



LITERACY MATTERS

OCTOBER 2021



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

What You'll Find in this Issue:

New OG Tutors	2
ELL Tutor Reflections	3
Happy Birthday!	4
Amazon Smile	4

Our Staff Team

Karen Micciche, Executive Director
 Anne-Marie Poliviou, Executive Assistant
 Renae Katz, Bookkeeper
 Kate Quijano, Senior Program Director
 Jessica D'Aprile, Program Assistant
 Mary Baumgarten, OG Tutor
 Jodie Calderon, OG Tutor
 Jane Hartigan, OG Tutor
 Melissa Sansobrinio, OG Tutor
 Jennifer Southard, OG Tutor

Our Board of Directors

Judith Beckman (Pres.), Financial Solutions
 Susan Santoro (VP), Oceanville Mason Supply
 Iris Grover (Secretary), Reading teacher (ret.)
 Sean Miller (Treasurer), TD Bank
 Wendy Ehrlich, OppenheimerFunds (ret.)
 Dorita Gibson, NYC Dep't. of Education (ret.)
 Melissa Grote, Sunrise Medical Labs
 Irv Miljoner, US Dep't. of Labor (ret.)
 Stefanie Singer, Novogradac

DYSLEXIA AWARENESS MONTH

(submitted by Karen Micciche)

Every year in October, we try to educate the general population about dyslexia in honor of Dyslexia Awareness Month. This year, I thought I might share something a little bit different.

If you've ever heard me speak, you know that my mom and my daughters all have varying degrees of dyslexia. What I don't often share, though, is how this manifests in my adult life - especially when it comes to my mother.

My mom is turning 78 years old this month. After 18 months of pandemic living, she has finally succumbed to the fact that she needs a caregiver. And it's not because she's so "elderly" - believe me, she's healthy and in good shape. Rather, it's because she's dyslexic. Here is how this manifests in her daily life:

My mom lives in Suffolk County in a garden apartment on a busy road just off of Sunrise Highway. There is a Stop and Shop, a public library, and a P.C. Richards across the street from her apartment complex. On her side of the street, there is a Shop Rite about a half mile away, in a small shopping plaza with a pizzeria, Chinese food restaurant, discount card store, and a few other transient shops.

Because of her dyslexia, my mother cannot drive. She simply cannot read the signs fast enough, and she has a very hard time with directions. As a result, she walks a lot. She also makes good use of public transportation. When she moved into her current apartment 5 years ago, there was a bus that stopped at the entrance to her community. But when COVID started, the county canceled the bus route, I guess since nobody was using public transit anymore. So now, if she wants to go somewhere outside of the shops I mentioned that are in her vicinity, she needs to call a taxi.

But Uber is cheaper, you might say. You're right - but my mom doesn't have the Uber app. Cell phones are hard for her to maneuver, causing her tremendous anxiety, and she doesn't have internet service because she can't use (and there-

fore doesn't have) a computer. So she pays more than double what you'd pay for an Uber just to go a few miles away to a doctor's appointment.

This has severely limited where she can go. Last spring, she figured, "It'll be okay, I'll just stay closer to home."

So she did. For the better part of a year. She would go outside every day to walk around her community, and a few times a week she would venture out to go to the library, once it reopened. (She likes to take out movies and books on tape.) The library is on the other side of the big, busy street, so she has to walk up to the gas station and wait for the light. There are no pedestrians, only antsy drivers getting off Sunrise Highway at excessive speeds, often distracted by their cell phones.

She called me up crying a few weeks ago. I asked what was wrong. "The traffic light broke," she said. "And who knows if it will ever get fixed." Just like that, her already pared-down world got cut in half. No more library. No more Stop and Shop.

She tried to make the best of it. She goes to Shop Rite because it's on her side of the street. "Stop and Shop's too big, anyway," she said. "I can never find anything there." But it has bialys that she likes, and Shop Rite doesn't have them.

But, last week she found out that Shop Rite is closing. And that's like the equivalent of a death sentence, because without a grocery store in walking distance, my mom really can't survive.

