

# LITERACY MATTERS

## JUNE 2018

Literacy Matters is a recurring publication of Literacy Nassau, Inc.



### What You'll Find in this Issue:



At Recognition Night on May 17th, Karen eagerly shared Literacy Nassau's plans to move to Wantagh to open a donation-based tutoring center for children with dyslexia, such as Darwin, Julianna, and Molly, pictured above.

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## **BREAKING NEWS! LITERACY NASSAU IS MOVING!**

*(submitted by Karen Micciche)*

For 50 years, Literacy Nassau has taught over 40,000 adults how to read, write and speak English with the help of countless volunteers who work as adult literacy tutors.

Over time, the landscape for literacy on Long Island has changed dramatically. What started as a strictly 1:1 tutoring model for native-born adults who lacked basic reading and writing skills has grown into an ample menu of programming spanning a wide variety of adult populations. 80% of our current students are English Language Learners who hail from countries abroad and are eager to make their way in America. 15% are adults with developmental disabilities who seek refuge in the social and educational therapy that literacy provides (by way of inclusion-based book clubs and writing clubs). Our final 5% of students are native born, English speaking adults with undiagnosed learning disabilities.

In recent years, a trend developed where we noticed more and more individuals seeking services from us as recent high school graduates who could not read. Upon investigating this trend, we learned that New York State does not mandate the same protocols for dyslexic children as our neighboring states of Connecticut and Massachusetts. In those states, if a child is diagnosed with dyslexia, he/she is provided with a 1:1 reading tutor who is properly trained by the Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators to intervene. By contrast, in New York, the word "dyslexia" was not even allowed to be used on a child's IEP (Individualized Education Program) until new legislation passed just 6 months ago. Children in the NYS public school system who cannot read are mandated to Resource Room, a small group instruction setting where an educator (typically trained in Wilson or another phonics-based reading program) works with the group for approximately 45 minutes, five times a week. Cognitively-impaired children with low IQs are put in the same group as bright, creative children with neurological differences in the brain (which present themselves in the form of a reading disorder). Curriculum-based interventions work better for the cognitively-impaired children than for the dyslexic children, simply because of issues that stem from the disorder, including poor working memory and slow processing speed. These children are also given accommodations, including extra time on tests, and even so far as having a teacher read assignments and tests to the child. On paper, this sounds like a reasonable solution, but in practice, it produces high school IEP diploma holders who come to Literacy Nassau as capable adults with great potential, shamed by a lifetime of being unable to learn to read.

The reason this happens is because there is a hefty cost associated with proper teacher training, as well as with providing the 1:1 customized intervention a child with dyslexia needs. Some states have mandated that school districts work these costs into their budgets; New York is not one of them. Instead, Resource Room typically ends in elementary school; after that, no assistance is offered to children with decoding or language arts needs. The emphasis becomes reading to learn, and the focus turns to comprehension. By this time, the dyslexic child is typically at least 3 grade levels behind his/her normally functioning classmates.

