



LITERACY MATTERS

NOVEMBER 2020



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

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A BIG THANK YOU!

(submitted by Karen Micciche)

November is the month where we take stock of all we have and express gratitude to those who help make it possible. It's hard to remember to be grateful during a pandemic, but Literacy Nassau has been fortunate enough to experience gratitude-inducing moments over the past few weeks that definitely warrant sharing.

After not receiving money from New York State since April, 2020, we turned our focus to private and corporate foundation grants to stay afloat. The fall has brought an abundance of new needs for our students, from technology to enable access to Zoom meetings for all to outdoor classroom space for tutors and students to meet, we have experienced challenges unlike any we've ever seen. The following funders have offered tremendous support and this is our opportunity to thank them!

The Guru Krupa Foundation (GKF) has provided us with a grant of \$38,400 which enabled us to build our outdoor pavilions.

These four structures give us the outdoor capacity to work one-on-one with four students simultaneously, or they can be reconfigured for use with a small group or Next Chapter Book Club. We have portable heaters and working lights as the days have turned shorter and colder. Our hope is that we may continue utilizing this fabulous space at least through the middle of December. A special thanks is also due to W.L. Concepts for donating beautiful custom signage and six plexiglass partitions for use indoors.

GKF's gift doesn't stop there, though. Understanding the need for the upgraded technology, they also offered us funds to purchase seven new laptop computers for our staff (whose desktop computers are old and slow), and four iPad Minis which will enable those of us tutoring OG students online to run multiple screens at once. These upgrades are endlessly valuable as they will enable us to continue running at peak performance should there be a second shutdown. (cont'd. on p.3)



THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

Well, whether we like it or not, the holidays are here. (How did *that* happen?) Halloween came and went almost as quickly as summer did, and now, here we are, facing Thanksgiving, many of us trying to balance seeing our loved ones with keeping them safe. I've racked my brain about this, as I am terrified of the thought of getting my 77 year-old mother sick. But she's alone, and Thanksgiving is her favorite holiday. So, what to do?

We came up with a compromise - and hopefully this might be of use to some of you who face a similar quandary. My husband, daughters and I will go to my mom's apartment, and we will sit outside, socially distanced, at the oversized picnic tables they have in the courtyard. I will make a turkey pot pie, which travels easily, and we'll get together for about an hour in the early afternoon when the sun is the strongest. We'll do a little Thanksgiving craft and have some pot pie. It's not ideal - but it beats risking getting her sick. On the list of things I'm grateful for, my family's health is number one.

Karen 😊



2020 has challenged us in many ways. Now, we have to re-imagine how we celebrate holidays. For Halloween, we let our girls tattoo their faces in lieu of trick-or-treating!



OG STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: MATTHEW

(submitted by Kate Quijano)

Matthew is a sixth-grade student in our Orton-Gillingham program. I have been working with him since January. We only had a few months of tutoring before we had to switch to virtual instruction. Luckily for me, Matthew is very tech savvy and actually taught me how to use Zoom. We had to be very creative on how to switch up the games we usually played to be more compatible with our new virtual platform. We have played some virtual jeopardy games to practice our OG concepts using the screen share feature on Zoom. We have also played bingo, with each of us having our own board and calling out the spots we were covering. We have been working on writing and illustrating our own story using a shared Google doc so we can both edit it together.

In order to get to know Matthew better, I conducted this virtual interview:

Q: How long have you been coming to Literacy Nassau and how did you find out about it?

A: About two months in person and seven months virtually. I found out about it because my Mom tutored a kid there. (Matthew's mom, Keri is one of our OG tutors and is currently finishing up her associate level practicum.)

Q: What kind of activities do you do at Literacy Nassau?

A: Reading, writing, spelling; we play games, and make stories.

Q: How do you feel about virtual lessons?

A: I think they are fun, and I like how we can still do games. I like that we get to edit our stories and draw pictures in google docs.

Q: What do you like most about reading?