So I had to hire her a caregiver to visit with her a few hours several days a week and drive her places. Someone to keep the world open to her.

This is the impact of dyslexia on people who never get proper remediation. It's like being in prison. The library is right across the street but you just can't get there, because the public bus got canceled and the traffic light broke and if you try and cross the street right down the middle, you will get killed by an errant driver speeding off the highway.

Imagine what that does to a person's mental state. It's exhausting, and it wears

(continued on page 4)



WELCOME OUR NEW COHORT OF ORTON-GILLINGHAM TUTORS

We asked our new cohort members to share a little background, summer memory or fun fact about themselves. This is the remaining group of tutors continued from last month's issue. We hope you enjoy getting to know them!

KAITLYN BELECKAS



I have experience working with both middle and elementary school students and am working as an Early Intervention Coordinator for Hagedorn Little Village School. I believe that it is important to put students on the right paths early to promote future success.

I chose to become an OG tutor, since I have witnessed firsthand with my own daughter, who was diagnosed with dyslexia in third grade, the difference that good reading instruction can make in the life of a child. When I was a child, I was diagnosed with a speech delay. I am grateful for the intervention that I received and learned that hard work does pay off. I try to instill the same perseverance and motivation in every student that I work with.

Although this summer continues to be different, I was glad to experience some normalcy on July 4th. It was great to enjoy the day with a parade and a beautiful fireworks display.

ANDREA CLIFFORD



In 2018 I retired from teaching and I have been enjoying my retirement. Previously, I taught high school English and Health to general and special education students for over ten years at P256q located at Mercy First. (Mercy First is a residential treatment center which provides a structured and

nurturing experience for children who have serious emotional and/or behavioral difficulties that requires separation from their home.) Throughout my life reading and books have always been a hugely important positive force. Many people who struggle with learning disabilities are unable to access that positivity and with the right tools I know I can make a beneficial impact in their lives. I am ready to learn OG and look forward to working with a younger generation.

This September is my 35th wedding anniversary. My husband and I have five children, and family is everything to me.

RENEE MACDERMOTT

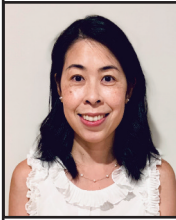


I have been an elementary educator for the last twenty years, with experience teaching Kindergarten through 6th grade. I am also certified in gifted and special education. My favorite grades to teach are 1st & 2nd grades because I love seeing the growth during those important academic years.

Years ago my son was diagnosed with dyslexia and dysgraphia. Even with my background, I realized that he needed more specific reading instruction that would teach him the rules of phonics in a way that would make sense to him. I discovered Literacy Nassau and he worked with an amazing tutor. Along the way I learned so much that helped me understand appropriate reading instruction. After seeing the incredible gains he made, I was inspired to continue my literacy training so that I can help other children like my son.

I love hiking some of the highest mountains in New York!

WENDY CHIU



I graduated from Columbia University with a Master's degree in Occupational Therapy and have been a licensed OT for over 10 years. I am fascinated by the use of incorporating a multi-sensory and systematic, scientific-based OG approach to tutoring students. I believe in empowering the

individual with dyslexia with grasping the fundamentals of reading, spelling and writing so that they can get that "Ah-Ha" moment and wave goodbye to the fear, anxiety, and judgement that so often comes with a learning disability.

My best summer moment was watching my 7 yr old son gain confidence from not willing to jump into the pool to now being able to swim across it. My 2 going on 3 year-old daughter surprised me recently with saying Triceratops, Stegosaurus, and Pterodactyl. I was shocked with her dinosaur vocabulary and beaming with pure joy! It's the small moments that count!

IZABELLA KATZ



I recently graduated from Farmingdale State College with a bachelor's degree in Psychology. I have had many friends in both school and work settings that have struggled with dyslexia. I have participated in an English class with a friend who refused to read due to her dyslexia. She would have

preferred to have no participation grade. The teacher we had told us he was also dyslexic. This gave her the confidence to give it her best try at reading aloud to the class. I've seen how dyslexia impacts someone's trust in everyday situations. Becoming an OG tutor, will give me the tools to help those facing the same obstacles my friends have. I also struggled with reading and spelling. My confidence was always low in the classroom, with my fear of getting the answers wrong. I want to make sure all kids have the opportunity to feel as confident as they can in all settings.

