



# Project Read Update

Project Read: the Adult Literacy Program of the San Francisco Public Library

Winter 2009 Volume 26, No. 1

## All About Abe by Eva Hopkins

On February 12, we celebrated Abraham Lincoln's birthday. Thursday, February 12 was also my Project Read appointment with my tutor at the Civic Center Main Library. We honored Abraham Lincoln by reading a book about his life.

He was a traveling lawyer. All towns did not have lawyers back then. He was a fair man. He liked to help people. He helped settle arguments about land and pigs and horses and money. He helped an honest man get out of jail.

Abraham Lincoln liked to wear a tall, black hat. He was a smart lawyer but he had one problem. He was not a good paper keeper. He kept a junky office! He filed important papers in his tall hat.

Abe Lincoln was from Illinois. It was a free state. He fought against slavery. He did not want the new western states to have slavery.

I learned a lot about Abe Lincoln from reading this book. I want to read it to my grandchildren. If you would like to read it too, it is called *Abe Lincoln's Hat* by Martha Brenner. 📖



President Abraham Lincoln's hat. Photo courtesy of Richard Strauss, Smithsonian Institution

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## Always Dream Big by Shaneika Henderson

Hi, my name is Shaneika Aprel Henderson and I was born on April 1, 1983. Yes, April Fool's Day is really when I entered this place some call Heaven on Earth but to me more like Hell on Earth with all the hatred and deception going around. I'm writing to express a little of my frustration with my life and the world, but at the same time, I would love to share with you some of my happy moments.

I really want the world to understand that yes, I have some days when I feel down on my luck, and that I am a single mother of one. I still deserve the right to make all my dreams come true. I have to remember I'm not just living for myself. I'm living for my son, too. So I must continue to climb the ladder until I reach the top.

### Feelings

Sometimes I feel so depressed and fed up with my life that I just want to close my eyes and never open them again, but if I gave up, what would become of my son? Where would he go? Because I know no one will care for him like me, so that gives me reason to keep fighting every day for the little I have.

It seems as if the harder I work to overcome hurdles in my life, the more they come with a tougher challenge to defeat. I'm working 16 hours a day, 7 days a week, to pay my bills and support my son the best way I can, but to me it seems no matter how much I try to do, I'm still in the same position as before. I hate the fact that I have to work two jobs in order to pay my rent and other bills because it takes a lot of my time away from my son. My heart cries out with pain when I have to drop him off at one of my family members' houses. My son loves me to death and he enjoys being around me every day but I have to spend so much time away from him in order to keep a roof over his head, food in his mouth, and clothes on his back. It just kills me inside because I have to sacrifice spending time with my son so I can care for him financially.

### Dreams

A lot of people look at me as just another unwed mother with no sense of direction in life but what they don't know is that I have dreams of becoming a strong, independent woman with courage to weather any storm that gets in the way of my reaching my dreams.

I dream of one day becoming someone's wife and having another child so my son will have a sibling to love and experience doing different things in life with. And I dream of owning a three-bedroom house with an upstairs and a downstairs. I would love for it to have a large backyard so my children can have lots of room to play. I want a white picket fence in front of my house. In addition, I have secret passion for wanting to travel the world. Some of the places I want to visit are Japan, Kenya, Paris, and there are so many more places I would love to go.

I would like to find a job as a medical assistant. I enjoy helping others when they are sick. I already have a certificate in medical assisting. Now I want to get more hands-on experience to further my career in the medical field. Later, I would love to obtain a certification in phlebotomy or train to become an X-ray or EKG technician.

My biggest dream is accomplishing all my life dreams. I was told as a little girl that some dreams do come true if you believe in yourself and take the necessary steps to make them happen. When you dream, always dream big.

### Happy Times

I would have to say the happiest day of my life was February 9, 2006, at 7:41 p.m., when I gave birth to my first baby boy. After I delivered him, I was so overwhelmed with happiness, all I could do was cry and smile for about a whole week. Sometimes when I'm having a bad day I look my son in his eyes and I feel reassured that I will overcome whatever problems I'm going through at the time and I begin to smile again.

