



LITERACY MATTERS

OCTOBER 2022



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

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NYS ADULT EDUCATION TRAINING

(by Karen Micciche)

From September 15-16, 2022, I had the pleasure of attending the New York State Education Department's Adult Career and Continuing Education Services statewide Program Manager Training. Held at the Marriott in Albany, NY, this two-day event was jam packed with great information for adult education programs regarding best practices for state-funded programs and focused on the work involved in bringing programs back in a post-covid world.

Having served as the Executive Director of LN for 12 years and counting, there was a good amount of information presented that was just a refresher for me. However, two particular sessions stuck out and offered helpful suggestions that would weave nicely into our program. The first was a session regarding intake procedures for adult students. This session was presented by Stephanie Englemann from Western Suffolk BOCES. She runs a robust program that has multiple state funding streams and, unlike LN, is housed on a campus where classes actually take place. (This differs from our program in that we serve students in libraries across the island.) She spoke about ways to make the intake process more palatable for students,

including offering small giveaways, having new students meet for longer periods of time with case managers, requesting feedback from students during the intake process, and creating a Student Ambassador program. The Student Ambassador program was fascinating to me. Essentially, by giving students who have been through your program the opportunity to help shepherd new students through the intake process, you'll create an instant connection for those new students, which will lead to a lower initial drop rate. Student Ambassadors come to registration events to help with translation, administer surveys, and generally create a more pleasant and palatable environment. If you know someone who you think might be able to serve in this capacity, please email Kate at kquijano@literacynassau.org.

The second presentation that I really enjoyed was offered by Nikeisha Smothers, who is the Manager of Operations for Adult Learning at the Brooklyn Public Library. She runs programs at many different libraries, like us, but she also has several different state funding streams (where we have only one). Nikeisha presented on best practices for case management and spoke specifically about creating teams for each

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THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

Well, fall is back in full swing and so are our programs! It is exciting to have our office abuzz with students calling, parents visiting, and children here in the afternoons and evenings.

Being married to a teacher (and doing a fair amount of teaching myself), I think we sometimes forget that the new school year brings a sense of hope and rejuvenation for our students. For us, it can seem like just another year of teaching the same thing again. But for our students, it's an opportunity to develop a new skill, build confidence, and become a better version of themselves. When they do well, we all do well! I urge you to keep that in mind as you plan lessons and consider your time with the students you serve. You are changing lives, one week at a time, one lesson at a time, and in doing so, you're making Long Island a better place for all of us.

Karen 😊



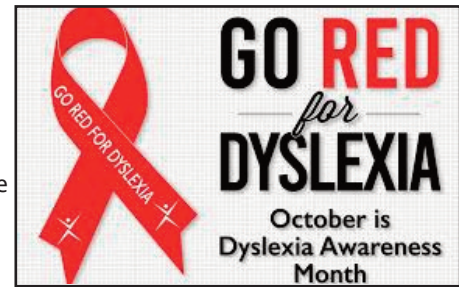
My girls on the first day of school. I can't believe they're in fifth and third grade!



OCTOBER IS DYSLEXIA AWARENESS MONTH

(submitted by Kate Quijano)

September offered a great start to our school year. We were thrilled to welcome our new cohort of donation-based students and their tutor trainees. They enjoyed doing some getting to know you activities and some assessment to prepare for the individualized instruction they will receive this year. We were also happy to see many of our students returning from last year to our fee-based programs and our school district contract work.



As we move into October, we are reminded of the importance of the work we do every day here at Literacy Nassau in serving students with dyslexia and other language based learning disabilities. October is Dyslexia Awareness Month and I would like to share some resources with you related to dyslexia. The word dyslexia comes from Greek and means “difficulty with words.” It is a difficulty with using and processing linguistic and symbolic code (understanding the relationship between letters and sounds). You can get more information about dyslexia here: <https://dyslexiaida.org/definition-of-dyslexia/#>



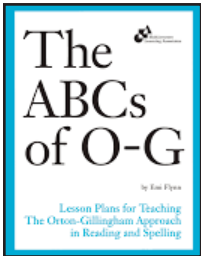
Orton-Gillingham is known as the gold standard in working with students with dyslexia. It uses a structured, multi-sensory approach and meets each child exactly where they are. All of our tutors have received their certification (or are training to receive certification) from the Orton-Gillingham Academy (OGA). For more information on OG, please visit: <https://www.ortonacademy.org>.

