

The Reading Center

Dyslexia Institute of Minnesota

www.TheReadingCenter.org



Fall 2017

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DYSLEXIA INSTITUTE OF MINNESOTA

"Toward Literacy for All"

From Struggling Pre-schooler to a Confident 2nd grader

The Reading Center's Reading Readiness program was started more than 10 years ago to find and help struggling students before they entered elementary school. **It was Quinn Ellingson's first exposure to Orton-Gillingham – and it made a huge improvement in his life!**

Quinn: Imaginative Artist and Struggling Reader

Kevin and Julie Ellingson's son Quinn has a great imagination. He is creative. He is a deep thinker and is very in tune to other people's feelings. He loves to recreate scenes from movies or music videos. He acts them out or draws the characters and uses them to act it out. He has a remarkable eye for detail, so his drawings are very precise.

Quinn also needs and likes movement so it was not surprising that Quinn was diagnosed with Sensory Processing Disorder. A later evaluation by the school district also noted a Specific Learning Disability.

Thinking back, Julie reports that the earliest sign that Quinn had a learning disability was that his learning was very inconsistent. When he was a toddler, he would play with an alphabet puzzle; and he might know most of the letters one day, and the next day he would only know a few. This wasn't just for a short period of time while he was learning his letters; it went on for a couple of years, and his progress didn't change. Other learning tasks had similar results, and Julie and Kevin were at a loss for why the things that he had learned just didn't seem to stick. **The only constant was that his learning was inconsistent. Julie says, "Of course, we now know that inconsistency is the hallmark of a learning disability."**

Quinn started school at Rochester Montessori School when he was 5. His teachers were noticing the same inconsistencies in his learning. He knew the sounds of each letter, but he couldn't blend them together to make words. He made very little progress in reading in the first year of school and required re-teaching on many of the lessons.

Julie says, "Even as a kindergartener, he was aware that the other kids were progressing in their reading faster than he was. He would come home and tell us about how the other kids were moving up to higher level books, and he wasn't even reading books yet. He began to be unenthusiastic about going to school."

Quinn's teachers at Montessori recommended that Quinn enroll in The Reading Center's Best of Basics (BoB) Summer Program, noting they had seen many kids make great progress in just the two week session. Our BoB program has a special class for younger kids, many of whom are entering kindergarten or had struggled to keep up in kindergarten.



Quinn Ellingson turned from a struggling reader to a confident one after completing our Reading Readiness program.

Quinn enrolled in BoB after his kindergarten year, and Julie states that "it truly did make a huge difference in Quinn's ability and his desire to read. Before the program, he had gotten very discouraged with trying to blend letters to make words. During the two weeks, he got really excited about reading. He felt more confident, and he began to make progress."

When he returned to school in the fall for first grade, the school said Quinn had made tremendous progress. Julie remains so grateful to his teachers for making that recommendation.

Continuing to Learn

Quinn continued to attend Reading Club with his parents the past two school years. **Quinn's academic skills didn't just improve but excelled.** By the end of first grade, he was reading above grade level and no longer qualifies for an IEP at school for a learning disability.

Jan Hagedorn is the instructor during Best of Basics for the youngest learners and also for Reading Club throughout the year. Julie says, **"Jan has been a wonderful resource. If Quinn has trouble with a reading concept at school, we know that we can always ask Ms. Jan; she will come up with**

(continued on pg. 5)

Greetings from the Chair

Greetings!

This is such a great time of year for The Reading Center. **October is Dyslexia Awareness month, and we have five events in September and October to celebrate it.** The 4th annual **Superhero Dyslexia Dash** is October 7, our **Dyslexia Simulation** is on October 11, and our **Open House with a presentation on testing** will be on October 26. New this year, on October 16, we will have a **Panel Discussion on new dyslexia laws** with Senator Carla Nelson and Decoding Dyslexia, MN. Learn how these laws will impact you and your student. Registration for all of these events is available on our website, www.TheReadingCenter.org.



