



LITERACY MATTERS

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2018



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

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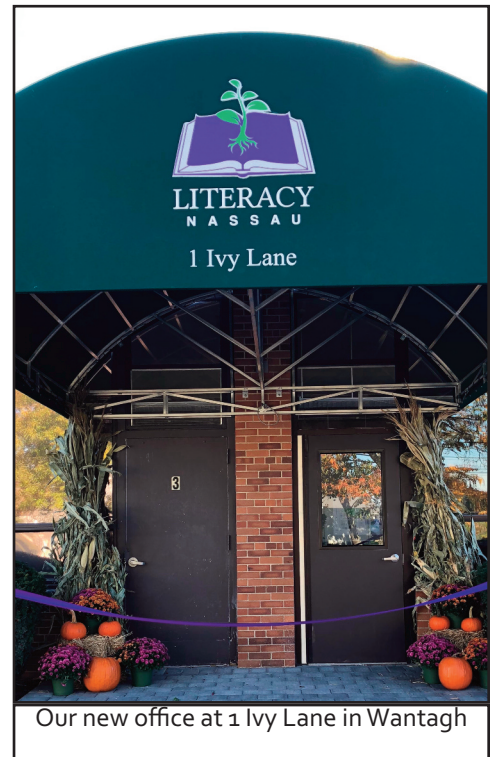
GRAND OPENING CELEBRATION!

(For those who missed it, below is an excerpt of Karen's speech from the ribbon cutting.)

I spend most of my time writing: emails, contracts, lesson plans, grants, speeches, and more. I love writing; there is something logical and rational about telling a story, walking an audience through its pieces one step at a time, weaving those pieces together to create a picture. Writing, to me, is art - expressive, cathartic, therapeutic. But practically speaking, writing is communication, and in turn, so is reading.

I grew up in a modest apartment in Queens, an only child in a broken home where communication was very poor. My mother, a visual artist with dyslexia, and my father, an accountant with an IQ of 160 but no social skills to speak of, were not exactly a match made in heaven. It was often loud, and I distinctly remember the refrain, "Children are to be seen and not heard," so I spent a lot of time by myself in my bedroom. It was there that I discovered my love of reading books. I would read, and then re-read, stories by my favorite authors: Judy Blume, Beverly Cleary, and later, Ann M. Martin, R.L. Stine, and Christopher Pike. I spent countless hours at the library in my neighborhood.

As I got older, I began using writing as an outlet, a way to escape my troubles. I kept diaries, wrote poems, stories, letters, and even songs. Writing gave me a voice when I was too shy to speak my mind. To this day, I write my thoughts down before I can speak them out loud. *(cont'd. on page 4)*



Our new office at 1 Ivy Lane in Wantagh

THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

My husband and I were talking recently, and he pointed out my insatiable need to be working on a project. He's right - I am a complete workaholic, almost to a fault. I love to bring life to new ideas, work super hard, and see those ideas through to completion. The problem is, once I'm done, I usually don't give myself time to rest and recover.

This time, I am trying to make a conscious effort to do things differently. I am trying to take a little break now that the new building is open. It's the holiday season, and I deserve a rest.

I often feel like we push ourselves so hard in this fast-paced world that we can easily forget to stop and appreciate how far we've come. Our students do this too. My advice to you, as tutors, is to give your students a moment during this hectic season to step back and appreciate the progress they have made. Host a pot luck where everyone speaks English. Let your class play Secret Santa. Mostly, encourage them to give thanks for all they have and for how far they've come.

Karen 😊



This is what our old office looked like when we first moved in ten years ago. It's crazy - so much has changed!



LITERACY NASSAU'S 1ST DYSLEXIA DASH

(submitted by Kelly Siry)

On, Sunday, November 4th, Literacy Nassau participated in our first 5k, the Dyslexia Dash. 1 in 5 children and adults on Long Island have a language based learning disability such as dyslexia. Tutoring can be extremely costly, and many families cannot afford the high prices charged by private tutors or learning centers.

