



LITERACY MATTERS

JANUARY 2023



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

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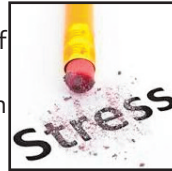
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THE CONNECTION BETWEEN DYSLEXIA, STRESS AND RHYTHM

(submitted by Karen Micciche)

Early on in my OG training, I learned about the correlation between stress (defined as a fear of or reaction to something that is happening), anxiety (defined as a fear of or reaction to something that will or might happen in the future), and dyslexia. Of course, it comes as no surprise that an individual with dyslexia will develop stress when having to read or write, because of negative experiences he/she has had with these tasks before, and as a result, dyslexic individuals tend to develop anxiety about reading and writing in general due to a fear of failure and/or ridicule. I remember seeing this in my mother when I was young, and I've also seen it in my girls on countless occasions. But there's something I've learned that comes from my children receiving a Waldorf education that I feel bears discussion: the need for exercise.



In my certified level practicum, I worked with a student who is a fraternal twin. He was 9-years old during our year together, and was tiny compared to his sister, who is not dyslexic. While she would stand upright, carry herself with confidence, and project her voice, he would often slump his shoulders, appear skittish, and mumble or

speak under his breath. The twins attend the same Waldorf school as my girls, and back in 2017 when I was working with this practicum student, the Faculty Chair and I spoke at length about the many interventions he was receiving every week. Five times a week, he was pulled out of class for resource room, twice a week he was pulled out for occupational therapy, once a week he was pulled out for counseling, and three times a week he was pulled out for Orton-Gillingham with me. The schedule was altered several times over the course of that year in an attempt to get it right. The Faculty Chair expressed a concern for my student's physical body. She felt it was extremely important for him to work on his gross motor skills, to run, move, and play. As a result, while we were a bit strapped by the confines of all his therapies, I worked diligently on placing him in environments conducive to his physical growth.

In Waldorf, rhythm is stressed from a very early age. There are rhythms in our daily lives: the sun rises and sets, the tides approach and recede. There are weekly rhythms, and seasonal rhythms as well. The children's daily rhythm encourages breathing in (working on academics or fine motor skills, which requires concentration and singular focus) followed by breathing out (running, playing, practicing eurythmy, *(continued on next page)*)

THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

This is the time of year when we all hit reset and think about what's to come in the year ahead. For me, 2023 is going to be a big year. I'm going to be an author - like, officially. I'm so excited and nervous, but more than anything, I feel satisfied. I set out to accomplish something and I did it.

We're all so busy making resolutions for what's to come, making up our minds about who we're going to be and what we're going to change or improve in 2023. I think it's equally important to reflect on what you've done, on all the goals you've promised yourself you'd achieve and on the success you've experienced. It's something I often forget to do; I'm always looking for the next project, the next goal, the next step. I'd be willing to bet a lot of our students do this, too. As we move into January, make sure you take the time to praise and congratulate your students for their progress and their milestones! Positive encouragement will only help to breed even more success!

Karen 😊



'Tis the season to reflect and celebrate on the accomplishments of the previous year!



RYAN'S BAR MITZVAH PROJECT

(submitted by Karen Micciche)

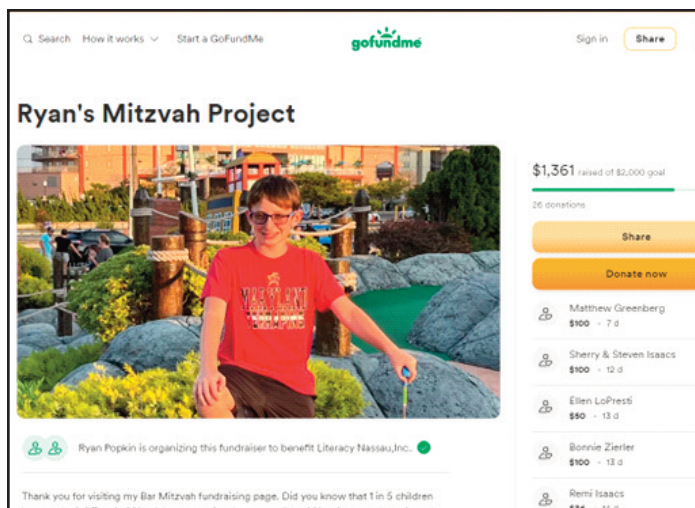
Every now and again, someone will do something that really floors me. This past month, it was Ryan Popkin, a participant in our OG program. He is preparing for his Bar Mitzvah and decided to take on a project to raise funds for Literacy Nassau. This is what he wrote on his Go Fund Me page:

Thank you for visiting my Bar Mitzvah fundraising page. Did you know that 1 in 5 children have dyslexia? That is 20% of the population. I am one of the 20% with both dyslexia and dysgraphia. I learn differently than other kids and require much needed literacy support.

For my Mitzvah project I have decided to raise money for Literacy Nassau. Literacy Nassau is a Long Island based not-for-profit organization that makes literacy available to kids and adults. I have been fortunate enough to be tutored by an Orton-Gillingham certified tutor for the past three years. In that time, my tutor, Melissa, was able to bridge the gap in both my reading and writing skills. She taught me the origin of words, how to break them down into smaller pieces promoting spelling, and how to organize ideas to create cohesive paragraphs. I was able to get this excellent training because I am fortunate enough to have parents who can afford such an intervention. However, many kids are not as lucky as I am.

I would like to raise \$2,000 for Literacy Nassau to be used to support tutoring for kids who would otherwise not be able to afford it. Please help me in reaching my goal. I would not be as successful as I am without the help of this wonderful organization.