Continued on page 3

“Always Dream Big” continued from page 2

I enjoy watching my son play with my niece and nephews because they seem to be so happy when they are all together but sometimes having all four of them under one roof can wear you out.

Another moment in my life when I considered myself happy was when I received my first job at Toys “R” Us. I used to love going to the bank to cash my check and walking around town with money in my pocket that I actually earned myself.

Just being able to wake up every morning and tell my son that I love him is all I really need to keep my spirits up and happy.

### Staying Strong

People always tell me that things will get better but the question I ask is when? I hope it is before I die so I can experience this so-called Heaven on Earth. No need to worry - this is just how I feel some days. I am not going to hurt myself. I have come too far to let anybody or anything stop me now. I have to keep in mind, on the days when I’m feeling depressed, that it is not all about me any more, because I brought life into this world. I must continue to fight until my death. They say only the strong will survive, so I guess I must be a little strong, because I’m still here. GOD BLESS. 🙏

## A Day in the Life of a Flower

by W.R. Chauncey

My day started when the sun came up. It is a nice day in June. I’m not what you would call a pretty flower. It is said beauty is held in the eyes of the person looking at me, but most people think I’m ugly. When I look back sometimes I don’t see beauty in you. At that point I’d like to stick my thorns in you. But I don’t. See I don’t care what you think of me. It is the beauty I find in myself that counts. I am the most beautiful flower in the world named Ed. 🙏

## Conrad’s Life by Kenny Soles

This is a story about a cat that had 9 lives. I’m writing this because Conrad was a part of my life for about 12 years. And he still means a lot to me. He was my life and joy. You hate to lose something so special that means so much to you. Conrad’s death made me look at other animals in a different way by looking at them and appreciating them for being a part of our lives. I’d like to tell you who Conrad was.

Conrad was a black cat with a white mark under his chin. He was 2 months old when I got him. I adopted him from the SPCA. He was 12 years old when he died. He was a male cat and he was all boy: he loved to chase balls and when he could find a rat he would torture it before he killed it.

What I miss about Conrad was him laying on my chest and purring when I woke up in the morning. He also liked to walk by and rub his body against my legs. I always knew where he would be in the late afternoon; he was always lying on my bed waiting for me to come home. I miss him slapping Minerva, my other cat, around. I didn’t know how much I knew him until he died. There is not a day that goes by that I don’t think about him.

When Conrad had his birthday on March 2nd I found out he had kidney failure. In a month he was so sick and he died that fast. I couldn’t imagine my life without him but I saw him getting so sick I knew I had to do the right thing for him. So I had to have Conrad euthanized on March 30th. I came home without Conrad and a part of me died with him. When he died, it showed me how much my love for him was deep. When he died I had him cremated that way I can keep a part of him in my life.

We should be so grateful to have animals in our lives because they bring a lot of joy in our lives. 🙏

## Learner Accomplishments by Brian and Those Terrific Tutors

**Bernard Cawaring** uses the Project Read Computer Learning Lab to check and write e-mail, do job searches, update his résumé, use *Spell It Deluxe* and *Ultimate Phonics*, and is halfway through *Carmen Sandiego Word Detective*. He tells us, “I am very proud that I had the courage to face what was missing in my life. I am thankful for the Angels that help me - my tutor Danielle and Project Read.”

**Chris Zimiga** and his tutor Steve Blumenthal have much to report. Chris has read his longest book yet, *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway. He also went to the audio/video section of the Main library and found, borrowed, and watched the DVD of the film adaptation of the book (starring Spencer Tracy). Chris has learned to do Google searches and even found a website where he can create his own word search puzzles for free (<http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com>). He then created a custom word search puzzle of some of his mom’s favorite words. He gave it to his mom when he visited her in the hospital. He has also used word search puzzles to practice spelling the days of the week and months of the year. Chris also worked with Project Read staff to use our Computer Learning Lab’s homemade MS Word templates to create his own greeting card. Chris used a gift certificate to the Friends of the San Francisco Public Library Book Bay at the Main bookstore (a birthday present from Project Read and the Friends of the SFPL) to buy his first book, a coffee table book of historic postcards picturing San Francisco landmarks.

