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Jerry Pinkney Finds Strength in His Art

The Reading Center welcomed Jerry Pinkney to our Bright Stars event on November 13. Jerry was chosen to be our keynote speaker because of his lifetime of accomplishments as an author and illustrator who also has dyslexia.

Early years – Struggles and Strengths

Jerry grew up in Philadelphia in the 1940s. He knew by the first grade that reading was going to be a struggle. Like many of our students, **Jerry says he can still “remember the pain and the exhaustion and the amount of energy” he spent at school.**

He doesn't remember anyone trying to figure out why reading was so difficult. And he doesn't remember hearing the word dyslexia until he was in his 40s. **But he is thankful that his parents shared their positive and encouraging outlook.** And he is thankful that he was never made to feel bad or inadequate at his academic shortcomings. But he does remember that even in his early life, he knew he had a gift for creating art. He remembers teachers appointing him class artist so he could show his strengths. And he says his mother's encouragement was like the “wind at my back.”

“I noticed I could do something the other kids couldn't...I had a talent. I drew great satisfaction from making pictures and was acutely aware of how it centered my being, enabling me to focus...Drawing carried the weight of my deficiency.”

Finding his Strengths

Jerry has made a career out of his greatest strength – illustrating, especially with watercolor. He feels lucky that his family always encouraged his interest in art. He says drawing enabled him to focus.

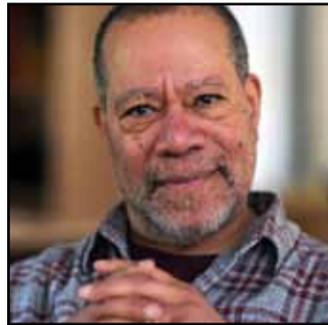
At age 11, he worked at a newsstand and took a drawing pad with him. He sketched people who walked by. That is how he met fellow

Philadelphian and famed cartoonist John Liney (famous for the *Henry* daily comic strip) who encouraged him to keep drawing. Jerry says, **“That was the first time I had the experience of being acknowledged as someone who had the potential to make art for a living.”**

Jerry completed a commercial art program at Murrell Dobbins Vocational High School. It was there he met his future wife, Gloria Jean. He then attended, on full scholarship, a program at the Philadelphia Museum College of Art (now University of the Arts) in Philadelphia.

Becoming an Artist

With his degree, Jerry and Gloria moved to Boston where he worked as a designer at Rustcraft Greeting Card Company and then at Barker-Black Studio as an illustrator. With his reputation growing, he opened Kaleidoscope Studio with two other artists before opening his own freelance studio – Jerry Pinkney Studio, where he remains today.



Jerry Pinkney

“I truly believe dyslexia made me the achiever I am in my art, and it made me who I am as a person.”

He found a great partner in Gloria both as a wife and co-collaborator. Gloria authored some of the children's books Jerry illustrated. She also did all of his paperwork freeing him up to do what he did best – create award winning illustrations.

Award Winning Career

Since he was 25, Jerry has illustrated more than 100 children's books and received more than 100 awards. Many of his books celebrate African American and multicultural themes.

Jerry's work was recognized by the US Postal Service when he was asked to create 12 postage stamps for the Black Heritage Series. He was asked by NASA to join the art team to commemorate the space shuttle Columbia. In 2003, he was invited by First Lady Laura Bush to illustrate the White House Christmas program for the Visitors Center. Mr. Pinkney was invited to serve on the National Council for the Arts from 2003-2009.

(continued on page 4)

Greetings from the Chair

As you know, the Reading Center has embarked on a **three-year plan to increase the number of students we serve by 56%**. I am pleased to report that we are moving forward toward this goal and seeing great progress in our first year. Our increased outreach and awareness initiatives are bringing more students to us, especially those wanting tutoring services. We have trained and hired more tutors to help reduce our waiting list. But these successes have presented a large challenge.

As our student numbers grow – up by 10% over last year – the need for scholarship dollars has increased. It is fantastic that new families are seeking help, **but it stretches our scholarship budget to the breaking point**. We are projecting that we may spend 50% more for scholarships during the 2016-17 school year than we anticipated.

