

The READ Review

A Quarterly Publication of READ La Porte County, Inc.
Winter 2015 Edition

What's New with READ?

Unity Foundation Funds Adult ESL Class Enhancements

On October 17th, READ staff joined representatives from many other La Porte County non-profits at Unity Foundation's annual luncheon. We received a total award of \$3,000 from three different sources – the Unity Foundation Power for Good Fund, the Unity Foundation Literacy Fund and the Kay Franklin Commemorative Fund.

This award will almost fully fund our 2015-2016 Adult English Language classes at Handley Elementary School. In addition to paying a portion of our instructor's fees, the grant also enabled us to purchase five additional Rosetta Stone software licenses for our students' use. These new licenses will help us serve language learners working at more advanced levels, and can even be accessed by some of our students outside of class time.

If you or someone you know would like to improve your English language skills, please consider participating in this free program. Classes meet Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. when school is in session. Preregister by calling (219) 325-0875 or emailing readlaportecounty@gmail.com.

Thank You, Tutors!

READ tutors were recognized at a luncheon on November 21st at the La Porte County Public Library. The itinerary included a delicious meal catered by Indiana Deli as well as a musical performance by READ board member Jim Lampl.

If you have tutored in 2015 but weren't able to make it to the luncheon, we thank you for your service as well. Please keep an eye on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/ReadLaPorteCountyInc for announcements about 2016 tutor events.

2015 Scrabble Tournament a Winner

We're pleased to report that this year's tournament ran smoothly and was even better attended than past years' events. A total of thirty teams faced off at the Best Western Plus LaPorte Hotel & Conference Center. The Honorable Steven King served as judge for the third consecutive year.

Tournament winners were as follows:

1st Place: Susan Schab and Sara Scherberg

2nd Place: David Wittchen and Pat Klimczak

3rd Place: Julie Bellah and Ginny Davis

Lightning Round winner: Julianne Berglund

Tournament sponsors included "Q" level supporters Alcoa Howmet, American Licorice Company and IU Health La Porte Hospital; "X" level supporters Michiana Antique Auto Club, Christa Pinkepank and United Way of La Porte County; "K" level supporters Alpha Baking Company, Jeff and Dawn Dunifon, Edward Jones – Sarah Brown, La Porte Savings Bank, LaPorte Seamless Gutter and Valerie Martinsen, DDS; and additional supporters The Floor Store and Betty Roy.

Prizes and favors were donated by Best Western Plus La Porte Hotel & Conference Center, Cannon's Automotive, Peggy Cunningham, Fannie May Confections, Greg Fruth, Holly's Restaurant and Pub, Magic Sports, Debe Meyer, Christa Pinkepank, Portofino Grill, Christine Rosario, Cathy Shadowsky, Connie Shei, Sherry Thompson and Works in Motion Dance Company.

Thanks to the generosity of our players and corporate sponsors, this year's tournament brought in a record profit of approximately \$4,000.00! The funds raised through this fundraiser help us keep READ's core programs up and running year after year, so we greatly appreciate your support.

Changes Ahead

As 2015 draws to a close, we are sorry to say goodbye to longtime Board members CeeCee Kaylor (member since 2010) and Christa Pinkepank (member since 2009). We thank CeeCee and Christa for all they have done for READ and wish them the best in their future endeavors.

In other news, we are pleased to welcome our newest Board member, Dr. Monica Ovalle. Welcome aboard, Dr. Ovalle! We appreciate your willingness to help us improve literacy in our community.

Changes are also coming to the La Porte County Public Library this winter. The Main branch is expected to close for renovations starting in March 2016. During the closure, you can continue to contact READ by calling (219) 325-0875 or emailing readlaportecounty@gmail.com. We will also be sending our tutors a list of alternative tutoring locations for use during this time period.

Loss of READ Tutor

We are deeply saddened by the loss of READ tutor and supporter Betty Roy, who passed away on September 18th. Betty worked with adult ESL students and was featured in a success story in our Spring 2014 newsletter after one of her students passed the GED, then made plans to attend college. She was a valued member of our community and will be greatly missed.

Betty's family requested that memorial contributions in Betty's honor be made to READ. To date, we have received more than \$1,800 in donations, which will be used to cover all remaining costs associated with our 2015/2016 Adult English Language Classes after the application of our Unity Foundation grants.

What We're READING...

A review of Kent Haruf's "Our Souls at Night" by Peggy Cunningham

Kent Haruf died last year at the age of 71. He leaves behind a body of work that includes best-selling novels "Plainsong" and "Eventide." He writes about very ordinary people who have remarkable lives because of their resilience and the desire to do the right thing. The theme of his novels is always the triumph of decency over small-mindedness. Haruf uses simple, sparse language to create stories of great depth.

"Our Souls at Night" was published posthumously in 2015. In an interview before his death, the author stated that the idea of the book was in his mind for a while and had to be written as a statement of what matters most in life.

The novel begins when Addie Moore pays a nighttime visit to Louis Waters, requesting company and conversation. They are acquainted, but not friends—both are in their seventies, both are widowed. They knew each other's spouses and children. As the story unfolds, the reader experiences the progression of the relationship from awkwardness to deep friendship and alliance.

During their nights together, Addie and Louis share their deepest secrets and the smallest details of their lives: the joys and sorrows, their perceived failings as parents and spouses and their hopes for the future. They have daytime outings—lunch at a local café, rides through the stark but beautiful wilderness surrounding Holt and a trip to the Denver Performing Arts Center.

When Addie is asked by her son to care for his six year-old child while he works out a separation with his wife, the connection between the couple deepens. Louis helps Addie care for the sad little boy, and becomes a father figure. He teaches him to use a catcher's mitt, takes him camping and even buys him a dog.

"Our Souls at Night" celebrates the possibilities of new happiness and growth even late in life. However, it does not spare the reader from reality. Inevitably change occurs in Addie and Louis's lives. Neighbors misinterpret their relationship and begin to gossip. Addie's son and Louis's daughter express disapproval. The surprise ending alludes to family obligation and the sacrifices people make for each other. Reading this book is a revelation that the future may not be easy, or painless, but does not have to be faced alone.

READ Success Story...

Below, READ Adult ESL Instructor Faith Mooney describes her experience with one of her students and the impact it has had on her own life. Find complete details about this year's class in the article on page 1.

I have especially enjoyed one of my ESL students this year. Having recently arrived in the U.S. from Thailand, this young woman came on the first day of class stating she not only wanted to practice her English, but also wanted to make some friends! This spirit has led to an interactive group of mixed nationality students who genuinely enjoy each others' company and NEED to speak English to each other in order to communicate.

This same student recently text messaged me and several other students to share her excitement about the first snowfall she had ever seen. It helped me to think about the beauty of the experience as opposed to merely the hassle of driving around in snow.

It has been fun to support my student's persistence and drive to first master the driver's license written exam, and now go through the process of applying for American citizenship.

Tutoring has provided an opportunity to relate cross-culturally and see my own world with different eyes!

Stats Update: READ currently has 33 active volunteer tutors, plus two paid teachers. Our volunteers and teachers are currently working with 39 ESL adults, 8 English-speaking adults and 20 children outside of the school day. We will have current statistics from our classroom tutors at the end of this month. As usual, we have a waiting list of students seeking services so please let us know if you would like to join our team!

From our READ family to yours . . .
HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

