

The Reading Center

Dyslexia Institute of Minnesota

www.TheReadingCenter.org



Fall 2018

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Student Becomes the Teacher: Sean O'Fallon inspires his students in rural Wisconsin

What would it be like to be a kid struggling with reading and math, born to two Mayo Clinic statisticians? Sean O'Fallon would know. Sean says he "struggled mightily" throughout elementary, middle and high school and was "embarrassed" that he was unable to learn even when his dad sat down at night to work with him one-on-one.

Sean was tested for dyslexia at age 9 by The Reading Center and then spent more than 7 years tutoring with the late Fay Waldo, a Reading Center tutor, in her home. **He remembers their time together fondly, recalling how she made learning fun and that she taught him "little tricks to study for tests," skills he used throughout his academic life. He says,** "Fay became like another family to me."

After graduating from Lourdes High School in 1985, Sean enrolled at Winona State. He says that after getting lower grades throughout high school his grades improved in college. Sean thinks that may be in part because of a meeting he had with a college counselor. As a child, Sean was given the MMPI (intelligence and aptitude) test by Mayo Clinic. His parents never shared the results with him, but the counselor did. Sean says "the results were not pretty." **It lit a fire in him and made him want to prove that he belonged in college. He did belong, graduating with a Bachelor's degree in Recreational Therapy.**

After graduating, Sean took a job in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, working at a center serving adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities. He enjoyed the role, especially working with people with autism. It was also where he met his wife.

But teaching had been a career Sean had considered for some time, so he returned to school and completed graduate degrees in adapted physical education and special education. **He now works as the high school special education teacher at rural Brillion High School with students who have intellectual and developmental disabilities, a position he has held for 16 years.**



Sean O'Fallon,
Reading Center alumnus,
and his family

Sean says his students have some advantages he didn't have when he was in high school – like technology. But he knows it's still a struggle today for students with learning disabilities like him. **To motivate his students, he says "I am constantly telling my students that I have a learning disability, and things were not easy for me in school either."** Reading and math are still areas in which he continues to struggle, but he's pushed through his fear and discomfort and ironically loves teaching his students reading skills. He now enjoys reading as an activity himself!

His advice to his students as well as Reading Center students is to **"never give up, find a way to keep fighting for yourself through school because the world needs you. The world needs smart kids who think in a different way."**



Continuing Toward Literacy for All: Brittany Thompson becomes Board Chair



Brittany Thompson
New Chair

Hello! I am Brittany Thompson, the Investment Operations Manager in Treasury Services for Mayo Clinic. I am also the new Reading Center Board Chair. I joined the board in 2014, serving as Treasurer before stepping into the Chair position.

My husband Derrick is dyslexic so I am familiar with the struggles that many in our community face. It's why I have become so involved in The Reading Center and am invested in its growth. I want us to serve more students and grow our community profile so more people know about who we are and what we do. I have been on the board since the beginning of our capital campaign and cannot wait to see us enter a new building. We are well positioned to serve more students than ever before in our 67-year history by the time we move programming into the new building in the fall of 2019.

I have attended many of The Reading Center's outreach events during October with my family – including the Dyslexia Dash (Oct 6). I want to encourage you to attend some of our events and share them with family, friends and teachers.

Attending an **immersive dyslexia simulation (Oct. 24)** or the **adults with dyslexia panel (Oct. 9)** can give you a new perspective about your child, siblings or student's experience with dyslexia. If you want to meet with someone at The Reading Center to discuss our testing or tutoring services, or if you want to learn more about how you can be trained in the Orton-Gillingham approach, then attend our **Open House (Oct. 15).**

And to conclude our Dyslexia Awareness month slate of events, come to our annual **Bright Stars celebration featuring naturalist, musician, author and illustrator Douglas Wood (Nov. 4) at Quarry Hill.** This year's event is free and promises to be a great time experiencing Mr. Wood's artistry and charm as a performer but also to hear his story of perseverance as he moved from a painfully shy child with ADHD and dyslexia to an award-winning author and speaker.

More information and registration for all events is on our website, www.TheReadingCenter.org. Hope to see you there!

