

ALTA NEWS



Tutors listen to chairman's report



AGM
Oct 2008



South/Central
Regional Meeting



Lystra auctions
concert tickets



ADULT LITERACY TUTORS ASSOCIATION
OF TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

March 2009 Volume 15 Issue 1

BELMONT 624-2582/3442 Mon - Fri 8am-5pm altapos@alta-tt.org
84 Belmont Circular Road

SAN FERNANDO 653-4656 Mon/Wed/ 9am-2pm altasfd@alta-tt.org
St Paul's Anglican Church Hall, Thurs
3rd Floor, 12 Harris Promenade

Inga Crichlow / Marilyn Rampersad Talma

ARIMA 664-2582 Tues/Thurs/ 9am-5pm altaarima@alta-tt.org
Arima PTSC Terminal Mall Fri

Alana Lynch-Gomez

www.alta-tt.org

STUDENTS' STORIES - UNDERSTANDING LITERACY THROUGH REAL LIVES

ALTA has started to compile students' stories, looking ahead to publishing for its 20th anniversary a unique record of ALTA through our students' eyes. We would welcome stories from all students - short, long and in-between.

ALTA Reading Circles present the ideal opportunity for students to document their past and present literacy experiences, ranging from the reasons for their reading problems to what ALTA has brought to their lives. Guides can assist by asking their students to write their stories or use the LEA approach, where the student dictates and the tutor writes. Drop in to any of ALTA's offices or e-mail Marilyn Rampersad Talma at marilyn@alta-tt.org

HELP! ALTA NEEDS NEW OFFICE PREMISES IN ARIMA

In December 2008, ALTA received official notice from the Ministry of Community Development terminating our contract as a 'vendor' at the Arima PTSC Mall as of February 27th, 2009. Since then, East Regional Coordinator Lystra Hazarie has been working feverishly to find alternative accommodation - with no success! We have a temporary reprieve as the Mall Vendors' Association met with the Prime Minister, who promised that "a consultant would be appointed to liaise with them in a bid to have an analysis done on the booths and alternative arrangements made as soon as possible".

JUNE TUTOR MEETING

Sat 27th June
Belmont
9am-12noon

Bring eats and
drinks to share.

FACEBOOK ALTA TODAY

ALTA is now on Facebook - thanks to Sarita Ramperasad. We hope this will spread the word about ALTA to new people, especially the young, and at no cost to ALTA. Tutors can check it out for up-to-date news on events and classes - and maybe photos of themselves! Join the group to share your ALTA experiences, student successes and teaching ideas. Remember, photos with students require their permission before sharing.

TUTOR TRAINING COURSES

There will be 3 training courses for new volunteer tutors over an 8-week period with a 2-week break midway (after Day 3):

Tue - Bethel Pentecostal Church, Arima - Apr 21, 28; May 5, 26; Jun 2, 9

Thu - UTT, Pt Lisas Campus - Apr 23, 30; May 7, 28; Jun 4, 10 (Wed)

Sat - ALTA Belmont Office - Apr 25; May 2, 9, 23; Jun 6, 13

Training is scheduled to avoid public holidays on May 30th (Indian Arrival) & June 11th (Corpus Christi). The response to our ads for tutors has been good. We thank the radio stations who have mentioned our upcoming training.

GREAT CRYSANDE SPA OFFER FOR ALTA STUDENTS

Crysande Hochst, owner of Crysande Spa and Make Up Studio Ltd in Arima, in her quest to help improve the literacy level in Trinidad and to motivate our students, is offering a gift 'Renewal Spa Package' to 4 ALTA students each term. This comprises a Deep Cleansing Facial, Classic Manicure and Pedicure and Eyebrow Sculpting. These can be modified for male students.

One student will be chosen in each region (North, East, Central and South) from those with perfect attendance based on class attendance registers. So tutors - please submit these promptly at the end of Term 2 so your students have a chance to be beautified!

