



LITERACY MATTERS

SEPTEMBER 2020



LITERACY
N A S S A U

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

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SEPTEMBER COVID UPDATE

(submitted by Karen Micciche)

By now, we've all gotten used to this "new normal" COVID world where we don't hug each other, wear masks in public places, and stay six feet apart from one another. It's a scary, weird world, but as humans, we are learning to adapt. Similarly, Literacy Nassau has had to adapt our programming for the "back to school" season, since for some, back to school really means back to the kitchen table with a screen in front of your face.

Let's start with the good news: our new outdoor classroom space. Thanks to the generosity of St. Frances de Chantal R.C. Church (the campus on which our building is located), we have been able to build a large, permanent outdoor structure under which tutors and students can meet to host tutoring outside. This "outdoor classroom" was built to accommodate our Orton-Gillingham kids who require multi-sensory instruction, but it can also be used by small groups or Next Chapter Book Clubs during the daytime hours of 10am-2pm. If you'd like to take advantage of the space, please be in touch with Kate (for ESOL or BL) or Jessica (for NCBC) and they will be happy to work out a schedule with you.

Now for the disappointing news: Because COVID still poses a great threat to

immuno-compromised and elderly folks, and because there are still strict limitations on gatherings here in New York, we have decided to postpone our annual (un)SCRABBLE event and our Dyslexia Dash for the spring. We feel this is in the best interest of our sponsors, our supporters, and the general public. We do not have our spring dates planned yet, and of course, the rescheduling will largely depend on the state of the world COVID-wise, which nobody can predict. But, we are trying to remain optimistic, and of course we'll keep you posted as we learn more.

We are excited to share that all of our ESOL continues to be virtual for the time being, which has proven to be a convenient and efficient way for our students to connect with each other and with their tutors. Many of our Next Chapter Book Clubs have also gotten online via Zoom, so for the time being, most of our folks are still able to connect with Literacy Nassau.

Most importantly, our staff remains healthy and enthusiastic about the coming season. Please stay in touch with us virtually via our social media platforms! We would love to see pictures of what your groups and students are up to.

Stay healthy and safe, and we'll provide more updates next month.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

I'm just now returning from having spent almost my entire summer in Cape Cod. We needed a break from our four walls on Long Island after a long spring of homeschooling and quarantining, so we took the leap and relocated to our (tiny) apartment in Massachusetts for the summer. If there's one thing I can say that I'm grateful for, it's been all this quality time the four of us have been able to spend together. Even though our typical activities (largely watching Cape League baseball, and having the girls in summer camp) were canceled this year, we replaced them with full day trips to the beach, long bike riding adventures, and hanging out at the pool with friends. Now that they have to return to school (and yes, mine are going back live in September), I'm a little bit sad. We've spent all our time together and I feel like I will miss them. Even though sometimes we all drive each other crazy, in it's own weird way this time has been a blessing. I hope that holds true for each of you and your families as well.

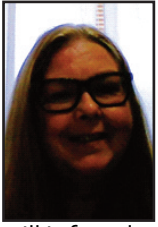


As the sun sets on our COVID summer, my girls would likely share that their best times have been spent at the pool or the beach in Cape Cod, spending time with Daddy!

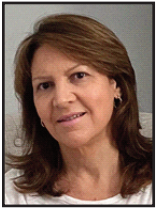
Karen 😊



MEET OUR NEW ORTON-GILLINGHAM TUTORS



My name is Kelly McKiski and I wish to pursue the Orton-Gillingham training so I can be trained to facilitate the reading process for individuals that struggle to read. I believe that reading is a determinant in an individual's future. All aspects of life involve the dissemination of information. This information primarily in this media world still is found within the print form. Unfortunately, we as a society recently, have consistently placed more value on STEM related education. Given this opportunity to be trained in a multisensory approach tailored to the individual is wonderful. I look forward to the training, the hands on experience and overall future potential of this opportunity.



My name is Donna Kosina and I am an Occupational Therapist. I have been working with a diverse population of students between the ages of 5 and 13 years of age. The students that I spend my time with have many challenges one of which is reading. I have found that teaching reading requires patience, repetition and creativity. In my daily work, I teach components to assist reading..I believe that I can reach more students with an approach that combines academic reading models, coupled with cognitive and visual/perceptual components. I have become interested in Orton-Gillingham primarily due to its creative and broad approach to teaching people how to read. I believe that if I can teach a person to read, their life has been changed for the better. Reading provides independence...it is liberating to be able to read a note, a directive, a book or a sign. Reading is a fundamental life changer. I believe that with more tools and support, I can help someone become a reader. I look forward to being a part of this program.

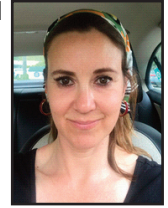


My name is Lauren Healey. As a reading specialist, and an adult with dyslexia, I have a passion for helping children with language based reading disorders. I have been trained in many reading programs. Some of the programs are inappropriate for children with dyslexia, and some of the programs are not flexible enough to meet the needs of all my students. It is my hope to integrate what I already know about good practice, reading research, and structured literacy, with the flexibility of an Orton approach, so I can reach as many individuals as possible. I am hoping that my training will teach me to differentiate my instruction.



