



LITERACY MATTERS

JANUARY 2020



LITERACY
N A S S A U

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

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NEW YEAR, NEW STRUCTURE

(submitted by Kate Quijano)

We have seen tremendous success in our Orton-Gillingham (OG) donation-based tutoring center for children with dyslexia and other language-based learning disabilities. The tutors and students have built great relationships and students are excited about attending their tutoring sessions. They are learning new skills and their progress is being recognized by their teachers and administrators in schools. Word is spreading and we now have a waiting list for children in need of our services.

We are restructuring some of our staff roles in order to accommodate this growing need. Effective in January, Cindy and Kelly will be managing all adult programs, while Kim and Kate will focus more on our growing OG program. Due to this shift, you may have a change in who your case manager is. If so, you will receive further communication from us, specifying who you should submit hours to or reach out to for support. Here is a breakdown of the new roles/responsibilities:

Regional Directors: Cindy/Eastern Nassau and Kelly/Western Nassau

- ESL small groups
- Next Chapter Book Clubs
- 1:1 tutors (ESL and BL "old program")
- Jot it Down Creative Writing Clubs

Director of OG Services: Kim

- OG student recruitment
- School district contracts for OG services
- OG tutor recruitment and management
- OG tutoring

Literacy Specialist/OG Practitioner: Kate

- Basic Literacy small groups (tutors trained in new BLprogram-OG based)
- OG tutoring
- School district contracts for OG services

We will all continue working together on special events and look forward to seeing you at (un)Scrabble, the Dyslexia Dash, and Recognition Night 2020. Feel free to contact your new case manager with any questions or concerns. If you are interested in training for an OG practicum, please contact Kim for more information at knau@literacynassau.org.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

For most of you, the new year means making resolutions, getting healthier, and purging the house of leftover sweets and carbs! In our house, things are a little different this year, because I'll be going back to Enders Island for my second MFA residency at Fairfield University from December 27-January 4. It's bittersweet: I'm excited to clear out space in my brain to continue working on my writing, but I will miss the family time with my hubby and my girls.

I am often asked how I manage everything: running a business, being a mom, going to school, and writing a novel. Truthfully, it's only possible because of my incredible husband, Chris. He supports me in all my crazy endeavors, watching our girls so I can write, giving me time to work out, even reading my novel and offering advice. So this year, my *real* New Year's resolution is to make sure to thank him every day for being the wonderful man that he is. My "business" resolution can be found on page 2. Happy New Year!



For my crew, this winter break will be spent with me away at school for residency and the kids enjoying some "Daddy time."

Karen 😊





DYSLEXIA AND THE BRAIN

(submitted by Kim Nau)

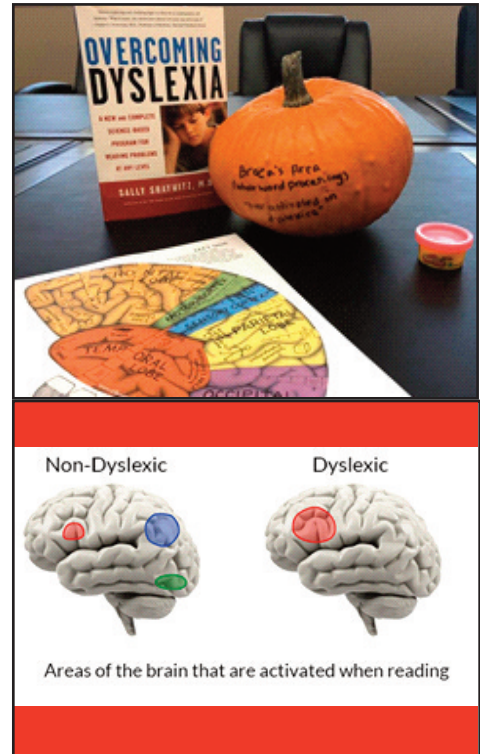
What do pumpkins and Play-Doh have in common with the human brain? Our Orton-Gillingham parents attended the first parent meeting this fall where we discussed the brain and how a student with dyslexia learns differently. We used the pumpkin as a model to show the parts of the brain that are activated (or inactivated) when a child with dyslexia reads. Good readers activate the back of the brain and some of the front. By contrast, dyslexic readers show a fault in the system with an under-activation of neural pathways in the back of the brain and an overuse of the front of the brain.

