

# ALTA NEWS



ALTA's 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary T-Shirts and bpTT-sponsored Flyers



## June 2007 Volume 13 Issue 2

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## 2007 STUDENT REGISTRATION

As usual, our annual student registration takes place during the first week of September. Our registration days are Tues 4<sup>th</sup> and Wed 5<sup>th</sup> Sept from 9am to 6pm. Help is always needed at the 12 public libraries and 3 centres where we do registration. Please call the coordinator listed below if you can do a 2-hour shift at one of the registration centres.

<b>LIBRARY</b>	<b>COORDINATOR</b>	<b>TELEPHONE</b>
Arima	Jennifer Antoine	790-2685c / 398-1263c / 667-7363h
Chaguanas	Marilyn Rampersad	653-4656w / 798-1656c
Couva	Gail LeGendre	636-1061h
Point Fortin	Lynette Gopisingh	726-5291c
Port of Spain	Camille Parmassar	742-0946c / 632-1162h
Princes Town	Myrna Jones	712-2548c / 655-1187h
San Fernando	Inga Crichlow	684-2671c / 652-2980h
Sangre Grande	Marsha Scott	478-2021c
San Juan	Hilaria Wellington	627-2325h
Siparia	Jean Rahaman	362-1688c
St. Helena	Christine Sookoo	662-0418h / 680-1400c
Tunapuna	Veronica Haywood	681-5676c

<b>CENTRE</b>	<b>COORDINATOR</b>	<b>TELEPHONE</b>
Cedros Community Centre	Diane Ramcharitar	364-1003c
Mayaro bpTT Resource Centre	Agatha Williams	630-3259h
Warrenville Resource Centre	Christine Sookoo	662-0418h / 680-1400c
Barrackpore Islamic Centre Mosque Hall is no longer a registration centre.		



**Flyers** - Please take some flyers to advertise ALTA's student registration dates. If each tutor puts up a few flyers in a busy area, this will go a long way to reaching those who need ALTA classes.

**Radio & TV interviews** - If any of your students would be willing to do a radio or TV interview in the last week of August or first week of September, please submit their names and telephone contacts to Rosie. Their testimonies serve to inspire prospective students who may be reluctant to come forward and register. We will ask TV stations to show our 15-min DVD "Literacy for Life" before or during the interviews.

**Newspaper Interviews** - Several names of students and tutors have been submitted to the three daily newspapers for interviews. The “Express” has agreed to give us a 4-page spread to publicize our 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Although the interviews are being conducted now, they will not be published until the end of August, just prior to registration and Literacy Week.

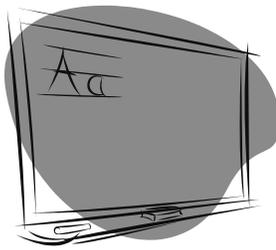
## **AGM - TUTOR CERTIFICATES & LONG SERVICE AWARDS**



**AGM is scheduled for Sat 27<sup>th</sup> Oct 2007 from 9am to 12 noon.**

Mrs. Zalayhar Hassanali, our patron, will present certificates to those who have successfully completed their one year of teaching. Also at the AGM, as it is ALTA’s 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary, long-service awards will be presented to active tutors and coordinators who have given 10 or more years of service.

Many thanks to the new tutors and to those loyal ALTA tutors who continue to volunteer year after year! A special ‘thank you’ to our hard-working co-ordinators who keep the wheels of ALTA well oiled.



## **TUTOR TRAINING**

The three training courses this year were much in demand, so that each course started with 40 participants. Due to health or work issues arising during the course, the actual number completing their training was 117. These new tutors will join our classes in September.

We welcomed new course facilitators, Raphael Sookram, Dhanmattie Ramkissoon and Genevieve Modeste, all excellent, faithful ALTA tutors. It was also good to welcome back as a facilitator ALTA board member Maureen Baldeo. Coordinators in training who attended the course a second time are Carolyn Walker-Hepburn, Sarah Williams, Lilian Ramsaroop, Karen Campbell, Sharada Hosein, Rosemarie Welch, Carla Mohammed, Gloria Morris, Sheila Warner, Tony Chen, Brenda De Silva and Jeanette Williams.

UTT came to our rescue once more by providing a venue for our South/Central training in Couva, and the Bethel Pentecostal Assembly graciously allowed us the use of their facilities in Arima for our East training.

For the first time, we replaced the overhead projector with Power Point presentations from Paula’s laptop, using a projector which Arlene borrowed from her church. Thanks to Arlene for converting the files to Power Point at short notice and providing both the projector and the technical ‘know how’ required to use it.



## NEW! ALTA TRAINING COURSE DVD

This year for the first time ALTA's training sessions were filmed! We look forward to seeing the finished version, hopefully by August.

The DVD will give all ALTA-trained tutors the opportunity to replay the sessions to review teaching methods and to reinforce what they learnt. Contact your coordinator if you are interested in viewing the DVD. We plan to organize viewings at ALTA Belmont and other convenient areas based upon tutor requests.