Something that is very important for our students is access to decodable texts (books that are decodable for them based on the skills they have already learned and which do not include advanced skills that they have not been taught yet nor concepts that would encourage guessing). This is very different from “leveled texts.” Our OG tutors create their own stories for students to read to ensure that they are successful in every lesson. Some other resources for decodable texts are Simple Words Books by C. Knebel (<https://simplewordsbooks.com>), the Dog on a Log series (<https://dogonalogbooks.com>), and High Noon Books-Sound Out Chapter Books (<https://www.highnoonbooks.com>).



Another way to spread awareness about dyslexia is by purchasing something from www.pqbd.org. This organization uses their unique design created with the letters p, q, b, and d to bring awareness to the common confusion among these letters for people with dyslexia. In print, those four letters look exactly the same except for directionality and placement on the line. They have created a symbol of awareness, celebration, and empowerment. You can purchase jewelry and other merchandise from them to help raise awareness.

Nessy also offers web-based resources, videos, and games that can add some fun while reinforcing the methodology that students are learning through their OG tutoring. Visit <https://www.nessy.com/en-us> for more information or search for Nessy videos on YouTube.



Many of our adult Basic Literacy students also show characteristics of dyslexia but may not have been fortunate enough to have an OG tutor in their life when they were children. This has led to a lifetime of struggling with reading. Our dedicated Basic Literacy tutors volunteer their time to teach reading to adult learners. While our BL tutors have not completed the full Orton-Gillingham training leading to certification, they have done some in-house training with us to familiarize them with the philosophy of OG and the importance of multi-sensory instruction for adults as well. Our BL groups utilize the curriculum *The ABCs of OG* which gives our volunteers support in creating lessons specifically suited for adult learners. It comes with a phonetic reader which provides decodable text related to each new skill introduced to the group.

We are glad to be able to share everything we have learned from our OG journey with both children and adults across Long Island.

NYS ADULT ED (CONTINUED FROM COVER)

class she offers. Each team consists of the lead teacher, the program assistant, the case manager, and the program director for that library. Teams meet once a week to discuss progress towards student goals and to make sure that the students have the support they need in order to be successful. They also brainstorm about ways to bring programming to life. For example, she shared that in one class, they were using the book *Hidden Figures* to discuss women in STEM and the historical impact of that particular story. Her team met to figure out ways to bring depth to that curriculum, and together they worked to create a list of potential jobs for women in STEM that exist today that do not necessarily require a high school diploma (since her students are in a HSE prep program and do not have one yet). By going through an activity like this, and combining it with a

STEM survey for the participants, the team could identify students who might be interested in this kind of career path and follow up with them individually via case managers.

Overall, the conference shared excellent information, and it was the first time we could all be together in a room for training in the past three years, so that was a welcome change as well. We hope to implement some of these best practices in the weeks and months to come; stay tuned for more information on that!



TUTOR SPOTLIGHT: MARJORIE BROWN

(submitted by Marjorie Brown)

For over thirty years, I worked for the same company and rose to a high-level position that I loved. Then, at the height of the Covid pandemic, I was let go. I was devastated, and rather than appreciating my new free time I found myself feeling empty and unfulfilled. I began looking for meaningful ways to spend my time, and stumbled upon Literacy Nassau when Googling volunteer opportunities. I found Kate and the rest of the staff to be so friendly, engaging, and most of all patient with all of my questions and concerns. I was given a level 3 class and I was both excited and nervous to embark on this new journey. I have since learned that I love to tutor. The adult students have learned from me, and I have learned from them. I enjoy hearing their stories, learning about their individual cultures, and their experiences in this country.

