

Adult learning aides among the region's volunteer needs

Visiting the CSIU Adult Education Program classroom in Sunbury was an eye-opener for me.

I expected a formal classroom setting, but was heartened to find a warm and welcoming space where volunteer tutors — including Derek Van Ruler assist CSIU Adult Education Bridge Instructor Jennifer Noll with individualized learning plans to prepare adult students for high school equivalency testing, college entrance testing or citizenship exams.

They also assist students to improve skills in reading, writing, basic math and English speaking to gain and retain employment.

Jennifer came to the area after life-changing events uprooted her. While seeking a position as an elementary school teacher, Jennifer chose to volunteer with the CSIU program as an ESL (English as a Second Language) tutor. Now a paid staffer in the CSIU Sunbury program, she says



NANCY DAVIS
Volunteers

volunteer classroom assistants/tutors are essential, as they use her lesson plans to give one-on-one attention to students. Attendance varies from day to day, depending on students' schedules, needs and family responsibilities, so both Jennifer and the tutors have to be flexible in their planning.

Derek, a local pastor who has volunteered for two years, told me that he finds satisfaction in helping others change the quality of their lives, and is motivated by the variety of students with whom he works. Garrett dropped out of school early, and later regretted his decision. He comes to the program to brush up skills for the HiSet high school equivalency exam.

He says that Derek helps him

to understand and organize concepts, enabling him to slow down and focus on the small steps he is taking to improve his life.

At the next table, Terry, a casualty of the Wood Mode closure, says that the volunteers "make me feel comfortable, because I can ask them for whatever I need."

Terry attends the program to work on skills to raise his test scores for entry into Triangle Tech's electrician program, a step up from his previous job.

With volunteer support, Terry will be better able to read workplace memos and handle job related math required for success in his new occupation.

Melanie Haas, the CSIU Student Support Specialist/Tutor Coordinator, oversees the adult program throughout the area. There are currently about 25 volunteers giving at least three hours weekly, but more are needed.

Day classes are offered in Shamokin, Sunbury and

Bloomsburg Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to noon, while evening classes are held in Lewisburg on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5-8 p.m.

If you are interested and have three hours/week to give to help adults in your community achieve their literacy goals, contact Melanie at 570-523-1155, Ext. 2327 or melanie.haas@csiu.org.

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Susquehanna Valley Reading Partners needs adult literacy tutors in many communities. A tutor works with a student three hours a week (two 1½ hour sessions) usually in the local library. Training, ongoing support and all materials are provided. Contact Jackie Willis 570-594-1679 or jswjrt@aol.com.

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Want to speak face-to-face with community groups about your interest in volunteering? Plan to visit the Bucknell University Fall Community Service Fair on Tuesday, Jan.

21 from 5:30-7 p.m. in the Terrace Room of the Langone Center on the campus of Bucknell University. Speak directly with local non-profit representatives in need of volunteers and connect with student clubs and organizations focusing on service. Agencies in attendance work with children, animals, environmental concerns, health care and more. This event is free and open to the public. Parking is available on Moore Avenue and 7th Street. Questions? Contact Lynn Pierson at lcp008@bucknell.edu.

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The Snyder County Solid Waste Management Authority is looking for community members with an interest in recycling to serve as board members, attending monthly meetings in Selinsgrove and assisting with recycling events. The Authority oversees six drop off recycling sites in Snyder County. Contact Tom Gibson at tgibson@snyder-county.org or 570-713-4812.

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Support the **Public Library for Union County** as part of the Library Auction Committee team's annual auction event scheduled this year for Saturday, March, from 5-10:00 p.m. at the Langone Center at Bucknell University. Contact Roberta Greene at 570-523-1172 or rgreene@publuc.org by Jan. 10.

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Susquehanna Valley CAS (Court Appointed Special Advocates) is offering a Milton-based training class beginning Jan. 9. Adults are trained at no charge and then thoughtfully matched with an abused or neglected child to advocate in the court system to aid in ensuring a safe, nurturing, and permanent environment. For more info, call Tammy Stempko at 570-492-3243, email tstempko@susquehannavalleycasa.com or visit www.susquehannavalleycasa.com.

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□ **Birthright of Sunbury** recently welcomed a new volunteer through this column, but is still in need of reception volunteers for 3 ½ hours a month on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday from 1-4:30 p.m. Birthright provides provide diapers, infant formula, crib mattresses and infant items to low income families and has been serving Northumberland, Union, Montour, and Snyder counties for over 36 years. Call 570-286-8560.

□ **Far Point Animal Rescue** in Port Trevorton relies on volunteers to provide daily care for their horses from 9:30 a.m. to noon any morning. No experience with horses is needed. Contact the barn manager at 570-847-5514.

□ **The Campus Theatre** in downtown Lewisburg uses energetic volunteers to serve popcorn & soda to movie patrons while paid staff tend the register. For more information, contact gabriele@campustheatre.org.

□ Are senior citizens your thing? **Penns Creek Adult Resource Center** needs you! Call Chris at 570- 837-6200 for more information.

□ APPRISE, the **State Health Insurance Assistance Program** for Pennsylvania's Medicare beneficiaries, relies on comprehensively trained volunteer insurance counselors to help others understand Medicare and commercial insurance benefits and coverages, compare Medicare prescription drug plans and file applications for government programs that help qualified recipients to pay Medicare expenses. For more information, call Northumberland County Agency on Aging at 570-490-2395 or 570-495-2371.

□ **Union-Snyder Community Action Agency (CAA)** Front Desk Reception volunteers answer and manage phone calls, walk-ins, room reservations, and basic office work. For more information, contact Samantha Leib at sleib@union-snydercaa.org or 570-374-0181 X194.

□ **The Foster Grandparent Program of Central PA** is recruiting volunteers to work with children at day care centers, Head Start and Pre-K Counts Programs, and at all levels in the public schools. Applicants must be 55 years of age or over. Income eligible applicants receive a non-taxable stipend and assistance with transportation. Call 570-374-9196 for an application.

□ **Community Harvest** offers a free community meal in Milton every week and needs help prepping, cooking, and serving meals on Mondays starting at 2 p.m., with serving at 5 p.m., and clean up concluding by 6:30 p.m. Interested groups or individuals please email Sarah Wochele for available dates at smw023@bucknell.edu.

□ **The Eastern Union County Supplemental Food Pantry** needs adults and teens to carry groceries for clients who are unable on the first and third Fridays of every month from 1:15 p.m. until 3:30 p.m. in the basement of the First Baptist Church at 51 S. 3rd Street in Lewisburg. Questions? Call Cindy at 570-523-6898

□ Think spring with the **Lewisburg Arts Council** by volunteering to help with the annual Arts Festival in April. For more information, visit www.lewisburgartscouncil.com or email info@lewisburgartscouncil.com.

□ **Lewisburg/Milton Meals on Wheels** seeks drivers to deliver meals