

# Literacy Volunteers of Wayne County

Fall 2019

Thank you to the community for supporting us through United Way!



## Big Changes at LV Wayne!

The free bookstore will be moved to the annex space adjoining the office on Canal Street in Lyons.

Also, the office itself is getting a make-over! During the month of October there will be a buzz of activity as changes are made. If you are interested in volunteering to help move furniture, or if you have a truck and trailer available for use feel free to contact us at (315) 946-5333

Visit us later this winter for our Open House to see the new layout!

## Success Story

A remarkable Success Story reached us here at Literacy Volunteers. One of our tutors and their learner took the initiative to explore uncommon educational opportunities! The two of them decided to take a trip to Seabreeze where they practiced reading, writing, and math. While at the amusement park they read menus, requested items in the gift shop, and decided on rides. The learner exercised problem solving, and organization skills while determining the sequence of activities. New places and experiences were used as a conversation starter for dealing with anxiety and discomfort as well.

After Seabreeze, they drove to Bob Johnson Chevrolet and checked out the new 2020 Corvette on display. At their next tutoring session, they read the descriptions of the roller coasters.

The learner then wrote about their experience and shared it: "I was fearless going on the roller coasters. The bobsleds and other rides weren't that bad either. My favorite ride was the Time Machine. I was fine eating my cheeseburger with everything on it. I liked seeing the Corvette. But the day at the rides was better."

## Inside this Issue:

### Page 1:

Big Changes!  
Success Story

### Page 2:

Math Journaling

### Page 3:

Tutor In-Service

**Page 4 and Page 5:**  
Singular They/Them

### Page 6:

Tutors Wanted  
Reading Night

### Page 7:

Word Search  
Save The Date Events

**Back Page:**  
Beneficial Information

A graphic with the words "Thank You" written in a white, cursive font on a grey background. The text is surrounded by white radiating lines, giving it a sunburst or starburst effect.

# Math Journaling!

## How to Get Learners Comfortable with Numbers

The goal for math journaling is to address and ease a learner's discomfort around math, and to encourage a new approach to math problems. Math anxiety is real, and even tutors experience it. As one can imagine, experiencing anxiety over a topic makes it all that more difficult to learn, and teach. One way to help feel more comfortable is through expression.

If you plan to explore this with a learner, reach out to the office and we can provide a journal and pen to facilitate. To start your learner off on the right foot you, as a tutor, need to lead by example. If you model lengthy and detailed responses, eventually learners will follow suit to the extent that they are able. Writing about math is difficult and strange to many students in the beginning, so be positive and encouraging with their efforts.

Also, be careful not to fuss at learners who are staring into space and not writing—math journals require a lot of effort, especially as they are still becoming familiar with the task. The time spent thinking is equally important as the time spent writing. Below are some example prompts that aim to assist learners in different ways.

These prompts assess attitudes towards math: *When it comes to math, I find it difficult to...*, *I love math because...*, *People who are good at math...*, and *When I study for a math test, I...*

More prompts that assess learning: *The most important thing I learned today is...*, *I could use today's skill in my real life when I...*, *Today I used math when...*, *At the end of this unit, I want to be able to...*, and *Some good test questions for this skill are...*

Finally, prompts that assess process: *Two ways to solve this problem are...*, *I knew my answer was right when...*, *Another strategy I could have used to solve this problem is...*, *If I missed a step in this problem, I could have...*, and *The most important part of solving this problem is to remember...*

Most learners need about 10 minutes to create a response, but be sure to allow some time at the end to talk about what they wrote. This keeps learners accountable and provides an incentive to write something meaningful and cohesive. Also, it acclimates learners to expressing their thoughts and strategies verbally.



