



LITERACY MATTERS

JULY 2019



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

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RECOGNITION NIGHT 2019

(submitted by Karen Micciche)

We hosted our annual Recognition Night celebration on Thursday, May 30th with close to 400 people in attendance. Guests included the ONA graduating class, friends and families, tutors, volunteers, NCBC members and facilitators, community partners, board members and special guests. While it was a particularly bitter-sweet ceremony due to the end of our ONA grant, I was happy we had the opportunity to pay tribute to our colleague, Digna Johnson. I was also particularly grateful to honor our anniversary tutors with my friend John Kornreich, and to recognize our Community Partner of the Year, WL Concepts.

Recognition Night is always a special

occasion, but this year's event highlighted the changing times, first in my speech regarding all that has occurred this past year (between our move and our new building) but also in our program, as it reflects the political landscape and the changes our country has been facing. I believe that as we continue to forge ahead, it is in our best interest to keep a steadfast focus on the children and adults whose lives become richer as a result of our work. That's not just here in the office, but across the entire island, in the libraries, bookstores, and cafes where we meet with our students. We will continue to have much to celebrate if we remember what matters most: the gift of our service to those most in need.



Our John and Janet Kornreich Volunteer Anniversary Award recipients; (left to right) David Leibenhaut, Claire Deroche & Jessica Merkel and John Kornreich (far right)



Karen Micciche (center) with Bill (left) and James Levine (right), owners of WL Concepts and our Community Partner Award winners

THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

These past few weeks have been an absolute whirlwind! I feel like June is always like that. But this year, between Recognition Night (which was held at the very end of May), the start of grad school for my MFA, the end of school for my girls, Father's Day, t-ball, and a surprise birthday gift, I'm really tired!

I'm super excited to share details about the birthday surprise though. My (amazing) husband checked his testosterone at the door to bring me to a literary luncheon with two of my all-time favorite authors: Elin Hilderbrand and Jennifer Weiner! (Poor Chris was the only man in the room with the exception of the wait staff.) It was so cool to hear them both discuss their writing process, what inspires them, and how they navigate the struggles of being a famous author. Held at the exquisite Wequassett Resort in Chatham, MA, the lunch was an event to remember. And just in time for the start of my Master's degree in Writing (concentration in fiction). Who knows? Maybe one day I'll be a famous author too!

Karen 😊



Starstuck!! Here I am pictured with Elin Hilderbrand (above) and Jennifer Weiner (below)!



OG TUTORS AND STUDENTS AT 2019 RECOGNITION NIGHT

(submitted by Kim Nau)

At Recognition Night, we heard from one of our Orton-Gillingham parents, Lorin Luft, who passionately shared how her son has benefited from our tutoring program. She brought the crowd to tears with her heartfelt words about the impact that Literacy Nassau has had on her family.

All of our teachers spend their time volunteering with Literacy Nassau because they want to make a difference (whether it's for one person or many). At the event, OG tutor Jodie Calderon spoke about the professional knowledge she has gained through her experience working with her student, Brooke. I know that all of our OG tutors have truly made a difference in the children that they have been teaching and it was an honor to share the Recognition Night stage with them and their students.

We are currently recruiting and interviewing approximately 15 teachers for our OG faculty training program that will begin this August. This year, our program will include workshops for parents and networking meetings for tutors, so that they can share resources and their valuable experience. We look forward to continuing to grow and expand our donation-based tutoring center for children with dyslexia. Please call us at (516) 867.3580 for more information or visit us at www.literacynassau.org/whatisog

**Congratulations to our winner
Iris Grover
for being the 1st to respond to
our request of a book
recommendation and review. She
sent us 3 appealing ones and we
can't wait to read them!**



From Iris Grover: These are some of my highly recommended must reads! I hope you enjoy them as much as I did.

A Man Called Ove by Fredrik Blackman, which is humorous, heartwarming and tells a lot about human nature and relationships. The character Ove, is more than just an angry old man next door. This book illustrates the profound impact one life has on countless others. Wonderful book that was a bestseller for many years!

Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine by Gail Honeyman: This is also a bestselling book. Eleanor is a wonderful character, and she is written with insight, humor and compassion. This is soon to become a major motion picture.

Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens, is exciting and different, with an unusual main character who overcomes incredible circumstances to live her life the way she wants and needs to. A coming of age story mixed in a tale of murder.



Orton-Gillingham tutors: Kim Nau, Denise Hibbert, Kate Quijano, Karen Micciche, Jodie Calderon and Jennifer Southard
Students: Cristian, Andrew, John-Ryan, Hunter and Julianna



OG Tutor and speaker Jodie Calderon (left)

OG Parent Lorin Luft (right) whose son, Hunter, is tutored by Kate Quijano



Warm wishes to the following tutors born in July!

