

The Bethlehem Globe-Times – September 13, 1977

'Each One Teach One'

Library Starts Literacy Tutoring Program

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Accent on Living Editor

"It's hard to teach someone to read a new language." said Camille Leslie. "Until you've tried to communicate language skills, you don't realize how complex your language is."

Camille, branch librarian at the South Side library, was sitting in the bright yellow basement meeting room of the renovated branch at 4th and Webster.

"I could point to the wall and say yellow but how will the student know whether I'm describing the color or giving the name for the wall."

Camille was discussing the Laubach literacy tutoring program which the library is sponsoring with the first three-day training session starting tomorrow at 9 a.m..

"Each one teach one" is the motto of the program initiated 40 years ago by Frank Laubach who pioneered in literacy training in the mission field in the Philippines. In the original plan each student would become in turn a tutor to teach another and thus accelerate the literacy training. The concept was practiced in 103 countries.

The tutor doesn't need a background in teaching, said Camille who will be assisting the instructors in the training sessions. The teacher's manual covers everything including what to say to the student. There is lots of repetition and lots of praise involved.



LOOKING OVER Laubach tutoring literature at South Side Library are, from left, Luis Malagon and Julia Colon, students, Lucy Morales and Camille Leslie, library staff members and tutors.

The volunteer tutor attends the training session tomorrow through Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. with box lunches and coffee provided. He or she is then asked to commit three hours a week of one to one contact with an individual student.

There are still openings for tutors and for students, said Camille. During the training each volunteer tutor is assigned a student and working with the student is part of the training.

A Laubach literacy training program was started several years ago at the Red Cross, but was discontinued. The library has some of the materials used in that program. Other materials have been purchased through a \$200 donation from the Jaycee Wives.

The instructor for the first day, along with Camille, will be Rachel Brogan of Chester County. Instructor on Thursday and Friday will be Martha Lane who is author of some of the guides used in the course.

Ms. Lane is employed by the American Lutheran Church Women to carry out workshops across the country. Literacy training is a major project of the LCW. Camille took the course last winter when it was offered by an Allentown Lutheran parish and it was at that time she became interested in starting it here.

Camille, who has been with the South Side branch since December of last year, said her experience in Bethlehem is her first working with non-English speaking persons.

It is the first time she has really become aware, she said, of how difficult it is for an individual thrust into a new culture speaking an unfamiliar language.

The course is designed for students who can't read or write any language but if the student already knows how to write and read in his own language, the course can be adapted for the particular student. Camille said she expected that most of the students will be able to read at least some in their own language.

Part of the reading aides which have been written by Ms. Lane include a shopping and cooking guide with simple recipes and a pamphlet on "how to fix the faucet" with diagrams.

Though the course could be used for children, Camille expects most of the students to be adults. "Children learn the language quickly at school," she said. "Often adults who don't know the language shut themselves off from English-speaking people."

It is, however, difficult to reach the potential student because, of course, he or she is not reading the newspaper information or the library posters. At this point, said Camille, the library is still seeking these potential students.

Children 12 years of age or older are accepted as tutors, said Camille. Children often make good tutors, she said. and because of the school strike it would be possible for them to take the training. Interested persons should contact Camille at the South Side branch or Cindy Wilson at Central Library.