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Luminary Night proceeds presented to Wellesley Friendly Aid Association



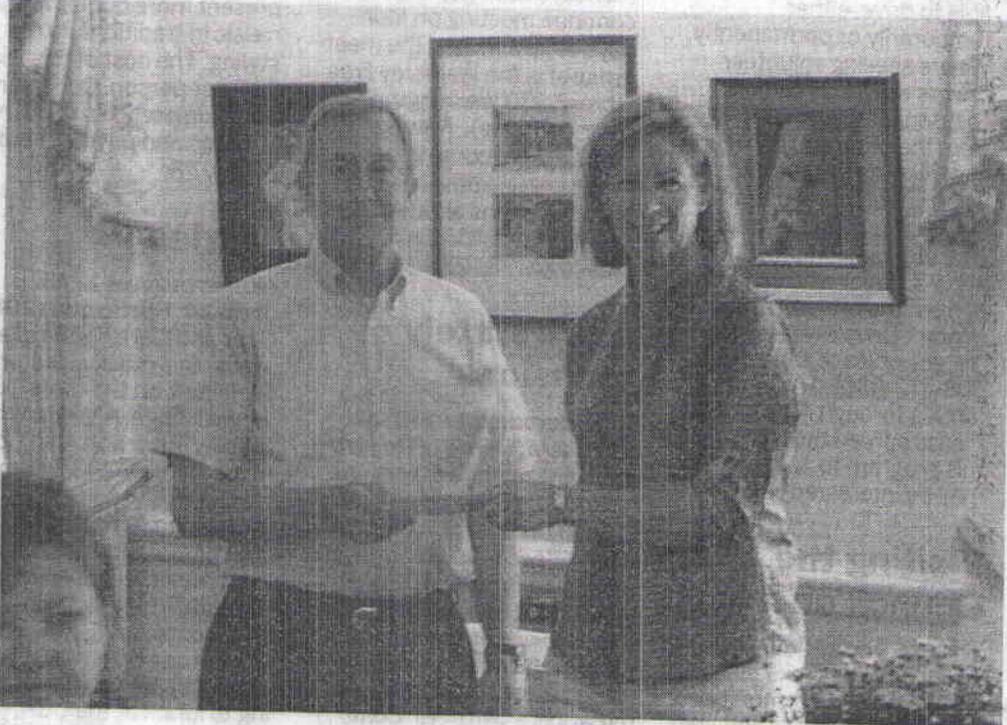
COURTESY PHOTO

Smiles light up the faces of outgoing President Angelika Angino, left, and new President Peter Johannsen as Stephanie Sheps, right, Wellesley Hills Junior Women's Club representative to Wellesley Friendly Aid, presents the majority of the proceeds from Luminary Night to the Association. The donation from the WHJWC will be used in part to provide financial aid for summer camp/ academic enrichment programs to Wellesley children living at or near poverty levels. Since 1942, the Wellesley Friendly Aid Association has been dedicated to giving disadvantaged children an enriching summer experience. For more information visit, www.wellesleyfriendlyaid.org

Torresmar 6/23/11

Making summer camp possible

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Mary Torrence, president of the Wellesley Service League, right, presents Peter Johannsen, president of the Wellesley Friendly Aid Association; a check to help underwrite the Friendly Aid Camp Fund. The Camp Fund sends young Wellesley residents, who might not otherwise have the opportunity for summer recreation and academic enrichment, to summer camp. COURTESY PHOTO

LIBRARY NEWS

Library to offer new ESL

By Bev Wax
Special to The Townsman

Wellesley Free Library is excited to announce the start of expanded English as a Second Language (ESL) services for those who live and work in Wellesley. The new Wellesley ESL Program is made possible through a generous grant from The Fund for Wellesley.

Under the direction of Philippa Biggers, Wellesley ESL Program Coordinator, ESL services will include English classes, conversation classes, and tutor training. Citizenship classes, conversation class leadership, and social events are also planned for the future.

"I'm an immigrant myself," Biggers said. She is originally from Australia and has resided in Wellesley since 1997.