Kirk Kottschade
Board Chair

Our preeminent Bright Stars event this fall will mark our first year celebrating dyslexia and film. Please join us for our **Dyslexia Film Festival to be held on September 27. All of the films to be showcased were written or directed by someone with dyslexia.**

This event is timed to coincide with the release of the late Vince Flynn's first movie featuring the beloved character Mitch Rapp. *American Assassin* will have just been released to theaters Sept. 15. Vince Flynn was a St. Paul, MN writer with dyslexia who had more than 14 New York Times Bestselling books to his credit.

In addition we will welcome **Reading Center alumnus, Mark Brecke. Mark is an acclaimed film documentarian.** We will show his film, *They Turned Our Desert into Fire* about the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Darfur, Sudan. Mark will also show a 15 minute preview of his film about the tradition of cinema in Somalia.

We will also welcome **Tamara Rosenfeld, a person with dyslexia who has written and directed Emmy-winning shows for television.** Tamara will start by showing a preview of her new film, *Equal Playing Field*, a film about women in sport. She will show the "Women of The Ice" episode she directed for Hallmark/ Feeln's series *Wonder Women* and Emmy nominated episode "Virgilio," which she directed for Netflix's series *Chef's Table*.

We will also show the family classic *ET*, directed by dyslexic filmmaker Steven Spielberg.

Tickets for the Dyslexia Film Festival are available on our website, www.TheReadingCenter.org. **Your ticket includes admission to one of the four films in the line-up, a pop and popcorn from the concession stand, and the opportunity to learn from our panel of guest directors about their work and their experiences with dyslexia.**

This is an awareness and fundraising event. Donations will fund scholarships and programs for our students. Due to the generosity of the Rochester Scottish Rite Children's Foundation and Mayo Clinic the first \$10,000 in donations made will be matched!

You won't want to miss these fall events! I will see you there!

From the Executive Director's Desk

It passed! **Reading Center supporters like you from across the state were instrumental in persuading legislators to include The Reading Center's bonding provision in the 2017 state-wide capital investment bill.** Our provision will provide The Reading Center/Dyslexia Institute of Minnesota with \$1.5 million to help build a new facility that will house our growing programming. As is standard with bonding bills, **The Reading Center will match that \$1.5 million with privately raised funds**, so that in the end, we will be able to build a \$3 million building.



Cindy Russell
Executive Director

Where are we in the process now? The Reading Center is considering a piece of property in the West Circle Drive area, being offered to us by the owners at a substantial discount from fair market value. It is wonderful that property owners are willing to make a significant contribution to our mission with an in-kind donation of land when they could have sold it for much more. Look for an announcement to come after we have completed this process.

Less exciting but necessary, we are talking with City and County officials about all of the important details related to building on a piece of property in Rochester. And we are working with our bonding partner, Olmsted County, to hammer out the details on how to proceed in the process with the state.

There will be a public announcement about a Capital Campaign to be launched by The Reading Center in the spring of 2018. Our great friends and supporters, Drs. Terri and Brooks Edwards, and Joe Powers, are Co-Chairing the *Unleashed to Succeed* Capital Campaign. Events and details are lining up, and you will hear more about this effort in the near future.

Thank YOU for making calls and sending emails to your legislators over the last two legislative sessions. **Many thanks to Sen. Carla Nelson and Rep. Nels Pierson for authoring and championing our bills and to Sen. Dave Senjem for shepherding it through the Senate Capital Investment Committee and the whole negotiation process.** And especially, thank you to retired Sen. Leroy Stumpf, whose advocacy for the cause of dyslexia and for the mission of The Reading Center gave our little bonding bill the strength to succeed in a very competitive bonding year. Stay tuned.

Reading Center Welcomes New Board Members



Carl Anderson is a distinguished Reading Center alum

The Reading Center **thanked our outgoing board members, Jeff Price, Mike Fogarty, Jr. and Dr. Joyce Balls-Berry**, at our June board meeting. We also **voted three new board members to the Board of Directors Carl Anderson, Ginger Holmes, and Charles Brust. Look for Ginger and Charles' introductions in upcoming newsletters.**

New board member, Carl F. Anderson, brings a wealth of legal experience to the board. Since 1989 Carl has been a practicing attorney in Rochester, having earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and his law degree from William Mitchell College of Law.