**Claudia Corletto** has attended several Wednesday Night Readers Club meetings and has actively participated in the discussions. Her tutor Ted Bamberger tells us that he is especially impressed by her “stimulating appreciations of Maya Angelou and Martin Luther King, Jr.”

**Deborah King** and her tutor Grace McKeone tell us all sorts of good things are going on. In November, Deborah voted for the first time! She registered through the Project Read Voting Workshop and tells us that the workshop and her additional research prepared her to make informed decisions in the voting booth.



Chris Zimiga proudly displays the deluxe coffee table book of vintage San Francisco postcards that he purchased (using his Project Read gift certificate) at the Friends of the San Francisco Public Library Book Bay at the Main Library. Photo by Brian Castagne

On the computer front, Deborah has mastered the art of e-mail and now checks her Yahoo! account on her own. Deborah went to the DMV and got a copy of the *California Driver Handbook* and studied on her own for two weeks. She then cruised right in and passed the written test.

**Dolores Naranjo** has brought her grandchildren to the library numerous times and reads to them on a regular basis. She completed a special writing project for the family literacy program and is hard at work on a longer writing assignment with her tutor Betsy Cheney. Dolores is currently reading her 10th book since joining Project Read.

## **Learner Accomplishments** *continued*

**Eva Hopkins** and her tutor Pat Rutland began reading a biography of Abraham Lincoln on his birthday (February 12) and finished it in two weeks. They then did brainstorming exercises which included looking at pictures from the book to help, as Eva puts it, “refresh my memory.” Eva did an oral book report which Pat then typed. Eva and Pat edited it together and it is now the front page story of this very newsletter.

**Mattie Foote** tells us that, with her tutor Laurie Heron’s help, she is pronouncing words better than ever and has increased her understanding of short vowel sounds. She also wrote a letter to a family member regarding important business. Mattie says, “I felt better because I expressed my full feelings. I felt relief and release.”

**Mohammed Nazam** has been working hard and consistently with his tutor Dee Van Atta. They continue to use *Ultimate Phonics* and *Type to Learn* in the computer learning lab and a range of different materials in the study rooms. The dedication has paid off and Mohammed has finished reading his first book ever and is halfway through the second!

**Ousman Kamara** and his tutor Andrea Jesse used the duet reading technique to read the biographies of Althea Gibson and Nelson Mandela written by Terry Barber

and published by Grass Roots Press. Andrea discovered these books in the Project Read collection on the 3rd floor of the Main Library. Ousman and Andrea greatly enjoyed both of these books and recommends them to other Project Read learners and tutors.

**Rifat Jehan** continues to work with her tutor Richard Baker Lehne to improve her reading, writing, and computer skills. She has also worked with Project Read staff to do all sorts of word processing assignments for her job. She has successfully used Microsoft Word, Microsoft Works, OpenOffice, USB flash drives, templates, Yahoo! e-mail, and more. She has written business letters, created and printed envelopes, and corresponded by e-mail. She continues to impress us with her enthusiasm, determination, and follow through.

**Thabiti Knight** has worked with Leon to ensure a successful return to City College of San Francisco. Thabiti has done online research, spoken with students, and met with several counselors, including staff at the Disabled Students Program. Thabiti also tells us that working with his tutor Amanda Hamilton has given his writing more detail and he is expressing himself better in general. He says that he speaks up quite a bit more and it has taken a few people by surprise—in a good way. 🙌

## **Welcome to the Project Read Team, Sarita!** by Randy Weaver

On December 9, 2008, Sarita Charitar joined the staff of Project Read, assuming the position vacated by Richard Le when he accepted a librarian position in the branches (see the Fall 2008 edition of Project Read Update).