In the dyslexic brain, reading tasks can be very problematic.

- Phonemic awareness, or knowing the sounds that correspond with letters and words, is the most prominent issue.
- Fluency, or getting the reading circuit to work together quickly, is the second biggest issue.
- Comprehension is the third but no less crucial issue to reading.

Students with dyslexia can “rewire” their brain with the proper instruction. They need a multi-sensory, structured, direct, diagnostic and prescriptive approach to learning. Just like Play-Doh can be molded and formed, we can forge new pathways in the brain with pure Orton-Gillingham instruction. We can build new neural connections (brain plasticity) to change the way the human brain reads.

Learning about the brain as part of my OG course of study has been fascinating. When we first started this journey in 2016, I couldn’t understand why the process of becoming an Orton-Gillingham Fellow would take 7 years. Now I get it, though. There is just so much to learn!



THANK YOU BRYAN KARP!

(submitted by Kim Nau)

Mr. Bryan Karp is a top-selling, competitive Long Island real estate agent. For the third year in a row in celebration of selling over 100 homes in 2019, Bryan Karp held a social media contest to give away \$5,000 to local charities. The race for third place was so close that Mr. Karp kindly donated \$500 to Literacy Nassau.

It was such a pleasure to meet Mr. Karp at his home office in Suffolk county to pick up the donation. Pulling up to his home you can’t miss the two large vehicles in his driveway (with his face on them) that advertise his successful real estate business.

When we met, he candidly shared his experience growing up with dyslexia. As a child, he would listen to books on records and tapes because he couldn’t read them on his own. I asked him about how he manages as an adult with a learning difference and he explained how much easier life is today with the advances of technology. He can use the voice assistant on his phone to send texts and his phone can read important emails and documents to him. He is an inspiring man who is living proof that perseverance can override any obstacles in life. We appreciate his ongoing support!



Staff New Year’s Resolutions

Karen: This year, I am going to submit my novel to no less than 30 agents for review. Fingers crossed by this time next year I will be a published author!

Kim: My resolution is to learn a new skill. I have been working on some DIY craft projects that I've learned how to do by watching YouTube videos. I hope to continue developing those skills, and learning new ones.

Kate: My house needs a good "spring" cleaning and organizing.

Cindy: Improve my finances; get out of debt, save money to buy our first home, and make small investments.

Kelly: As many of you know, I have 2 small children. Riley is 4 and Patrick is 8 months old. I find that it is easy to allow mundane tasks to take up all the time in the day, leaving little time for what truly matters. My resolution is to put chores aside to make time to play with my children. It is these little moments that I will look back on and cherish as they get older.

Rena: To be more organized. Life gets busy and things get messy! I feel very overwhelmed when I walk into a messy house after a long day of work.

Anne-Marie: To find more time to enjoy my hobbies.

Jessica: To spend more time with family, and to be kind to others.



TUTOR SPOTLIGHT: RICHARD WEIDER

(submitted by Cindy Cabrera)

Richard Wieder is a current tutor teaching a level 3 group at the Farmingdale Public Library. He has a passion for teaching our students to reach their language goals. We are lucky to have him as a part of our organization helping us foster literacy on Long Island. Below are some questions we asked him so you may get to know him better.

Q: Tell us a little about yourself.

I worked for 35 years in the Information Technology industry, most of which was for the investment banks Merrill Lynch and Bank of America. I retired from Bank of America in June 2017.

Q: When did you start volunteering with Literacy Nassau?

I started volunteering at Literacy Nassau in February 2018.

Q: Why did you volunteer with us when there are many other volunteer opportunities you could have pursued?

I have two degrees in English literature and before embarking on a career in IT I had considered a career as an English teacher. When I saw your ad, it piqued my interest.

Q: Explain your experience throughout this time with us.

I began at Literacy Nassau as a Tiny Group Tutor with two students. One withdrew from the class in May when she gave birth to her second child and the other withdrew from the class in August when she was hired for a new job with evening hours. In the Fall 2018 semester I worked as a Co-Tutor for a Level 3 Small Group Class, together with fellow tutor Evelyn Chevalier. In January 2019, Evelyn withdrew from tutoring due to family

issues, and I functioned successfully as sole tutor of a Level 3 Class during the 2019 Winter and Spring semesters. In September, Evelyn returned and we have been co-tutoring a small Level 3 Class for the 2019 Fall semester .

