

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

What You'll Find in this Issue:

Golf Outing	2
Fluency & Reading	3
New Board Member: Liza	4

Our Staff Team

Karen Micciche, Executive Director
 Anne-Marie Poliviou, Executive Assistant
 Kate Quijano, Senior Program Director
 Izabella Katz, Program Manager
 Julie Gaber, Program Coordinator
 Renae Katz, Bookkeeper

OG Tutors:

Jeannie Curtin, Shamika Lilavois,
 Stephanie Trees, Andrea Adams, Mary
 Baumgarten, Megan Best, Mary Biondillo,
 Sarah Cottrell, Lauren Degen, Ann Gordon,
 Annemarie Eng, Gina Macolino, Stacey Popkin,
 Andrea Riccobono, Donna Rocco,
 Susan Sangirardi, Judy Schoeppe

ESL Teachers:

Richard Aizer, Christine Brennan,
 Melissa Buchberger, Janice Collins,
 Chris Fields, Linda Ivans, Evelyn Korzendorfer,
 Nancy Schleyer, Steve Unter

Our Board of Directors

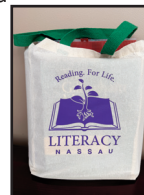
Melissa Golfo, (President), Merrill Lynch
 Wendy Ehrlich, (Treasurer), retired
 Daniela Gallina, (Secretary), Teacher
 Judith Beckman, (President Emeritus)
 Robert Castora, Channel Manager
 Richard Corrao Esq., Educational Attorney
 Allyson Grossman, Teacher
 Sal Morici, AT&T (retired)
 Lisa Palmieri, Teacher
 Richard Sanders, Editor (retired)
 Susan Santoro Esq., Attorney
 Liza Weinstein, Literacy Coach

ORTON-GILLINGHAM TRAININGS

(by Kate Quijano, Senior Program Director)

As a brand new OG Fellow finally planning and delivering trainings on my own, I undertook two courses this summer. The first was a Classroom Educator level course that ran on Fridays throughout July and part of August. This course is for general education teachers who want to have a better understanding of structured literacy and phonics and to be able to apply OG concepts to the general classroom setting for all of their students. This was the first time I ran this level of training and it was interesting to share more about how these concepts can be applied in whole class and small group settings. The trainees from this course will begin their practicum in their classrooms this fall and I will provide ongoing support as they apply their new learning.

My second course was an Associate level course delivered to a group of teachers in a school district. While I've conducted this course before, it was a big change to make sure to pack up everything I might need and drive it all off site. My husband even bought me a big wagon to wheel out all the materials for the trainees on the first day. It was a pleasure working with this dedicated group of teachers who will begin their practicum working with students in their district this fall. The Associate level course



is intended for special education teachers and reading specialists who intend to provide one on one individualized instruction for students with dyslexia or other learning disabilities. They will receive an additional five days of training throughout the school year so I will be visiting them again in their schools.

It was a busy summer of trainings and I am looking forward to working with the teachers as they complete their practicums this school year, observing their lessons, and mentoring them as they become more comfortable with the OG approach.

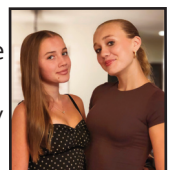
I am also looking forward to my final training of this school year: a virtual Associate level training that will run on Monday evenings beginning in October. I spent a lot of planning time over the summer modifying my usual activities to fit a virtual format and I am excited to see how that works out. This is an opportunity to offer OG training to a wider group of teachers as the virtual format allows anyone to join. I have several out of state teachers already registered and will be interested to learn more from them about how different states approach dyslexia intervention in their schools. While we are full and trainings are already underway for this school year, we hope you will be able to join us at a future training. Please check the website for updates later in the year. We look forward to continuing the spread our OG knowledge across our communities.

FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi everyone,

I can't believe I'm the parent of a high schooler. Haley started ninth grade this month and I am just beside myself. I've been the Executive Director here since before I had children, and many of you have been on this journey with me through all the ages and phases of parenthood. It's true what they say: "The days go slow, but the years go fast." I think our adult students have a similar experience with their own literacy journeys. Each small step feels monumental, until one day, you turn around and can't believe there was a time when you were ever a beginner.