Reading Center Program and Building Update



Cindy Russell
Executive Director

We just completed the summer months at The Reading Center – our busiest time of year. Our summer student Best of Basics program completed its 24th year and we also graduated 22 adults through our Summer Basic and Advanced Orton-Gillingham Training institutes. Almost half of the trainees were from out of state – Illinois, Wisconsin, Oregon, Hawaii, South Dakota, and California. Some of these graduates will become Reading Center tutors, no matter where they return to after training!

Our work behind the scenes persisted this summer as well. **We continue to make progress on our Unleashed to Succeed Capital Campaign.** Due to construction cost increases in Rochester and some special energy requirements to qualify for state bonding funds, our construction budget increased 30% over our original 2016 estimates! **The good news is we have raised more than 75% of the \$4.3 million needed, leaving a gap of less than \$ 1 million.** To those who have donated already – thank you. If you haven't had a chance to learn more about the campaign and the great recognition opportunities, expect to receive campaign information later this fall.

People are interested to hear our building updates. We selected local builder Benike Construction, a family-owned business with alumni ties to The Reading Center. We secured a construction loan from Premier Bank and plan to begin construction by October 1.

We will hold a ceremonial groundbreaking on Sunday, September 16 at 3:30 (after the Vikings-Packers game) on our new property off of Scott Rd, near West Circle Drive. We encourage all Reading Center families and supporters of all ages to attend.

Come and help us turn the soil to celebrate this milestone in Reading Center history. We hope to enter our new building by the fall of 2019.

If you are interested in supporting the capital campaign, please visit our website at www.TheReadingCenter.org for more information and to see layouts and plans. Or call us at 507-288-5271.

The Reading Center
DYSLEXIA INSTITUTE OF MN

Groundbreaking Event

You are invited to The Reading Center's
Groundbreaking Ceremony

Ceremony to be held at our new address located at 2010 Scott Rd. N.W.
Rochester, MN 55901. You can park anywhere along Scott or
Commerce Road and walk to the Kuik Trip concrete parking lot for the
ceremony. Everyone is welcome to participate in shoveling and photos.

RSVPs appreciated to 507-288-5271 or online at
www.TheReadingCenter.org

Event hosted by Capital Campaign Co-Chairs:
Joe Powers • Terri Edwards, M.D. • Brooks Edwards, M.D.

**Sunday,
September 16th
3:30-4pm**

First 50 attendees
receive a free
event t-shirt!

Changes to Reading Center Board of Directors in June 2018

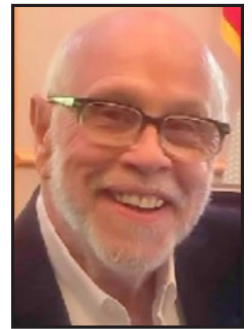
Thank you departing Directors Nicole, Jennifer and Michael!

We said thank you but not good-bye to three long-time serving members of our Board of Directors. **Nicole Blegen and Jennifer Gowin** joined the board together in 2012 and served two terms. Nicole was the board chair from 2014-2016 and led the organization through the strategic planning process needed to set us on the course toward our new building in 2019. She was Chair of the Bright Futures Campaign and is now providing leadership in our Unleashed to Succeed Capital Campaign. Jennifer Gowin served as secretary from 2014-2016 and continues to serve on several key committees including Marketing, Dyslexia Dash and Bright Futures. **Dr. Michael Zaccariello** has served on the board since 2015, and we appreciate his expertise in the area of learning disabilities. **Thank you Nicole, Jennifer and Michael!**

Welcome Dick Devlin, retired Olmsted County Administrator

We are happy to welcome Dick Devlin to our board of directors this fall. Dick retired in 2017 from his position as the top non-elected official with Olmsted County, a position he held for 45 years! **He was with Olmsted County when the county agreed to partner with The Reading Center to obtain state bonding support for our new building.** Dick is tremendously respected at the county and is a strong Reading Center ally. He is joining the board at an exciting time and says, "It's so rewarding to watch a project from start to finish."

Dick has lived in Rochester a long time and knew Reading Center founder, Paula Rome, and her husband personally. He has dyslexia and remembers struggling as a child, but The Reading Center had not been founded yet when Dick needed help. In retirement, Dick is spending his time watching two of his grandsons play baseball and splitting his time between residences in the Twin Cities and Rochester. Welcome Dick!



