

LITERACY MATTERS

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2025



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

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OUR NEW SCHOOL YEAR

(by Kate Quijano, Senior Program Director)

It's the start of a new school year and a year of many changes to our adult English program. Last year, we piloted the process of having a paid staff member teaching larger classes of students in our busier locations. We are fortunate to have Steve back again with us this year in the same role. We have also welcomed several new teachers who will be paid staff members teaching English. Some were previous volunteers of ours who are certified teachers and transitioned into this new role and others are new to our organization. We now have a total of 10 staff members teaching 12 classes that will run from September through June, serving approximately 200 adult students under our ALE grant.

We will also have several of our volunteers returning in an assistant teaching position in these larger classes, supporting the teachers in differentiating instruction and providing small-group or one-on-one instruction within the larger class. This is a great opportunity for students who need a little bit more support or a little more of a challenge to get some more individualized help in a larger group. We look forward to

the building of relationships among our teachers, volunteers, and students.

We kicked off the year with a week of registration, going out to our 12 classes to meet new students, help them complete paperwork, and administer an English speaking test. Teachers conducted some getting to know you exercises with students as well. In the first few weeks of class they will continue supporting students as they create goals for their learning, introduce them to community resources in their area, go on tours of the libraries, and discuss employment opportunities. We also have a new curriculum, *Ventures*, that we are excited to roll out in the next few weeks.

Our new teachers will also be taking on the role of case managers and will meet one on one with each of their students at least once a month to check in on their progress and refer them to any other supports in the community they may need.

We look forward to getting to know each of our new teachers and each of their classes better throughout the year. Look out for some teacher spotlight articles in upcoming newsletters for more information about what is happening in each of our classes.

FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

I can't believe it's fall already. The leaves are starting to change, we're drinking pumpkin spice everything, and the kids are back to school. In my personal life, too, things are shifting, as I am in the process of placing my mother in an assisted living facility.

It's sad, and often scary, to see how dyslexia impacts every single thing in her life. She's 81 years old and things that she should be able to do, she can't manage without help. For example, she recently got cataract surgery, but she couldn't manage the 3x daily post-surgery eye drops because there are too many directions: right eye vs. left eye, eye drops 1, 2, and 3, etc. Similarly, we got her a walker, and she struggles to figure out the steps involved in using the walker to have a seat. (It has a seat on it; all she has to do is activate the hand brakes before she sits down.) Navigating multi-step directions is a critical skill that impacts people with dyslexia at all stages of life. Anna Gillingham famously said, "Go as fast as you can, but as slow as you must." I remember that regularly as I guide my mom through her activities of daily living. It's good advice, so I use it to give myself grace as I fumble through this challenging time.

Wishing you a peaceful fall season. Take time to enjoy the changing colors. Before you know it, they'll be gone.



Karen

WELCOME TO OUR NEW ORTON-GILLINGHAM COHORT

(submitted by Kate Quijano, Senior Program Director)

In August, we welcomed a new cohort of trainees who will be studying the Orton-Gillingham approach with us throughout this school year and ultimately receiving their Associate level certification by next summer. They completed their initial 35 hours of training which introduced them to the OG approach, the components of the lesson plan, and early OG skills. They ended the week by watching a video of a sample lesson. They also had the opportunity to plan a portion of a lesson themselves and role play teaching in front of the rest of the cohort. This allowed them to practice working with the OG principles they just learned.

After the initial week of training, our trainees were matched with a student who they will tutor throughout the school year for a total of 100 sessions of practicum where they will receive observations and feedback to further support them on their journey as an OG tutor. They will also meet for an additional five weekend dates in order to finish the rest of the required 70 hours of training for their Associate level certification. It was a pleasure meeting all of these enthusiastic, dedicated OG trainees and we can't wait to see them meet their students and start putting the new skills they learned this summer into action.

The students who were matched with our trainees are part of our unique donation based tutoring, which allows families to receive OG services at a donation-based rate that they can afford. It provides a dual purpose for helping students learn to read and helping our trainees get experience and fulfill their practicum requirements to obtain OG certification. We asked our new cohort of trainees to tell us about themselves and why they are interested in training for OG with us. Here is what they said:



Sarah: I've been a special education teacher for 7 years, working in both ICT and 12:1:1 settings across grades K-5. Over the years, I've watched my students thrive when given specialized reading support, and it's inspired me to become part of that process. I'm excited to learn strategies through OG training so I can better meet my students' needs in the classroom and help them grow into confident readers.