If our services are only attainable by families with high incomes, too many children are left out.

That is unacceptable. If we cannot increase our funds for scholarships substantially, we will be unable to meet the demands, and we will have to turn away any additional students in need of tutoring and scholarships for the rest of the school year. We don't want to do that.

We are confident that our supporters will help us **meet the need as you have in the past**. The money raised at the Dyslexia Dash and at our 65th Bright Stars Celebration will go toward student scholarships and programs. If you have yet to decide if you will donate to a nonprofit before the end of 2016, consider a donation to our scholarship program.

The Reading Center has just celebrated 65 years of serving students and families. **We are in an exciting time of growth and are thrilled at how much progress we have made thus far** – from a basement operation to one looking at expansion into a new 12,000 sq. ft. building. You are all a part of this growth and progress. Thank you for helping the Reading Center reach our potential by assisting more students with dyslexia.



Kirk Kotschade
Board Chair

From the Executive Director's Desk



Cindy Russell
Executive Director

October was declared Dyslexia Awareness month nationally, and many groups like the Reading Center, Decoding Dyslexia and the International Dyslexia Association offered community events to raise awareness, answer questions and connect people to reliable services.

One of the common themes of these events is the **showcasing of people with neurodiverse brains and their accomplishments**. In one of our events, we welcomed three Reading Center alumni to speak at

our Adults with Dyslexia Panel at the Rochester Public Library. I was struck, like I always am, at the perseverance of those with dyslexia to get through their school experience oftentimes struggling and not knowing why. And how, despite challenges in school and oftentimes continued challenges with reading while an adult, their humor, intelligence and creative thinking shines through.

John Kottschade, owner of Ashley's Hallmark store in Rochester, is a Reading Center alum and dad to two boys struggling with reading. When asked a question about his strengths as a person with dyslexia, he told a personal story about **telling his boys that dyslexia is their superpower**. That the way their brains solve problems will be an asset to them as they grow older. We embraced that theme as well during our Dyslexia Dash. And Jerry Pinkney spoke about his superpower as an artist at the 65th celebration event.



Zeb Dudek, John Kottschade and Lois Shub
Reading Center Alumni at our Adults with Dyslexia Panel on Oct 10

Our other panelists, **Zeb Dudek**, a member of the Rochester Scottish Rite and employed by Olmsted County, and **Lois Shub**, retired psychologist and former member of the Reading Center Board, shared their insights with our audience as well. I love how Zeb shared his confidence at work noting how he is open with his employer about his dyslexia and asked for and uses accommodations to do his job well. I was so happy to hear that while Lois was diagnosed well after her high school graduation, her nephews benefitted from her openness about her own dyslexia; and with early intervention, they are excelling in their own academic and professional careers.

These events make a difference – by helping the parent or teacher of a student with dyslexia better understand struggling readers, or to give a person with dyslexia a glimpse of what their future can look like with the right supports. Thanks to everyone who participated in these awareness events. I am proud of the community that makes up The Reading Center.

2016 Bright Stars Event and 65th Anniversary Celebration

Art as Manuscript

A Reading Center Event, featuring Jerry Pinkney

Last month 250 guests attended our Bright Stars Event celebrating our 65 years of teaching struggling readers. On November 13 we enjoyed a wonderful meal and comradery at the Rochester International Event Center. Guests enjoyed complimentary appetizers and drinks, courtesy of Andy Chafoulias and Pepsi Gillette of Rochester.

Our annual Bright Stars event brings dyslexia awareness and inspirational dialogue with a successful adult dyslexic in our community. Our guest this year was award winning illustrator, Jerry Pinkney. Two events were offered. **The first was a FREE family friendly event**, hosted by the Rochester Public Library. A lively group of young children saw a demonstration of Mr. Pinkney's artistic talent and heard from him a message of perseverance and embracing your strengths.