Tutors, feel free to explore different ways to utilize a math journal! Some ideas are: drawings, diagrams, or models to illustrate math problems or math concepts, written explanations of mental calculations, lists of math vocabulary or symbols, math-inspired art (such as tangrams, tessellations, fractals, or symmetry), photographs of your learner doing a hands-on math-related project, creative writing that features math within the story, written explanations of how a problem was solved, and artistic expressions (What colors

do you associate with math? Drawings that use only geometric shapes. Etc.)

It's not uncommon that we hear, "I'm not a math person." Comments like that can provoke more than just laughter, particularly if said around learners. It can send the message that there are some people gifted in arithmetic skills and those that will never be — and that's the wrong note to ever send to a learner. Learners want tutors to be experts on the subjects they present. But if tutors lack comfort with the material, they may pass that unease to their learners. It's important to tell learners that they can get better at anything they work on — including, of course, math.



Erin Maloney, who published a study about math anxiety, reminds educators, "It is okay for students to struggle with math so long as they are learning from their mistakes and they realize that struggling is part of the learning process,"

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## Tutor In-Service

### October

*Learner Enrollment-* This in-service will cover the process of screening, paperwork and enrollment for potential learners with Literacy Volunteers. This in-service covers all paperwork procedures as well as reasons behind information collected and all privacy procedures. If you've ever been curious about the process or are interested in helping with the enrolling of new learners, please contact Heidi for the date and location to attend this in-service.

### November

*New Volunteer Orientation(11/13/19 Williamson)-* A small presentation outlining all of the volunteer opportunities with Literacy Volunteers. Allows new Tutors to become acquainted with staff and sign up for the training process. Please email Heidi for the time and location if interested.

*TASC Preparation-* This presentation will cover the process all learners will follow when pursuing their High School Equivalency and the related tutoring techniques. The in-service will touch on new TABE 11/12 requirements, TASC readiness testing, testing requirements, as well as Regents transfer credits. Please email Heidi for the date and location if interested.

Math is a part of New York State testing and it's here to stay. Given how prevalent math anxiety is in learners and in tutors, it is important that we offer training on what math anxiety is and what can be done to help reduce it. In order to facilitate productive learning environments we are working with local math educators to provide tools for our tutors, in the form of math in-services. This is a work in progress and is a very important goal for us at Literacy Volunteers. Keep your eyes, ears, and email open as more information on this topic is released!

# Singular They/Them!

## Why it is Here to Stay

Singular *'they.'* A common topic of discussion these days, for what may seem like new usage of an old word. Yet, there are a lot of misconceptions that need to be dispelled as the original usage of *'they'* is making a comeback

First, to clarify for those who are unfamiliar, *'they'* is a pronoun. A pronoun, by definition, is: "A word that can function by itself as a noun phrase and that refers either to the participants in the discourse or to someone or something mentioned elsewhere in the discourse." In laymen's terms, a pronoun is how you refer to a person, or thing without using the name.

Examples:

He is short.	I hug him.	His hair grows.	He dresses himself.
She is short.	I hug her.	Her hair grows.	She dresses herself.
(Plural) You are all short.	I hug you all.	Your hair grows.	You feed yourselves.
(Singular) You are short.	I hug you.	Your hair grows.	You feed yourself.
(Plural) They are all short.	I hug them all	Their hair grows.	They feed themselves.
(Singular) They are short.	I hug them.	Their hair grows.	They feed themself.

One of the best things about language is how it evolves! Many people are aware of how terms like "Yeet" and the current usage of "Mood" have sprung up amongst younger Americans. Terms like that are considered colloquial language. Language that is mostly used among friends, and would never be found in scholarly writing.

In colloquial communication there are important uses for singular *'they.'* Many people enjoy the personal benefits of intentionally using *'they.'* For example, to avoid discrimination that comes with being treated as a specific gender when communicating online, or at a distance. Similar to how one might use a pen-name, some benefit from the anonymity *'they'* provides. Also, there is a population who don't identify as either male or female, and make the choice to use *'they'* for their pronouns because it is gender-neutral.

