



The Reading Center

DYSLEXIA INSTITUTE OF MN

Fall 2022

Founded in 1951

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The Reading Center

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www.TheReadingCenter.org

Tim Jirik, Reading Center Alumnus is Blasting Off!

Living out his childhood fantasy, **Reading Center alumnus and recent Arizona State graduate, Tim Jirik is packing up for Florida to build reusable rockets for space flight.** Tim will live in Cape Canaveral to work for the aerospace company, Blue Origin. Tim's new job involves the physical hardware of the rockets and on the ground support equipment. Being able to touch and see rockets on a daily basis is going to be a dream! Being dyslexic, the journey to this dream job was not always easy.

Tim recalls the 1st grade when each week the 5th graders would read with 1st grade reading buddies. To cover up his struggles in reading Tim hid a book that he had memorized to reuse each week. He remembers feeling stupid when he was pulled out of class for extra help and was hesitant to accept any accommodations.



Tim Jirik

However, **he credits his Reading Center tutor, Robin Sullivan, for laying the building blocks of language and building his confidence that has empowered him to accomplish things that his younger self would have never thought was possible.**

“As I have grown up, I recognize that having dyslexia isn't a bad thing. It is something that makes me uniquely myself and I have found friends who have similar struggles. **I recognize**

that my ability to think through problems logically and carefully was really one of the advantages of my disability. I think deeper about things and don't easily give up if I care about them. I'm happy to say that many of the problems I faced in my early education are not things I struggle with today. I learn differently than some and am not afraid to ask for the help I need to be successful in all I do.”

In 2016, Tim had the opportunity to share his story at the MN State Capitol, providing testimony at the Senate Education Committee on Dyslexia Day, alongside other students from The Reading Center. Reading Center staff person, Jan Hagedorn, mentored him to give his testimony, and it was well received. His experience that day inspired him to become an advocate for others and to not only accept his dyslexia but to share his struggles and successes with others. Tim decided that it was not only helpful to accept accommodations, but smart.

He reminds dyslexic students that though it can be hard at first, accepting accommodations such as more time on a test doesn't make you stupid, it gives time to show your worth. He says “use tools, and remember the quality of the work you produce is more important than how long it took you to create it.” In school he found that extra time was helpful and nowadays he enjoys listening to audio books and finds that though he can type sufficiently, he is able to articulate his thoughts better through the use of speech to text.

The Reading Center would like to congratulate Tim on his recent graduation and new dream job. We are so proud of you and know that you are an inspiration to all current students!

Join Us for Dyslexia Awareness Month Events this Fall



Ilaya Rome Hopkins
Board Chair

Greetings Reading Center reader! This is my first opportunity to introduce myself as the new Chair of the Board of Directors of The Reading Center. As you may know, I am the granddaughter of Paula Rome, founder of The Reading Center, and it is a true honor to provide leadership to this great organization.

Autumn is a busy season and we hope that you will make time to participate in some of the activities of Dyslexia Awareness Month in October. The activities are fun and bring us together but they also serve an important purpose – to provide facts about dyslexia and how The Reading Center exists to provide support through testing, tutoring and training. You can help by sharing information such as one out of every five people (20% of the population) are dyslexic, relatively few of those are identified formally, we know how to teach dyslexic people to read and train people in the Orton Gillingham method, and dyslexic people bring a wealth of intelligence and creativity to the world in which we live.

Sept. 30 kicks it off with a family centered Friday evening event offering a showing of the 20 minute film “Mical” about a dyslexic child, followed by a panel discussion and a fun filled raffle of Dav Pilkey books and swag. Dav Pilkey is the dyslexic author of the hilarious children’s book series, Captain Underpants, and others.

On October 4, we will offer the popular “Walk in the Shoes” Dyslexia Simulation. This is especially impactful for those who work with dyslexic individuals, or family members of a dyslexic child. You will gain a new appreciation for the effort required for a dyslexic person to navigate the school or work environment. Register early because attendance is limited.

Can’t make it to Rochester? No problem! **On October 11, we will offer an online family showing of “Mical,” with a panel discussion and yet more Dav Pilkey books and swag to raffle off!** Be sure to register to receive the link to attend.

We will wrap up our awareness month on Nov. 12, at our Shining Stars event at The Reading Center’s Rochester building. Purchase a ticket and you will enjoy heavy appetizers, soft drinks, wine and beer while you celebrate the mission of The Reading Center. Prepare to be inspired by the induction ceremony of TRC’s 2022 Hall of Fame Class, where you will hear from dyslexic individuals (most who are TRC alumni) who have accomplished important things. We’ll also honor State Senator Dave Senjem upon his retirement. Sen. Senjem served as Chair of the Senate Capital Investment Committee when the state legislature granted TRC funds that helped us build our new building!