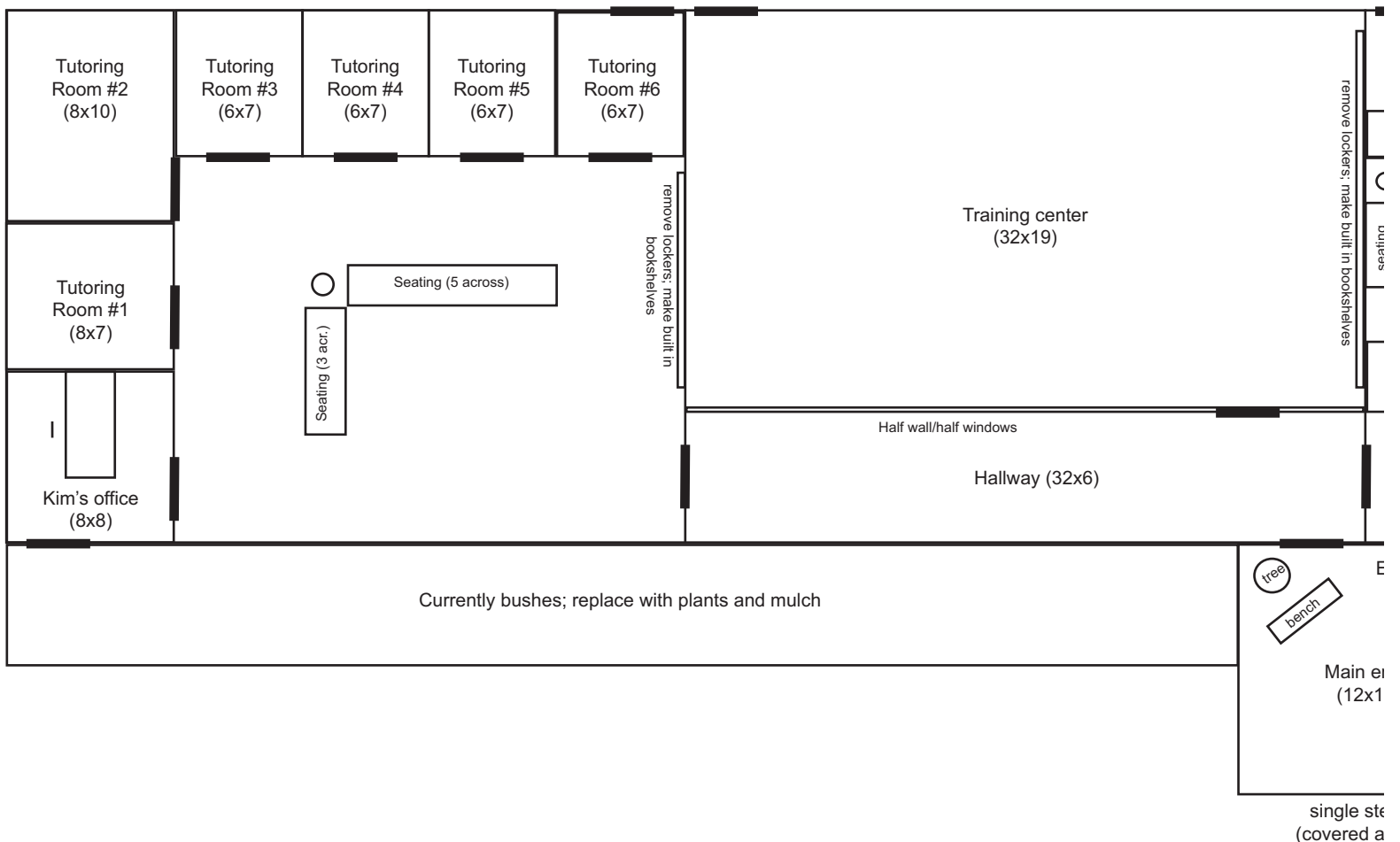
Literacy Nassau was designed to be a catch-all, a last stop for adults who could not function in a typical classroom and who would not fare well in a traditional adult education setting such as Nassau BOCES or Nassau Community College. Our services are offered for the cost of only donations, thus making them widely accessible, even to the poorest communities on Long Island. In 2016, we received a grant from the John and Janet Kornreich Charitable Foundation for \$1 million to provide us with the capital to create the infrastructure to develop a donation-based tutoring center for children with dyslexia and other learning disabilities. We believe this is necessary, especially in New York State, because the emotional damage done to these children by well-meaning teachers who lack proper training perpetuates throughout their lifetimes and only grows deeper with age. Dyslexic children can read if taught properly! *(cont'd on p.4)*