If you meet a dog and say, "He's so cute!" Should the owner reply, "She, actually." Manners would dictate you make the correction, "My mistake. She is cute!" The same respect you give to a dog is expected when you speak to people. This article explores how using *'they'* to refer to a single person is not new, and at the end of the day, common decency is all people are asking for.

Language evolves in formal ways just as it evolves in colloquial ways, and the history behind singular *'they'* is truly interesting. As unusual as it may sound, using *'they'* as plural only is actually new!

According to Dennis Baron, writing for the Oxford English Dictionary's blog: "The Oxford English Dictionary traces singular they back to 1375, where it appears in the medieval romance William and the Werewolf. Except for the old-style language of that poem, its use of singular they to refer to an unnamed person seems very modern. Here's the Middle English version: 'Hastely hized eche . . . þei neyȝþed so neiȝh . . . þere william & his worþi lef were liand i-fere.' In modern English, that's: 'Each man hurried . . . till *they* drew near . . . where William and his darling were lying together.'"



In the same article mentioned above, there's this important observation, "... singular you was [originally] a plural pronoun that had become singular as well. Singular you has become normal and unremarkable." 'You' was once plural only! Then, language evolved introducing 'thou' for singular usage. Over time, language evolved once more, allowing for 'you' to be used in both plural and singular contexts.

Singular 'they' can also be found in Shakespeare. In his play Hamlet, at one point Lord Polonius says, "'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother, since nature makes *them* partial, should o'erhear the speech." Prior to that line, Lord Polonius had been referring to a specific mother, and not an unknown person.

There are even more, easy to collect examples of singular 'they.' George Bernard Shaw, Charles Dickens, and Jane Austen have all used singular 'they.' It has even been used in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, as well as the 1382 Wycliffe's Bible. The use of singular 'they' has a long standing history, and is not new to the English language.

Of course if anyone complains about singular 'they' being used in your formal writing, do not fret! According to Grammarly, "As of 2019, most big style guides—including the Associated Press, the Chicago Manual of Style, the MLA style manual, and the APA style manual—accept the usage of the singular they. Whether they approve of it as an indefinite singular pronoun, a specific person's preferred pronoun, or both, all of these manuals concede that the singular they has a place in our modern world." For anyone who is unaware, style guides are used to determine how all academic papers be written.



This is particularly useful in scholarly papers, which for the past few decades had to opt for the clunkier 'he or she' when referring to general people in a singular form. Now academics, and students writing papers, can use the much more streamlined 'they.'

The lesson of this lengthy article is that singular 'they' is grammatically correct, in both a colloquial sense, and a formal one!

# Tutors Wanted!

If that special tutor could be you, contact Heidi at 315-946-5333 to get started!

- o English as a New Language Tutors wanted for the Sodus Area! One-to-One tutors and tutors willing to work in conversation groups in Sodus or Williamson area are needed.
- o Math Tutors are needed for the entire Wayne county, but specifically in Lyons & Newark. Refresher courses for nervous Tutors are available! Basic math skills are often times the most sought after (Topics such as multi-digit division, basic fractions, and introduction to geometric shapes).
- o As always, we need tutors in general! If you have a friend you've always thought would be perfect for this please connect them with Heidi, whose contact information is above.

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## Make Reading a Nightly Habit

Mr. Poole's Recommendation

School is back in session and now is a great time to start a nightly reading routine with your children. Just 10 or 15 minutes after homework, dinner, or before bed is a perfect way to set the stage for reading. When you create a routine, you not only show your children that reading is a nightly exercise you model the importance so children make the connection between school and home; it helps bridge the literacy gap.

Not all parents have an easy time with reading and may struggle. Don't worry, let pictures be your guide with younger children. Talk about what you see in the illustrations- what colors? What shapes? And make predictions in the story about what you think may happen next.

