



Providing adults who live in or near Ottawa County with an opportunity to improve and transform their lives by strengthening their reading and language fluency.

August 2024 Newsletter

Change a Life! Give Today!

Tutor Spotlight



Sue Skeindziel

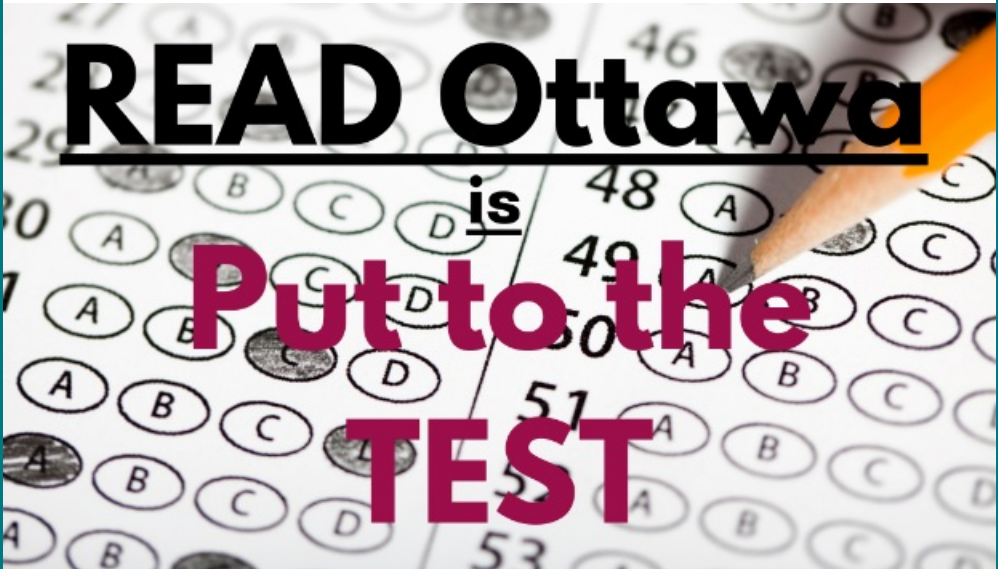


2 and a half years ago READ Ottawa held it's first tutor training in Holland. Sue Skeindziel was among this group. Newly transplanted in Holland, Sue sought to volunteer in an arena she knew best: literacy. As a former librarian, a director of a literacy organization, as well as a teacher of developmental reading, Sue says she has always been involved in literacy.

Sue is inspired by her mother who served as a missionary in Kenya. Her role was to teach English to young African men. Incidentally, Sue remembers her first reading material to be that for ESL learners.

So far Sue has tutored 4 different learners; currently she has 2. Richelle Hofman reports that Sue willingly subs for tutors, meets to help other tutors gain confidence, and is invested in improving her own skills. It is no wonder that one of her learners, who passed his GED after 7 attempts, called out a "thank you to teacher Sue" in his graduation speech!

Faced with navigating culture differences and the task of developing rapport, Sue claims that when she sees the understanding in her learner's eyes, it has all been worth it. Thank you, tutor Sue!



Literacy programs across the United States, including READ Ottawa, were notified of a significant change in ESL testing. The CASAS Life and Work tests used to determine an ESL learner's reading level are becoming obsolete. READ Ottawa was given a year's time to phase out the old CASAS test and transition to the new. A monumental task, indeed.

To say that the CASAS Life and work tests used by ZAE and READ Ottawa were out of date is clearly an understatement. The graphics not only depicted nearly obsolete technology like dial phones, but the tests were also in black and white. Reading examples included handwritten doctor's notes and old job applications. With the new STEPS testing, colored photos now show cell phones and flat screen TVs, and reading passages used are in the form of text messages and emails. In addition to the problem of old and dated Life and Work test questions, there were also gaps between the reading levels that needed to be addressed. The new STEPS tests are significantly improved; it is a better testing program overall.

The efforts of tutors in Holland have been significant. They helped explain the process to learners and even aided in scheduling. Many showed up to offer moral support with hugs, sharpened pencils, and smiling faces. Our learners worked hard despite broken air conditioning at Herrick! Richelle Hofman reports outstanding growth in post scores.

22 learners have been tested in 22 days! Renate Watters, Vicki Mast and Richelle have worked diligently on individual testing, group testing, scoring, reporting and documenting this mass evaluation machine. Richelle has clearly gone above and beyond to make this all work. She is the truly our crucial power source.

Grand Haven testing will be held at Spring Lake District Library on Friday, August 16 from 1:00-4:00 and on Monday, August 19 from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm.





please enter through the north door of the church building



FREE CITIZENSHIP CLASS

Intersection Ministries
945 136th Ave.
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PLEASE CONTACT BEV STEPHENSON AT 616-953-2051 OR BJSTEP02@GMAIL.COM; OLIVIA KUIPHOFF AT 303-434-3209 FOR SPANISH



Fall Tutor Trainings

Holland: September 24 & 26

Grand Haven: October 1 & 3

Allegan: October 8 & 10

Interested in becoming a tutor? RSVP through one of the following:
Filling out the form at <https://readottawa.org/volunteer>
Email Lynn Groothuis at lynn@readottawa.org
Call Lynn at 616-414-0295

"It is not how much we give, but how much love we put into giving." Mother Theresa



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