The first presentation of this gift certificate, which will be valid for one year, will be on April 27th 2009 (one week after Term 3 starts). At the presentation, Ms Hochst would like to photograph at least one of the students receiving their gift certificate.

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

Critical Thinking Workshop with Ramona Khan Cost: \$100.00

Date: Sat 14th March, 9am-3pm

Venue: ALTA Office, Belmont

Standard English Workshop with Cynthia Birch Cost: \$100.00

Date: Sat 21st March, 9am-3pm

Venue: ALTA South Office (call Marilyn or Inga)

National Volunteer Week 20th- 25th April

Volunteer Connection Fair

Wed 22nd, POS

Heroes Convention 5

Fri 24th - Sat 25th, UTT O'Meara

Contact ALTA if you can do a 2-3 hr shift at the ALTA booth.

Great opportunity to interest persons in tutoring, helping with Reading Circles or sponsoring students.

BG Internet Free Training for Tutors, Level 2, 3 & Reading Circle students

Dates: Sat 6th & 13th June - Group A 9am-12noon; Group B 1-4 pm

Venue: BG Training Centre, Briar Place, Sweet Briar Road, St. Clair

Directions: Take a Maraval taxi. Get out at QRC. Walk down Maraval Road. Take first right onto Sweet Briar Road. Last building on the right.

72 TUTOR CERTIFICATES AWARDED

In 2008, 72 new tutors were awarded certificates upon completing one year of teaching at an ALTA class. The 2008-9 academic year opened with 254 tutors. Of these, 164 were returning tutors who attended a 1-day refresher. Our student body in Sept. showed 1,222 students, putting our student-tutor ratio at a healthy 5-1.



ARIMA BOYS RC WORKSHOP

Lystra Hazarie, Paula Lucie-Smith and Christine Sookoo conducted a one-day workshop on Nov 12th for teachers at Arima Boys RC, a school that has long hosted multiple ALTA levels on four days a week. Sessions included the reading process, spelling with the ALTA Spelling Dictionary, children's literature and what to do in the Literacy Hour.



NALIS YOUTH LIT

The first term of NALIS Youth Lit at 7 libraries was successfully completed in the first week of Dec. Classes at five additional libraries scheduled to start in January 2009 have been postponed to Sept 2009.

On December 6th, all coordinators and tutors involved in this project met at the Chaguanas Library with project managers, Marilyn Rampersad-Talma and Cheryl Thurab-Prince, for an update and feedback session. At the start of Term 2, they met with parents, students and librarians at each library. Parents were unanimous in their praise and gratitude for the programme, with almost all commenting on the improvement in their child's reading and school work, as well as greater self-confidence. Several noted that their children now had the confidence to read to their parents.

REPUBLIC BANK AND ALTA: 'POWER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE'

Republic Bank, through its 'Power to Make a Difference' initiative, is funding ALTA literacy programmes for rehabilitating drug addicts. The first phase is running from Jan to Oct 2009 with 6 hours weekly instruction at:

- Rebirth House (Chaguaramas) - ALTA tutors: Jeanette Williams, Marilyn Jordan-Romany & Cynthia Birch
- HEAL (Couva) - ALTA tutor: Joseph Jubrajsingh
- Arima Rehab Centre - ALTA tutors: Leonie Lyons, Marlene Wilson-Mc Neil & Grace Charles-Spencer

As the demand for ALTA instruction grows, ALTA's focus in 2009 is on building a strong team of tutors available for paying work who are proficient in the delivery of several ALTA levels and able to customize instruction to meet student or workplace needs. The Republic Bank sponsorship included training to build our capacity to meet such requests.

A training session held on Saturday 24th January at ALTA Belmont attracted 53 tutors available for contract ALTA tutoring. Tutors came from as far afield as Mayaro and Pt Fortin. The training included the responsibilities of contract teaching, how to incorporate workplace materials in the ALTA Programme to suit needs of employees, and editing of students' writing - always an area of challenge for tutors. The highlight of the day was a "live"

editing done by Lystra with Paula as the student. Thanks to all who provided workplace materials, especially as this was at short notice.



