



# LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF KENT COUNTY

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## THIS ISSUE

*Naming Ceremony*  
*Resource Spotlight*  
*Tutor Training Workshop*  
*Newsela In-Services*

## RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

*Newsela (online resource)*

Newsela is an online platform that takes articles, videos and other content making it accessible and engaging for students with over 15,000 instructional content articles in 20+ genres. Texts are available at five reading levels from grade 2 to grade 12, with some texts available in English and Spanish.

Tutors are able to track student progress, view content to apply to lessons including main idea & themes, key terms, before reading activity, and discussion questions. Each article has accessibility options to increase the size of the font, and an audio feature to listen to articles.

Newsela is a convenient way to find content of interest for students, with suggested lessons and vocabulary for tutors. Tutors may contact [lvkc@coventrylibrary.org](mailto:lvkc@coventrylibrary.org) for information on how to sign up!

## CELEBRATING THE NAMING CEREMONY: A BLEND OF TRADITION AS IMMIGRANTS IN THE USA

BY ANA CECILIA MARTINEZ SALES

Our son entered the world in December, a month filled with meaning for our family. As immigrants in the United States, my husband and I are far from our roots: his family in Ghana and mine in Mexico. In this multicultural context, we share and embrace traditions from both cultures, weaving a rich tapestry of experiences.

We chose to celebrate the naming ceremony, a practice deeply rooted in my husband's family, as a tribute to the beginning of our little one's life. Choosing a name for our son was no easy task. We wanted to honor my husband's roots by selecting the name "Maltiti," a traditional name from the Ghanaian tribe that translates to "Solve things for us" or "make things good for us." Additionally, we incorporated the name "Zaid" as a middle name, merging influences from Islamic and Catholic cultures. Furthermore, following Mexican traditions, our son has two (2) last names, first from daddy and second from mommy, this combination reflects our connection to different aspects of our cultural identities.

In Islam, the naming ceremony is known as "Aqiqah." This celebration takes place after the birth of a child and is an act of gratitude. During Aqiqah, an animal, typically a lamb, is sacrificed, and its meat is distributed among family, friends, and the less fortunate. Also, the naming ceremony involves choosing a name for the newborn and circumcision for male children. The circumcision these days is performed in the hospital instead during the naming ceremony as it was done in the past.

In Ghana, specifically in the Northern region with Dagbon culture, a similar tradition called "Suuna" exists. During this event, 7 days after being born, the baby is introduced to the community, and a name is given. (cont.)

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## CELEBRATING THE NAMING CEREMONY (CONT.)

The choice of the name may be based on specific circumstances, such as the day of the week the child was born, proverbs or family experiences. This event not only marks the arrival of the new family member but also strengthens community bonds. In Dagbon tradition, the first hair of a child is regarded as impure, and it is shaved during the Suuna. It is believed that the child originates from the spiritual realm, and the hair they bring from that realm must be removed. This practice serves to detach the baby from their spiritual ties with their unborn siblings.

However, we faced the challenge of physical distance separating us from our families. We opted for an innovative solution: conducting the event virtually through a video conference. Despite significant time differences, the experience was a resounding success.

The virtual naming ceremony became a magical moment where both families, scattered across the globe, came together to commemorate our son. Technology allowed us to overcome the distance, multilingual (Spanish, English, & Dagbani) barrier and share this precious and sacred moment. In Mexico our family gathered for breakfast, in Ghana for dinner with the Imams and the community for prayers and in the USA, we had brunch with our close friends. During the ceremony the Imams performed prayers and sacrificed a lamb in Ghana. We, the parents announced the name of our son to everyone on the video conference. Our family, in Mexico offered prayers and thoughts for the baby and parents.

Both traditions, though different in their details, share the essence of celebrating life and the identity of a new family member. Whether in Islamic or the Dagbon cultural traditions of Ghana, the naming ceremony is a special moment involving significant rituals, gratitude, and the introduction of the baby to the community with the choice of an important name. At the intersection of these practices, we see the richness of cultural diversity enriching our lives.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### TUTOR TRAINING WORKSHOP

LVKC's Spring 2024 Tutor Training Workshop is scheduled for March 11, 18 & 25 with a follow-up on April 22, 2024 in the Literacy Room at the Coventry Town Hall Annex (1675 Flat River Rd, Coventry, RI).

If you or someone you know may be interested in becoming a volunteer tutor, please fill out the tutor application at [coventrylibrary.org/tutors](https://coventrylibrary.org/tutors)

## NEWSLA IN-SERVICES

Calling all tutors! If you're struggling to find content for your lessons with your students, and are interested in learning how to use Newsela, consider attending the Newsela Tutor In-Services.

The Tutor In-Services are scheduled for March 21, 2024 at 10:00 AM, and March 27, 2024 at 6:00 PM. If you are interested in attending these In-Services, please register at [coventrylibrary.org/tutor-in-service](https://coventrylibrary.org/tutor-in-service). Refreshments provided.

[coventrylibrary.org/lvkc](https://coventrylibrary.org/lvkc)

## NEED FOR BOARD MEMBERS

LVKC is looking for volunteers to join our Board of Directors.

For more information on how you can help, please contact us at [lvkc@coventrylibrary.org](mailto:lvkc@coventrylibrary.org).

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