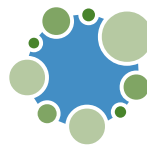


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# PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

San Mateo County Library celebrates International Literacy Day and calls for volunteers for the Library Adult Literacy Program.

**San Mateo, CA, September 8, 2008:**

*"Caution: Road Construction Ahead." "Do not give to children under 12 years of age."*

For millions of adults in America and worldwide, reading these simple words presents an enormous struggle. In honor of International Literacy Day, San Mateo County Library recognizes this global and local problem. To address this pervasive issue, the library offers an adult literacy program, helping adults in our communities to reach their full potential. This program provides free, one-on-one and small group tutoring for adults who are functionally proficient in English and want to improve their basic reading and writing skills. After receiving a training course, volunteers will be matched with students from the surrounding communities.

The lack of literacy skills stands as a serious problem in our country and it transcends socio-economic, racial and gender lines. According to the National Assessment of Adult Literacy, issued in 2005, 93 million people in the United States struggle to read and write. Limited reading and writing restricts a person's chances to advance in the work place and the vast majority of high school drop-outs, welfare recipients, and prisoners score poorly on reading assessments. Accessing and comprehending health care information is more difficult, resulting in an estimated annual cost of 73 billion dollars in the form of longer hospital stays, emergency room and doctor visits, and increased medication. Parents are unable to help their children succeed in school and the cycle of low-literacy can be perpetuated. In responding to these needs, a library based adult literacy program can make a difference. A literate population is not only good for the individual; it is good for the community at large.

For more information about becoming a volunteer, or if you know someone who would benefit from these services, please call 650.312.5287, visit our website at [www.smcl.org](http://www.smcl.org), or ask a staff member at your local San Mateo County Library branch.