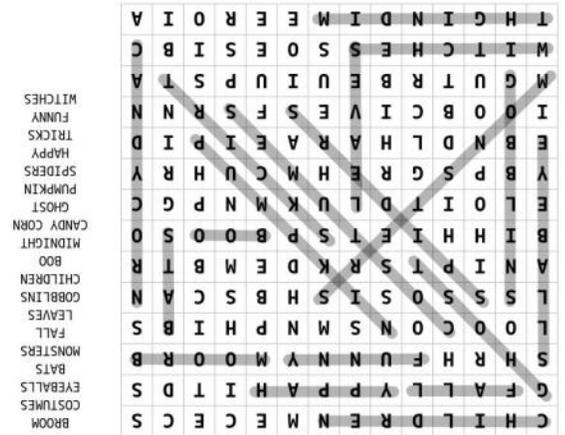
Regular reading routines are easy, free to use and strengthen bonds between parents/grandparents with children/grandchildren. Start today and make it a nightly positive and enriching tradition!

# Halloween



- BROOM
- COSTUMES
- EYEBALLS
- BATS
- MONSTERS
- FALL
- LEAVES
- GOBBLINS
- CHILDREN
- BOO
- MIDNIGHT
- CANDY CORN
- GHOST
- PUMPKIN
- SPIDERS
- HAPPY
- TRICKS
- FUNNY
- WITCHES

## Answer Key:



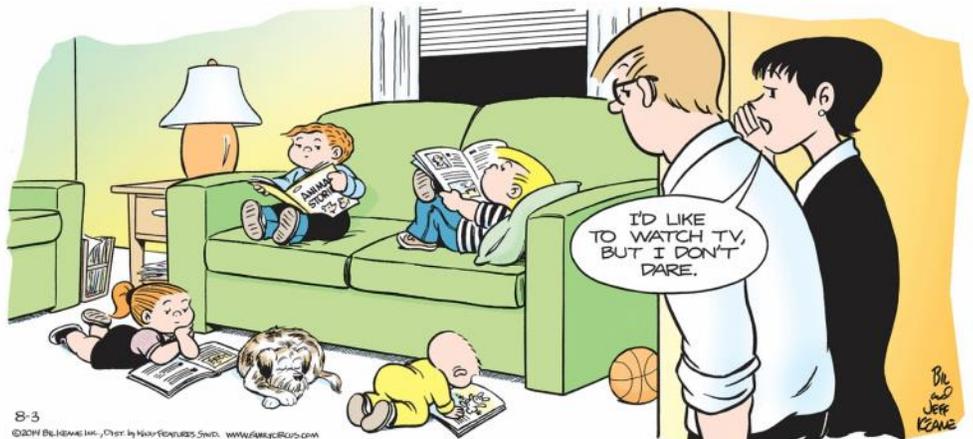
Halloween

Don't want to wait for the next newsletter? Follow us on

Facebook

for frequent updates!

Check out [facebook.com/lvwayne](https://www.facebook.com/lvwayne)



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## Save the Date!

Board Meeting - October 21st

Learner Enrollment- October

New Volunteer Orientation- November 13th

TASC Preparation- November

Board Meeting- December 16th

Holiday Open House- TBD in December





Literacy Volunteers of Wayne County, Inc.  
 12 Canal St.  
 Lyons, NY 14489

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You can also check out all of our available volunteer opportunities by checking our current listings with Volunteer Match at [www.volunteermatch.org/search/org5018.jsp](http://www.volunteermatch.org/search/org5018.jsp)



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Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchase to support us, and *you don't pay any extra on your purchase!* Every little bit helps, Thank you!

**Our Mission:**  
*To promote increased literacy in our community through a variety of programs that provide opportunities for adults to learn, encourage reading in the community, and help children succeed in school.*

Board President  
 Laura Burghdorf

Executive Director  
 Chris Edgar



For those who don't know, we have a delightful cook book available for 5\$ a piece! There are hundreds of recipes and useful tips such as: how to stock a pantry, common spices, tips for baking, measurements, cooking dictionary, and equivalency charts!