# The Future Home of Literacy N



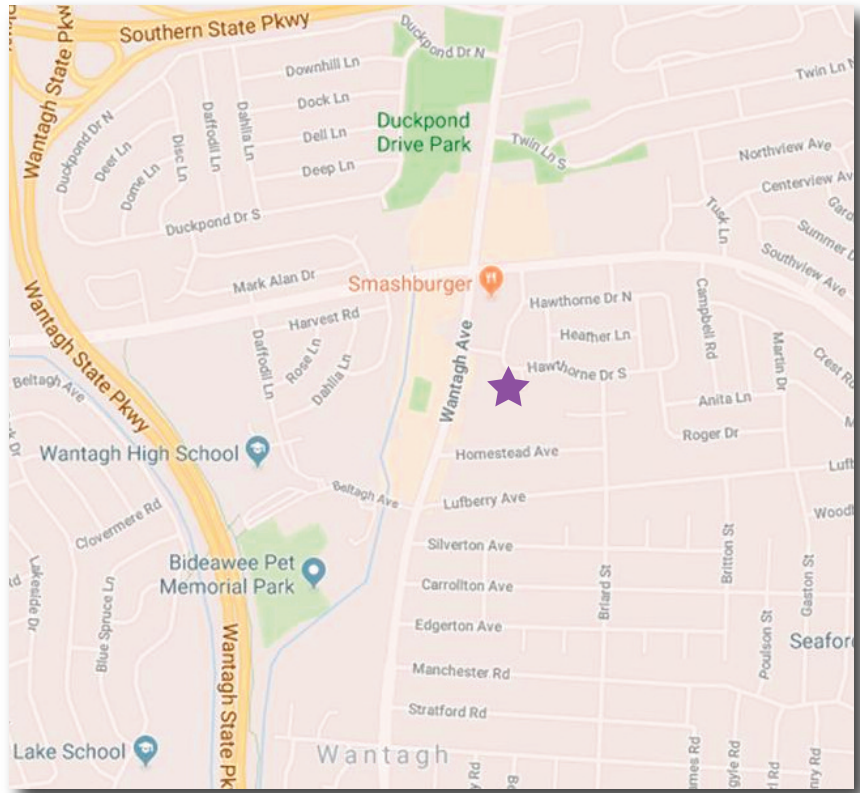
1 Ivy Lane was formerly a Catholic elementary school. Located 1/4 mile south of the Southern current space is comprised of four (4) adjacent classrooms. We plan to turn the four rooms into center by creating a long hallway along the north end that connects the rooms from within. We directly from the parking lot, with ample signage and handicap accessibility. The design below space for 1:1 and small group tutoring, training, and administrative offices. **We need your help time gift to our capital fund.** Checks can be mailed to Literacy Nassau, Attn: Capital Fund, 1 You can also donate online at [www.literacynassau.org/capitalfund](http://www.literacynassau.org/capitalfund). Our goal is to be up and running school year, with a grand opening celebration to be held in late November/early December.

