

Tutoring

By Dorothy Basche

After I had retired from my part-time job, I read an article in the newspaper about an older woman who was learning English at the Literacy Council. That sparked my interest. I had enjoyed helping my nieces learn their ABC's. Now, I could help older people learn to read and write.

I met my first student in February 1999, Eva was Mexican. She had a husband and two young children. She was interested in reading to her boys and understanding their school work. Ten months later she had to end our sessions because she had a full time job and other responsibilities.

Evelia was my second student. I called her house to set up an appointment in October 1999. Her daughter answered the phone and explained she would speak for her mother. I insisted Evelia speak to me even though her English was not good. We formed a friendship and a relationship for eight years. She had a husband and four daughters, two born in Mexico and two in California. By the end of the eight years grandchildren entered into our discussions. We were all very proud when Evelia passed the test and became a United States citizen in June 2007. She had achieved her goal and in October 2007 she decided to end our sessions to take care of grandchildren. We still occasionally visit.

My third and last student was from Russia. I met Oksana in May 2008. She had gone to University in her country. She knew some English and by May 2009 she decided she would attend classes at St. Norbert where they had an accelerated English Program.



I had taught for almost ten years twice a week. In May 2007 I received an award for one thousand hours of service. My name is on a gold plaque along with some others who have done far more than I was able to do. It was a privilege to have served.

Editor's Note: Sadly Dorothy passed away this summer, not long after dropping off this story.

