



# LITERACY MATTERS

AUGUST 2019



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

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## Our Staff Team

Karen Micciche, Executive Director  
 Anne-Marie Poliviou, Executive Assistant  
 Renae Katz, Bookkeeper  
 Kim Nau, Regional Director  
 Cindy Cabrera, Regional Director  
 Kelly Siry, Regional Director  
 Kate Quijano, Literacy Specialist

## Our Board of Directors

Judith Beckman, President  
 Susan Santoro, Vice President  
 Iris Grover, Secretary  
 Sean Miller, Treasurer  
 Dorita Gibson  
 Laura Graves  
 Melissa Grote  
 Irv Miljoner  
 Irwin Scharf  
 Stefanie Singer  
 Craig Weintraub

## WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

(submitted by Karen Micciche)

Finding and selecting new members for Literacy Nassau's Board of Directors is one of my biggest challenges as an Executive Director. I am forever in search of people who possess a unique blend of characteristics, most notably including bringing to the table business acumen that we, as an organization, would otherwise lack. This year, I have been fortunate to recruit and add three new (and one returning) members to our Board of Directors.

Returning from a 2-year hiatus is Irv Miljoner, recently retired District Director of the Wage and Hours Division of the U.S. Department of Labor. Irv has been involved with Literacy Nassau for 10+ years.

His knowledge of labor law and passion for disadvantaged populations is unsurpassed. We are thrilled to have him back.

Stefanie Singer is the General Counsel for Novogradac. Her legal expertise and enthusiasm for our mission were both palpable from our first meeting.

Dorita Gibson is the recently retired Senior Deputy Chancellor of the NYC Department of Education. She brings a wealth of perspective regarding our interactions with school districts as we move towards serving learning disabled children on a deeper level.

Laura Graves is a Labor Relations Specialist for NYSUT. She has also worked as a teacher and an administrator. Her unique background will be an asset to LN.



We happily recognize our new (and returning) Board Members pictured above (L-R): Stefanie Singer, Dorita Gibson, Irv Miljoner, and Laura Graves. We are beyond excited to welcome each of them to our organization during this unprecedented time of growth in our service population and programming.

## THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

My older daughter Haley deals with a good amount of anxiety on a regular basis. She is scared of new experiences, of meeting new people, and of having to step outside of her comfort zone. Despite playing softball (and being very good at it), when the time came for her to go to baseball camp last week, she was terrified - even though she went last year and loved it.

Each year, new college players come to Cape Cod to showcase their skills for scouts. Some of them coach the kids at camp. Mason Black, a pitcher from Lehigh, came in on Thursday. He didn't throw a 95 mph fastball or teach the kids any new skills. But he noticed that my girls were the only little girls under the age of 10. He made eye contact, asked their names. He got silly, offered some jokes, and pitched to them in a game. He helped them laugh it off when they struck out. His kindness built their confidence, which will ultimately help them play better. It's a great lesson for all of us: sometimes *how* you teach is more important than *what* you teach.

*Karen* 😊



Summer, for us, is marked by baseball, but it's about so much more than just the mechanics of the sport.



## OG STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

*(submitted by Kim Nau)*

Often when we think of summer, we think about sunshine and beach days. What we forget is that many struggling students can regress during the summer months if they don't practice the skills that they have been employing throughout the school year.

Our Orton-Gillingham students have developed their reading and writing skills and they have accomplished so much in this pilot year. Below, our OG tutors share some of the great leaps and bounds that their students have made this year.

**Karen Micciche** - This year, my daughter Haley learned how to write in cursive, a feat which she is extremely proud of. She also learned to use the dictionary, and loved it so much that she asked for a dictionary for her 7th birthday.

My student, Julianna (who is like another daughter to me), learned how to advocate for herself with regard to what she needs. I was proud to sit in on her CSE meeting and hear her voice her opinion on her interventions and accommodations in front of a room full of intimidating adults! She is a very shy girl so for me, this was a huge accomplishment. She also continued to excel in her reading (particularly her fluency) and writing, with increasing strength in organizing her thoughts.

**Denise Hibbert** - I have seen a considerable improvement in Andrew's cursive writing and his ability to self correct.

**Kate Quijano** - Hunter learned five of the six syllable types and has learned several syllable division rules that have allowed him to read multi-syllabic words independently. His reading and spelling have greatly improved since we started working together. He also learned cursive and has beautiful handwriting. Cursive writing was helpful in preventing reversals of the letters b and d which was a common struggle for him in print.