Carl is also an alumnus of The Reading Center. In elementary school, when he was struggling to read and was falling behind his classmates, his parents grew dissatisfied with the help he was receiving at school. They brought Carl to The Reading Center where he was tested for dyslexia and later tutored by beloved tutor, Jean Walters.

Carl says, **"I remember one of my proudest moments as a child was being moved from the lowest reading group to the highest reading group. Learning strategies to deal with my dyslexia changed my life.** While I credit my parents as strong advocates and avid readers themselves, a great deal of the credit must go to The Reading Center and the wonderful tutor I was matched with."

One of Carl's sons was also diagnosed with dyslexia; he was tutored by Nola Christiana, for six years when he was young, ending services after he began reading at a college level. Carl says, "The Reading Center provided critical help that I needed to be academically successful; and, as a parent of a dyslexic child, I have seen it help him become a confident and successful student."

Carl has become an avid reader in adulthood, enjoying reading biographies, historical non-fiction, and all types of fiction. He frequents an independent bookstore, Beagle Books, near his cabin in Park Rapids, to pick up something to read on the dock.

As a board member, **Carl plans to help make Reading Center services available to as many struggling students as possible.**

Carl is married to his wife Sherri and has three children: Margaret, who is a junior at the U of Minnesota – Twin Cities, Ian, who is in South Korea as a Rotary Youth Exchange student, and Freddie, who is a junior at Mayo High School.

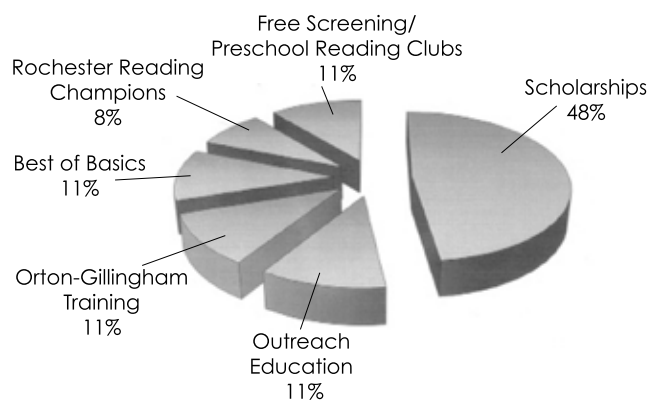
2017 Bright Futures Campaign Results

Great news! The final tally for the 2017 Bright Futures Campaign is done, and we are pleased to report that we more than surpassed our goal. **In total, we raised more than \$84,000 – 112% of our original goal of \$75,000!!** Thank you, thank you for all of your donations to The Reading Center's mission. **Funds will be allocated to scholarships for students in our tutoring program, classes and training institutes.**

We extend a special thanks to the **Rochester Scottish Rite for their donation in memory of their friend Al Koenig and to Jeff Price and Rochester Concrete Products** for their generous donation of matching funds. We could not have met our goal without them, and without YOU!

Thank you to our campaign leaders and volunteers: **Nicole Blegen** (Campaign General Chair), **John Caldwell** (Board Campaign Chair), **Lora Keller** (Staff and ALT Campaign Chair), **Danny Bucknell** (Friends Campaign Chair), and our core volunteers who made phone calls at our contact parties: Erin Olson, Rebecca Frokjer, Lindsay Schroeder, Jordan Rakes, Zach Peterson, Christine Maki, Mary Heise, Malachi McNeilus, Mickey Elias, Nate Liesse, Sarah Kohn, Chelsea Cliff, Mitch Hardsaw, Lené Heise, Kirk Kottschade, Lindsey Salfer, Jennifer Gowin and Dr. Terri Edwards. **Special thanks to Sterling State Bank, Elias Construction and Premier Banks for encouraging volunteers to attend!**

How we'll invest your dollar



2017 Dyslexia Awareness Events

Mark your Calendar for our September/October Events

October is Dyslexia Awareness month. The Reading Center is holding 5 events in September/October to help our community understand our mission, dyslexia, and how the one in five persons with dyslexia is contributing to our communities.