If you would like to donate to Ryan's project, you may do so by visiting www.gofundme.com and looking up "**Ryan's Bar Mitzvah**" in the search bar.



DYSLEXIA AND RHYTHM (CONTINUED)

being outside). Upon creating my schedule with my student, we tried to choose times when his work with me would follow a "breathe out" activity, such as recess, but when that was not possible, I altered the environment so that he could still benefit from some of the positive side effects, such as sunlight. On Mondays, I met with him after counseling, which is a "breathe in" activity. He and I would sit in the cafeteria, facing the hustle and bustle of the high school.



Even though he was not actively participating in the movement and noise of the hallways, he was exposed to it, and this was good for him. I initially thought it would make it impossible for him to focus on his lessons, but I was wrong. It was helpful for him to be near that movement. On Tuesdays, we would meet right after recess. We'd sit in a library pod or in a quiet corner of a classroom on those days, and our work became a "breathe in" activity for him. Then, on Fridays, I'd meet with him right after painting, which is a "breathe in." If the weather was nice, we'd sit in the grass by the pond and he would work on a lap desk, or we would meet at a picnic table. Being outside in the fresh air fed his body and soul while the OG lesson fed his mind.

Best practices show the importance of exercise and physical environment to build brain power and reduce stress. I think the same goes for maintaining your student's natural rhythm. I find that the environment sets the stage for a positive experience, which in itself builds confidence and an "I can do this" attitude, and ultimately results in success.



SATURDAY ENGLISH IMMERSION PROGRAM FOR KIDS

FUNDED BY THE GURU KRUPA FOUNDATION

Featuring traditional academic instruction, crafts, games, and other activities!

SATURDAY, JANUARY 21 - JUNE 17
IN-PERSON AT 1 IVY LANE IN WANTAGH
9:15AM - 11:45AM
CHILDREN AGES 6-10; GRADES 1-5

CLASSES ARE FREE! SPACE IS LIMITED.

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OR CALL US AT (516) 867-3580

REGISTER BY JANUARY 14

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WWW.LITERACYNASSAU.ORG

TUTOR BREAKFAST

(submitted by Kate Quijano)

We were so pleased to have our first in-person event since pre-COVID times. We recently hosted a tutor breakfast in our outdoor space at Literacy Nassau. It was a cool, rainy day, but our roll-downs and heaters kept us toasty and dry. It was so nice to get to see our tutors in-person and to give everyone a chance to meet each other and share stories about their classes. Both ELL and BL tutors joined us so it was a nice mix of programs and tutors had a chance to chat with people they don't usually get to meet with. We were so glad we had the opportunity to spend the morning with our dedicated tutors and hope to host another event in the spring.



Pictured: Justine, Amita, Neil, Virginia, Marjorie, Jerry, Bob S., Fran, Bob P., Adrienne, Arlyne and Literacy Nassau's Kate. Not all tutors in attendance are pictured.



Pictured above are tutor Virginia with LN's Cristina



Everyone was happy to finally meet in-person.



TUTOR SPOTLIGHT: MARY H.

I recently retired after working for many years as a Human Resource Generalist at Stony Brook Medical Center. Throughout my work experience, I've met many interesting people, and interacted with many different cultures. As challenging as many of the situations were, my goal was to help them in any way possible. After a couple months of retirement, I thought to myself, how can I continue to have a purpose and help others? This led me to consider working as an ESL tutor.



This is my first experience working as a tutor with Literacy Nassau. I was so nervous the first class! With time, I became more confident and slowly found a path with both challenges and rewards. Most of the students are motivated and grateful for my time and effort. I have found the most challenging aspect of tutoring an adult population to be restoring confidence in themselves. I will often cite examples from my life that were difficult for me to face. It took time and commitment to resolve these obstacles. I encourage the students to continue with the program, participate in class, and make mistakes. I would love to say that I have overcome their insecurities; I haven't, however, I have made progress in this area.

My motivation to continue to work with adult learners comes from both the other tutors and students. I have found sharing some of the common issues we face as tutors during the support group to be invaluable. From the students, their sincere "thank you" at the end of class keeps me moving forward.

If I was to offer advice to a new tutor, (hard to imagine, being a novice myself) I would say be patient and keep a sense of humor.

Some of my interests include reading, walking my dog, sharing videos and music with my husband, and spending time with my 5-month-old granddaughter, Aimee Rose. I love being a grandmother!



Warm Birthday Wishes to our Tutors!

Leslie Arluck – Mildred Aronson – Jonathan Baker
 Debbie Buglisi – Jill Ditchik – Frank Dorf – Connie Egelman
 osepine Feldman – Marleen Fenton – Janet Gordon
 Samantha Gordon – Latoyra Graves – Mary Howley
 Mara Jacobowitz – Ruthann Kennedy – Jan Kerr
 Carol Kessler – Emma LaPrince – David Leibenhaut
 Rose Lowe – Kiana Mahabadi – Michelle Malone
 Michael Marrin – Roseann Martz – Anjana Matani
 Marcia Mayer – Christine Merola – Eileen Morgan
 Harriet Morosoff – Marion Polizzi – Honey Prager
 Alice Scharf – Patricia Searby – Paula Silverman
 Addy Skolnick – Janet Trajbar – Karen Vermut
 Melva Victorino – Nina Wachsman – Kourtnee Wallace
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SAVE THE DATE

LAUGHS FOR LITERACY: A BOOK LAUNCH PARTY TO BENEFIT LITERACY NASSAU

Author KJ Micciche

Comedian Liz Miele

MAY 17, 2023

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