

# THE STORY

SUMMER/FALL 2009 VOLUME 4 NO.2

## IN PRAISE OF THE LIBRARY'S VOLUNTEERS

*Written by Victoria Dow*

This is a little love letter to our wonderful library volunteers who serve this library so well: those who have been with us for years and those who help with a special project or for a particular time. WCPL's volunteers may be folks you know as well as you know the staff, and they may be people you've never met. Either way, rest assured that the library would be sadly lacking in its service to you if those volunteers were not here. Not only is the staff workload eased, library patrons get a direct benefit from our volunteers' service.

By far the most important jobs volunteers do in the library are re-shelving materials and keeping those materials in order on the shelves. When you consider that every item – book, DVD, magazine, CD – that is checked out of the library comes back at an average rate of 13,000 items per month, you begin to see how critical this job is. Without the dedicated volunteer shelvees, ranging in age from 14 to 80, you would not be able to find that Disney DVD your child wants, or the first novel in a bestselling author's series, or anything else you might need in the way of books, magazines, CDs, etc.

Volunteers also work at the checkout desks helping to manage the hundreds of patron-requested items that come in weekly from other Chester County libraries. These volunteers help unpack the bags that come in every morning via the Chester County Library System van delivery service, then file



**VOLUNTEER MELANIE WATSON [BACK ROW, CENTER] & HER HELPERS CREATED HAND-PUPPETS FOR THE DRAMA CLUB SHE RAN AT THE LIBRARY IN JULY.**

requested items behind the desk to await pick-up. These folks also make phone calls to let patrons know that a requested book is ready for pick-up.

Then there are the volunteers who fill in, helping with special projects, or assisting with and even presenting programs. High school and college students, as well as Boy and Girl Scouts and Eagle Scouts, have all fulfilled volunteer requirements for school, service groups, and merit badges at the library. This summer an enterprising Girl Scout working toward her Gold Award planned and presented a weeklong drama club for children ages 5-10 in the library. She taught the children about puppetry, story-telling, and pantomime; helped them write a play, organize their costumes, and present the play for their parents on the last day of the program. Others have assisted staff with event planning and support, done countless hours of data

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**MARK THE DATE!**  
**Fifth Annual**  
**Literacy Heroes Breakfast**

Friday, April 16, 2010, 7:30-9:30am

Log onto [www.literacyheroes.com](http://www.literacyheroes.com) for nomination information.

**Check Out WCPL's Blog...**

Take a look at <http://wcpubliblibrary.blogspot.com>

# 4th Annual Literacy Heroes Breakfast Honors Literacy Stars

by Kim Gormley

The fourth annual Literacy Heroes Breakfast, held April 17th at Longwood Gardens, once again inspired attendees with the stories of Chester County residents using creative, literacy-based initiatives in helping others. We are truly astounded by the number of nominations we receive each year, and by the passion of both the nominees and those whose lives they have touched.

This year, over 100 nominees were whittled down to just one winner in each of eight categories. These included a couple who have opened a school in Ghana, the founder of the Chester County Family Academy, and author Lisa Scottoline. The youth category heroes, two sisters, have volunteered countless hours of their time to help others learn to speak English and to read. Our community impact hero created a supper club for disadvantaged children. Bentley Systems, the corporate good neighbor hero, was recognized for its generous book grants to local schools. This year's medical/health literacy hero educates the public about dental health and provides free dental exams through the Chester County Community Dental Center. Finally, our technology and innovation hero, AWE, created learning station computers in use in libraries and schools across the nation, including right here in our library.

