

March 2026



# Literally Speaking

Empowering adults to achieve greater success in their lives through literacy skill development

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## IMPORTANT DATES

**\*Coffee with the Coordinator\***

Tuesday, March 31<sup>st</sup>

**\*Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon\***

Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>

**\*Annual Learner Assessments\***

Tuesdays & Wednesdays in April

**\*In Our Own Words Due\***

Tuesday, June 30<sup>th</sup>

## BIRTHDAYS



to some of our fabulous Volunteers!

**Katherine**

**Charles**

**Barbara**

**Marsha**

**Samantha**

**Donna**

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## Writer to Writer Winners Announced

The 2025 Writer to Writer Challenge winners have been announced! There were 59 learners who participated in Writer to Writer from literacy programs throughout Southern California. We had 12 learners from PAL participate in this opportunity. Of those 12, we are happy to announce one of our learners - Omi Choi - won! She received Honorable Mention in the Advanced Writing category! Omi was presented with her award at the SCLLN Writer to Writer Luncheon this past weekend! Please enjoy her letter to the author.

*Congratulations!*

**Honorable Mention - Advanced Category**

**Omi Choi, Newport Beach Public Library**

**Letter to Matt Haig, author of "The Midnight Library"**



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## Writer to Writer Winners Announced continued...

Dear Mr. Haig,

Hello. My name is Omi Choi.

I emigrated from Korea to the United States four years ago. I'm a learner of English. I read your book "Midnight Library" with my Korean friends as book club members who are learning English.

My English is not good enough to read this book. So the book was a challenge for me. Even though it was hard work for me, I kept reading it and I was able to finish it because the plot was so interesting. At first, it broke my heart that Nora was having a really hard time and that made her try to attempt suicide. Fortunately, Nora was able to enter the Midnight instead of facing death. It was an interesting point and also in Korea, we have concepts of past lives and reincarnation, so the main theme of "Midnight Library" felt somewhat familiar.

Reading this book made me reflect on my life and the choices I've made.

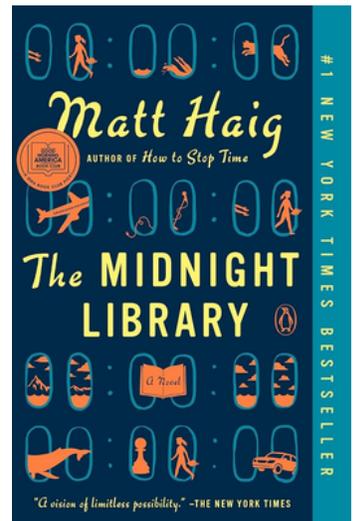
What if I hadn't gotten married?

What if I hadn't had children?

What if I hadn't immigrated to the United States?

Would I have been happier?

There's no perfect life. No matter how smart, how rich, or how good at English I am, I'll still have worries and regrets. Of course.



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## Writer to Writer Winners Announced continued...

However, reading this book made me realize that happiness isn't about living a perfect life, or making perfect choices. There's no perfect life and no perfect choices. Thanks to this, I've become more grateful for my life now.

My husband and I sometimes argue and disagree, and my children sometimes make me upset. There are days when I feel embarrassed and angry at myself for not being able to speak English well. However, I'm grateful for the small joys of being with my husband and children every day in a new country. I've also come to appreciate the challenges I've faced, like learning English and adjusting to a new country. These challenges have made me a little bit better person.

This book has made me reflect on what's truly important in life. While it's natural to imagine other paths that I could have taken, I realized that focusing on the present, cherishing and appreciating the moments we have is most important. Even if I have to face some difficult situation, I want to continue to live a happy and joyful life, smiling at the small joys and cherishing the people I love. Thank you for writing such a meaningful book. I really appreciated that I could read your book in English.

All the best,  
Omi Choi

**Please join us in CONGRATULATING Omi for her hard work and determination to improving her English literacy skills!**

Shoutout to her tutor, Lynn Iba, for always supporting her!

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## Santa Ana Tour Group Visits the Library

Project Adult Literacy had the pleasure of welcoming a group of 25 ESL students from Santa Ana for a special tour of the Newport Beach Public Library. The visitors explored our library and learned more about the specialized literacy services we provide. These type of tours serve are a wonderful introduction to the library's environment, helping potential learners and community members feel at home among our stacks and resources.