Finally, THANK YOU to our many donors, who made gifts during our spring Bright Futures Campaign! With support from staff, tutors, our board members and all of you, we exceeded our ambitious \$100,000 goal and will be able to provide direct benefit to our students through the programs that help them.

It is an exciting time as we settle into our beautiful building and continue to expand the services of The Reading Center to more people. Thank you for your continued support.

Community Partnerships and Boosting Capacity to Serve Students



Cindy Russell
Executive Director

We are so excited to share that a **new chapter of services by The Reading Center** will be in full swing this fall. We are expanding our overall reach and are partnering with new organizations to provide **services to more low-income students and kids of color.**

The NAEP, the nation’s report card reveals that only 35% of all 4th grade students are reading proficiently. When you narrow the focus to 4th grade students who are black and brown, only 19% of students are proficient. Neither figure is acceptable, and plenty of undiagnosed dyslexic students are hidden within the ranks of those who are not reading at even the basic level. The Reading Center’s teaching approach, grounded in the science of reading, works for dyslexic students as well as ALL emerging readers. We feel the urgency to reach more students and overcome existing barriers.

Thanks to funders both in Rochester and the Twin Cities, we are poised to expand our partnership services in both places, providing free intervention for students who are low income and kids of color!

In Rochester, this new chapter will look like **free group Orton-Gillingham (OG) tutoring at Gage Elementary School**, in their afterschool academy during the 2022-23 school year. We will be providing free Reading Club onsite at the **Jeremiah Program** in Rochester, and continue to partner with the **Reading Champions**.

In South Minneapolis, we have expanded our services to students through the **Urban Venture’s (UV) Reading Plus** program, providing 1:1 tutoring to their students who are too far behind in reading to participate in UV’s OG groups. Our tutors provided intensive tutoring over the summer and resume in the fall afterschool program to change student lives and academic trajectories.

The Reading Center is looking forward to launching a new satellite office in the Twin Cities from which we can serve Twin Cities dyslexic students. Watch for more news soon. We are excited to grow our reach in St. Paul and the Cities while we continue to expand our services in Rochester. Join us by supporting our strategic expansion, because dyslexic students deserve instruction that works!

Congratulations to Our Spring Outstanding Students

These outstanding students have been nominated by their tutors for their hard work and progress made during 1:1 tutoring sessions.



Brayden Bunger

Brayden Bunger, 7th Grade, Rochester, MN
Brayden's tutor, Judith Sloan, says he is a hard worker, very cooperative and brings a nice sense of humor to his tutoring sessions.



Katlyn Warner

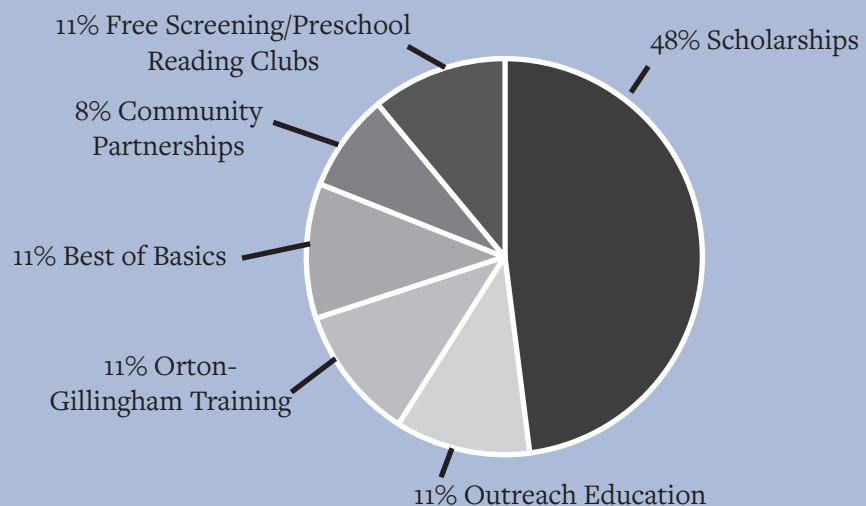
Katlyn Warner, 7th Grade, Long Prairie, MN
Katlyn's tutor, Karen Elsenpeter, shares that Katlyn has a fantastic attitude & strives to do her very best at every lesson. She is very motivated and working hard to reach her literacy goals.

THANK YOU for Helping Us Reach Our Bright Futures Campaign Goal!