Sept. 27: Dyslexia Film Festival, our annual Bright Stars Event

Time: 5:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Location: Wehrenberg Theater, 4340 Main Avenue SE, Rochester, MN

Join us for our Dyslexia Film Festival that will focus on the outstanding accomplishments of dyslexics in the field of filmmaking.



The event will feature several films written or directed by a dyslexic filmmaker. We have timed this event with the release of the first film based on the work of the late author, Vince Flynn. Flynn was a Minnesota born and raised person with dyslexia, and the author of 14 *New York Times* Bestselling novels. **The film, *American Assassin*, is the first film based on Mr. Flynn's beloved character, Mitch Rapp. Dyslexic Filmmakers Mark Brecke and Tamara Rosenfeld will be part of a film makers panel, and their films will be available for viewing. We will also show the family classic *ET*, directed by dyslexic filmmaker Steven Spielberg. This event is appropriate for all ages.**

Tickets for this event can be purchased at www.TheReadingCenter.org.

Oct. 7th: 4th Annual Superhero Dyslexia Dash 5K Fun Run/Walk



Time: Check-in, 9 a.m.; 1 Mile Kids' Run, 9:45 a.m.; 5K Run/Walk, 10 a.m.

Location: Begin/End at Soldiers Field Picnic Shelter area

Join us for the **4th Annual Superhero Dyslexia Dash 5K Fun Run** on Saturday, October 7, 2017. The run (or walk) begins and ends at Soldiers Field Park in Rochester. Registration is available online at www.TheReadingCenter.org, or in person on the day of the event (pre-registrations by 9/24 are guaranteed a race shirt).

Register at www.TheReadingCenter.org.

Oct. 11: Walk in My Shoes: An Interactive Dyslexia Simulation

Time: 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Location: Rochester Area Foundation, 12 Elton Hills Dr NW, Rochester, MN

Dyslexia is an invisible condition that can impact every area of one's life. If you have ever wondered what your dyslexic child or student experiences, please attend the **Walk in My Shoes: An Interactive Dyslexia Simulation** event. This is a high-impact, immersive event that will be an eye opener to the struggles that students with dyslexia face in school settings every day. Appropriate for older teens through adults.

FREE. Space is limited to 35 so registration is required at www.TheReadingCenter.org.

Oct. 16: New Dyslexia Laws in Minnesota

Time: 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Location: Rochester Public Library, 101 2nd St SE, Rochester, MN 55904

Join our guests. Senator Carla Nelson, Dr. Vicki Weinberg, Minnesota Department of Education (invited) and a representative from Decoding Dyslexia Minnesota, as we discuss how these laws impact your student and what initiatives are coming up in 2018.

FREE. Space is limited so registration is requested at www.TheReadingCenter.org.

Oct. 26: Reading Center Open House, with presentation on Testing/Educational Evaluations

Time: 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m., testing presentation with Q&A starting at 6:00 p.m.

Location: The Reading Center

Join us for a chance to ask an expert at The Reading Center your questions and learn more about what services we offer for struggling students. Come between 4-7pm to meet with one of our knowledgeable staff. Starting at 6pm, we will give a short presentation on our testing options and how this information is used to help your child. Come with your questions!

FREE but please register at www.TheReadingCenter.org.

Minnesota Legislative Recap

Great things are happening for students with dyslexia in Minnesota!

The hard work of dyslexia advocates has paid off. In 2017, The Reading Center was the beneficiary of \$1.5 million in state bonding funds. These funds act like a match, so that we will work to raise **\$1.5 million more to complete a new facility to meet our growing program needs**. We plan to launch an official capital campaign in the spring of 2018. Stay tuned.

The 2017 Omnibus E-12 Education bill contained a provision for a **Dyslexia Specialist to be added to state Department of Education**. The parent-led grassroots group Decoding Dyslexia Minnesota was pivotal in getting a key advisory position in place in the Minnesota Department of Education. The new position will act as a resource and provide technical expertise and professional development opportunities for teachers across the state. The position must be filled by a highly trained and experienced individual in the field.