My name is Samantha Aizer and I graduated from SUNY Oswego with a B.A. in Elementary Education. I then received my Masters in Literacy (B-6) at Queens College. I am currently teaching Pre-School in Bayside, Queens. I have always known that I wanted to be a teacher. Also, since I love to read, I have a passion to pass this along to my students. I am very excited to start the Orton-Gillingham program. I know this will enhance my capacity in teaching students to read, especially those who present reading challenges. Personally, besides enjoying to read (love historical fiction), I love Broadway which hopefully will be back soon. Finally, I am enjoying my summer going to the beach and preparing for the next school year!

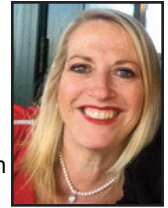
My name is Christina Boughal and I am excited to grow and develop new skills to help readers thrive. The Orton-Gillingham method appealed to me because of its success helping students with dyslexia. As an elementary reading teacher in Smithtown, I have worked with students who experienced challenges associated with having dyslexia. Having a strong foundation with the OG approach to reading will allow me to assist them in becoming fluent readers. Helping others is an educators most rewarding experience.



My name is Dawn Sietas and I am thrilled to have been selected to participate in the Orton-Gillingham training program and am thankful for the opportunity. I am a second grade teacher in Woodside. One of my passions is to foster the love of reading and writing in all of the children under my tutelage. Each year, I notice more and more children in my class are diagnosed with dyslexia. This training is so important to me as I want to acquire the skills necessary to teach them the OG multi-sensory approach with fidelity. I am so thankful for this opportunity.

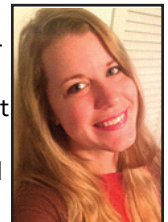


My name is Bonnie Buckley and I am a NYS certified teacher of students with disabilities, 1-6. During my time in classrooms I became increasingly aware of how many children struggle to read and how unprepared I was to help them. Reading was barely touched upon during my own education to become a teacher. I love to read! I read for fun, for information, to learn new things, to find places to visit, and so many other reasons.



My daughter was identified as having dyslexia at 9 years old. I had to advocate for her to be given appropriate instruction, to learn the most basic of skills needed to be successful in life. It is so clear to me that reading is the key to everything. I have seen firsthand what happens when people are given the appropriate tools to read. I am eager to learn how to open that door for other children and excited for this next step in my career.

My name is Alison DeGrazia. Years ago, during an interview for a teaching position, the school's-director asked me, "Has anyone ever told you what a change agent you are?" I've never thought of myself in that way but, throughout my career, that is a term I've come to embrace. As a tenured special education teacher, I have over ten years of experience identifying areas of need and creating positive change. My desire to pursue Orton-Gillingham training is no different. With several dyslexic students in my classroom, this approach—unlike others we currently have access to—was identified by myself and my students' parents as it allows for my students to be instructed on their current level while using a multi-sensory approach to tackle areas of need. I hope that this training will help me be an agent of change within my school.



My name is Marie Loeffel and I have been teaching for thirteen years in both private and public school. I have my degree in Childhood Education from Molloy College and my Masters in Special Education from Brooklyn College. I also hold a certificate in Applied Behavioral Analysis, where I work with nonverbal autistic children.

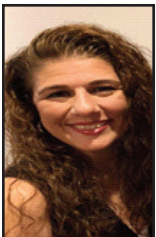


I am excited to be a part of this program and I look forward to sharing my knowledge. When I was first introduced to OG, I was excited about the opportunity because I enjoy learning new ways to engage and reach my students so that they can reach their full potential. Prior to the Coronavirus, I worked for a home agency with a nonverbal autistic child. It was during that time that my student's other therapist introduced me to the basic foundation of the program. I look forward to sharing this new knowledge to help my students be successful.



My name is Deborah Brown and I am a Registered Nurse, however my most important role is being mom to my three children. My nursing training has played an integral part in my ability to advocate for the health and learning needs of my children. My youngest child is dyslexic and I have struggled to access appropriate help

through the public school system. Recognizing that appropriate intervention like the Orton Gillingham approach is hard to come by in schools and in the community at large, I have decided to take matters into her own hands by becoming certified in OG. I am thankful for the opportunity to be part of the training program and excited to work with Literacy Nassau. I hope to be able to utilize these skills to assist not only my child but other children and families.



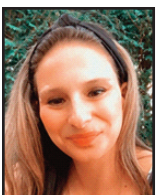
My name is Angela LaVeglia and I am a special education teacher in Queens for the NYC Department of Education. I love kids and have the best job in the world, teaching. I am so excited to be a part of the Orton-Gillingham program. It has been a dream of mine to become certified for many years. My first experience with it was when my own son with special needs was taught to

read using this approach. Over the last 12 years of teaching I have always felt that so many of my special education students could benefit from it as well. I am trained in several reading programs, however, over the last two years I had been working with students who have dyslexia. I see how the programs still leave my students with gaps and I want more than anything to be able to help fill in the gaps using this approach to reading.