Barbara Alster – Janet Baram – George Bleckman – Eric Bonge – Sid Burgreen – David Caines – Janis Caravello – Deborah Cavaliere-Arden – Carol Ann Ceraldi – Andrew Corsi – Lou Deutsch – Maria DiCroce – Barbara DiPalmo – Helene Doleyres Nancy Falciano – Susan Fitzgerald – Ed Friedman – Gloria Glick Audrey Green – Anna Maria Iannetta – Elise Knauer – Carmen Lloyd – Helene Marcus – Christine Martin – Roseann Michelson Phyllis Modiano – Camille Mowatt – Lynn Newman – Nancy Reedy – Mary Jane Regan – Patricia Regan – Susan Risberg – Kevin Ryan – Dianne Saccone – Karen Santoro – Susan (Peedee) Shaw – Cynthia Spiletic – Trish Szendrey – Susan Woodward – Anne Zajac – Natalie Zephirin

BASIC LITERACY TUTOR OF THE YEAR WINNER

(submitted by Kate Quijano)

At this year's Recognition Night, I had the pleasure of presenting the BL Tutor of the Year Award to Mara Jacobowitz. Mara has been a tutor with Literacy Nassau for the past several years. She has been working 1:1 with Basic Literacy Students, individualizing their instruction and helping them to improve their reading and meet their goals. She is very dedicated in finding materials of unique interest to each of her students and in assigning homework and follow-up assignments to further improve their skills. Her students have shown tremendous growth.

This past year, as we began transitioning our Basic Literacy program from 1:1 into a small group model and started incorporating procedures from Orton Gillingham, we asked Mara if she would be willing to take this new training and take on a small group of students. We were delighted that she accepted. In addition to working with her previous 1:1 student, Mara began working with a new BL small group. She introduced the ladies in her group to a new method of instruction that they had not seen before. Her students reported making several attempts at learning to read in the past without success, but once they began working with her, they finally understood what it was all about. They were delighted to have grown so much this past year that they were able to include their written work in Open Door.

We are thankful for Mara's continued dedication to the students of Literacy Nassau and look forward to working with her again next year.

If you would like to follow in Mara's footsteps, we are in need of a few more Basic Literacy Tutors for small group instruction. BL groups have about 3-5 English speaking students who are reading below the 6th grade level. You will be trained in an introduction to Orton Gillingham procedures and provided with a curriculum and materials for the group to use. Groups meet in local libraries twice a week for 1 ½ hours. Once groups are matched, they will stay together permanently. As new students enroll, they will be added to ongoing groups that have available space.

If this sounds like an opportunity you would be interested in, please keep an eye on our website to see when our next BL training will be held. You can register for the training through this link <https://www.literacynassau.org/new-volunteers>



Literacy Nassau's Kate Quijano (center) with BL Tutor of the Year Mara Jacobowitz and BL student Patricia Chin

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE ONA CLASS OF 2019

(submitted by Cindy Cabrera)

On Thursday May 30th, our final Literacy Nassau ONA students graduated at our annual Recognition Night at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset. It was an evening filled with excitement, self-achievement, and new beginnings. For many of our English language learners, this was a dream come true. Some started out knowing not a word of English, and can now confidently carry out a conversation, write an e-mail, apply for a job, or communicate with a doctor - so this is a well-deserved reward.

We were lucky to have Digna Johnson join us at the event. We dedicated our graduating class to Digna's hard work and passion for our students. Thanks to her commitment, our graduates are able to embark on their pursuit of the American dream. They have gained many skills in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, listening, social skills, and cultural competencies. Our students will go on to find better employment, apply to higher educational programs, and more importantly they have the opportunity to thrive within their community.

This year, 44 graduates participated in the graduation ceremony. A certificate of program completion was presented to each graduate. Digna, Kate and I took pride in what we did as ONA teachers. We strategically prepared lessons that resulted in growth and success for all of our students. It's very rewarding to see how far many of our students have come.

I want to congratulate the many tutors who are responsible for getting these graduates to where they are today.



ONA teachers Kate Quijano, Digna Johnson and Cindy Cabrera with ONA students of the year. More graduates below.





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RECOGNITION NIGHT 2019: A STARFISH STORY

This is an excerpt from the speech given by Kim Nau. It reflects how we feel about all of our great volunteers.

One day, an old man was walking along a beach that was littered with thousands of starfish that had been washed ashore by the high tide. As he walked he came upon a young girl who was eagerly tossing the starfish back into the ocean, one by one.

Puzzled, the man looked at the girl and asked what she was doing. Without looking up from her task, the girl simply replied, "I'm saving these starfish, Sir."

The old man chuckled aloud, "There are thousands of starfish and only one of you. What difference can you make?"

The girl seemed crushed, suddenly deflated. But after a few moments, she bent down, picked up another starfish, and gently tossed it into the ocean. Then, she looked up at the man, smiled and replied, "Well, I made a difference to that one!"



Congratulations to ELL Tutors of the Year Elena Litescu (left), Richard Wieder and Helene Doleyes (pictured with Cindy) and Next Chapter Book Club Facilitator of the Year Carol Morris (right)



We would like to thank the committee of the WE CARE Fund and the Nassau Bar Foundation, Inc. for awarding us their generous grant of \$2,000. The funds will be used to offset the cost of our Orton-Gillingham donation based tutoring center for children with dyslexia. We could not continue to help these families and others without the support from partners like you!



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