**Warm wishes to the following tutors born in August!**

Amina Ahmed - Susan Astre - Alison Auerbach  
 Eleanor Blackman – Elinor Brown – Evelyn Chevalier-Richards  
 Natalie Colaneri – Maryann Deveau – Eileen Eder  
 Judy Elfenbein - Barbara Entes – Jerry Fitzgerald  
 Marcie Granick – Anita Greenman – Maureen Gunderson  
 Patricia Hanlon – Harriet Kaufman – Fran Kistler  
 Harriet Klein - Debbie Levine – Angela Milora - Jazmin Mooney  
 Mike Moran – Linda Napoli - Mary Ellen Nardiello  
 Janet O’Keefe – Victoria Perrone - Anthony Pustorin  
 Nancy Riebling – Patricia Rossi - Ann Scavetta  
 Claudia Stern – Elizabeth Tilton – Reed Toscano  
 Eleanor Turino - Suzanne Valls – Bridget Ward

**Kim Nau** - One of John-Ryan's biggest accomplishments from this past year has been his ability to decode large, multi-syllabic words. You can give him a word and he is able to code it and divide it based on the syllable types. He also has his first college interview this summer and I am so proud of how far he has come!

**Mary Baumgarten** - This year, during his OG tutoring sessions, Cristian has become a stronger, more confident reader as he is increasingly able to decode longer, more challenging words. This progress in his reading is an ongoing accomplishment that he can continue to be proud of each and every day. Cristian is doing a great job with Orton-Gillingham! It has truly been a pleasure to help Cristian develop and strengthen his reading skills. I look forward to helping him grow even further.

**Jen Southard** - My student, Eliana, has accomplished many things throughout the past school year. She learned how to count money and make change in her math class which she feels is important to know for when she gets older. She also played softball for the first time and loves it! In fact, her goal for the summer is to get better at softball. She would also like to read historical fiction books over the summer. Finally, when asked what she felt most proud about in regards to her Orton-Gillingham tutoring, she wrote, "I am proud that I learned how to sound out the words and say it correctly."

**Jodie Calderon** - Brooke has become a more confident reader. I asked her what her favorite part of our time together was and she said reading. Although she still struggles, we enjoy reading together.

### What is donation-based tutoring?

Private Orton Gillingham tutoring can cost \$150 or more per lesson.

At Literacy Nassau's donation-based tutoring center, the suggested donation for an Orton Gillingham lesson is \$50.

We understand that every family has unique circumstances.

Pay what you can afford.

Literacy Nassau  
 1 Ivy Lane, Wantagh, NY 11793  
 516-867-3580  
[www.LiteracyNassau.org](http://www.LiteracyNassau.org)





## **NCBC FACILITATOR: STACY PELLEGRINO**

*(submitted by Kate Quijano)*



Stacy Pellegrino is a facilitator for the Oceanside Next Chapter Book Club. These small groups offer members the opportunity to socialize and share their love of literacy. She meets with her group weekly at the library. We wanted to get to know her better and share her experiences with all of you, so we conducted this interview. Thank you, Stacy, for everything you do for your NCBC members!

### ***How did you get involved with Literacy Nassau?***

I was born and raised in Queens; we moved to Nassau County almost two years ago. I've had the desire to one day get involved helping others with literacy for several years. Raising my children, taking care of my aging parents, and working did not afford me much extra time. I worked with Kelly Siry in an elementary school for one year several years ago. We kept in touch and remained friends. She had asked me if I knew of anyone who would be interested in facilitating a book club on Fridays at 2:30 pm. I told her I myself would be interested but it conflicted with my work schedule. She pushed the meetings to 3:30 which fit perfectly into my schedule. I just completed my second year.

### ***Describe some of your experiences facilitating a NCBC with Literacy Nassau.***

I've had nothing but positive experiences facilitating the book club. The members look forward to it and I now count them as my friends. It has also gotten my creative juices flowing. At one of our meetings we finished the book we were reading about a half hour early. So rather than start another book, I asked the librarian if they had any board games or puzzles. I decided on a memory game, which encourages thinking and conversation. We all had so much fun and laughs! I even have some of the caretakers who sit with us read with us too and they enjoy it. A few months ago one of the members asked me if I'd like to go to lunch with her and her aide. I asked her if it would be all right to include the entire group. Instead of meeting at the library, we met at a local diner for an end of the year celebration this past June. I'm planning to make that an ongoing tradition and perhaps do the same around the holidays.