New Board Member
Dick Devlin

DONOR SPOTLIGHT - Blegen Family Honors Dyslexic Family Members with Gift to Capital Campaign



Nicole and Patrick Blegen with daughters Brooke and Autumn.

The number of multi-generational Reading Center families is almost too numerous to count. If you aren't one, chances are you know a member of one. One such family is the Blegens of Rochester. Former Reading Center Board Chair Nicole Blegen is the mother of a recent Reading Center student, Brooke - a new 7th grader, and wife to an alumnus, Patrick. Nicole and Patrick have been longtime supporters of The Reading Center, both financially and in service. Nicole is currently serving as a co-chair of the Parents & Alumni section of our capital campaign.

Patrick's parents, Peggy and Dave Blegen, are long time financial supporters of The Reading Center too. The family moved to Rochester so Dave could take a position with IBM. It was 1982 when Peggy began to search for help for her children, Patrick and Shannon, having come from Atlanta where both kids had received services. Peggy says she felt "blessed that I found The Reading Center. It was a real honor to meet with Paula Rome and discuss what The Reading Center could provide for our children."

All the Blegens believe in giving back to the community, and The Reading Center was a natural fit. **As a family positively impacted by The Reading Center, they are heavily invested in seeing The Reading Center reach more students and gain visibility in the community.** The Blegens were therefore early supporters of our Unleashed to Succeed Capital Campaign. Together, the Blegens combined their gifts to the campaign to reach the \$10,000 level. Their family gift will be recognized in the new building along our Hall of Heroes highlighting an accomplished dyslexic above a portrait of the gifted person they chose. Peggy says she "hopes our contribution will help children like Patrick, Shannon and Brooke."



Parent/Grandparent Alumni
Peggy and Dave Blegen.

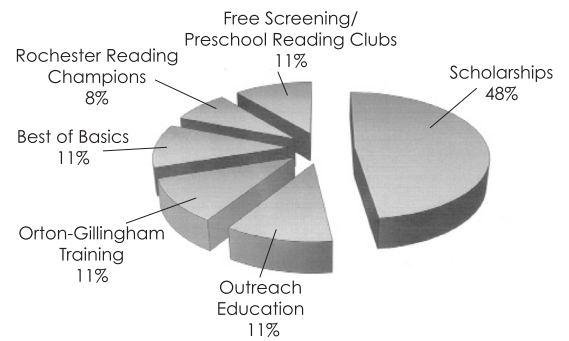
It will. Thank you Blegen Family!

2018 Bright Futures Campaign a Success – Thank You!

We met our goal and ended our annual Bright Futures campaign with \$75,660 to support programs and scholarships benefitting students with dyslexia. Special thanks to **Rochester Scottish Rite Children's Foundation and Joy and Mike Fogarty** for their donation of matching funds to support this fundraising drive.

And thank you for our campaign volunteers. We could not do this great work without you! **Mary Heise** (Friends Campaign Chair), **Lora Keller & Bobbi LaRusso** (Staff and Tutor Campaign Co-Chairs), **Amy Davis** (Board Campaign Chair), and our calling night volunteers from Premier Bank and Sterling State Bank: **Jennifer Gowin, Danny Bucknell, Lené Heise, Lindsey Salfer, Chelsea Cliff, Sarah Kohn and Zach Peterson.**

How we'll invest your dollar



Best of Basics – 4 great weeks of learning!

Our summer Best of Basics program ended its 24th program year having served 51 students in K-12th grade.



Steve Sperling Riding Cross-Country to Support The Reading Center

Steve Sperling is a humble, unassuming dentist with a practice in Rochester. Steve is also an avid cyclist. **Looking for a new challenge, he began a two month journey across the country with a cycling group to raise funds for two charities close to his heart – The Reading Center and Sperling Smiles.** Steve left on Father's Day, June 16, and is set to end in Boston on August 18, after this newsletter has gone to print. Steve is a parent alumni – one of his sons was helped by The Reading Center and he remains grateful for the life changing help he received. We thank Steve for embarking on this ride and for raising funds and awareness for The Reading Center!