Biggers received her training as an ESL tutor at Literacy Unlimited, a long-established

program in Framingham that trains volunteers to tutor adults in ESL, basic literacy, citizenship, and GED preparation. She then led ESL conversation groups at Natick's Morse Institute Natick Library before proposing the need for a similar program at Wellesley Free Library. The result was several sessions of tutor trainings and an ESL Conversation Group at the WFL Hills Branch every Thursday morning, where, Biggers says "students are not only there to learn English. They end up bonding with each other."

Conversation class participants range from complete beginners to "fairly advanced" English speakers. A beginner class, already up and running at the Barton Road housing development through Wellesley Friendly Aid (WFA), will now come under the umbrella of the newly expanded Wellesley ESL program.

Over the past two years, Biggers found increasing proof that there is an unmet need for expanded ESL services in the town of Wellesley. Citing recent US Census statistics, she explains that 5,455 Wellesley residents speak a language other than English in the home, and of these, 1,022 speak English less than "very well."

The Fund for Wellesley grant, administered by the Wellesley Free Library, will allow Biggers to organize, publicize, solidify and expand the current ESL services. The mission of the Fund for Wellesley is to promote the common good and to benefit all residents of the Town. The Fund for Wellesley is a permanent source of funding that fosters innovation and collaboration in support of community needs and opportunities.

Biggers hopes to recruit new volunteers in order to offer more ESL classes and programs. "It is a very rewarding experience. Tutors get as



Philippa Biggers

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on a 17,301 square foot lot in a district in which the minimum lot size is 20,000 square

program

much out of it as their students," she believes. The requirements are straightforward. A potential tutor needs

to have a high school diploma, attend a six-week training course and commit to work with someone for only two

hours a week for a year.

Biggers also looks forward to contacting other town departments and organizations that would like to reach out to the ESL population. Using grant funds, she will coordinate the efforts of the Library and Friendly Aid and also bring in any other organizations that may be interested. These might include the Chamber of Commerce, Wellesley Town Clerk's Office; school PTOs and the Council on Aging.

"It is a town-wide project," she noted. ESL discussion groups are especially important to new arrivals in a community. Participants can improve their English, learn about their new surroundings, and meet other people. Tutoring is confidential, individualized, and free of charge.

For more information on the program or to become a tutor, contact Philippa Biggers at 781-591-1247, or wellesleyESL@minlib.net.

ESL cont'd

9/22/11

ESL

ESL classes up and running at various Welle

By Bev Wax
Special to The Townsman

Wellesley's ESL Program is offering a new writing workshop for intermediate level students of English as a Second Language (ESL). There is no charge to attend this class that began on Sept. 21, at 10:30 a.m. at the Hills Branch Library.

Individual writing styles will be evaluated and basic grammatical instruction will be provided at these writing classes led by Jacqueline Fitzpatrick. Fitzpatrick has been a one-on-one ESL tutor for two years. She is a retired middle school English teacher who also taught at community colleges and later worked as a reference librarian at Wellesley College.

Fitzpatrick's plans for the writing class include 15 sol-

id minutes of writing work. The rest of the time will be devoted to answering questions to help the students work through any problems that are revealed by the writing samples. The intent is to make sure the finished product is the students' own writing in their own voice.

Fitzpatrick is looking forward to helping ESL students learn about English language grammar and sentence structure. She was inspired by one of her current ESL students, who is working hard to pass the American citizenship exam. Fitzpatrick has been helping her study the naturalization booklet. "She wants to know everything American!" says Fitzpatrick. Fitzpatrick also occasionally leads the weekly ESL conversation classes held at Hills Branch Library. "It is



Participants in a Wellesley ESL Program. COURTESY PHOTO

a very satisfying and fun thing to do," said Fitzpatrick. Based on these experiences, both she and

Wellesley ESL Coordinator Philippa Biggers believe the new writing class will be successful. "I am excited

and anxious to see how Wellesley's program is made possible through generous gra-

locations

Fund for Wellesley, administered by the Wellesley Free Library, with additional assistance from Wellesley Friendly Aid. Beginner classes are held at Barton Road and Wellesley's senior housing complexes as well as at the Main and Hills Libraries. ESL students at all levels are welcome to attend Conversation Class, held every Thursday from 10:30 a.m. to noon at the Hills Branch Library.