The event, co-sponsored by Verizon and other corporate partners, took place on a gorgeous morning in Longwood's conservatory and ballroom. Honorary Chairman Governor Edward G. Rendell could not be with us, but, he sent warm greetings and congratulations to the winners. Our emcee, 6abc Action news anchor Tamala Edwards, kept things moving smoothly, and guest speaker Dick Vermeil provided his own heartwarming take on the importance of literacy. As always, the beauty of the setting, good friends, good food, and uplifting stories combined to make an unforgettable event. ❖

## 2009 Winners:

- Adult Literacy Hero:  
Kwesi & Melissa Koomson
- Community Impact Hero:  
Leon Thomas
- Corporate Good Neighbor Hero:  
Bentley Systems, Inc.
- Education Hero:  
Lorraine Andersen
- Local Author Hero:  
Lisa Scottoline
- Medical/Health Literacy Hero:  
Jaclyn Gleber, RDH, PhD
- Technology/Innovation Hero:  
AWE
- Youth Literacy Hero:  
Elizabeth & Kathryn Metzker



THE BALLROOM AT LONGWOOD WAS AGAIN THE SETTING FOR THE LITERACY HEROES BREAKFAST



L-R: KATHRYN METZKER; KWESI AND MELISSA KOOMSON; ELISE HALL (BENTLEY CORP); HOWARD SUNDWALL, WCPL BOARD PRESIDENT; TAMALA EDWARDS (6ABC NEWS) EMCEE; LORRAINE ANDERSEN; LEON THOMAS; JIM FRICK (BENTLEY SYSTEMS); LISA SCOTLINE. (NOT PICTURED: KARL THORNTON (AWE), AND DR. JACLYN GLEBER)



Thank you to all of our sponsors:

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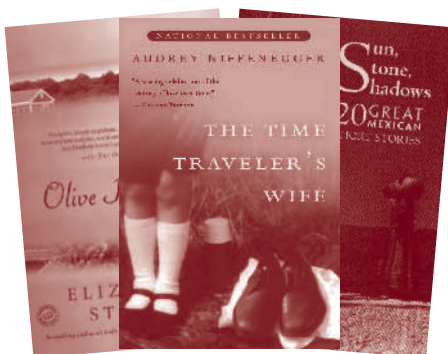


## 3rd Wednesday Book Discussion Group:

### FALL & WINTER SELECTIONS AND A SPECIAL PROGRAM

Now in its thirteenth year, the library's book discussion group met recently to select titles for the fall and winter months. The group meets at 12:30pm in the library's Community Room on the third Wednesday of every month except August. Discussion is informal and always lively, and newcomers are always welcome. At a recent meeting, during a conversation about *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*, one new participant shared memories of visiting Guernsey just after WWII.

The October discussion of *Sun, Stone and Shadows* will be led by West Chester University graduate students under the direction of Professor Victoria Tischio. This special WCPL program is part of **The Big Read** hosted locally by WCU. **The Big Read**, an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and in cooperation with Arts Midwest, is dedicated to restoring reading to the center of



American culture. *Sun, Stone and Shadows: 20 Great Mexican Short Stories* edited by Jorge Hernandez is the area's Big Read choice. WCPL is pleased to be a local partner in West Chester University's presentation of **The Big Read**.

To reserve a copy of any of the titles please visit the online catalog at [www.ccls.org](http://www.ccls.org) or call the library at 610-696-1721. Discussion begins at 12:30pm; bring a brown bag lunch. Selections for September 2009 through February 2010 follow. ❖

#### September 16

*The Time Traveler's Wife*  
Audrey Niffenegger

#### October 21

*Sun, Stone and Shadows: 20 Great Mexican Short Stories*  
in conjunction with  
West Chester University

#### November 18

*Olive Kitteridge*  
Elizabeth Strout

#### December 16

*Hoot*  
Carl Hiaasen

#### January 20, 2010

*The Alchemist*  
Paulo Coelho

#### February 17, 2010

*Sister of My Heart*  
Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

## 1-2-3 PLAY WITH ME: LIBRARY PROGRAM MAKES A DIFFERENCE

by Meg Diskin

Gina Curley's 27-month-old grandson was diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder shortly before he enrolled in the West Chester Public Library's 1-2-3 Play With Me program. The program is offered by the library three times each year, and in the spring WCPL offered a special program for families of children with disabilities. Each week for five weeks, the children played with developmental toys, and professionals in the field of special education and early intervention spoke informally to caregivers.

Curley said the library program provided a place where she felt completely comfortable bringing her grandson. "I had avoided public situations, including



kid-friendly places, due to my grandson's unpredictable behavior. It was wonderful to be in your playgroup where he could play with other children with no accusing or intimidating stares when he was not acting typically. I could actually relax and enjoy conversations and take in

the educational information provided weekly, and all this at no cost. I didn't feel like I was alone. Thank you."

