



# LITERACY MATTERS

MAY 2021



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

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## MEETING OUR FELLOW

(submitted by Karen Micciche)

When I tell people about what I do for a living, I invariably mention Orton-Gillingham and the training I'm going through to get to the Fellow Level. Very often, I'm asked what makes Orton-Gillingham "different," and we have some standard answers we often give: "It's diagnostic and prescriptive," or "it's individualized to each student," for example. But the real difference is the amount of work it takes to plan each lesson. In the past year, this was never quite as evident as it was the weekend of April 16-18, when our OG Supervising Fellow, Jennings (Jenni) Miller, came to town for a visit.

In order to apply to the Orton-Gillingham Academy and receive certification at the Associate level, one must go through a rigorous process which involves, among other criteria, a lengthy application. In addition to demographic information, a resume, two letters of recommendation, and proof of having completed 60 hours of coursework and 100 hours of practicum, each applicant must submit a student profile and a series of three lesson plans. The profile is a detailed description of the applicant's practicum student, including significant cognitive and academic testing, a detailed medical history, family history, and more,

which is ultimately synthesized to create a learning plan for the child. Then, each applicant is required to submit a lesson trio, consisting of a pre-lesson, an annotated lesson, and a post-lesson. All lessons must include any supporting materials and copies of original student work. The goal is to show the Academy's Certifying Committee that the applicant's lessons are diagnostic (student errors are tracked and corrected properly) and prescriptive (tomorrow's lesson is based on today's errors).

Jenni came to NY for a long weekend to train our current cohort in the nuances of planning a lesson trio. There was no shortage of appreciation for her making the trip. OG trainee Christina Boughal explained the intensity of the sessions: "The weekend with Jenni and Karen was an intensive immersive experience in planning a series of three lessons. The pre-lesson involved preparing students by reviewing previously taught skills in order to ensure success with the new concept. Karen and Jenni sat with individual OG tutors and helped us tailor our individual lessons to meet the needs of each child. The lesson trio requires an enormous amount of detail and specific word choices that correlate to the skills taught to the student. Additionally,

*(continued on next page)*

## THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

Well, the world seems to be undergoing yet another shift. Thanks to the vaccine and the warmer weather, we're starting to feel the hopefulness that only the spring season can offer. Here at Literacy Nassau, we would be prepping for Recognition Night around this time of year, a grand night of celebration. But you can still celebrate your own accomplishments at home - safely - with close family and friends. Just because COVID's not over yet, doesn't mean we shouldn't be grateful for all the ways we've grown in the past year. My daughter, Haley, learned to crochet this year. My little one, Julie, is starting to read on her own. My husband, Chris, is mastering figuring out how to keep our lawn lush and green. And I completed two novels this year. So, raise a glass to the little things! Happy spring!

*Karen* 😊



Julie (pic right) was so excited to meet Jenni Miller, our OGA Fellow. She wrote a book called *The Alphabet King*, which has been instrumental in teaching Julie how to read.



## BASIC LITERACY PROGRAM UPDATE

(submitted by Kate Quijano)

This past year of virtual instruction has been one of extreme challenges for our Basic Literacy (BL) tutors and students. Many dropped out or put their sessions on hold due to the pandemic and the lack of access to/understanding of technology that goes along with being a struggling adult reader. Also, our very hands-on, multisensory approach to teaching reading was hard to replicate virtually. However, we have a small group that has persisted throughout the whole year, reworked their methods, figured out the technology, and continued to improve their reading skills. We also welcomed five new students and tutors during this time, who we have yet to meet in-person!

Throughout March, I had the pleasure of meeting virtually with our BL students to conduct a short reading assessment. They all expressed their thankfulness that their tutors were able to continue working with them and how they had not given up on them. It was amazing to see all the progress they had made and to hear stories of how they are more confident going to the grocery store alone, able to read coupons now, able to understand notes from their children's teachers and help them with school work. Our tutors helped their students apply for their first job and provided emotional support for those who were out of work or who had ill family members. We even had a group who prepared reading selections that they wanted to share with me before their tests. It was so touching to hear everyone's stories and to know what an amazing group of volunteers we have in this program.