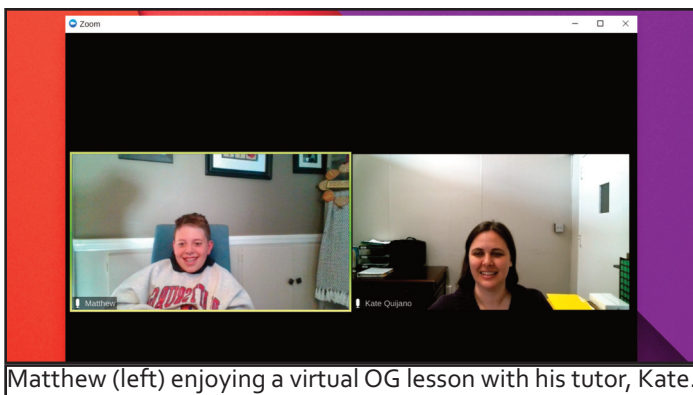
A: My favorite thing about reading is to pick out books. I love when I can just read for a really long time. I like when there are twists in the story.

Q: Do you think your reading has gotten better since you started coming here?

A: Yes.

Q: Why, what has improved?

A: Being able to read and know what the words are.



Matthew (left) enjoying a virtual OG lesson with his tutor, Kate.

Q: What was the hardest thing you've learned here?

A: The dge/ge spelling rule and vowel teams. The hardest thing is learned words. They are so hard because they are words that do not follow the spelling rules. They sound strange and you have to know how to spell them.

Q: How is what you do here different from school?

A: It's shorter. We do just reading and writing, no math, thankfully. There's no social studies or science. We read a lot of stories. We get to make fun stories and then edit them. I wish we got to do that in school. We never get to draw pictures and add them to our stories in school. At the end of OG lessons, we always play fun games in reading and writing.

Q: What are some things you like to do?

A: I like to play hockey and lacrosse. I like to bike ride with my friends. I like to play games with my family. We usually play Trivial Pursuit or Clue. Sometimes we Zoom with my Grandma who lives upstate and we play with her. I like to read. I have a hidden reading spot under my bed so if I'm playing hide and seek, I can read while I hide.

Q: What are some things you'd like to tell us about yourself?

A: I play travel lacrosse and travel hockey. I love science and social studies. I like to read, and I like to write stories. I like to play with my dog.

Q: What are some goals you have for this year?

A: To read a 1,000-page book. The longest book I've ever read was 784 pages.

MENU

LITERACY NASSAU PROVIDES PERSONALIZED ORTON-GILLINGHAM INSTRUCTION FOR CHILDREN WITH DYSLLEXIA. HERE IS OUR MENU OF OPTIONS:

- Donation-based tutoring (waiting list)
- Fee-based tutoring w/ experienced tutors
- 1:1 instruction in-school
- Virtual or in-person options available

Contact us for more information:
KNau@LiteracyNassau.org
 516-867-3580



Warm Birthday Wishes to our Tutors!

Susan Anton – Lorraine Bak – Patricia Ballard
 Nupur Banerjee – Gail Bauer – Roselyn Botkin
 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 – Karen McDonough – Deirdre McElhatton
 Mary Ann Neber – Kevin O’Keeffe – Teresa Rienzie
 Martha Salzberg – Helen Schmidt – Adarsh Singla
 Diane Ugelow – Maryanne Williams-Pitman



THE OG DIFFERENCE

(submitted by Michelle Rodriguez, OG parent)

JP and his tutor Karen completed their 100 hours of Orton-Gillingham practicum tutoring. His mom, Michelle, reflects below on how that 100 hours of time has impacted her son with his studies in school. We know JP is on a path to even greater accomplishments. Please read on about him and his work towards reaching his literacy goals. We are very proud of them both and wish him continued reading success.



Why did you decide to pursue OG tutoring with us?

I decided to pursue OG tutoring with Literacy Nassau after hearing about them on a Facebook group. I was researching the difficulties my son was having in school and specifically with reading. JP was not progressing in reading and began to become very frustrated with schoolwork. During our reading time at night, I noticed that JP was not able to decode. While he knew his letter sounds in isolation, he was not able to blend or manipulate them. JP's struggles with reading led him to hate to read with me and tell everyone he read with at school that he didn't like reading because it was too hard.

Tell us about JP's tutor, Karen Coll.