The library has also offered the 1-2-3 Play With Me program to Spanish-speaking families. "Although all families are welcome to attend any of our library programs, sometimes patrons feel more comfortable attending a program which is tailored to their particular needs," said WCPL's Story Time coordinator Meg Diskin. The 1-2-3 Play With Me program is designed to provide families with the opportunity for uninterrupted play and to connect families to resources in the community in areas such as speech and hearing, nutrition, and child development. ❖

# In Praise of the Library's Volunteers

Continued from cover article

entry, and helped out on Saturdays so that regular staff can take a lunch break. Still others have held special story times for borough summer camp kids. Our Saturday chess instruction is provided by a dedicated volunteer and chess expert.

Who are these wonderful volunteers? They truly do range in age from 14 to over 80, with one very special volunteer who is just ten years old. They come from many walks of life. Among our volunteers you will find several on the autism disorder spectrum; for them the library is a great place in which to participate and give back to their community. A number of our volunteers are retired teachers. Also among us are: a retired physician, an avid birdwatcher, an expert on orchids and a theatre expert, an artist and a musician, a therapy dog trainer and her dog, and a graduate student in library/information science. We have teens who are interested in music and



**VOLUNTEER CHUCK SHAW SHOWS A YOUNG CHESS PLAYER THE FINER POINTS OF THE GAME**

reviewing books, and one soon-to-be college freshman who has come faithfully on Saturday mornings all through high school to maintain our public PCs.

Collectively, the library volunteers donate over 1,800 hours of their time per year to the community. Without volunteers the library would be much less useful to the community, and certainly much less lively. Our volunteers are a fun and interesting

group of people, full of stories of the world and their experiences. When you next visit the library, say hello to a volunteer and be sure to say thank you, too. ❖

*Everybody can be great.  
Because anybody can serve.  
You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve.... You don't have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace.  
A soul generated by love.*

~Martin Luther King, Jr.

## VILLAGE VOICES

*I am an avid library goer, and in our many moves before I always made the library a first stop for my daughter and me (we used to joke that we'd read every book in the children's and young adults' sections in at least 10 libraries). Anyway, when I drove up to your library our first week here I just sat in my car and stared, thinking what a fabulous town this must be to have such a beautifully cared for library. Thank you so much!*

~Mary Helen Rossi

## OUT AND ABOUT WITH VICTORIA DOW



RECENTLY, AT THE INVITATION OF SENATOR ANDY DINNIMAN (CENTER), WCPL DIRECTOR VICTORIA DOW (L) VISITED HARRISBURG TO APPEAR WITH DOWNINGTOWN LIBRARY BOARD MEMBER DAN BURGESS (R) ON SENATOR DINNIMAN'S CAPITOL UPDATE PROGRAM. THE TOPIC FOR AUGUST 2009 WAS "LIBRARIES IN OUR COMMUNITIES." YOU CAN WATCH THE HALF-HOUR INTERVIEW PROGRAM ON DVD, AVAILABLE FOR CHECKOUT AT NO CHARGE AT THE LIBRARY.

**WCPL MISSION STATEMENT**

*West Chester Public Library provides  
a welcoming and open environment  
that enriches the community with its  
resources and technology as patrons pursue  
knowledge for pleasure, work, and life.*

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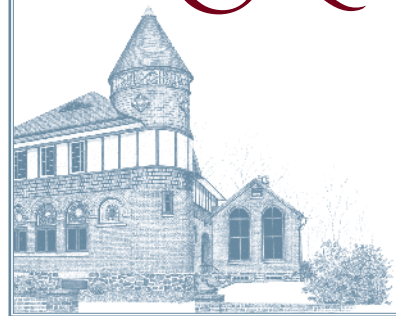
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**Volunteers**

Angie Andre  
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Bond Collard  
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**STORY**



**WEST CHESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY**

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West Chester, PA 19380  
610-696-1721 (Main)  
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[www.wcpubliclibrary.org](http://www.wcpubliclibrary.org)  
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