Sarita brings a wealth of library experience to her new position with Project Read. She has worked for the San Francisco Public Library for over 25 years—first in the branches and later in Borrower Services at the Main Library.

She is excited to have joined the Project Read team and has already made some needed improvements by reorganizing our audio book collection and improving basic record keeping. 🙌



Photo by Brian Castagne

## 2008 Donors - Our Thanks for Your Generous Support!

### Individuals

Susan and Ben Abarca	June Fraps	Richard Keller	Ryan Owens	Carleen Trares
Florence Abe	Genevieve Fujimoto	Mary J. Kelley	Gertrude Patch	Dyann Tresenfeld
Wade Acton	Evelyn Gaines	John Kelly	Michael Patrick	Paul Turner
Judith Darnbrough Adams	Olive Gamble	Young Mi Kim	Janet Patterson	Keri Tyson
Bonnie and Michael Barr	Marvin Gans	David L. Kirp	Robert and Nancy Pease	Deborah Van Atta
Chloe Barr	Michele Garside	Thea F. Kitt	Norman Pefley	Frances Varnhagen
Amy Barron	Diana Gay-Catania	Mary Christine Knepper	Tina Perrin	Patricia Villasenor
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Susan Becker	Kathleen Gifford and the First District Court of Appeal - Division 5	Erin Kovsky	Harry Plant	Lorna Walker
Andrew Belschner	Christine Giordano	Barbara Kozlowski	Marcia Popper	Flynn Waters
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Rajiv Bhan	Cindy Goddard	Mary Patricia Lavin	Dale Posner	Martha Webster
Bernice Biggs	Sarah Goldman	Irwin and Enid Leff Leff Family 2000 Trust	Arlene Powell	Kerry Weisel
Debbie Blackwood	Doris Grasshoff	Deborah Lefkowitz	Mary Joe Power	Betty Jean Weiss
Steve Blumenthal	Glee Greenwood	Richard Baker Lehne	Judy Prejean	Martha Wellington
Drina Boban	Kami Griffiths	Chris Lehr	Shirley Reece	Nancy P. Weston
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Cheryl Chase	Carlyn Halde	Beverly Marlow	Elizabeth Ryan	Alan K. Young
Jim Chidester	David Hall	Theodora Mauro	Terri and Bob Ryan	Susan Zegans
Tracy Chmelauskas	Amanda Hamilton	Maria Mazer	William and Wilma Ryan	Margaret Zeigler
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Kevin Coleman	Joanne Heffelfinger	Kathleen McClung	Heather Scheidt	Artists for Literacy
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Jobyna Dellar	Marie Howarth	Simon Mills	Anna Simmons	Charles Schwab Corporation Foundation
Karen Devaney	M. Rita Howe	Anne-Marie Mogan	Gail Singer	Seyfarth Shaw Charitable Foundation
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	Pamela Jue	Michelle Okafo	Ann Telthorst	
	Carol Keener	Doris Osenda	Jean Lousie Thacher	
		Susan Ovington	Jean Louise Thacher Survivor's Trust	

## 2008 Project Read Accomplishments

### DIRECT SERVICE

- Tutored 156 adults.
- Interviewed and assessed reading and writing skills of 65 learners.
- Matched 68 learner/tutor pairs and placed 11 tutors in community agencies.
- Sent 68 individualized recommendations to tutors upon initial match with their learners.
- Assisted over 150 learners to achieve their personal goals, often involving continuing their education, improving their employment situation, becoming more active in their community, and strengthening their families.
- Held six 15-hour training sessions for volunteer tutors, training 69 volunteers.
- Referred 67 persons to appropriate services.
- Answered 618 additional information questions.
- Continued to update the Project Read book collection in the Main and Branch libraries.
- Presented 5 continuing education classes for tutors on topics which included: advanced tutor training, innovative strategies to improve comprehension, and utilizing oral history and reporting techniques.
- Held 11 tutor roundtable meetings.
- Held 11 meetings of the Wed. Night Readers Book Club and distributed 264 free books and audio books to participating adult learners.
- Held 25 new learner orientation meetings.
- Continued to improve and update the Project Read blog ([www.projectreadsfblogspot.com](http://www.projectreadsfblogspot.com)) to support tutors, learners, and other members of the adult and family literacy community.
- Produced 4 issues of Project Read Update - a high quality print and online publication of learner writing, instructional resources, and program news.
- Celebrated Project Read's 25 years of literacy service to the community. Held a gala event and produced a treasury of learner writing.