Richard: After graduating from NCC and NYU, I worked for 40 years as a magazine editor at People Magazine and Entertainment Weekly. Volunteering was one of my goals after retirement, but my wife became sick and I was her caretaker until she died four years ago, after 52 years together. I began volunteering after that, teaching ESL to adults at Literacy Nassau. Now I'm branching out by helping children and I'm TOTALLY excited by the prospect.



Christine: As a newly retired NYC educator with nearly three decades of experience, I look forward to combining my commitment for teaching with evidence-based strategies that truly make a difference. Seeing a child move from struggling with letters to confidently reading full sentences is a transformation that never loses its magic. I am eager to pursue OG to support students and watch them succeed.



Ann: Since retiring, I've been teaching ELL through Literacy Nassau—work that has been incredibly rewarding. I supported my own child through early reading challenges, which sparked a lasting interest in helping others. I'm excited to learn the Orton-Gillingham approach to help children overcome reading difficulties with greater confidence and less frustration.



Andrea: I've been teaching elementary students in the Sayville School District for 29 years, and I currently teach 3rd grade. Helping kids learn to read is truly my passion! I love using best practices and explicit instruction to make sure every child feels confident and successful. I'm always looking for new ways to grow as a teacher, and I'm really excited to be working toward my OG certification to keep learning and supporting my students.



Susan: As a Special Education Teacher with 25 years of experience, I've had the privilege of teaching students with autism in a classroom setting and then with students with disabilities in a resource room. Teaching students to read is my passion, and I am looking forward to learning OG. Developing a strong reader is a team effort, and I am excited to collaborate with Literacy Nassau, you, and your child.



Lauren: I have been teaching in NYC for 22 years. I am a mother of two boys, one who is dyslexic. Since he has started with Orton-Gillingham I have seen such growth in him and more importantly his confidence soaring. I am excited to start this journey and help other children like my son who struggle with reading, writing and poor confidence. I look forward to working with my student.



Barbara: I'm a Literacy Specialist and an educator with many years of experience supporting students. I'm also a mother of three, including one child with multiple disabilities, which has deepened my commitment to meeting the diverse needs of all learners. I'm excited to continue growing professionally and looking forward to learning more about OG and putting it into practice to help my students succeed.

NEW ORTON-GILLINGHAM COHORT

Darlin: I've been an educator for over 29 years, working with at-risk learners and helping them discover their potential. I am also a proud mom of three amazing kids with learning differences—they've been my biggest inspiration in wanting to make learning accessible and joyful for all children. I'm passionate about helping kids learn to read, spell, and write. I'm looking forward to expanding my skills and making a difference through the Orton-Gillingham approach with the Literacy Nassau team.

Katia: I am a dedicated special education educator with over 15 years of experience, driven by a deep passion for both academic achievement and Social Emotional Learning. I am a Special Education Instructional Lead at the middle school level. I'm a proud mom of twin girls and we cherish traveling and hosting epic game nights filled with laughter and connection. I'm excited about the opportunity to continue making a meaningful impact in the lives of students and families.

**WISHING ALL OF OUR
STUDENTS AND TUTORS AN
AMAZING SCHOOL YEAR!**



**Warm Birthday Wishes to our
Tutors Celebrating in September!**

Maria Acosta – Lisa Adams – Sam Antar – Jessica Askoy
Lillian Baum – Shaneehah Beau – Michelle Berman
Toni Cangialosi – Lisa Chieco – Janice Collins – Carol Cook
Janice Donoghue – Pat Egland – Rhea Epstein – Leslie Feinberg
Kelly Filippone – Nancy Friedman – Laura Garcia – Ann Gordon
Freya Grice – Elinor Haber – Donald Hayde – Jean Heinz
Amy Karofsky – Cynthia Katz – Hannah Kim – Linda Klein
Margaret Latronica – Tim Leask – Kathy Leibowitz
Maxene Liverpool – Mary Ellen LoConte – Alison Marooney-
Marie Marsac – Judith Mauro – Michaela McElhatton
Lois Miceli – Denise Phillips – Linda Pierce – Rona Rappe
Marcy Ruggiero – Sanya Saini – Rebekah Santos – Irwin Scharf
Stan Schickler – Arlyne Skolnik – Ana Stanley – Jenn Starzynski
Jeanmarie Tener – Lois Thomas – Blanche Tyrkko
Maria Vivona – Janine Washinger – Loretta White
Colleen Woodell