UNDP EVALUATION

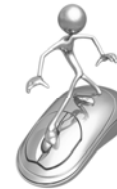
Key stakeholders attended a ceremony on Sat 17th January at ALTA Belmont to evaluate the UNDP North East Literacy Project (2006-8). Three representatives from UNDP, two from the Ministry of Education, ALTA project managers and tutors shared their ideas after the coordinator of the UNDP Project, Arlene Wallace-Romero, presented the results and challenges of introducing ALTA classes in the villages of the North East. The highly interactive session explored the unique features of rural communities and adapting the ALTA model to serve them.

FUNDING/DONATIONS

Thanks to:

- Angostura, Agostini Marketing, Beacon Insurance, CLICO, EOG Resources, Haji Gokool Meah Memorial Trust, PPGPL, RBTT, TCL Group – tutor training
- CMMB, JB Fernandes Memorial Trust I, Price Charities, United Way T&T – continued support for ALTA classes in specific regions
- Intercept Security – monitoring/security service at Belmont & Arima
- NGC – 2 computers for ALTA South
- Trinidad Systems Limited – XEROX photocopier for ALTA Arima Office
- Fluor – used photocopier for ALTA Belmont
- FEEL – Phonic Cards
- Neal & Massy Foundation – ALTA Student Workbook 2A L2, revised
- Imjin Security & First Caribbean International Bank – ALTA Student Workbook 2B L2, revised

The BG-sponsored high-speed internet service is up and running at the South office. BG will soon be installing two computers so South students can have an Internet Café like that in Belmont. Desks for the computers will be provided and training sessions organized for students and tutors. If you are interested in assisting students with the internet on weekdays or Saturdays, contact Marilyn at 672 5085.



GIFT OF READING

In December, ALTA had 88 requests for Gift of Reading Certificates, an improvement from 2007 when this fund-raising idea was launched. This increase was primarily due to one company, Neal & Massy Energy Ltd, whose corporate Christmas gift for 2008 was the ALTA Gift of Reading. Thank you Neal & Massy Energy for giving a gift that will last a year.

AU REVOIR TO ROSIE HENDERSON - BON COURAGE!

Rosie Henderson, who has been with ALTA since 2000, retires in mid-March. A real team player with a ready smile and willing to take on a range of tasks from ALTA T-shirt design to managing our student recruitment campaign, Rosie will be sorely missed. Her presence will live on in her wonderful illustrations scattered throughout the ALTA books.

Her part-time post of Communications Officer is now open.

REMINDERS FOR TUTORS



- **Tutor-Coordinator Meeting** (from 20th Mar - 25th Apr):
Tutors meet with their coordinator to review student evaluation. Tutors should make every effort to attend and come prepared to draft the end-of-level evaluation for some of their students. Tutors who plan to continue teaching in September should submit their refresher form to the coordinator. Planned dates for refreshers:
Beginner: Fri 21st & Sat 22nd Aug (2-day course)
Level 1 & 2: Sat 22nd Aug (South); Tues 25th Aug; Sat 5th Sept
Level 3: Sat 12th Sept
All at Belmont except for 22nd Aug.
- **Student Evaluations:** Deadline for submission is June 26th (two weeks before the end of term), to allow office staff time to print the student certificates. Collect and present to students *before* the end of term, Jul 10th.
- **Class Attendance Registers:** Please submit attendance registers promptly! Due at the end of every term, these are important for judging whether or not a student should repeat, and also to monitor the effectiveness of the ALTA Programme. Please check the spelling of the student's name so our database is accurate. Remember to fill in tutor's attendance as well. The Excel version of the Attendance Register (on the ALTA Games CD) can be filled in and emailed to save you having to come into the ALTA Office.

