintances.

Why? You know that we're always looking for additional volunteers to be teachers or trainers or office help, etc. You also know that, as a non-profit organization, we're always looking for funding to help support the work we do. Well, you never know where the next volunteer or the next dollar may come from. That help may come from the last person you talked with about what we do.

This summer, Bob Mahar, Jon Lazenby (Vice-President of our Board of Directors) and I went to a meeting of Literacy

Volunteer boards sponsored by Literacy New York. The speaker was an expert in non-profit boards and provided valuable information about the roles of a board. In talking about fund-raising, she gave a great example of how talking about what you do, even with strangers, can bring unexpected positive results.

An Executive Director of a non-profit organization concerned with raising funds to construct playgrounds for handicapped children was riding an elevator on her way to meet with a potential funder. She was carrying a variety of materials to use in the meeting. On her ride up, a gentleman made small talk and asked her what she was doing that day with such an impressive set of materials. She described her organization, its mission, and the purpose of her call. She went to her meeting and forgot all about the conversation. A short time later, the organization received a check for \$250,000 from this gentleman.

It turned out that he had a child with the same disability as supported by the organization and wanted to help the cause.

Now, will every “elevator speech” turn out with that same result? Not a chance. However, we won't know what that next conversation may lead to if we don't try. We'll supply you shortly with the “elevator speech.” All we ask of you is that you talk with anyone who will listen about what makes you proud (and happy).

**Coming Soon:  
Details about  
Spring 2006  
Raffle**

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### Office Hours

Monday-Friday 9:00 am – 4:00 pm  
Closed Saturdays during July & August

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