PAL offers customizable Library-Literacy Tours for any group interested in a deeper look at our programs. Whether you are part of a local school, a community organization, or a neighborhood group, we can tailor a visit to highlight the



specific tools and services that matter most to you. It is a fantastic way to bridge the gap between our community and the lifelong learning opportunities available right here at the library.

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## Updated Literacy Resources & Materials

Next time you stop by the Literacy Office, you will notice some exciting changes designed to make finding the perfect book much easier. We have been busy updating our materials and resources, most notably by adding color-coded reading level labels to our collection. These colors are directly coordinated with our learners' assessment levels, allowing both tutors and students to identify appropriate matches at a glance and navigate our shelves with confidence. In addition to the new labeling system, we are focused on fostering a more



collaborative reading experience. We've been working hard to stock duplicate copies of the same titles, enabling learners and tutors to check out a book together. This ensures that both parties can follow along, annotate, and discuss the text simultaneously, making the learning process more interactive and supportive.

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## Volunteer Tutor Training Recap

Last month, we held our first Volunteer Tutor Training of the year. Congratulations to our newest volunteer tutors!

We are always looking for volunteer tutors. If you know someone who is interested, please have them contact us. Our next training is in April 2026.



## New Learner Orientation Recap

We are delighted to share that 9 new learners successfully completed our Winter New Learner Orientation last month! We are excited to have these new learners in



our program and joining our Literacy community. If you know someone who is interested in becoming a learner with PAL, our next New Learner Orientation is in April 2026.

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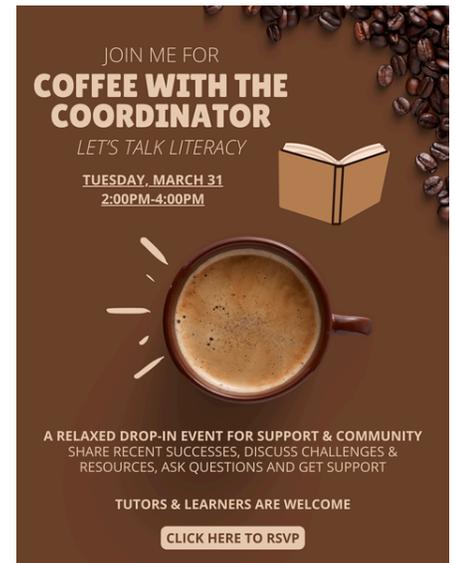
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## Upcoming PAL Spring Events

### COFFEE WITH THE COORDINATOR

All tutors, volunteers and learners are invited to join Literacy Coordinator, Christina Smith, for Coffee with the Coordinator, happening Tuesday, March 31, 2026 from 2:00pm-4:00pm. Stop by to share your recent successes, discuss challenges, ask questions, and meet new people. You are welcome to stop by for 5 minutes or stay the full 2 hours – it is up to you! Coffee and treats will be provided!



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You are invited to our...

### **VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION LUNCHEON CELEBRATION**

<b>SAT 25 APRIL</b>	A fun award ceremony & lunch to celebrate our volunteers. Spouses welcome! Friends Room	<b>11AM -1PM</b>
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[CLICK HERE TO RSVP](#)

### VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION LUNCHEON

Tutors and volunteers are invited to our second annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon on Saturday, April 25, 2026 from 11:00am-1:00pm. Let's celebrate the profound impact our tutors and volunteers have made in our learners' lives and in our community. Join us for an afternoon of delicious food, heartfelt stories, and well-deserved recognition—because milestones are meant to be celebrated together.

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## Save the Date: International Literacy Day

SAVE THE DATE for this year's International Literacy Day Celebration happening on Thursday, September 17, 2026 from 10:30am - 12:30pm in the Civic Center Community Room. This year marks a huge milestone as our program celebrates our 40th anniversary of empowering lives through literacy. We hope you can join us as we honor our learners, celebrate our dedicated volunteer tutors, and reflect on the last four decades of making a difference in our community.

40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

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Save the Date

# INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17**  
**10:30 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.**  
DOORS OPEN AT 10:00 A.M.  
*Civic Center Community Room (Next to City Hall)*

Join us for an International Brunch as we celebrate our learners and their advancement of literacy in our community! We will be celebrating our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as a program, presenting the Rochelle Hoffman Memorial Award and giving out our 'In Our Own Words' publication.  
 All volunteers, learners and families are welcome to attend.

**CLICK HERE TO RSVP**

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