We also had an In-Service Training for our current BL tutors where we discussed syllable types and syllable division. We decided to invite our ELL tutors as well. It was so nice to have both groups of tutors together to share ideas. While they work with different populations, some reading/writing challenges are similar and it was great to have an opportunity to share ideas. Thank you to everyone who joined us for this training. I hope you left filled with some new strategies for your instruction and that you enjoyed your virtual social afternoon with other tutors. If you have any other suggestions for In-Service Trainings please let us know.



### **Warm Birthday Wishes to our Tutors!**

Roslyn Armstrong Powell - Sr. Mary Alice Aschenbach  
 Donna Bennett - Dee Berger - Lynne Borah - Carl Borruso  
 Esther Braun - Linda Caginalp - Christopher Cantanno  
 Regina Dallensandro – Nicolas DeMarco - Delia A. Espinal  
 Joanne Finochiarro - Johnny Gilchrist - Maryanne Gogolinski  
 Laura Graves - Daniel Henick - Sandra Herman - Sherry Jagels  
 Mindy Kaiser - Barbara Kaplan - Daniel McCarthy  
 Kaitlyn Migliore - Evelyn Monaco - Grazia Norton  
 Sandy Palma - June Prisand - Alisa Promakul - Barbara Randall  
 Kathy Scheiner - Mahendra Shah - Lanie Spencer  
 Harriet Studness - Ernestine Warner - Sherika Wheatley

## MEETING OUR FELLOW (CONT'D FROM P.1)

some words are good for reading but not for writing." Trainee Lauren Healey described the task as "a difficult process in which broad goals are broken down into small objectives or parts and sequenced for instruction into small steps that a child can master more easily."

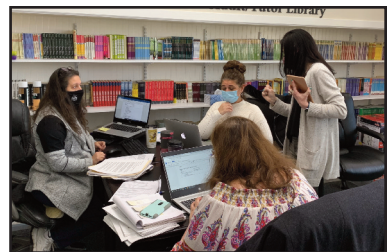
Boughal went on to explain: "The annotated lesson is where a new concept is introduced. The new concept is linked to a previously learned concept. The post-lesson reviews the new concept and previously taught concepts. The lessons are prescriptive, so you create the next lesson based on the student's errors. The weekend highlighted the discipline required to plan an OG lesson from start to finish. Jenni and Karen's commitment to helping educators is extraordinary. Their knowledge and work ethic is something to be seen. The program is rigorous, but the knowledge gained is truly transformative."

Christina wasn't the only one who felt invigorated by the visit. Trainee Bonnie Buckley said, "[The] weekend was equally exhilarating and challenging. Jenni, Karen and Kate worked so hard to help us get over this hurdle." Angela LaVeglia shared, "There were moments that I felt overwhelmed and confused and thought I would never be able to get my lessons on paper for this trio!" Dawn Sietas summed it up best: "The process of completing the lesson trio for our application was a daunting task. However, Jenni's visit helped me to overcome any trepidation. It allowed me to breathe easier when I realized that all the skills and knowledge I've acquired over the last 7 months made me fully prepared to tackle this task."

Trying to rally a cohort of trainees and coach them through the hardest part of their application process was no small feat. However, our Fellow, Jenni Miller has an unparalleled dedication to this work that even COVID couldn't shake. We are grateful beyond words for her guidance and support, and look forward to turning these trainees back out into our local public schools where, once certified as Associates of the OG Academy, they can utilize these methods with their classroom children. In the end, it's all about making sure no child on Long Island graduates high school without knowing how to read.

*"I continue to be so amazed by the persistence and work ethic of this cohort of trainees. It has been one of the greatest pleasures of my career to watch these women grow into spectacular therapists in just 9 short months."*

– Jenni Miller, Fellow/OGA



## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: PATRICIA JEAN HENRY

(submitted by Kate Quijano)

Patricia is one of our virtual level 4 ELL students. She is very dedicated to her studies and very active in Literacy Nassau's programs. She attends Nupur's level 4 class and joins many of the supplemental classes and workshops we have offered throughout the year. We are very proud of all her hard work. We asked her some interview questions to get to know her better:



**1. Where were you born?**

I was born in Haiti. It is a beautiful country that has dared to make history as the first independent Black Republic.