### ***What motivates you to continue working with your group?***

My motivation is simple, seeing how happy the members are! One member in particular was shy and needed help reading certain words and needed encouragement. He now reads entire paragraphs with some help and is so proud of himself!

### ***What would you advise a new facilitator just starting out?***

- Make it a fun experience, remembering that it is not school.
- Get to know your members; if they don't want to read don't force them, use gentle persuasion. Some members just like to listen.
- Heap lots of genuine praise. I always make sure to praise each member on how well they've read.
- If you feel a book is too long and drawn out and members are losing interest don't feel obligated to finish it. This is supposed to be a fun experience!
- Rather than involving a middle man I have the phone numbers of the member's parents/caretakers. If I have to cancel a meeting due to weather or other circumstances, I contact them myself.
- I check in with them either the night before or the morning of the meeting to ask if they're coming. Barring an emergency, I ask them to let me know either way by 1pm. We currently have a group of four people, once in awhile only one showed up so this works well for us. I also let the library know.
- Summer meetings. I tried last year but between vacations, camp, etc... it didn't work out for our group so I decided to take summers off. Of course each group is different; summers may work for others.
- It's not about what you get from it. It's all about what you give which then the members get out of it!
- Depending on the individual member, some may need the caretaker to sit with them others may not. That being said caretakers should always be nearby in the vicinity.

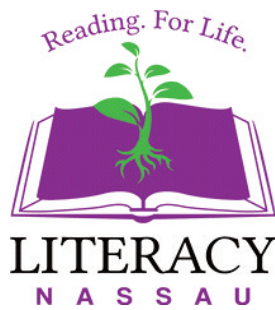
### ***What are some activities you enjoy outside of tutoring?***

I enjoy reading; I've been an avid reader since I learned how to read. I also enjoy spending time with my family and friends, painting and crafts, and going to the beach in the summer.

**For more information on how to become a Next Chapter Book Club facilitator please call us at (516)867-3580.**



Oceanside NCBC members enjoying their time together.



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**MANHASSET COMMUNITY FUND GRANT**

*(submitted by Kelly Siry)*

The Manhasset Community Fund supports many local charities and organizations that work to help children, the elderly, the less fortunate, and the disabled of Manhasset. The Greentree Foundation, founded by the late Mrs. John Hay Whitney of Manhasset, established the "Greentree Good Neighbor Fund" at the Manhasset Community Fund. This fund is allocated by the Manhasset Community Fund to organizations addressing the needs of residents of the Town of North Hempstead. Both the Manhasset Community Fund and the Greentree Good Neighbor Fund have been long time supporters of Literacy Nassau. Each year we propose new ideas about how Literacy Nassau can offer our services to the areas they represent. This year we are the proud recipient of two grants.



The Greentree Good Neighbor Fund has awarded us \$5,000 to provide naturalization assistance to residents of North Hempstead who are seeking citizenship. In these uncertain times, many immigrants are weary about the naturalization process and worry about completing the lengthy N-400 citizenship application. We plan to use the money from this grant to hold several Citizenship Assistance Clinics during which we will help those seeking naturalization complete and file their N-400 applications.



The Manhasset Community Fund awarded us \$2,000 to start a new Next Chapter Book Club at the Buttercooky Bakery in Manhasset. As you know, our Next Chapter Book Clubs are small book clubs of 6-8 people. They offer adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities the opportunity to read for pleasure and socialize in the community. Guided by a pair of trained volunteer facilitators, Literacy Nassau's Next Chapter Book Clubs meet weekly in various locations. We are excited to add this location to our list of meeting places. If you are interested in becoming a facilitator for this new location please email me at [ksiry@literacynassau.org](mailto:ksiry@literacynassau.org).

Instagram: @literacynassau  
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**SAVE THE DATE: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20TH  
 A DAY OF BRIDGE @ UUCSR/MANHASSET  
 BEGINS AT 9:00AM**