



# LitNet News

The best of 2022 edition



## From the director's chair

As we wrap up 2022, we are excited to bring you this exclusive "best of" edition of our 2022 e-newsletters. Seeing the best of the LitNet news here altogether reveals what a meaningful year it has been for LitNet!

We share both sad and happy news in these pages, but all stories show that our organization hums with activity.




We are grateful to everyone in our community, from our dedicated learners who are working hard to make our community stronger to the generous donors who support our work, often year after year, because they believe in what we do. And, of course, where would we be without our committed tutors? Whether you're already a part of our community or if you're just learning about us, we hope you like what you find in these pages!

Leigh Doherty, Executive Director

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Luana Dias David gives a Salsa dance demonstration at Sip, Salsa, & Samba

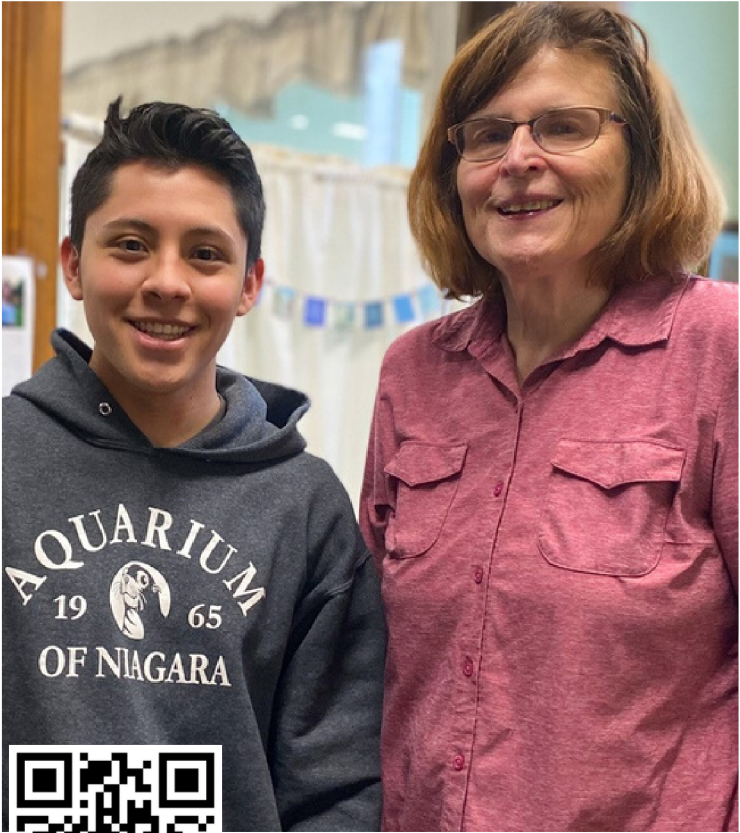


The LitNet Board of Directors (not all members present)

# Julian's Story

Julian came to the United States from Colombia more than four years ago unable to speak almost any English at all. In high school, he learned by listening and taking ESL classes. As Julian started thinking about college, his guidance counselor connected him with LitNet. In particular, Julian sought help with completing a Chang Chavkin Scholarship application. The Chang Chavkin Scholarship supports "rural, high achieving, first generation students with the funding and resources needed to graduate from a four year college that meets their potential."

Julian worked with two tutors, with Alice (pictured with Julian here) on writing and with Kathy on speaking. We are proud to announce that after working on his application essay and doing multiple mock interviews, Julian received the scholarship! He will head to college in the fall of 2023. He plans to pursue a degree in Finance or the STEM fields.



*Read Julian's full story here*

# Julia's Story

Julia moved to the United States from Mexico in 2004. She learned about LitNet while at Berkshire Community College's Adult Language Program. She wanted to some day earn her high school diploma but knew she would need a lot of help, with math in particular. She began working with Ron about five years ago.