### COMPUTER LEARNING LAB

- Received more than 3,700 visits to our lab.
- Facilitated more than 1,500 highly supportive training sessions and one-to-one consultations.
- Continued our mission to emphasize the use of select educational software to achieve personal literacy and life skills goals, provide immediate and frequent opportunities for learner success, support learner-tutor teamwork, increase learner independence, demystify technology, and provide a welcoming gathering place for the Project Read community.
- Provided technology curricula, support, and guidance to other adult literacy programs.
- Submitted 2 successful proposals to the CA State Library to provide literacy and technology workshops for library colleagues.
- Continued participation in TINT - BALit ([www.tintbalit.blogspot.com](http://www.tintbalit.blogspot.com)). Met quarterly at Bay Area libraries to share resources and promote the thoughtful and effective use of high technology in adult literacy.

- Participated in the SF Community Technology Network ([www.ctnbayarea.org](http://www.ctnbayarea.org)). Shared resources and coordinated methods to provide technology resources to underserved members of the community. Collaborated with other SFPL departments to host a CTN MeetUp which highlighted technology and online resources available free to library cardholders.

### OUTREACH

- Made 43 presentations to community agencies and businesses to promote Project Read services and propose collaborations.
- Made contact with 275 organizations and businesses to recruit students and tutors.
- Set up 111 informal information tables in San Francisco neighborhoods.
- Distributed over 5,000 flyers, posters, card stands, newsletters, pens, pencils, and other promotional materials.
- Participated in events sponsored by Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Association, All Hallow, City & County of San Francisco Drug Court, Bayview Housing Project, Bayview MAGIC - Youth and Children's Books and Technology, Bayview Boys & Girls Club, Bernal Heights Neighborhood Association, Ella Hill Hutch Community Center, ETGAR 6 (Jewish youth development program), Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, San Francisco Sheriff's Dept. Pre-Release Program, San Francisco Head Start Family Community Partnership Committee, Sunset Neighborhood Association, Treasure Island Homeless Development Initiative, Friends & Foundation of the San Francisco Public Library, Walden House, Western Addition Community Association, and the Mission YMCA.

### FAMILY LITERACY

- Distributed over 400 children's books to parenting learners. Books and other educational materials were distributed at the learner's initial intake, workshops, office visits, and special events.
- Provided over 150 family events and individual consultations to share strategies on topics such as: reading in the home; utilizing the library and other community resources; media literacy; television as a learning tool; science literacy; parenting skills; working with the school system; health and nutrition; and computer literacy.
- Continued to serve as a KQED Hands on Literacy project mentor to develop new learning strategies, create engaging educational materials, and provide support and guidance to 35 agencies as they present workshops and provide first quality books to underserved and at risk families.
- Collaborated with the Exploratorium® to provide science literacy materials, educational toys, and Exploratorium® passes to parenting learners and their children.
- Served on the SF advisory board of the national First Book Project ([www.firstbooksf.blogspot.com](http://www.firstbooksf.blogspot.com)) to support local agencies including The Children's Book Project, The Reading Tree, Holy Family

Day Home, Up on Top tutoring program, SF State Childhood Development Center, Screen Actor's Guild BookPALS, San Francisco - Raising a Reader, and the Jumpstart San Francisco Early Literacy Initiative.

- Collaborated with the SF Early Literacy Network ([www.sfearlyliteracynetwork.blogspot.com](http://www.sfearlyliteracynetwork.blogspot.com)) to improve services to young children and families.
- Held a highly individualized summer reading club for families.
- Continued active participation in the family literacy chapter of BALit to share strategies and promote best practices.