DINA MAIELLA-MARRO



I discovered my love of literacy during my years as a classroom teacher in NYC, and I've since followed this passion into the pursuit of sparking the same in others. I struggled with reading and writing when I was younger and often speak of the joy I found in literacy once the door was unlocked for me. I have a

Masters of Arts in Education from NYU, and was awarded a fellowship at Fordham for further intensive literacy studies.

I would like to be able to use OG to help those who need it. I found it a challenge to sit in class all day. I just wanted to be outside. I often got notes on my report card indicating that I talked too much in class. I just wanted to interact with all of the people around me and it felt like torture to have to be quiet.

I have gotten into biking this year, and have a 10 mile ride I try to do daily. It's become one of my favorite parts of each day. I wouldn't have imagined that a year ago!

RESOURCE CORNER: ESL LIBRARY

(submitted by Kate Quijano)

ESL Library is a great resource for supplemental lesson resources. It works well for both in-person and virtual classes. You can download the lesson pdf and either print it or email it to your students. You can also choose “task player” if you are screen sharing on Zoom or displaying the website on a screen/SmartBoard at a library.

They have so many resources available; here are some hints for finding what you need:

1. Choose “calendar;” choose your current month. It will give you a list of holidays/special events for that month. Choose the one you are interested in and it will give you links to all the lessons they have available on that topic. Many tutors use this option to include seasonal topics into their sessions.
2. Click the search button. Type in the grammar focus you are studying in Side by Side. It will give you links to all the lessons related to that topic. This is great for differentiation because they have multiple levels available on different concepts. They also have stories available specifically written to include each grammar concept.
3. Choose “lessons;” under “ESL Lesson Categories,” choose the level of your class. It will give you all lessons available for that level.

This is one of our tutors’ favorite resources. If you haven’t tried it yet, I definitely recommend that you give it a try during the fall session.

Visit: www.esllibrary.com



WELCOME OUR NEW OG TUTORS (CONT'D)

MARYBETH THOMAS



I have been a teacher at the Waldorf School for over 10 years. I am a master teacher, which means I brought my first class from 1st through 5th grade and took two classes from 1st through 3rd grade. I teach with love, utilizing a multifaceted approach, catering to each individual student's needs. I am passionate about providing my students with the necessary tools they need to succeed academically.

The OG approach is the path which will give children with dyslexia an equal opportunity to shine amongst their peers. It also will help my students grow in reading, spelling and writing. As a child, I struggled with spelling, often forgetting the patterns and rules. I dreaded quizzes and remembered studying and struggling to recall the proper spelling of words.

My best summer moment was my reunion with three childhood best friends, with whom I have known since 1st grade!

ELL TUTOR REFLECTIONS

(submitted by Kate Quijano)

Our transition back to in-person classes went very smoothly. We had limited libraries and many of our classes were small, but everyone worked so hard on their English skills and enjoyed meeting new people. After a year and a half of virtual classes, it was so nice for me to have an opportunity to visit them again, to post-test students, and see our amazing tutors in action. Here are some tutor reflections of their students and class:

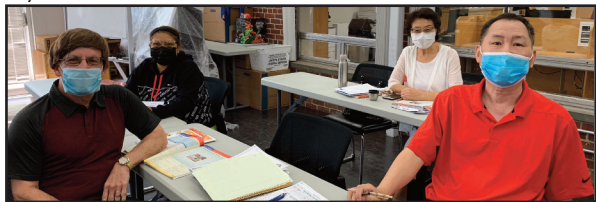
“Very nice, stress-free experience to be a 1st time tutor. I liked the way my class interacted with each other and how they often laughed at themselves for mistakes or mispronunciation.”
(Sherry P.-Hicksville Level 2)

“It was a learning experience for me as well as my Level 1 students every Tuesday morning in Oceanside library. I was inspired by their motivation and persistence, and I am proud of their progress.”
(Rhonda I.-Oceanside-Level 1)