Steve Sperling and Cindy Russell at the 2017 Dyslexia Dash

2018 Give to the Max Day is November 15

Due to the generosity of the Rochester Scottish Rite, we have \$5,000 in matching funds available for donations made on Give to the Max Day – November 15, 2018. As in years past, you can schedule your donation online any time after November 1, and it will be counted toward the match and incentive prizes provided by the host of this state-wide day of giving, GiveMN.



Upcoming Fall Events – Registration for all events is open on our website www.TheReadingCenter.org

Groundbreaking Sept. 16

Come see where the new building will be built and take your turn shoveling dirt with our golden shovels. Reading Center families and tutors are encouraged to attend. There will be free Reading Center T-shirts, first come, first served.

Date: Sunday, September 16, 2018
Where: 2010 Scott Rd. NW
Rochester, MN 55901
Time: 3:30-4:00pm

RSVPs appreciated at www.TheReadingCenter.org or at 507-288-5271



Learn About TRC Services at Our Open House Oct. 15

Join us for a chance to ask an expert at The Reading Center and learn more about what services we offer for struggling students. Come with questions!

Date: Monday, October 15, 2018
Where: The Reading Center
Time: 4-6pm

FREE, Registration requested.

5th Dyslexia Dash Oct. 6

Help support Reading Center programs and scholarships by registering for the all ages and abilities Superhero Dash. The kids' race starts at 9:45 am, the 5K at 10am. Kids 12 and under receive a medal. All registered participants are welcome to join us for free pizza and pop at Pasquale's down the street after the race!

Date: Saturday, October 6, 2018
Where: Soldiers Field Park
Time: 5K at 10am



Dyslexia Simulation Oct. 24

Have you ever wondered what it felt like to be dyslexic? This is a great event for teachers and parents to learn what their students experience every day.

Date: Wednesday, October 24, 2018
Where: Rochester Area Foundation
Time: 7-8:30pm

FREE, Registration requested as space is limited.

Adults with Dyslexia Panel Oct. 9

This event is perfect for families and teachers who want to learn more about the experiences of students with dyslexia. Join us to learn from a panel of Successful Adults with Dyslexia, all of whom are Reading Center Alumni. They will speak about their struggles in school, and what helped them to achieve success in their chosen career paths.

Date: Tuesday, October 9, 2018
Where: The Reading Center and streaming on Facebook Live
Time: 6-7pm

FREE, Registration requested as space is limited for in-person viewing.



Nov. 4

Our special guest, Douglas Wood will share stories and songs and inspire the audience with his story of going from the "worst reader in the class", a painfully shy kid with ADHD and dyslexia, to a best-selling author and speaker.

Date: Sunday, November 4 2018
Where: Quarry Hill Nature Center
Time: Starts at 12:30pm and 3pm

FREE, Registration requested as space is limited.

Many Thanks to Our Contributors

March 15, 2018 - August 10, 2018

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.

Paula Rome Legacy Society

Those honoring The Reading Center with a planned gift

Tony Love
Leone & Thomas Mauszycki
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Super Heroes \$25,000 and Up

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Best of Basic 2018

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Post Bulletin



Dyslexia Dash 2018

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 Home Federal Savings Bank



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The Reading Center

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Office Hours
Monday through Friday
9:00 am to 5:00pm

**Kids Reading
Kids Succeeding**
•
The Reading Center

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

Save the Date!

Sept.-Nov. Online Basic
Orton-Gillingham Training..... **Sept. 4-Nov. 25, 2018**

New Building Groundbreaking
Ceremony **Sept. 16, 2018**

Fall Reading Club **Week of Oct. 1, 2018**

Student Writing Classes Begin **Week of Oct. 2, 2018**

5th Annual Dyslexia Dash..... **Oct. 6, 2018**

Adults with Dyslexia Panel..... **Oct. 9, 2018**

Reading Center Open House..... **Oct. 15, 2018**

Dyslexia Simulation –
A Walk in Our Shoes..... **Oct. 24, 2018**

Bright Stars Celebration..... **Nov. 4, 2018**

Nov.-Feb. Online Basic
Orton-Gillingham Institute **Nov. 26, 2018-Feb. 24, 2019**

Jan.-Mar. Hybrid Basic
Orton-Gillingham Institute **Jan. 2-Mar. 24, 2019**