Karen is an angel sent from heaven. From day 1, she created a rapport with JP that allowed him to be the silly 2nd grader that he was while working hard at every lesson. She always asked me for more information about JP to better understand him in order to make every lesson worth it. Every lesson she does with JP is made just for him, just for what he needs. She is so creative, she makes worksheets, creates games, writes stories and does so much more for each and every lesson. She also gave me many activities that I could do at home with JP to make our reading together more meaningful. When we were quarantined, Karen reached out and started tutoring virtually right away. She

provided the only consistency that JP had during that time. She is not only an encouragement to JP, she helps me understand and help my son as a reader. With Karen's help, I was also better able to communicate JP's strengths and weaknesses with his teachers and service providers at school.

How do you feel that JP has benefited from OG instruction?

Now, JP is reading very close to grade-level. He is able to use the strategies that he learns with Karen to decode new words. JP is a different child now. He loves to read! We were recently on a beach vacation and JP took a book to the beach and was reading it in his beach chair. Before OG, JP ran from the idea of reading a book. He now asks if he can read "funny" parts to me and asks me for some extra reading time.

What can he do now, that he couldn't do before?

He can read chapter books! JP can also now read nonsense words. When we first started JP could not read those words. Now, he is decoding nonsense and multisyllabic words. JP also struggled with manipulating sounds within a word. He is also now able to manipulate sounds in a word to make new words.

What can parents do to support their child at home?

When JP started hating reading, I started reading to him so that he didn't feel overwhelmed or frustrated by the words he couldn't decode. Once JP had shown some progress working with Karen, we moved to taking turns reading. Karen also gave me copies of worksheets that they would use every lesson so that I could use it during homework with JP.

How can we encourage schools to better support children with dyslexia?

I believe workshops in schools would be a starting point. The more educated we are on dyslexia, the more we will want to learn about it. As an educator myself, I did not know much about dyslexia before I started this journey with my son. Now, I can't understand why every educator does not walk out of school knowing about the true science of reading. I feel that teachers want to do the right thing by the students that sit in front of them every day but may not know what that right thing is. Educating the educators is key. Get teachers on board, and they will move mountains.

A BIG THANK YOU (CONT'D. FROM PG. 1)

In this critical election year, GKF also provided funding to continue our work helping our students apply for naturalization by offering free application services for N-400, I-912, and I-942 forms. Additionally, this funding helps support our civics and citizenship preparation classes, which enable our folks to study for the naturalization test.

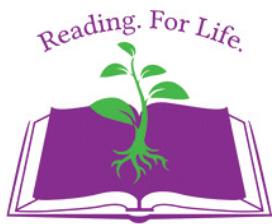
Similarly, the RTS Family Foundation recently awarded us a grant of \$40,000 towards general operating support for our organization. In this unprecedented time, that includes the addition of new safety protocol, ranging from hand sanitizing stations to face masks with clear panels for OG tutoring, PPE equipment at the front desk and much more. It also helps offset the costs of salaries for our staff, which (without our State funding) is a crucial component in being able to remain open.

MSC Industrial Supply has awarded Literacy Nassau a grant of \$15,000 to enable us to train and support three new Orton-Gillingham tutors. The training costs approximately \$5,000 per tutor but will change the lives of three learning-disabled children and potentially many other children when each tutor returns to his/her school district, armed with the knowledge to teach all children - regardless of ability - how to read, write and spell.

With 2020 being the bizarre year it's been, Literacy Nassau decided to continue trying to do our part to engage folks in civic duty. Part of that includes being counted in the United States Census. We were awarded a grant from Nassau County to participate in helping students complete the Census, but the funding was cut off by the Federal government via pass-through to New York State, and then the Census was abruptly cut short after being extended to October 31st. Nonetheless, the United Way (who is the fiscal sponsor for this grant) is honoring the grant we were told we would receive for \$19,000 to offset costs of the work we were able to accomplish in our shortened timeline.

All of these grants do more than help our bottom line - they enable us to serve our communities in a safe, engaging way. Our gratitude is endless, especially during a year when so many non-profits and small business have had to shut their doors. Thank you!





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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT :)



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