At our 65th Anniversary celebration, we enjoyed a program that included remarks from our co-founder **Jean Osman** and **Sharon Rome**, daughter-in-law of our other co-founder, Paula Rome. One of our student alumni, **Tim Jirik**, now a high school junior, spoke about the skills and confidence his Reading Center experience provided.

Jerry Pinkney provided our keynote address. He spoke about his **struggles with reading**, but also about the strengths that dyslexia has provided to him – namely his incredible artistic vision.

Generous matching fund challenges were issued by the Mayo Clinic (\$5,000) and Rochester Scottish Rite Children's Foundation (\$5,000). **Our donors were up to the challenge and our Bright Stars event (with matching funds) raised more than \$33,000 for The Reading Center programs and scholarships.** We knew that our faithful donors would come through and meet this wonderful challenge!

Tom Overlie of KTTC was warmly welcomed as our energetic event emcee.

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Jerry Pinkney and The Reading Center co-founder Jean Osman



Jerry Pinkney with kids at the Free Family Event offered by The Reading Center at the Rochester Public Library

The Reading Center welcomed John Caldwell to our Board of Directors this past July. Welcome John!

John Caldwell is the Vice President of Credit Administration at Think Mutual Bank. John and his wife of five years, Shelly Caldwell, live in Rochester. John has served as a member of our Finance Committee and Dyslexia Dash planning committee for two years, and co-chaired the 2016 Bright Futures Friends Campaign.



John Caldwell
Think Mutual Bank

Q: You are not a native of Rochester. Why did you decide to make Rochester home?

John: Shelly and I moved to Rochester in October of 2013 from St. Cloud. We moved here for my management position at US Bank, while Shelly was a Sales Representative for Marco already covering the Rochester area. We both really enjoy the great environment and the people here in Rochester. It has been a wonderful experience.

Q: You work in banking. Where are you working now?

John: I recently joined Think Mutual Bank as the Vice President of Credit Administration. In this position I oversee the bank's credit and underwriting departments. Prior to that, I was the Commercial Lending Team Lead at US Bank. I have been in the Banking industry for over 20 years and enjoy what I do every day.

Q: What do you like to do outside of work?

John: Shelly and I enjoy spending time together doing outside activities such as biking, jogging, and kayaking. I am an avid golfer and enjoy getting away during the winter months to warmer climates to play golf and relax. I officiate high school and college football and basketball when I am not golfing. It has been a rewarding experience to stay involved with these sports long after my playing days. I am also a member of the Sertoma Club of Rochester.

Q: How did you get involved with the Reading Center?

John: I learned about The Reading Center from (local businessman and Reading Center alumni) Joe Powers and his involvement with the organization. As an elementary school student, I struggled with reading and spelling and received assistance from great teachers that gave me additional attention outside of the regular class room exercises. I know what a tremendous difference these teachers made in my education, and I want to help The Reading Center grow to help as many struggling students, like I was, to be successful in school and more importantly being successful in life.

Q: What skills or experiences do you hope to bring to the Reading Center?

John: I hope that I can bring my passion for helping as many students as possible who are struggling with reading. Reading is essential to all areas of our education and quite often determines the future success in life. As the Reading Center looks to expand, I hope to contribute my experience in commercial real estate and finance.

Q: What is your favorite book?

John: I am not an avid reader, but I do enjoy reading to learn about history and historical United States figures such as US Presidents, Alexander Hamilton, and generals from the Civil War.

Welcome John!

RC donors provide 250 tutoring sessions during Statewide Online Giving Event

Supporters logged on and gave November 17th

40 donors logged on November 17 and donated on Give to the Max Day, raising \$6,525 for the mission of The Reading Center! The Rochester Scottish Rite Children's Foundation offered a generous matching fund in the amount of \$5,000 for donations to the Reading Center through GiveMN.org. The entire amount of the match was utilized!

With the matching grant, you provided \$11,525 for scholarships and programs at the Reading Center in only one day! This equals 250 tutoring sessions for children in need. Thank you!

Thank you for making a difference to children who struggle to read. Our supporters are instrumental in making Reading Center programs and scholarships possible for students. Every little bit adds up to big progress for struggling students. Thank you!