WELCOME NEW STAFF

(submitted by Karen Micciche, Executive Director)

In addition to the group of English Second Language we have added to our staff in September, we also welcomed Jeannie Curtin on board as an Orton-Gillingham tutor. She will be helping children with reading disabilities in the schools. Here are some words from her: *"I became a dyslexia practitioner because I've seen how deeply reading struggles can affect a child's confidence and love of learning. As a special education teacher, I often worked with students who were bright, creative, and eager, yet reading felt like a wall they couldn't climb. I wanted to do more than just support them in the classroom. Working with LN has allowed me to give them the tools to succeed. Now, I get to watch students discover their own strengths, overcome frustration, and realize they are capable of so much more than they ever imagined. That transformation is what inspires me every day."*



We also are pleased to welcome Jenelle Torem as our Program Assistant. I'm a compassionate person who thrives on making a difference both at work and at home. With a keen eye for detail and an open heart, I bring energy and empathy to every interaction. My greatest joy, though, is spending quality time with my daughter, exploring parks, reading bedtime stories, and creating memories that last a lifetime. Whether you need a listening ear, a helping hand, or a fresh perspective, I'm here to support you every step of the way! We are excited to have them both!



**Warm Birthday Wishes to our
Tutors Celebrating in October!**

Mary-Joan Albiston – Eileen Ambach – Catherine Anticoco
Patricia Boilerman – Angella Broderick – Helen Chang
Daniela Chiu – Pini Churgin – Ann Cullen – Joanne DePaula
Alanna Devine – Joshua Diamond – Sherryl Dorf
Judy Douenias – David Evans – Rhonnie Fischman
Cindy Florman – Alison Frankel – Lori Freeman
Rosemary Fuchs – Robert Genovese – Marsha Herman
Linda Ivans – Sarah Jairam – Jeff Konzett – Maya Leibfreid
Ada Marcus – Maura Martinez – Judy McClusky – Karen Moore
Antoinette Nardo – Maureen O'Connor – Rebecca Popolek
Gwynn Riordan – Halima Samatallee – Gene Sanders
Olga Scileppi – Philip Scotto – Scott Shelofsky
Barbara Simonds – Andrea Snyder – Irma Souveroff
Julianne Stanko – Diane Tully – Eileen Weissman
Donna White – Richard Wieder – Megan Williams
Thomas A. Williams



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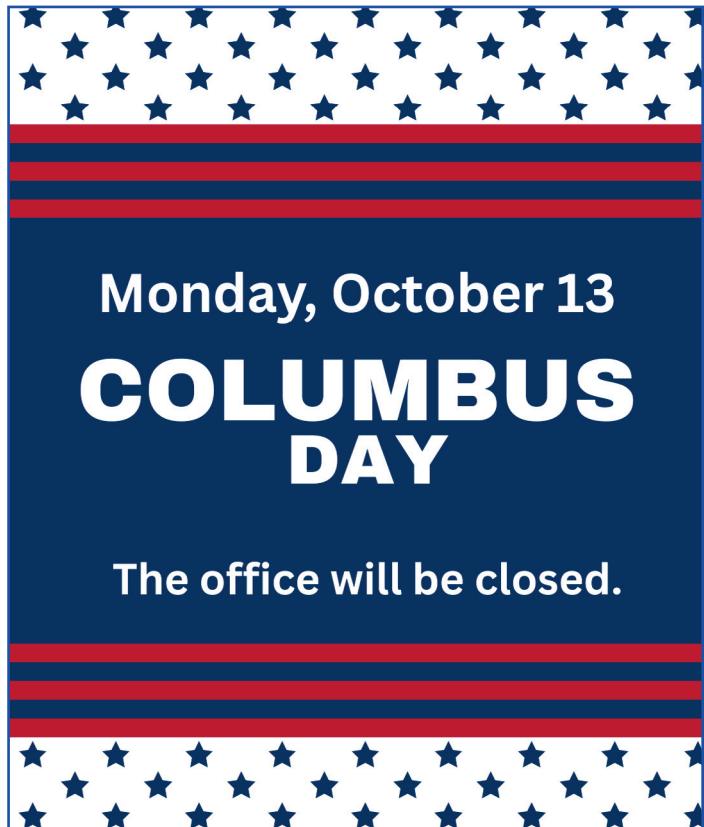


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