This time of year marks the beginning of a new journey for many of us. For me, it's high school. For you, it might be becoming a grandparent for the first time. For some of our students, this fall will be the first time they ever stepped foot in a classroom in America. Whatever journey you're on, remember to give yourself grace. The missteps along the way actually create the path for us. The failures and mistakes show us the way. I look forward to a year of growth for all of us!



Karun ☺

CHARITY GOLF OUTING

(submitted by Karen Micciche, Executive Director)

On September 9th, Literacy Nassau hosted its 6th Annual Charity Golf Outing at Pelham Bay and Split Rock Golf Courses, 870 Shore Road, Bronx, New York. The annual fundraiser, with support from presenting event sponsor, Charlie Meaney's Bar and Grill, brought together golfers, business leaders, community organizations and supporters to raise essential funding for Literacy Nassau's programs that empower adults, strengthen families and expand opportunities through literacy education.

Registration began at 7:00 a.m. with breakfast, followed by an 8:00 a.m. modified shotgun start in a Best Ball format. The outing included a full day of golf, contests, networking, awards and a valuable opportunity for individuals and businesses to learn about Literacy Nassau's mission and history.

The proceeds of the event, which raised over \$10,000, will support Literacy Nassau's donation-based educational programs, including adult basic literacy instruction, English language education, Orton Gillingham tutoring for children with dyslexia and other language-based learning differences, and Next Chapter Book Clubs for adults with developmental disabilities.

"Literacy is the foundation for opportunity," said Melissa Golfo, Board President and Golf Chair. "When adults strengthen their reading, writing and communication skills, they gain confidence, qualify for better jobs, pursue educational opportunities, support their children's learning and become more engaged in their communities. Charlie Meaney's longstanding commitment, together with the generosity of our sponsors, golfers and volunteers, provides the resources that make this life changing work possible."

"The golf outing has become much more than a day on the course," said Mike Labeck, owner of Charlie Meaney's Bar and Grill. "It is an opportunity for our community to invest in individuals who are determined to improve their lives through education. Every golfer, sponsor and volunteer expands opportunities that create lasting change for individuals, families and our community. I am proud to support Literacy Nassau and its mission of opening doors through literacy."

Over 80 golfers attended the event this year, and almost 20 volunteers came out to support the event as well. "It takes a village," Golfo commented, "to put on a fundraiser of this size." Now that the event is over, plans for next year are already underway. If you would like to get involved, please contact Karen at kmicciche@literacynassau.org.



WELCOME ORTON-GILLINGHAM TUTOR: SHAMIKA LILAVOIS

My name is Shamika Lilavois and I am a Special Education Teacher with ten years of experience working with students with a wide range of learning needs. Over the past several years, my work has become increasingly focused on supporting students with dyslexia and those who struggle with reading.

I earned my bachelor's degree in Speech Pathology from Adelphi University and my master's degree in Education from Molloy College. I am also an Orton-Gillingham Academy Associate. My background in special education, along with my training in Orton-Gillingham, has shaped the way I approach my work with students. I value the diagnostic and prescriptive nature of OG because it allows me to look closely at what a student knows, identify where the breakdown is occurring, and determine what needs to come next.

One of my favorite parts of this work is seeing a student's confidence begin to change. Many of the students I work with have experienced frustration with reading, and it is incredibly rewarding to see what happens when they receive instruction that truly meets their needs.

I am excited to be part of Literacy Nassau and to begin working toward my Clinical certification through the Orton-Gillingham Academy. I look forward to continuing to grow as a practitioner while helping students become stronger and more confident readers.



FLUENCY AND READING COMPREHENSION IN-SERVICE TRAINING

(submitted by Kate Quijano, Senior Program Director)

I was pleased to meet with a group of our volunteers who wanted to learn more about reading fluency and comprehension. The training primarily focused on strategies for our BL students (adult students reading below a 6th grade level) and connected fluency and comprehension strategies to our BL curriculum. We also had some volunteers from our ELL and NCBC programs join us so we discussed how we could apply some of these strategies to students in those programs.



Fluency is considered to be the bridge between decoding and comprehension. In our initial work with BL students, we focus on building their phonemic awareness and phonics skills and teach them to blend sounds to accurately decode words. For beginning readers, this can be a slow, laborious task. As students improve their decoding skills, we want to start working on fluency strategies to increase their reading rate and help them to attend to phrasing and prosody rather than rote word by word reading. Being able to read with fluency and not expend as much effort decoding, increases students' ability to focus on comprehension.