For the past 50 years, Literacy Nassau has been teaching adults how to read, write and speak English thanks to the help of countless volunteers who train with us to be adult literacy tutors. We have paved the way for thousands of immigrants and low-literate, American-born adults to find access to meaningful jobs, U.S. Citizenship, and many other personal goals. All of our programs are offered at no cost to our students; instead, we ask them to offer whatever donation they are able to afford. At Literacy Nassau, we believe that all people, especially children, have the right to learn to read.

Race day was a gorgeous fall morning, the kind where the trees are full of vibrant orange leaves and the air is crisp and cool. The excitement was palpable as those who registered arrived to race on our behalf. From volunteers, tutors and ESL students to Orton-Gillingham students and their parents, you could feel the love. 76 people and 6 teams registered for the race and they were all there to raise money to show how much they appreciate what Literacy Nassau offers the community.

Together, we rose over \$9,500! Our top fundraiser, Marty Siry, raised \$1,065 dollars. All funds raised by this event will support our capital campaign to build up our center in its new location in Wantagh. The event was a huge success. It was a reminder that many, many people from all over Nassau County are touched by the services we offer.



OG student Hunter Luft and his family.



OG student Julianna Grote and her parents.



Digna Johnson met her Uniondale ONA students at the finish line.



One of our Freeport ONA students completes the race.



Executive Director Karen Micciche with her family and our fundraising leader Martry Sirty (left).



Literacy Nassau staff all ready to run/walk the Dyslexia Dash.

ENGLISH CLASSES

Reading. For Life.

LITERACY NASSAU

REGISTER FOR WINTER CLASSES IN DECEMBER

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT TO REGISTER

www.LiteracyNassau.org/appointment
516.867.3580

WHY AREN'T SCHOOLS SERVING STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA?

(submitted by Kim Nau)

Are you aware that 20% of children struggle with dyslexia? That means, in Nassau County alone, schools are failing to serve approximately 160,000 of their students (ages 5-14). How can this be?

This is how it usually happens. Children often go undiagnosed until at least third grade (even though the parents suspect dyslexia). Schools may use the "wait and see" or "wait and fail" approach to determine whether a child needs services. A child cannot receive special education services in a school without an evaluation.

Once a parent has the diagnosis of dyslexia, the district should simply meet the child's educational needs, right? No. If your child receives services in school, usually it is a commercialized program that may not meet the specific language needs of your child. Children with dyslexia require a specific type of multi-sensory teaching designed for the unique learning patterns of the dyslexic brain.

There are only 14 educators on Long Island who are certified by the Academy of Orton Gillingham Practitioners and Educators (AOGPE). The reality is that schools cannot provide 1/5 of their student population with appropriate instruction, support, and accommodations that will teach them to read because it is a tall order. It is simply impossible. School districts lack the trained staff to provide evidence-based, explicit, Orton Gillingham (OG) instruction.

Literacy Nassau has committed to changing the educational landscape on Long Island by training teachers so that they can provide tutoring services in our center and beyond (including in their schools). Our long term goal is to partner with school districts to provide OG tutoring in schools that lack OG trained professionals.

I have been receiving calls from parents who just do not know where to start. Here is a **game plan** for parents who want to advocate for their child who may have dyslexia or another language-based learning disability (adapted from: <http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/fape.dyslexia.kate.htm>)

Get an Independent Evaluation

Find an independent expert who can evaluate your child and describe his/her educational needs. Invite the evaluator to attend the IEP meeting and explain that your child needs a reading program that is "structured, systematic, sequential, repetitive and phonologically based," and needs to be taught by a teacher who is trained in this method. The evaluator also needs to describe what will happen if the school does not provide the educational services he needs. Your independent expert should be a child psychologist or educational diagnostician who specializes in reading disorders.

Strategy: Use Legislative Publications on Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Dyscalculia

In 2017, New York State adopted legislation stating that "school districts may use the terms dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia in evaluations, eligibility determinations, or in developing an individualized education program (IEP)." It is important to educate the educators and school administrators about issues, and research the recently issued guidance memo released by New York State.