Proposed Design: 1 Ivy Lane, V



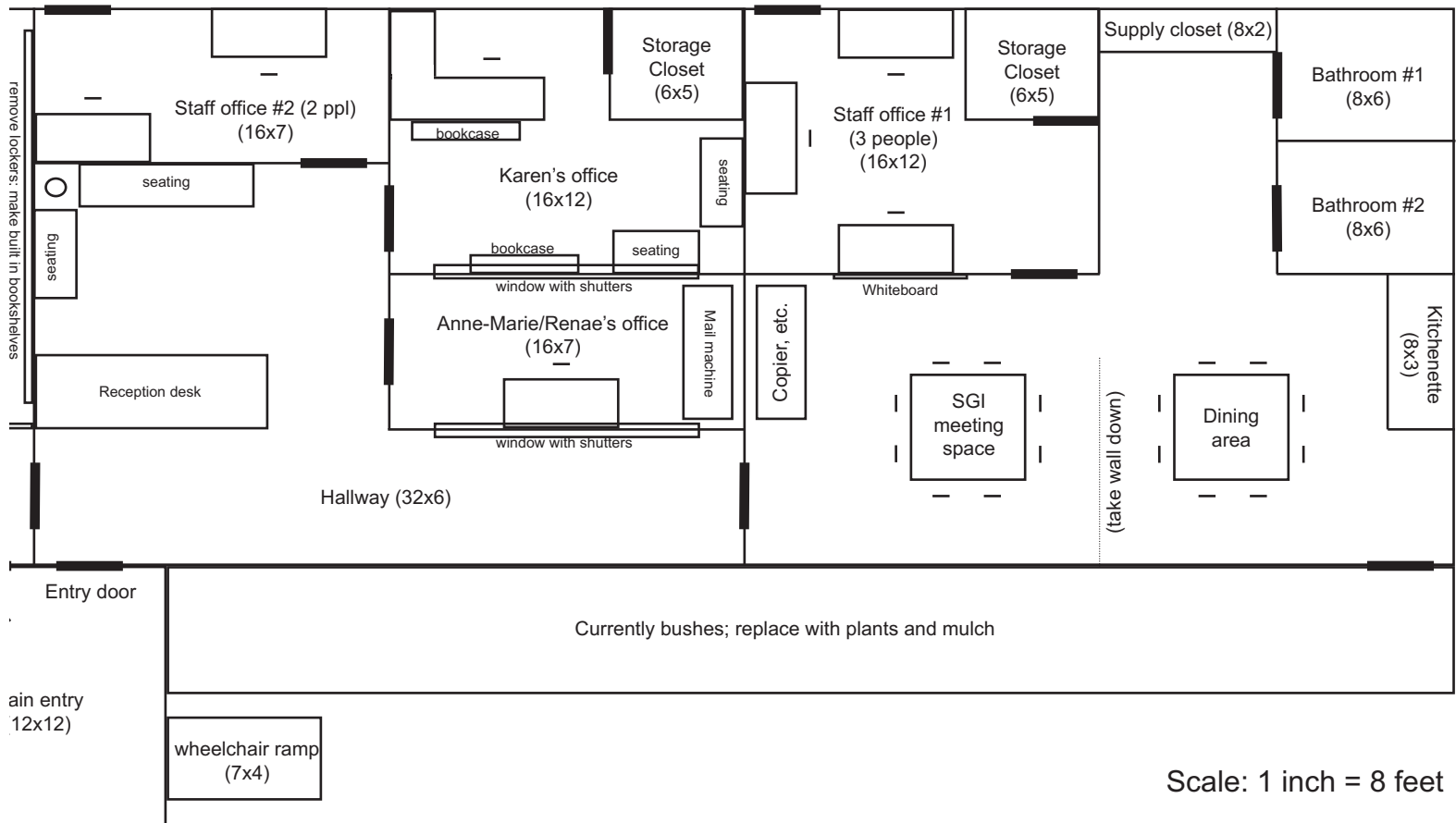


# Nassau: 1 Ivy Lane, Wantagh



ern State Parkway at exit 28S, the  
 into a self-contained tutoring/training  
 We will create our own main entry  
 ow shares details of our plans to create  
**help!! Please consider making a one-**  
 l, 187 Smith Street, Freeport, NY 11520.  
 running for the start of the 2018-19

e, Wantagh (Total: 3200 sq. ft.)



Scale: 1 inch = 8 feet

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## **LITERACY NASSAU IS MOVING (CONT'D. FROM P.1)**

Training is expensive and intensive. It takes 7 years to master all of the levels of the Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators – but that is what we have set out to do.

Upon receiving the gift from the Kornreich Foundation, Kim and I began the 7-year training process right away. We earned our Associate-level AOGPE certification after only 9 months (the process usually takes 2 years), and we are halfway through the next level now. We attend weekend classes in Connecticut (not surprisingly, access to these classes is unavailable locally) and we are supervised by an AOGPE Training Fellow using virtual methods such as Facetime and Skype. Once we reach the Certified level, we will be able to operate without the supervision of a Training Fellow, but we plan to continue on for 3 more years to the Fellow level ourselves, so that we can train and certify others and create a long-term sustainable model for not only Literacy Nassau, but future generations of Long Island's public school teachers as well.

With such a robust plan in place, it is time to move our organization's headquarters to a more centrally located space with ample room to build the donation-based tutoring center for children and a training center for teachers. We have found a space at 1 Ivy Lane in North Wantagh that is part of the St. Frances de Chantal Roman Catholic Church campus. It is an old Catholic school building with a wing of classrooms that is not being utilized. The space is fully ADA compliant and at 3200 square feet, will provide enough room to meet our needs. On Thursday, May 17th (just hours before Recognition Night!), I signed a lease with the church and now we are eager to begin the necessary renovations to make our tutoring center become a reality.

On pages 2 and 3 of this newsletter, you will find a copy of the plans we've drawn up for our new space, along with a map delineating its location and a few pictures. I welcome you to look at it and consider the role you can play in helping us build this new space. I had a vision for this new chapter in Literacy Nassau's history about 2 years ago, and I look forward to making that vision become a reality.

Each one of us holds the key to success. All of the attributes and characteristics of my amazing staff team have led us to a moment where the key we hold to 1 Ivy Lane in Wantagh can, and will, transform the scope of education on Long Island for generations to come. Having spent the past year teaching dyslexic children how to read has forced Kim and I to blur the boundary of keeping your personal and professional lives separate. We had to be creative with space for lessons because our current offices in Freeport are not conducive to this kind of teaching or learning. This is why the new space in Wantagh is so critically important to us. We are not just erecting partition walls within classrooms, we are building a future for all the children on Long Island who we do not want to have to serve when they become adults.

Please support our capital campaign by making a one-time gift today at [www.literacynassau.org/capitalfund](http://www.literacynassau.org/capitalfund). I look forward to keeping you posted on our building progress this summer!