

WORD FOR WORD

A Quarterly Newsletter

December 2014

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SGRL Welcomes New Library Director

When Miguel Vicente arrived in the United States at the age of 32 he didn't speak English and had "no money, no job, no car." His only advantage was a college degree, but even that wasn't enough to succeed.

"The public library changed my life," said Vicente. "It is because the public library opened the door of opportunity for me by offering English classes, computer classes, and information about how to survive and succeed in this country that I have been able to overcome challenges."

Vicente's first job in the library field was creating a Spanish library from scratch in the Athens Regional Library System. Starting a new library branch is always a difficult task, but Vicente's job was made more difficult by the fact that many of the people he served had no prior experience with public libraries. To spread the word, he and his wife went house to house,

handing out leaflets and describing the library to their future patrons.

They also formed partnerships with organizations in the community, including schools, in order to reach out through them to help the people they served learn about their library's services.

Though it was sometimes difficult, Vicente's job as a library manager taught him many things. One of the most important lessons Vicente took away from his first library job was "that teamwork and partnerships are essential for library success." That's not all Vicente learned though.

"With my first job working in the public library, I realized the potential of the librarian to touch lives, regardless of age, gender, race, background, education, or cultural differences."

Now, Vicente has been working in libraries for 10 years and has over 20 years cumulative experience working in the field of education. He sees himself primarily as a teacher and loves to share both what he knows and what others have taught him. Vicente also believes that "any

success in my personal or professional life is the direct result of the patience, effort, and support my family has devoted to me." Both his wife, who earned her Master's degree from VSU, and son are excited that Valdosta will soon be their home.

When asked about his plans for the South Georgia Regional Library System, Vicente emphasized that he has a vision, not a plan. "I know that the best plan for the SGRLS will be developed by all of us working together," said Vicente.



Photo courtesy of OnlineAthens.com originally taken by Richard Hamm.

A Word from Our President

Seasons Greetings to everyone,

It has been a pleasure working with all of you this past year! Special thanks to those who assist with the Back Door Book Store on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. We can always use more help sorting through the boxes of donations that arrive each week!

As we look forward to 2015, I would like to encourage everyone to renew their membership. We've done quite a bit of good this year, but we can't keep doing it without you! To see our efforts in action, just check out the articles about the Fall Festival and the snapshots included on the last page! Thank you all for your membership this year and best wishes during the holiday season!

Mary Helen Watson

Annual FOL Members Meeting to be Held January 15th

The annual Friends of the Library members meeting will be held at Steel's Jewelry on Thursday, January 15th from 5:00pm to approximately 6:30pm.

**Steel's Jewelry is located in the Summit Pointe Village at
3338-I Country Club Road, Valdosta, GA 31605.**

Our annual FOL meeting gives members a chance to mingle, meet the officers and board members for the coming year, and participate in a brief meeting! In addition, we will once again hold a silent auction, which allows members to bid on various items donated to the FOL. Finger foods and libations will be available and all attendees are welcome to enter to win a beautiful door prize. Both the door prize and location are provided to us free of charge by our generous hosts, Chuck and Susan Steel. We greatly appreciate their support!

We encourage all FOL members to attend our first meeting of 2015. After all, what better way to start off the New Year than by visiting with our Friends!

Happy New Year

Fall Festival Fun!

On October 25th, 2014, the Valdosta-Lowndes County Library celebrated its 13th annual Fall Festival. Library staff and volunteers worked together to create a carnival full of fun, food, and educational activities for hundreds of local children. “The Fall Festival is important because it provides families a chance to have a good time outside before it gets too cold. It’s one of our best programs!” said Assistant Director Bernard Bulemu.



Enthusiastic volunteers from Valdosta State University (VSU) served patrons throughout the event, some offering snacks and lemonade to crowds of hungry and thirsty attendees, while others operated games and handed out prizes. There were also two bounce houses, provided by funding from the Friends of the Library, which entertained children throughout the festival.



Professor Linda de la Garza and a dedicated group of student volunteers from VSU’s Chemistry Department came to teach children about science through interactive experiments. At their science booths, children studied crystals by making cotton candy, discovered molecules through a jar of skittles, and weighed different sodas to learn about density. “Kids learn best when they get their hands dirty,” Professor Linda de la Garza explained. “They love to do things.”

In addition to the science booths, VSU also supplied volunteers from their American Sign Language Department. Professor Christia Williams and Ms. Ronnie Tyson-Jones taught children the basics of sign language and its importance to people who can’t rely upon spoken language. “Our mission is to build understanding,” Professor Williams said. “No one can learn sign language in a day, but they can start to imagine how being deaf or hard of hearing influences your life. That’s what we have to teach.”

With over 350 attendees, this year’s Fall Festival was a huge success that would not have been possible without all of our volunteers! Thank you to all who came!



Take a Look: The FOL in Action

The Friends of the Library assist with tons of library programs throughout the year. Below are a few snapshots of recent events that would not have been possible without help from our Friends!



What's Happening @ the Valdosta Library?

Thursday, December 19 Meet and Greet with Santa from 10:00am-11:00am and from 4:00-5:00pm!

Saturday, January 3rd is Snow Day!!! Dress warmly and come play in the snow from 3:00-5:00pm .

January 13th from 12:00-2:00pm we will be hosting a Lunch and Learn program presented by the Department of Labor. They'll be teaching interviewing skills and resume writing. Free food provided!

*Call 229-333-0086 for more information!

Levels of Membership

Please circle your contribution:

Basic	\$35
Bookworm	\$50
Booster	\$100
Patron	\$250
Silver Patron	\$500
Gold Patron	\$1,000

**Ask about our
Corporate Memberships!**



Jump Ahead:

Join Friends of the Library for 2015

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

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E-mail: _____

Make checks payable to "Friends of SGRL, Inc." and mail to:

Friends of the Library Membership

Friends of SGRL, Inc.

P.O. Box 5511

Valdosta, GA 31603