“I really enjoyed tutoring this summer which was my first time. Great when you see the students are understanding and speaking more.” (Shelly B.-Hicksville Level 1)

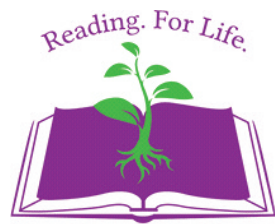
“On Mondays I was assigned a level 1/2 class at Williston Park Library. There are only three students in this class. It may be a small group, but it is my first in-person group since March, 2020. It is also interesting to observe the group dynamics you can’t get in a Zoom class. The three students interact with each other. They correct each other’s mistakes. When my class was over last Monday, I left, but the three class members stayed, socializing, perhaps sharing each other’s experiences in America. Part of their education is what they can learn from each other. Remote classes are a fine way to learn and to teach, but they are a two-dimensional experience compared to sitting in the same room and seeing each other in real life, rather than at the end of a computer screen!”

Jeffrey M.(far left)-Williston Park Level 1/2 & Hicksville Level 4



“There are few greater rewards in life than the look of appreciation on the face of a student upon achieving even the smallest of successes. The rewards continue with the exposure to customs and cultures from across the globe, which students so gleefully share with their tutor.” (Bob P.-Hicksville Level 3)

“Applause! Applause and gratitude to Literacy Nassau for inspiring learning and literacy development in our communities. Neither the heat of summer or masks deterred the mission as my students and I zoomed along to develop language and literacy proficiency. I felt rewarded as each class ended with words of appreciation from students who shared their joy and greater comfort in learning to speak, write, and read English. Support provided by the tutor workshops and sharing with other tutors provided meaningful ways to introduce instruction on a zoom platform and I acquired new skills in using technology.” (Carmen L.-Virtual Level 2)



LITERACY
N A S S A U

1 Ivy Lane, Wantagh, NY 11793
(516) 867-3580 ~ www.literacynassau.org

NON PROFIT RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
P A I D
Wantagh, NY
11793
Permit No. 29

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Warm Birthday Wishes to our Tutors!

Mary-Joan Albiston – Eileen Ambach – Catherine Antioco
Patricia Boilerman – Angella Broderick – Judy Casella
Helen Chang – Ann Cullen – Joanne DePaula – Alanna Devine
Joshua Diamond – Sheryll Dorf – Judy Douenias
Rhonnie Fischman – Darleen Fleming – Cindy Florman
Alison Frankel – Lori Freeman – Rosemary Fuchs
Robert Genovese – Marsha Herman – Linda Ivans
Sarah Jairam – Carol Keating – Jeff Konzet – Maya Leibfreid
Laura Longo – Ada Marcus – Judy McClusky – Karen Moore
Louise Nachshen – Antoinette Nardo – Rebecca Popiolek
Gwynn Riordan – Gene Sanders – Olga Scileppi – Philip Scotto
Scott Shelofsky – Barbara Simonds – Andrea Snyder
Irma Souveroff – Diane Tully – Eileen Weissman – Donna White
Richard Wieder – Megan Williams – Thomas A. Williams



Instagram: @literacyNassau
Facebook: Literacy.Nassau
Twitter: @LiteracyNassau

DYSLEXIA AWARENESS MONTH (CONT'D)

you down. Nothing can ever just be easy.

The reason I tell you all this is because there is remediation but our state doesn't recognize this as enough of a problem to mandate the proper therapy for dyslexic children in school. When they're young, and their brains are more malleable, dyslexia can be remedied. But the older people get, the more doors close, and the bleaker life becomes. The social ramifications are dramatically life altering.

If you know someone with dyslexia and want to make a difference, write a letter to your local legislator this month educating him/her about dyslexia. Share their struggles. Dyslexia is often referred to as a "hidden disability," but that's only because you can't see it from the outside. But you can talk about it. So get loud. Tell their story. Try and get the bus reinstated, or the traffic light fixed.

You have the power to make a real difference in the life of a person struggling with dyslexia. And if you don't know anyone personally, then do it for my mom.