One of my most rewarding experiences was when a student approached me after class had ended, and said to me, "I never knew I could read a book in English!" I had given my students copies of *Charlotte's Web* and we read one or two chapters together each week, and I also assigned them to read one or two chapters at home. Part of my class was always spent reviewing what we had read. This student was proud of herself. There is no greater feeling than knowing I helped provide that for her.

Teaching English to speakers of other languages requires a level of delicacy that I sometimes have struggled to find. When correcting a student, it is a hard line to walk between providing important and constructive criticism and potentially crushing someone's self-esteem. I try to find this balance by always praising some portion of the work I am correcting, prior to providing corrective feedback. I also remind them that I only speak one language, so they should never feel embarrassed about being corrected in their second language. And I reassure them that errors are a part of the process; mistakes are how we learn.

My students motivate me every day to continue working to improve my own skills as a tutor and to continue on this path. I teach a three hour evening class, so my students often come

to me after a hard day's work. They make the effort because they want to learn. They want to be there and that motivates me to be the best I can be for them.

I would advise any new tutor of the following:

- Do not expect to cover a chapter a week. It won't happen, and it shouldn't happen. It's better to go slow and ensure everyone understands the material.
- I use the text as well as the activity books, but I do not spend the entire class time on them. I break up the time to also include reading, talking, role-playing, etc.
- Try and make the class fun. I once brought in my grandson's pretend food and we had such a good time role playing. The students all had to pick a food item from a bag and then ask another student (the supermarket employee) where that food could be located within the supermarket.
- Take a few minutes per class to discuss our culture. The students are very eager to learn all they can about our customs. For example: When you are invited to someone's house and they tell you they don't need anything, you still have to bring something (a bottle of wine, a dessert, etc.)! We discuss thank you notes, making sure to respond to emails, as well as slang. They love this portion of class time.
- Perhaps most importantly, make sure to attend the tutor Zoom meetings. Someone always has something to say that will help you in your own class. I get so many good ideas from fellow tutors!

My current interests include playing with my grandchildren as well as my two dogs, going to brunch with other retired friends, going to book fairs and flea markets, playing pickleball and Canasta. I recently learned Mahjongg and I love it. But truth be told, tutoring is my favorite.

It turns out it was a very good thing I was let go. Thank you, Literacy Nassau.

Thank YOU, Marjorie. Your students are lucky to have you and so are WE!



Thank you Melissa Golfo, Charlie Meaney's Bar and Grill in Valley Stream and our host Clearview Park Golf Course for raising over \$9,000 for Literacy Nassau.

October Birthdays

Warm Birthday Wishes to our Tutors!

Mary-Joan Albiston – Eileen Ambach - Catherine Antioco
 Patricia Boilerman – Angella Broderick – Judy Casella
 Helen Chang – Pini Churgin – 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 – Maya Leibfreid
 Laura Longo – Ada Marcus – Maura Martinez – Judy McClusky
 Karen Moore – Louise Nachshen – Antoinette Nardo
 Rebecca (Vicky) Popiolek – Gwynn Riordan – Gene Sanders
 Olga Scileppi – Barbara Simonds – Andrea Snyder
 Diane Tully – Eileen Weissman – Donna White – Richard Wieder




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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT :)

SATURDAY ENGLISH IMMERSION PROGRAM FOR KIDS HAS BEGUN!

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

**EVERY SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1 - DECEMBER 17
IN-PERSON AT OUR OFFICE IN WANTAGH
CHILDREN AGES 6-10; GRADES 1-5
FREE CLASSES**

**THANK YOU TO OUR FRIENDS FROM
MANHASSET COMMUNITY FUND/
GREENTREE GOOD NEIGHBOR FUND
AND
DOLLAR GENERAL**



DOLLAR GENERAL

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