We are grateful to Fern Chase and Petals Foundation for filming the sessions free of charge as part of their training programme for youth, reducing our costs to the purchase of tapes (mini DVDs), editing and DVD production. We're looking for a sponsor to cover these costs. Suggestions anyone?

Thanks also to the Government Information Service (GIS) for free filming of Days 1 and 2 and to all new tutors on the Belmont course who were at ease with their unexpected 'reality TV' role, managing to ignore the camera and focus on their learning.

## VENUE CHANGES

CLOSED	REPLACED WITH
Bon Air High School (Arouca)	Tacarigua Presbyterian Primary
Belmont ALTA Office (Mon & Wed 9-11am Beginners)	Belmont ALTA Office (8-10am Level 1 & 2 Tutors needed)
San Fernando: St. Joseph's Convent (Class has to end at 5.30 instead of 6pm)	HELP needed to find alternate 4-6pm venue!
Laventille: Morris Marshall Centre (No coordinator available)	KIND (To be confirmed)
Barrackpore Mosque Hall (no tutor, too few students)	
<b>NEW</b>	
Cedros Community Centre, Wed & Fri 4.30-6.30pm	
La Horquetta South Gov't School (days & times to be set)	
Maloney Gov't Primary School (awaiting approval)	



## 15<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY T-SHIRTS ON SALE

- ◆ T-shirts: purple, green, turquoise - S, M; black, white - L, XL, 2XL \$40
- ◆ Baby Tees: purple, green, turquoise - L, XL \$40
- ◆ Scoop-necked fitted jerseys: purple, green, turquoise - S, M, L \$50
- ◆ Ladies sleeveless polos: black - XL; black, white, purple, green, turquoise - S, M, L \$60

**Wear your ALTA T-shirts on registration days in Sept and to the AGM!**

## REFRESHER TRAINING

Dates: Thurs 23<sup>rd</sup> Aug / Sat 25<sup>th</sup> Aug }  
Tues 28<sup>th</sup> Aug / Sat 8<sup>th</sup> Sept } Time: **8am-4pm**

Annual training is essential to become an adept and professional ALTA tutor. Also, since companies and government programmes now contract our services, ALTA has to be sure that contracted tutors are excellent tutors. It is difficult to grade tutors who only do part of the refresher as we cannot get a complete picture of both their teaching and writing skills.

Because we cannot review everything in one day, the written assignments are extremely important and must be submitted by the end of July. If you submit your assignment on the day of the refresher, you have defeated the purpose of the homework which is to provide you with feedback at the refresher. On the day there is no time to look at work submitted.

Thanks to tutors who submitted students' writing for refresher preparation.

## REMINDERS FOR TUTORS

- **Tutor Training Handbooks** Current tutors or coordinators with 1996 or 1998 handbooks may exchange these for the 2002 version. Tutors who would like the 2007 version will have to pay the usual price, \$60.
- **Tutor Certificates** Tutors should hand in their certificates on the day of the refresher so the refresher grade can be inserted before the end of the year.
- **Student Certificates** Collect printed student certificates at the Annual Tutor Meeting on June 30<sup>th</sup> and distribute to your students **before the term ends on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> July**.
- **For students who will be leaving ALTA**, collect the list of Government Lifelong Learning Centres offering School Leaving and CXC English courses and the list of ALTA Reading Circles to refer them to.
- **Term Dates**
  - ∴ Term 3 ends Friday 13<sup>th</sup> July
  - ∴ Term 1 (new academic year) Mon 10<sup>th</sup> Sept–Fri 7<sup>th</sup> Dec
- **Unused ALTA cards: phonics, rule, sight words** Please return to ALTA. Except for whole sets, sort into sets with the same word, e.g. for Level 1 phonics, all the **qu** cards put together with a rubber band or paper clip, all the **z** cards together, etc. This makes it possible to compile into new sets. If a student is repeating and did not get all his cards due to end-of-term absence, label his cards and pass to his tutor at the orientation meeting.
- **Orientation meeting** during Aug/early Sept (3 hrs). This is essential to meet co-tutors, review ALTA procedures, initial assessment and lessons for the first month. Let your coordinator know your availability. Bring with you your ALTA Handbook, ALTA Spelling Dictionary, Procedures and Guidelines booklet and the tutor set you will be using in September.



## STUDENTS' CORNER - ALTA CERTIFICATES FOR ST. AUGUSTINE SENIOR COMP STUDENTS



On June 29<sup>th</sup>, the pilot ALTA project came to a successful close as Paula Lucie-Smith awarded five Level 3 certificates and twelve Level 2 certificates to students. Many thanks to ALTA tutor Sirimavo Singha who, although not yet interviewed by the Ministry of Education for the remedial teaching post, has done an excellent job in difficult circumstances. Thanks to the Rotary Club of St Augustine for financial support.

Despite the learning gains made by the students, evidenced by the pieces of writing below, the Ministry of Education is not continuing the programme in the new academic year. This is unfortunate since the school is taking in a Form 1 for the first time, which is the ideal form for the ALTA Programme.