**2. When did you come to the United States?**

My family and I left Haiti because of recurring political problems and rampant insecurity to settle in the USA. We have been living in the United States (New York) since November, 2019.

**3. Tell us a little about your family.**

My husband Peggy, my son Paolo, my daughter Perlanne and I are the P family. Perlanne is ten years old, she is a smart fifth grader, cheerful and vivacious. She likes to read, dance, swim and play with her LOL surprise dolls. Paolo is 12 years old, he is in 7th grade. He is a nice and very smart boy. He likes to ride his bicycle, swim and build legos. Peggy is caring and dedicated, he is a lawyer and always ready to help. I am Patricia, I am passionate, optimistic, confident and studious. I am a doctor with a solid experience in infectious diseases. Humor for me is an important part of my daily life. I am a firm believer in making every moment count, no matter how small.

**4. How did you hear about Literacy Nassau and how long have you taken classes with us?**

A week after moving to NY, I inquired about classes at the nearest library. I started my English class in January 2020 at Henry Waldinger Memorial Library. Due to the pandemic, the following sessions since April 2020 have been online.

**5. Describe some of your experiences learning English.**

I started learning English with teacher Celeste Maloney once a week at the library. Since January 2020 until today, I have had an intense English learning experience with Literacy Nassau. I

was navigating between my health classes with teacher Harshini Suresh, my conversation classes with teachers Harshini and Fran Fox, and my regular ESL classes with teacher Nupur Banerjee. I also participated in a nutrition webinar, a contest about distance learning, and a workshop on resume writing and the job search. I benefit from the expertise and guidance of my teachers. Everyone gets special attention from the teachers. We all know each other by name. I feel like I'm part of a family.

As a mother of two young children, I truly practice what I preach. I take my learning very seriously. I read, listen and talk every day. I do my homework religiously and I don't miss classes. I am not afraid to take risks and make mistakes. Now I am more confident and helpful for my children with their homework, although they are already fluent.

I am grateful for the opportunities that the Literacy Nassau has offered me to immerse myself in English studies. Learning English is more than just grammar rules and structure, it's communication and connection.

**6. What are your goals for the future?**

Short term goal: I dream of speaking English as well and as fast as possible.

Other goal: I am preparing for the (USMLE), the United States Medical Licensing Examination is a three-step examination for medical licensure in the U.S.

I have received generously and I would like to put my art and my passion to good use in service of this generous and welcoming country.

**7. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?**

My parents live in Haiti. I am the eldest of one sister and two brothers. My sister Stephanie is American and lives in Florida with her husband and two boys. My brother Max is French and lives in Paris. My younger brother Patrick is both my godson and my best friend. He is Canadian and lives in Montréal. Despite the distance, the "United Nations," as we like to call ourselves, is very close.

My hobbies include listening to music, traveling, playing board games with my family, reading books and articles or watching videos about countries, foods, nature and animals. I just discovered a new passion for cooking.

I feel lucky for choosing Waldinger Memorial Library. I would like to thank the Literacy Nassau staff, my teachers and classmates. English is one key that unlocks a world of possibility.



## PLAY AT HOME TUTOR CONTEST WINNERS

### CONGRATULATIONS TO ELEANOR FEINGOLD AND HER SON LEON!

Eleanor has been a volunteer tutor with Literacy Nassau for many years. With the assistance of her son Leon, they submitted the highest word score to this year's at home (un)Scrabble contest and won a Deluxe Scrabble Board Game. When we reached out to her she shared with us how much they both enjoy working as volunteers. In fact, Leon, and his late wife Yuan, started a 100% volunteer charity called The House of Good Deeds. This non-profit organization collects donations of shoes and clothing which are given away to the needy. The group also holds blood drives, neighborhood clean-ups and food giveaways. Enhance your sense of altruism! For more information about this organization and to learn more about how to help them please visit [www.HouseOfGoodDeeds.org](http://www.HouseOfGoodDeeds.org).





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