We talked about echo reading, partner reading, and choral reading and participants had an opportunity to role play using each of them. These are all great ways to support students' fluency and prosody and help their reading "sound like talking." It is important to choose text that students can decode easily and which only includes concepts that you have already taught (controlled, decodable text).

Everyone participated in a fun activity, using "Silly Voice Cards." This is a strategy to promote repeated readings of sentences to increase prosody. The student is provided with a stack of picture cards of different characters. For each sentence, the student reads it first in their regular voice, focusing on decoding and understanding the sentence. Then they pull a silly voice card, and read the sentence again in the voice of that character. For example, if you pull the card with the opera singer, you have to sing the sentence in a high pitched voice. These repeated readings increase automaticity because the words have already been decoded and students can read more quickly the next time.



Next we discussed different text structures such as compare & contrast, problem & solution, cause & effect, description, and sequence. Participants each had a short passage to read and were then asked to identify the type of text structure. It is important for students to understand that different texts have different purposes for reading. Understanding the structure and what to expect from it can aid comprehension. We also looked at various graphic organizers that align with each text structure.

It was a great opportunity for volunteers across different programs to get together and share ideas. Our dedicated volunteers are always seeking new ways to engage their students and support them in their journey to become stronger readers. Thank you so much for joining us and I hope to see you again at our next in-service training.



WELCOME JULIE GABER: PROGRAM COORDINATOR

My educational and professional background has centered on counseling, education, and helping individuals achieve their academic, personal, and career goals. I earned both my Bachelors of Arts in Psychology with a minor in Sociology and my Master of Science in Education with a specialization in School Counseling from Queens College.



Throughout my career, I worked as a high school guidance counselor, supported individuals with autism at Giant Step Services, and spent over 12 years as Supervisor of Guidance, ESL, and GED Departments for the Great Neck Public School District. I also worked as a Lead Career Consultant with Career Employment Opportunities, where I provided career counseling, taught career development skills, and helped students prepare for employment. I have also earned my Career Counselor and Life Coach Certification and remain committed to supporting individuals in reaching their goals.

I am eager to begin the next chapter of my professional development through Orton-Gillingham Training. I look forward to learning this structured, sequential, and multi-sensory approach to literacy instruction and supporting individuals with dyslexia and other reading challenges.

In addition to training for the Associate level of OG, I am joining Literacy Nassau as the new Program Coordinator. I look forward to overseeing the day to day activities of our adult ELL, BL, and NCBC programs. I will be coordinating with staff, volunteers, libraries, and students to bring our adult learners the best possible instruction. If you need support or have any questions feel free to email me at jgaber@literacynassau.org.





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

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBER, LIZA WEINSTEIN

(submitted by Karen Micciche, Executive Director)

Liza Weinstein is a literacy educator and coach with more than a decade of experience supporting students, teachers, and school communities across New York City. She began her career as an elementary teacher in ICT, ENL, and General Education settings, where she developed a deep commitment to literacy instruction, multilingual learner support, and culturally responsive, inquiry-driven teaching.

Liza served as an Academic Intervention Support Teacher at PS 1 Alfred E. Smith School, implementing Tier 2 phonics interventions and partnering with school leadership to accelerate literacy growth. Previously, she taught fourth and fifth grades at PS 1, where she helped pilot a shared ELA curriculum while supporting multilingual learners and students with disabilities.

Liza currently serves as the UFT Teacher Center District 28 Literacy Coach, supporting schools in the implementation of NYC Reads. In this role, she works closely with educators and school leaders to strengthen literacy practices through professional learning, one-on-one coaching, model lessons, and side-by-side teaching. She holds an M.A. in TESOL from New York University and a B.S. in Childhood Education from Pennsylvania State University.



Liza is excited about the opportunity to serve on the board of Literacy Nassau because she believes literacy is foundational to opportunity, confidence, and lifelong learning. Having grown up on Long Island, she feels a strong connection to the community and is eager to contribute her experience in literacy education, teacher development, and advocacy to an organization making a meaningful difference locally.

Outside of education, Liza is an avid traveler and the founder of LMW Travel, a passion inspired by her childhood experiences visiting family in Mexico City. Her love of travel and different cultures continues to broaden her perspective and shape the way she connects with and learns from diverse communities.

Follow us on Social Media!



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