My name is Melissa Cantone-Simpson and I am a mother of two, I have a 10-year-old son and an 8-year-old daughter. I work in Hospitality Management, where I spent 17 years advancing in the hotel industry. I made a decision to transition within my company allowed me to expand on my career and spend more time with my kids.

During this transition, my 1st grade son was diagnosed with ADHD and dyslexia. My family has been fortunate to have the support and education to place my son on a path to success, but this did not happen overnight. I am at a point in my life where I want to give back to families like mine. Coupled with my work experience, education and parenting I feel that I have something positive to give to a child and their family. I am excited for this new endeavor and grateful for this experience.



My name is Manuelina Ambrosio and I currently work as a special education teacher in Brooklyn. I decided to become a Special Education teacher in my junior year of college because I fell in love with helping students who struggled. During the quarantine, I used the extra time home to take

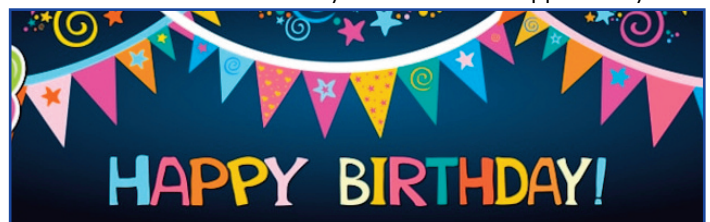
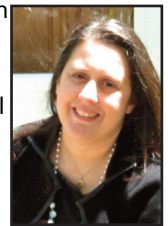
on-line classes to further my education.

I was able to take a class to better understand dyslexia and support students in the classroom. I wanted to prepare myself for the upcoming school year to help support my students. While taking the online classes, over and over again, it stated that Orton-Gillingham was one of the best programs to support children in the classroom who had dyslexia. During the course of the class there were small tidbits of how the program worked to support students. I became very intrigued by dyslexia and helping students who have the disability. I am thankful to be accepted into this program.

My name is Elizabeth Brenner and I am thrilled with the opportunity to be a part of this program! I have been a Special Education teacher for 13 years. I have taught in the NYC schools, as well as private and public schools on Long Island. Currently, I am teaching 6th grade Special Education in the Huntington School District. My students have various academic needs, and many are second language learners. It is my belief that implementing the Orton-Gillingham approach will help close the gap for my students, and in turn support them in other subject areas. When I complete the program I am anxious to give back to Literacy Nassau in support of the fantastic work they do!

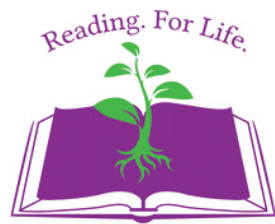


My name is Jeannie Buonocore-Curtin and I am interested in Orton-Gillingham for various reasons. One is to help students who struggle with their reading skills because I struggled in school. I found reading very frustrating and I did not have teachers to teach me strategies to help me improve my skills. After having my first son, I decided to become a Special Education teacher to help him with his learning disability. I now have 3 children who struggle with reading. My past student was another deciding factor. I had no training with dyslexia and did not know how to help. I realized I needed to be trained and learn more about this learning disorder. I want to make a difference and become a better educator. I'm extremely excited for this opportunity.



Warm Birthday Wishes to our Tutors!

- Maria Acosta – Sam Antar – Jessica Askoy – Lillian Baum
- Michelle Berman – Toni Cangialosi – Lisa Chieco
- Janice Collins – Carol Cook – Janice Donoghue
- Rhea EpsteinLeslie Feinberg – Kelly Filippone
- Nancy Friedman – Laura Garcia – Ann Gordon – Freya Grice
- Elinor Haber – Donald Hayde – Jean Heinz – Amy Karofsky
- Cynthia Katz – Linda Klein – Margaret Latronica
- Kathy Leibowitz – Maxene Liverpool – Mary Ellen LoConte
- Jenny Marcotrigiano – Alison Marooney – Marie Marsac
- Michaela McElhatton – Lois Miceli – Andrew Mihopoulos
- Irv Miljoner – Paul Nelson – Karla Padawer Solomon
- Linda Pierce – Rona Rappe – Marcy Ruggiero – Irwin Scharf
- Stan Schickler – Arlyne Skolnik – Jeanmarie Tener
- Blanche Tyrkko – Maria Vivona – Janine Washinger
- Loretta White – Linda White – Colleen Woodell



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What is donation-based tutoring?

Private Orton-Gillingham (OG) tutoring for a child with dyslexia can cost up to \$200 per lesson with a trained practitioner.

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

We understand that every family has unique circumstances.
Pay what you can afford.

We are now accepting applications for our donation-based program that starts in September.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT :)



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