(Pinkney continued from page 1)

He served as Art professor at the University of Delaware and State University of New York at Buffalo. In addition, he has completed 30 one-man exhibitions.

The number of artistic commendations, awards and medals are too numerous to write here. **He has five Caldecott Honor Medals, five Coretta Scott King Awards, five New York Times Best Illustrated Awards, four Gold and four Silver medals from the Society of Illustrators, the Boston Globe Honor Book Award, and The Laura Ingalls Wilder Award, to name a few!**

His book, *The Lion and the Mouse*, won the Caldecott Medal in 2010 and in 2016 he was awarded the Coretta Scott King - Virginia Hamilton Award for lifetime achievement. His books are translated into 16 languages and published in 14 countries. He has been selected to receive the "Nobel Prize of Children's Literature" in 2018, The Hans Christian Andersen Award.

A Life Filled with Accomplishments

Jerry and Gloria now live in Westchester County, New York just south of New York City. They raised 4 children and have 7 grandchildren. Now 76 years old, Jerry enjoys traveling and presenting at events like the Bright Stars Event where he can inspire a new generation of young people who may struggle in one area but are fated to success in another.

"For the young person who is struggling in school, never forget there are many different ways to learn. Be curious. Do not be afraid to try. Do not be disappointed when making mistakes."

It's a Bird. It's a Plane. It's the 3rd Annual Dyslexia Dash!

A record number of runners and walkers enjoy a beautiful day to support the cause

On Oct 8, costumed runners new and old came out to support The Reading Center at our Superhero Dyslexia Dash. **This year was our most attended yet with 159 registered superheroes** – we mean runners and walkers! Reading Center alum, Ben Tilson, was our event emcee and got the festivities started with an inspirational pep talk. An enthusiastic group of more than 40 kids ran the 1 mile fun run followed by a larger group in the 5K at 9:45. **Congrats to Jeremy Keller**

who came in first with a time of 20:37.

Thanks to our sponsors for supporting the event including Pasquale's Neighborhood Pizzeria for the free pizza for every participant! This family friendly event is one we hope to see you at next year!

In all, almost \$8,000 was raised to support scholarships and programs that benefit students with dyslexia. Thank you to our sponsors, volunteers and participants!



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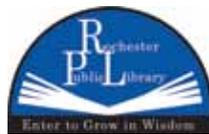
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August 20, 2016 - November 17th, 2016

We would like to acknowledge and thank all of you who have so generously pledged or donated to the Reading Center. We strive to list our donors accurately, but occasionally we make a mistake. If your donation has been omitted, your entry is misspelled or put in a wrong giving level, please contact Sarah Carlson-Wallrath at scarlsonwallrath@thereadingcenter.org.

If you would like to make a contribution, please use our secure online server at www.TheReadingCenter.org, contact us at 507-288-5271, or use the enclosed envelope.

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Have you included The Reading Center/
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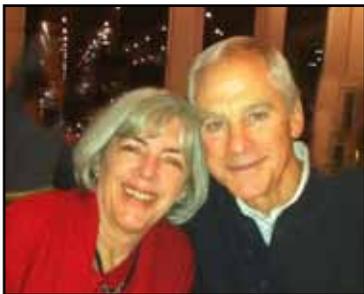
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Donor Spotlight



Chris and Leo Stern

The Sterns make a difference for struggling readers

Leo and Christine Stern of North Oaks, Minnesota, have been long time supporters of The Reading Center. Leo's mother, June, was a lover of books but also had dyslexia, a fact she did not learn until she was 70 years old. Before June passed away at age 92, she began a foundation to help teachers learn how to help struggling readers.

The June Stern Family Foundation was

born. And over the years the Reading Center has benefited greatly from its efforts.

Leo and Chris have been steadfast supporters not only of The Reading Center but also the International Dyslexia Association, forming partnerships with key education leaders to teach structured literacy in teacher preparation classes. This vision culminated last year in the creation of the **Stern Family Professorship in Reading Success at the University of Minnesota**. The holder of the professorship will provide instruction in the teaching of reading to early childhood and elementary teachers with an emphasis on the struggling reader.