*Brandon* "Being in this ALTA programme has been a great success in my life and my reading, spelling and my speech which I use daily.

Over the past few months we've been using the ALTA Workbook, phonic cards and the Spelling Dictionary. Every day we did different lessons in the workbooks. We get spelling and dictation. It has different exercises that will help you in reading and writing. The structuring writing is very helpful.

At first I did not want to be in this class but I'm very happy I stayed. There are so many things I did not know, like all the different ways of spelling long **a**, long **e**, and there are so many other things I've learnt. However, all of my achievement goes to my teachers."

*Jamel* "My punctuation, reading, spelling, grammar and writing has improved dramatically. I never thought I would be able to do all the things like normal people who can read, write and spell. This ALTA Programme has really helped me. Also my parents have seen the improvement. The phonic cards have helped a lot, once you practise it everyday. If anyone else who is in this programme says that it hasn't helped them, it is because they weren't paying attention or they weren't interested in the work.

If it wasn't for the wonderful help from Miss Singha and Miss Griffith it wouldn't have happened. They would go through the work until we get it. They are always behind us to learn and practise our phonic cards. Phonic cards really help because when I don't know how to spell a word and I sound it out, I would get the word correct.

My essay writing has improved a lot. I had never liked to write essays but since I have started this programme, I enjoy writing essays."

**Condolences** to the family of tutor Wendy Figaro-Hackett and of student Michael Jackson (Naparima Girls class), both of whom died in car accidents.

**Best Wishes** for a speedy recovery to Pauline Philbert, Point Fortin tutor, also involved in a car accident.

**Skilled students to maintain ALTA offices?** Call with names of ALTA students with carpentry, plumbing, painting or general maintenance skills whom ALTA could employ when the need arises.



**KIND (Kids in Need of Direction) Summer Camp** is seeking ALTA volunteer tutors to play ALTA literacy card and board games with children on 4 consecutive Mondays (July 16-Aug 4) from 9-10 am. Call 626-5463, 626-6333 or email [kind@kindkids.net](mailto:kind@kindkids.net)

## **DRAFT NATIONAL READING POLICY FOR POST SECONDARY/ADULT**

*From January 2007, Paula Lucie-Smith, at the invitation of the Ministry of Education, has been attending meetings of the committee to develop a draft national reading policy. Below is ALTA's submission to the committee. We welcome comments from ALTA tutors.*

### **ALTA REVISIONS TO DRAFT NATIONAL READING POLICY: POLICY STATEMENTS & PRINCIPLES**

#### **Post Secondary/Adult**

Adults who do not read well enough to function independently in their daily lives must have access to free reading instruction to equip them to participate fully in all areas of national life and in their working environment.

National standards for reading competencies must be developed for a series of levels from beginner to fluent reading.

Initial assessment must effectively determine the starting level for instruction as adults come with differing reading competencies.

Additional diagnostic testing, as well as vision, speech and hearing tests, must be available where there are indicators of ongoing learning challenges, and referrals made to specialist teachers where needed.

Evaluation must be designed and must be conducted after instruction, as well as at points during instruction, to determine progress and certify achievement in keeping with the national standards set for each level of reading.

Systematic, incremental and progressive instruction must be provided in the fundamental skills of reading: word recognition (sight words, phonics and phonological awareness, word structure); vocabulary development; comprehension and study/research skills.

The skills of reading must be taught sequentially and explicitly with structured review. (*Optional rationale: Since many adult non-readers and struggling readers in Trinidad and Tobago are dyslexic and almost all have attended school and received reading instruction, adult literacy students are very unlikely to have a natural aptitude for reading.*)

To be effective and maintain interest, instruction must allow for differing learning styles and rates of learning by employing multi-sensory approaches, a range of strategies, and offering options to repeat a reading level using different content.

The content of instruction must be at adult interest level and relevant to the lives and culture of adults in our country. This requires the use of local rather than foreign materials, and necessitates periodic updating.

Adult reading programmes must be informed by an understanding of the differences between Creole and Standard English.

There must be a range of topics to cater to differing individual interests and goals.

Learner-generated material should be developed to the stage of publication as part of the programme, e.g. anthologies of students' writing, booklets on trips or 'how to' booklets. At Beginner Level, text dictated by the student and scribed by the teacher should supplement published materials for reading instruction and practice.

Partnerships with established, effective national adult literacy organizations must be forged and links made among NGOs / CBOs to avoid duplication of effort and ensure quality provision. Technical and financial support must be available from the government to sustain these initiatives.

Experienced master teachers of adult literacy must train all adult literacy teachers in how to teach reading and in the specific needs of adult learners. Annual refresher training must be mandatory for practising adult literacy tutors.

There must be ongoing public awareness efforts, with specific targeting of employers, to promote an understanding of adult literacy issues and to change the prevailing perception that poor literacy skills indicate that an adult has poor thinking skills.

*OPTIONAL:*

*Book clubs and other activities that involve reading should be encouraged to promote the habit of reading and make reading an integral part of the daily life of our people.*

*Adult non-readers and struggling readers must be treated with respect and their self-esteem nurtured.*