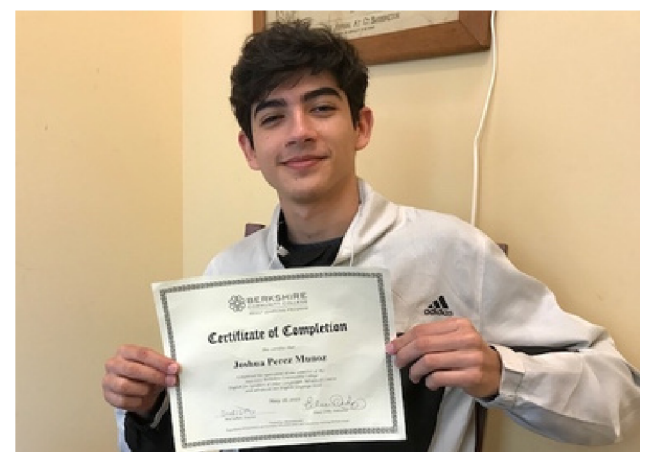
Ron and Julia started with basic concepts like addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. They eventually moved their way through geometry, trigonometry, and other components of high school math. Julia, who was also raising two children and running her own business, needed to cancel her tutoring sessions often and almost gave up several times. She credits Ron with keeping her on track. If she forgot a concept, they would just do it again. If she needed a break, he was there when she came back. After five years of persistence, Julia's hard work paid off. In June she received her high school equivalency through the Pittsfield Public Schools.

Julia plans to enroll in BCC. She credits Ron with helping her discover her true passion, natural sciences, and she plans to study that in college.



*Read Julia's full story here*

*"I'll never forget his patience. I'm very grateful and I always will be."*



# Sip, Salsa, & Samba!

On Saturday, September 17, about 150 guests attended LitNet's annual fundraising celebration, Sip, Salsa, & Samba, at Crissey Farm in Great Barrington. A mix of supporters, tutors, and learners gathered under a tent and inside to enjoy food by Crazy Arepas, La Chalupa y La Enchilada, and Barrington Brewery. With a Samba dance demonstration by dancer Luana Dias David and Latin dance music played throughout the night, LitNet exceeded both its fun and fundraising goals!

Two tutor-learner pairs, Sara and Carolina and Marc and Ashly, spoke about their experiences in front of the attendees, highlighting the most important aspect of LitNet's work: the strong and supportive bond that forms between tutor and learner.

DJ Miguel kept the music going throughout the night. Supporters overwhelmed us with their generosity during our paddle raise. Sip, Salsa, & Samba was such a hit that we hope to repeat the formula for future fundraisers. Thanks to all who made our party a success!



*Read more and find links to speeches*



## The Susan Weintraub Tutor Resource Center



*Read about  
our grand  
opening*

In October, we celebrated the grand opening of the Susan Weintraub Tutor Resource Center, a new gathering and working space for LitNet tutors and learners. This new space is on the ground floor of the building where our current office is at 32 Park Street in Lee.

This fabulous new center was made possible by the donations we have received in the past eight months in memory of Sue, our beloved tutor and board member for 11 years, who passed away in February. We have no doubt that Sue would approve of how we are making use of the funds we've received in her honor. For those of you who knew her, you likely remember Sue as a generous, hard-working, and supportive person. We're thrilled to be able to perpetuate her giving spirit by opening this space where tutors and learners can work together, access online resources, and utilize our three library collections: the Susan Weintraub Professional Collection, the Donald C. McGraw Foundation's Literature Collection, and the Ruth Krauss Foundation's Children's Collection.

This new space is a place where learners, many of them immigrants who are new to the community, can feel like they are welcome. A place where they feel at home.



# Celebration of New Americans

In July, we celebrated our Keator Scholars: learners who have recently become U.S. citizens with the help of LitNet. 2022 has been our most robust year for our citizenship program yet. We have welcomed 12 new citizens so far, and we anticipate more before the year is out!



## Who do we appreciate? Our tutors!

In August, 70 of our 120 active tutors gathered together at the home of a LitNet board member. It was our first such gathering since the pandemic, and how wonderful it was to see everybody together at long last. We hope to start gathering in appreciation of our tutors more often, as everyone who attended agreed that it feels incredibly good to be together. Tutor Mayra, on the right below, captures the feeling best.



## A few words from longtime donors...



"I was a tutor for 15 years so I put my money where my mouth is. I have tremendous admiration for people who emigrate, people who flee their lives and situations. I am always so impressed with the LitNet students and their accomplishments and I want to support that." -Susan Dana. Susan and her husband Ned have been donating to LitNet since 1996.



"I have vivid memories of overhearing my parents, who were immigrants, speaking about their wonderful English teacher whom they worked with when they came here to the U.S. This was before LitNet. Both my parents were doctors. This is what inspires me to give to LitNet: it helps people new to our country, like my parents, achieve their goals." -Steffi Fletcher. Steffi has been donating to LitNet since 1996.

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