### COLLABORATION

- Collaborated with City College of San Francisco by referring Project Read tutors to volunteer at the following Adult Basic Education sites: John Adams Community College, Adult Learning and Tutorial Center, Mission Community College, and Southeast Learning Center.
- Collaborated with Episcopal Community Services of San Francisco by referring Project Read tutors to become volunteers for homeless and at risk learners at the Skills Center.
- Established a new collaboration with Walden House, providing Project Read tutors for one-to-one client instruction.
- Established a new collaboration with the 5 Keys Charter School at the San Francisco Jail. Trained tutors will assist classroom teachers and provide additional instruction to inmates enrolled in this educational program.
- Collaborated with the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services and the African American Art and Culture Complex to support the Alive and Free literacy and career guidance program for at-risk teens.
- Collaborated with the SF Dept. of Elections to present a voting workshop for Project Read learners prior to the November election.
- Collaborated with the California State Library, Bay Area Literacy Network (BALit), and the Southern California Library Literacy Network (SCLLN) to promote the Writer to Writer Challenge for adult learners in library-based literacy programs throughout California.
- Collaborated with Stacey's Bookstore to promote Project Read services and expand awareness of adult literacy issues.
- Collaborated with the Children's Book project to provide free books directly to participants in Opportunity Impact and Youth Tennis Advantage youth programs.
- Continued collaboration with BALit (Bay Area Literacy), a consortium of 25 library-based literacy programs, in order to increase public awareness and enhance staff development.
- Continued a close collaboration with the local chapter of the Women's National Book Association, a group of Bay Area writers committed to increasing literacy awareness in the community.
- Two Project Read staff members participated in Gen PL, an innovative new San Francisco Public Library leadership academy. 



**PROJECT READ**

*People Helping People To Read*

**Friends of the  
San Francisco Public Library**

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## Welcome, New Tutors

The following folks have completed the comprehensive Project Read Tutor Training and are now eagerly engaged in making our society more literate, informed, and participatory.

### *November 2008 Training*

Josh Biddle  
Debbie Blackwood  
Cheryl V. Chase  
Jim Chidester  
Kate Drenning  
Vanessa Heckman  
Monica Herbert  
Annie Leuenberger  
Shirley Liano  
Mike McWalters  
Carol Mersey  
Jennifer Parker  
Tina Perrin  
Anne Schlaitz  
Frances Walker  
Martee Webster  
Cheryl Yannotti

### *January 2009 Training*

Jim Carberry  
Lauren Cooperman  
Carol Douglass  
Chris Edmunds  
Kelly Faddis  
Jim Harfman  
Steve Hatch  
Dave Jones  
Elissa Jones  
Carol Korb  
David Lee  
Sheryl Lee  
Clarence Mayers  
Michael Misch  
Gary Ng  
Maggie Tallman 🙌

## Thank You

John Gildersleeve and Mary Hilton for leading the Wednesday Night Readers Book Club meetings  
♦ Friends of the San Francisco Public Library for their generous ongoing support ♦ Tutor contacts Vivian Altmann, Renee Feldman, Susan Fink, JoAnn Lopez, Terri Ryan, and Bruce Suehiro for providing invaluable support to their fellow tutors and the entire Project Read staff ♦ Jennifer Henley, James Bartley, Linda Lee, and Chris Giordano for speaking at the January 2009 tutor training  
♦ Eva Hopkins, Pat Rutland, Edward Jetton, and Chloe Barr for speaking at the March 2009 tutor training ♦ Gino Squadrito and Jennifer Forester of LaserCom Design ([www.lasercomdesign.com](http://www.lasercomdesign.com)) and Kami Griffiths of the San Francisco Community Technology Network ([www.ctnbayarea.org](http://www.ctnbayarea.org)) for their exceptional patience and skill assisting in the layout of this newsletter and patient instruction in navigating Adobe InDesign CS2 ♦ Genanne Walsh for eagle-eyed proofreading assistance 🙌