Thank you Sterns for your generosity and your vision!

Former Student, Hannah Johnson wins IDA UMB story contest!

Hannah nominates her tutor, Sue Christenson

Hannah Johnson, a Reading Center alum, knew right away that her tutor, Sue Christenson, deserved an award. The International Dyslexia Association, Upper Midwest Branch was offering an iPad for both the student and the teacher, in their recent prize offered during Dyslexia Awareness Month, and Hannah applied. She only had one day to write the essay, something that was not easy for her, but it was worth it. After she finished with her homework that Thursday evening, she stayed up until 11:30 p.m. to finish the nomination essay.

The result? Hannah's story was selected to win the prize! Both Hannah and Sue won iPads, and Sue was honored for changing Hannah's life through her tutoring relationship with her. Congratulations, to both Sue and Hannah.

Here is an excerpt of Hannah's nomination essay:

"My name is Hannah Johnson, I am almost 16 years old and I'm a 10th grader in Byron High School. I have always had trouble with reading and writing.

My mom said she noticed right away in preschool but no one would listen and thought that I was just not developing as quickly as others. She even put me in a special preschool with extra help and smaller classes. She kept asking my teachers as I got older and they kept saying the same things, that I was just a slow learner.

That started my journey to finding The Reading Center. After going through every possible program for learning disabilities including three years of special reading classes in school, Sylvan Learning Center and a specialist that we traveled hours to see in another city, we finally heard about The Reading Center.

I was so done with all the testing and I just didn't think I could do it again, but my mom made me go and I'm so glad that she did. They finally told us what my mom thought all along, I have Dyslexia, and not just one kind!

Then I met Sue Christenson. . . We just clicked and she thought that she could help me make more progress quicker than I was. . . She helped my mom get my school to implement a 504 plan so I could have a better chance to succeed in a normal classroom. She was like part of our family and was always checking to make sure I completed my lessons, even when I didn't want to review them. Now I am able read and understand complicated grammar, I still struggle with retention but have the skills to make that better and I am finally feeling better about school. I also spend every summer helping kids like myself during the Best of Basics program offered by The Reading Center, thanks to Sue.

My only regret is not finding Sue earlier because I wouldn't have missed out on so many school extra-curricular activities and fun classes like art and music and technology because I was sitting in special learning disabled class. I know that I will continue to struggle with my Dyslexia, but with the skills that Sue has taught me I am sure to succeed! I still call her and we talk and she gives me advice. Remember, for everyone who has Dyslexia, it does not define you!"



Hannah Johnson with a Best of Basics Summer Program student



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**These classes and events are open for
registration now at www.TheReadingCenter.org**

Save the Date!

WINTER 2017

Jan. 19 - Mar. 16, 2017.....Winter Basic OG Training Institute
Learn to be a tutor for people with dyslexia
Ask us about tuition reimbursements!

Tuesdays, Jan 24 - Mar 28, 2017.....Writing: From Words to Works
3:45 - 5:15pm (grades 6-8)

Thursdays, Jan. 26 - Mar 30, 2017.....Study Skills and Reading Comprehension
3:45 - 5:15pm (grades 7-11)

SUMMER 2017 - Registration to open soon!

July 10 - Aug 4, 2017.....Best of Basics Summer Program for students

June 7 - Aug 19, 2017.....ONLINE Basic Training Institute

June 15-29, 2017.....Advanced OG Training Institute

July 13 - Aug 3, 2017.....Summer Basic OG Training Institute

We need your help!



The Reading Center needs to update our records to better keep in contact with you. Enclosed is a form asking for some updated contact information as well as your thoughts and opinions on programming of interest to our supporters. Please either complete the enclosed form and mail/drop it off at the Reading Center, or complete the same form online at www.thereadingcenter.org. **Two random completed forms will be drawn to receive a \$5 Caribou gift card.** Thank you!



Tim Jirik, alumni speaker and Jerry Pinkney at the Bright Stars / 65th Anniversary Celebration