Momentum for aiding dyslexic students has been building the past few years. In the 2016 session, an amendment offered by now retired Senator LeRoy Stumpf (a big Reading Center champion) **inserted the word "dyslexia" into state statute for the first time**. Check out MN Statute 125A.01, and you will now find a definition of dyslexia in black and white!

Minnesota also has a "Reading Well by Third Grade" initiative. **Last year, language was inserted to require districts to annually report their efforts to evaluate and identify students with dyslexia to the commissioner by July 1 of each year**. This is huge!

If you are interested in what your home district is doing to screen and identify students with dyslexia, check out their homepage and search for "Local Literacy Plan."

If you want to learn more about these provisions and what they mean to you and your student, we invite you to attend our Panel discussion at the Rochester Public Library on Monday, October 16 from 6-7:30pm. You can find more details on our website at www.TheReadingCenter.org.



(continued from front page...)

a way to teach it that will make it easy to understand."

Quinn again took advantage of this summer's Best of Basics program, taking our math course with Staff Tutor Lillian Stewart. He excelled there too and enjoyed the class. Julie says, "We will continue to take advantage of programs that The Reading Center offers, because Quinn really responds well to how things are taught in these classes."

Julie says that "Quinn's progress in the last couple of years has really exceeded all of our expectations. We are so thankful for all of the help from Occupational Therapists, for his sensory needs, great teachers, and The Reading Center programs."

If you know of a young student, age 4 -6, who is struggling with pre-reading skills like naming letters and making and blending letter sounds, contact The Reading Center for a free screening. These screens can find kids at a high risk for learning disabilities and get them enrolled in programming that can prevent the frustration of falling behind in school. Options for pre-readers include our year-long Reading Club program, a parent/child class offered throughout the year, and our summer two-week course during Best of Basics, that can help kids better prepare for the academic skills they need to demonstrate in kindergarten and first grade.



Jan Hagedorn says Quinn has moved on to bigger and better things. **She says, "Quinn morphed from a shy, tentative boy to a confident leader over the time he attended Reading Club. I so thank the Reading Club community of supportive families that helped contribute to his growth. We certainly enjoyed having his family in our Club."**

Many Thanks to Our Contributors

March 3, 2017 - July 31, 2017

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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Tutor Appreciation

On May 3 we celebrated the dedication of our vast tutoring staff at a **luncheon sponsored by Thrivent Financial, Rochester Group**. Tutors, ranging from those in their first year to one we all know and love (Jean Osman) who completed her 61st year, were honored. Nancy Sears, former Executive Director, was honored with 25 years of service. Thank you, tutors, for all you do! And thank you to Thrivent Financial for helping provide a lovely event.



Nancy Sears celebrated 25 years of service with Fay Van Vliet



The Reading Center
DYSLEXIA INSTITUTE OF MINNESOTA

"Toward Literacy for All"

847 5th Street NW
Rochester, MN 55901
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e-mail: Read@TheReadingCenter.org
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Monday through Friday
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The Reading Center

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

Save the Date!

Events

- Dyslexia Film Festival, our annual
Bright Stars Event **September 27, 2017**
- 4th Annual Superhero Dyslexia Dash
5K Fun Run/Walk **October 7, 2017**
- Walk in My Shoes: An Interactive
Dyslexia Simulation **October 11, 2017**
- New Dyslexia Laws in Minnesota **October 16, 2017**
- Reading Center Open House, with presentation
on Testing/Educational Evaluations **October 26, 2017**

Student Classes

- Fall Writing Class One: Applied Grammar*
(grades 6-10) **Tuesdays, Oct. 10 – Dec. 12, 2017 from 3:45-5:15**
- Fall Writing Class Two: Academic Writing*
(grades 7-11) **Fridays, Oct. 6 – Dec. 15, 2017 from 3:45-5:15**
- Reading Club
(1st grade) **Mondays, starting Oct. 2 from 4:30-5:30**
- Reading Club
(Kindergarten) **Wednesdays, starting Oct. 4 from 4:30-5:30**

Institute

- Online Basic Orton-Gillingham Training **Nov. 27, 2017 – Feb. 25, 2018**
- In-Person Basic Orton-Gillingham Training **Jan. 18-Mar. 15, 2018**