Anyone interested in receiving training to become an ESL tutor can attend a six-week class to be held on Friday mornings this fall at the Main Library. To sign up for classes and trainings, or for more information about any aspect of the Wellesley ESL program, contact Philippa Biggers at 781-591-1247 or email wellesleyESL@minlib.net.

ESL cont'd 9/22/11

The Neighbor Brigade Comes to Wellesley

BY DAVE HALPERIN

In what could be called an information age update of a Wellesley tradition of helping those in need, the Wellesley Friendly Aid Association has joined forces with Massachusetts-based Neighbor Brigade, which matches people facing challenges due to illness, surgery, or other short term issues with volunteers in their community through the web site lotsahelpinghands.com.

"Wellesley has a history of having a lot of people who are willing and able to volunteer their time to benefit the community in one form or another," notes Wellesley Friendly Aid's Richard Winters, "and this is just another way of channeling that volunteerism."

Winters explains that launching the program comes from the knowledge that while we never know if or when tragedy is going to strike, we can be prepared.

"Even though [the program] might not touch a whole bunch of

people directly... anybody can have tragedy happen to them and we all need help once in a while in dealing with these tragedies," he said. "We hope [residents] don't need us, but if they do, we hope they'll know that we're here."

The specific seed for Wellesley Friendly Aid's partnership with the Neighbor Brigade was a difficulty that Winters witnessed in his own family.

"My own brother's wife was sick... and he's down in New Jersey," Winters says. "He had the help of his church and other friends, but it was tough going for him, being a caregiver 24/7, and he needed help. It is very emotionally and physically taxing for someone who's a caregiver."

The services provided by the Wellesley chapter of the Neighbor Brigade include helping an individual or a family with errands, transportation to medical appointments, providing weekly meals, dog walking, and light yard work.

Neighbors and friends helping each other with these kinds of things is not a new experience; the difference with Neighbor Brigade is that the internet has the potential to ensure that more of those who are in need get help through the Lotsa Helping Hands website at lotsahelpinghands.com, which provides a way to coordinate schedules easily and efficiently.

"We have a pool of 28 volunteers," Winters said, noting that they hope to grow that pool to about 50 community members, "and we communicate with them through [lotsahelpinghands.com] when we need help... and we can specify what the needs are, and volunteers can sign up based on their own schedules."

Those interested in pitching in, or who are in need of assistance, should contact Karen Mondell at 781-235-3960 or wellesleyfriendlyaid@verizon.net. The organization's website is at www.wellesleyfriendlyaid.org.

"We have a group of volunteers in place, so now it's a matter of getting the word out that we're available to families in need of temporary support," Winters says.

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Cheri Clark, chair of the Hills Congregational Church Pumpkin Patch presenting a check to Peter Johannsen, president of Wellesley Friendly Aid.

Wellesley Friendly Aid's Camp Fund receives welcome donation

Following another successful Pumpkin Patch fundraising event held each year at the Hills Congregational Church on Washington Street, the church has provided a generous gift of \$9,827.51 to help support Wellesley Friendly Aid's Camp Fund. It should be noted that people can actually buy MUCH bigger pumpkins at the event!

Peter Johannsen, president of Wellesley Friendly Aid, commented that "this gift is greatly appreciated by the WFA to support our Camp Fund, a program dedicated to giving Wellesley children living at or near poverty levels an enriching summer camp experience...in 2011 benefiting 83 Wellesley children."

To find out more about all the Wellesley Friendly Aid (WFA) programs, please contact Karen Mondell at 781-235-3960 or wellesleyfriendlyaid@verizon.net — or visit their website at www.wellesleyfriendlyaid.org.