Q: Working with people from different cultural backgrounds, what have you learned from your students?

While working primarily with students emanating from either Central / South America or from Asia, I have come to understand the unique linguistic obstacles English presents for them, and this has enabled me to temper my expectations as to how quickly they can progress in their mastery of the language. Through my experience of tutoring several groups of immigrant students, I have also come to realize how difficult it often is for these adult students to integrate English studies into their busy lives.

Q: What would you advise a new tutor starting out with us?

I can offer the following advice to a new tutor. Come prepared, with a lesson plan that will realistically engage the students for the full duration of the class. Whenever possible, engage the students themselves to read and speak in class. For most of them, their primary objective is to become better English speakers and they usually have little opportunity outside of your class to practice these skills. Make use of all available learning aids, including the We Speak NYC videos, wherein the stories relating to immigrant themes have actors speaking English a little slower than normal. Try to infuse the class with humor wherever possible. A smiling, laughing student is more likely to be a motivated student.



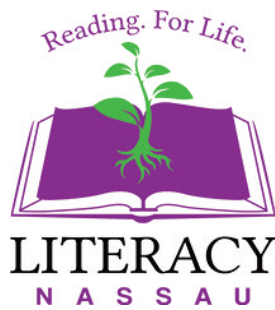
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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



Warm birthday wishes to the following tutors!

Leslie Arluck – Mildred Aronson – Jonathan Baker
Irene Baydarian – Debbie Buglisi – Roberta Cione
Jill Ditchik – Frank Dorf – Connie Egelman
Josephine Feldman – Marleen Fenton – Dorita Gibson
Janet Gordon – Samantha Gordon – Latoyra Graves
Mara Jacobowitz – Ruthann Kennedy – Jan Kerr
Carol Kessler – Emma LaPrince – David Leibenhaut
Robin Lovell – Rose Lowe – Kiana Mahabadi
Michelle Malone – Roseann Martz – Marcia Mayer
Chritine Merola – Harriet Morosoff – Marion Polizzi
Honey Prager – Dorothy Royal – Alice Scharf
Patricia Searby – Paula Silverman – Addy Skolnick
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NEXT CHAPTER BOOK CLUB

(submitted by Kim Nau)

Recently Next Chapter Book Club founder, Tom Fish, came from North Carolina to New York for a visit. Tom began Next Chapter Book Clubs in 2002 because he saw a need to provide meaningful opportunities for lifelong learning, social connections, and authentic community inclusion for individuals with disabilities.

He came to see Literacy Nassau's new office space and we visited a Next Chapter Book Club at the West Hempstead Library. The volunteers, Eileen D'Antonio and Suzanne Valls, have been co-facilitating the club since July 2016. The volunteers and members were thrilled to meet Tom. During our visit they were reading *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio.

Here are some words from co-facilitator, Suzanne Valls:

People with disabilities rarely have opportunities to continue their education and literacy once they leave high school. As a result, they tend to not participate as fully in their community. Our NCBC meets in a local library, and through our regular meetings, we have created additional community for our participants. We have a lot of fun together and share experiences with each other in addition to enjoying literature together. It was such a pleasure to meet the founder of Next Chapter Book Club, Tom Fish and learn what motivated him to start this organization, how it functioned in its earliest days, and congratulate him on the success of his efforts.



W. Hempstead Next Chapter Book Club members and tutors

WELCOME JESSICA D'APRILE!



We are excited to introduce our new Americorps VISTA! Jessica D'Aprile received her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Stony Brook University, graduating Magna Cum Laude in 2018. Currently, she is pursuing her Masters of Science specializing in Forensic Psychology at Southern New Hampshire University, and will be awarded her degree in January. Jessica decided to become a VISTA because of her desire to give back to the community, and to help with capacity building in any way possible. Her main goal is to receive a Ph.D in Forensic Psychology, and to perform research focusing on jail diversion programs. Jessica is passionate and devoted to the areas of understanding and helping others. In her free time, she enjoys taking her dog for walks, hiking, kayaking, reading, attending concerts, and spending time with her family.