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT NATIONAL FAMILY SERVICES DIVISION

Mission: To promote healthy family functioning through the provision of preventive, developmental and remedial programmes and services. Senior citizens receiving the old age grant may claim assistance for:



Housing.....Up to \$10,000
Household appliances.....\$4,500 (every 1-3 years)
Medical equipment.....\$6,000
Domestic Help.....\$1,600/month for a
minimum of 3 months

Address of Ministry of Social Development Office	Tel	Office Days
<i>St. George West</i> ABMA Building, 55-57 St. Vincent Street, POS ANSA Building, 3 rd Floor, Henry & Queen St, POS	624-8218 625-6464	Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri
<i>St. George Central</i> 60 Eastern Main Road, Silver Mill, San Juan	675-1975	Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri
<i>St. George East</i> Social Welfare Building, EMR, Tunapuna	662-5483	Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri
<i>St. David/St. Andrew</i> Savi St., Sangre Grande	691-3503	Mon, Thu, Fri
<i>Caroní</i> Couva Social Services Centre McCoon Building, Eleanor St, Chaguanas	636-0021 671-3526	Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri
<i>Victoria</i> Social Welfare Bldg, Independence Ave, San F'do Social Welfare, Princes Town	653-0991 655-4741	Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri
<i>Nariva/Mayaro</i> Social Welfare Building, Rio Claro Mayaro Community Centre (sub-office)	644-0813	Mon, Thu, Fri Tues
<i>St. Patrick</i> Rotel Building, Neverson St, Pt Fortin Social Welfare Office, High Street, Siparia	648-6747 649-3869	Mon & Tue Fri

STUDENTS' CORNER

Comments made by students at the end of a Workplace Programme:

- “I want to thank the company for this opportunity, for ALTA classes. Now I can spell and read better than before. I still need to work on it. The classes was good for me. Miss is a good teacher. We have learn a lot.”
- “Thank you for giving me a chance to educate myself and be a better person. I still need to work on ALTA class more hard. The classes were very interesting and understanding.”
- “Now I can do a lot myself. I have more confidence now. I still have to work on my spelling. The classes were challenging and educational.”

WHY THE ALTA WORKPLACE PROGRAMME?

The Workplace Unit of ALTA seeks to provide effective literacy instruction using customized programmes which meet the needs of employees, employers, schools and students through flexible training options, which are responsive to the needs of the individual and organization.



The ALTA workplace programme aims to improve the reading and writing skills of participants with a focus on achieving the following results:

In the Workplace

- Greater on-the-job productivity and efficiency.
- Enhanced employee self-esteem and job satisfaction.
- Better communication and improved working relationships.
- Increased knowledge and application of company policies and health & safety procedures.
- Positive effect on the organization's profit.

For any workplace literacy programme to fully reach its operational state, barriers must be identified and appropriately resolved. It is important that many opportunities are provided for employer/employees to talk about the programme and that thorough orientation is done before the programme is implemented. Workers must be assured of confidentiality and sensitivity to their needs. The tremendous positive impact of the improvement of literacy skills should be emphasized to all involved.

While the free ALTA Community Programme and the Workplace Programme both have the ultimate goal of enhancing literacy, the Workplace Programme offers several advantages to employers.

Benefits of the Workplace Programme:

- Tuition sites can be chosen by the employer, either on-site or off-site.
- Space in the class is assured and workers do not have to compete with the public for space within a class.
- Tutors are contracted to come to teach at a location convenient for employees.
- Workplace programmes are flexible in both the duration of sessions and frequency, to cater to the needs of the workplace. They allow for an intensive programme for quicker results (13 wks, 17 wks, 19 wks or 25 wks). They can commence as determined by the employer and run on days and times to suit employees' work schedules and to avoid peak times or seasons.
- The employer can monitor attendance and progress of the employee, through reports at regular intervals or on request. Tutors follow-up on absence, lateness or other problems.
- Workplace tutors are experienced and accomplished ALTA tutors whose classroom performance is consistently high and who are able to bring out the best in their students in a supportive and comfortable learning environment.
- The ALTA Programme is supplemented to meet the specific needs of the organization and modified or extended appropriately.



“Fairness means to each according to his need.” Dr. Mel Levine