Strategy: Use IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act)

IDEA places schools under increased pressure to use educational programs that work, i.e., that have a track record of success. "What works" for dyslexic children are research-based reading programs based on Orton-Gillingham principles.

Strategy: Connect with your State Decoding Dyslexia Group

Decoding Dyslexia is a network of parent-led grassroots movements across the country. Their goals are to raise dyslexia awareness, empower families to support their children and inform policy-makers on best practices to identify, remediate and support students with dyslexia. Here is the website for the New York branch: www.decodingdyslexiany.org.

I hope that you can use these tools to help you advocate for your child and for others who struggle with dyslexia.



Warm wishes to the following tutors born in November!

Susan Anton – Lorraine Bak
Patricia Ballard – Gail Bauer

Roselyn Botkin – Steven Carbone – Erica Davis – Kathleen Dendy – Diane Dwyer – Stefanie Edwards – Lita Friedman – Janice Haber-Horn – Sandra Heiman – Charles Jencius – Joni Jones – Joanne Kassnove – Susan Kimmel – Jean Lavelle – Kathy Mahony – Deidre McElhatton – Mary Ann Neber – Carolyn Quenon – Teresa Rienzie – Martha Salzberg – Helen Schmidt – Adarsh Singla – Diane Ugelow – Van Vasiliades – Helen Westerman – Maryanne Williams-Pitman



Warm wishes to the following tutors born in December!

Anita Achkhanian – Linda Bernstein – Laura Blanc de Silva – Anita Bloom – Mercedes Carbonell-Scudero – Marie Gruen – Jackie Cooper – Fran Dowling – Arline Ellison – Lauri Englert-Sacco – Johanna Esposito – Helene Fleisig- Patricia Goldberg – Julie Goldstein – Kathleen Gyves – Georgene Harrison – Georgine Hartenfels – Maryann Harvey – Donna Katz – Nancy Keegan – Leslie Leber – Joyce Levine – Lilianna Carolynea Llanos – Janice Mazzari – Susan Molinelli – Salvatore Morici – Kathie Novack – Robert Palleschi – Saumil Patel – Sue Rachell Lucille Sanders – Barbara Spun – Sheldon Wald



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1 Ivy Lane, Wantagh, NY 11793
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GRAND OPENING CELEBRATION (CONT'D. FROM P.1)

When I came to Literacy Nassau eight years ago, I was shocked to realize the staggering numbers of adults in my own community who lacked the capacity to read and write. Even more shocking was my own ignorance to the fact that this community existed. I quickly got used to the fact that most people had never heard of Literacy Nassau. I learned that there were pockets of people desperately seeking this gift of communication that I had taken for granted my whole life. I began to work on this systemic issue, first by devising ways to serve more people more quickly, and later by expanding programming to welcome a more diverse audience of participants. In my mind, reading and writing are an essential part of life. Everyone deserves access.

I began researching methodologies for teaching children with learning disabilities. I discovered that the process of becoming certified at the highest level by an entity known as the "gold standard" for teaching this population would take 7 years at minimum. That explained why the necessary instruction was not being made available to children in public schools. Proper teacher training is expensive and time consuming. But, it works. Using Orton-Gillingham, children will learn to read, write and spell.

So that's the answer, I thought. But it has to be accessible to everyone. With more research, I found that the few specialists who provide tutoring in Orton-Gillingham charge as much as \$200 an hour. I wouldn't be able to afford that, nor would most of the people I know. So I came up with the idea for donation-based tutoring. Give whatever works for you and your family.

This idea was a seed, requiring fertile soil, water, and sunlight to become a reality. The ground we are standing on today is the soil. Without a proper home to host teacher trainings, and most importantly, to bring children, the idea wouldn't be able to grow. The investment of funds, not just for the building, but for the program itself, is the water that allowed the idea to take root. Lastly, the gifts of time and talent from all those involved in making this building become a reality were the sunlight that gave the idea life.



Karen Micciche, Literacy Nassau board members and funders at ribbon cutting.



Welcome to our reception area at 1 Ivy Lane in Wantagh.



Our tutoring center reception area and individual tutoring rooms.