Thanks to 167 generous donors we raised \$110,705! These donations ensure that we are able to keep our students who need scholarships and programs on the path to skilled reading. And importantly, you are helping us to reach students who have not been able to access our services in the past!

Special thanks to our 2022 Bright Futures Leadership Team: Ginger Holmes (Campaign Chair), Carl Anderson (Board Campaign Chair), Lora Keller (Staff Campaign Chair) and Ann Peterson (Friends Campaign Chair)! We couldn't have met and surpassed our goal without them!

How We'll Invest Your Dollar



New Online Professional Development Modules

Attention Teachers!

Check out The Reading Center's growing list of free professional development modules on our website. The 5 clock hour Dyslexia 101 course remains free for all Minnesota educators thanks to the Carl and Verna Schmidt Foundation. In addition, check out our new online offering, Dyslexia in the Classroom, with more to come later this fall and winter. These are excellent modules designed for classroom teachers to learn more about dyslexia and structured literacy instruction. Funders supporting our Strategic Initiative have made these new clock hour courses for educators possible. More will be added!

Sign up on our website at www.thereadingcenter.org/onlinecourses

Best of Basics Summer Program Was a Hit!

For the third year, we held our annual summer program with both virtual and in-person class options.

Our new Best of Basics Director, Elena Walden, did a fantastic job keeping the program running smoothly with students in-person in Rochester, and online coming from Rochester, Minneapolis/St Paul, to New Jersey and Texas!

We served 34 students getting them ready for the school year by solidifying reading skills and cementing confidence as they begin a new school year.

Thank you to all BOB instructors who worked with students one-on-one and in small groups. It was wonderful to hear

laughter coming from our classrooms and it sounded like some of the students became fast friends.

Evalina says, **"I am so grateful for all of The Reading Center's small group and 1:1 BOB instructors. They have given 34 students the opportunity to strengthen skills and grow in confidence this summer."**

BOB will return next July with in-person and online opportunities for students entering kindergarten to 12th grade.



34 students were served through Best of Basics.

Director of Testing, Amy Basnyat, Retires

After twenty-two years of committed service to The Reading Center, Amy Basnyat retired this past spring. Amy is the daughter of our late founder, Jean Osman. While those are certainly large shoes to fill, Amy set her own path at The Reading Center, focusing on testing and becoming our Director of Testing in 2010. Amy tested more 679 students and screened countless more!

As Director, Amy helped create and implement our annual recheck program which provides parents and tutors feedback on the progress of their students. While training a talented core of tutors to assist, we do recheck tests for over 100 students every year.

Executive Director, Cindy Russell, says, “**Ever flexible and willing to help, Amy is dedicated to assisting families and people of all ages who come for dyslexia testing. We value Amy’s involvement at The Reading Center.**”

When reflecting on her more than twenty years working with dyslexic students Amy says, “Over the past 22 years of testing, one evaluation at a time has culminated in so many positive and enriching experiences. **Each child or individual that I test is so unique and I feel I just keep learning from each one of them. It is very rewarding to be able to help a parent understand what is going on with their child, and then be able to tell them, “Yes - there is something you can do about it.”** Although I really enjoy meeting the children and families, I think the best part of my job is the wonderful, dedicated, encouraging colleagues and staff that I get to work with here at The Reading Center!

Best wishes for a great and rewarding retirement, Amy!

Congratulations on your retirement!



Thank You to New and Retiring Board Members

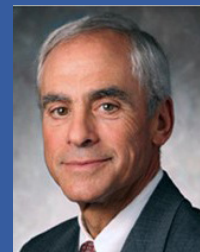
The Reading Center welcomed two new board members this summer.

Leo Stern was honored as a member of our second Hall of Fame class last fall. He is a retired corporate attorney who now works as a consultant on education law cases, often involving dyslexic children. Leo, along with his late mother and two children, is dyslexic. Leo lives in the Twin Cities and northern Wisconsin with his wife, Chris.

Erin Jerabek Heelan is a community and economic development professional from the Twin Cities. Erin is the parent of a dyslexic child.

Thank you to John Caldwell, who served as Board Treasurer and a Bright Futures Campaign Chair, **and Amy Davis** who served in so many capacities including Board Chair during our capital campaign. Both served two terms on our board. Your dedication to the students and families being served by The Reading Center will not be forgotten.

Welcome New Board Members



Leo Stern



Erin Jerabek Heelan

Newsletter Donor List

January 1, 2022 – June 30, 2022

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 Jamie Schwaba at jschwaba@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*

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Kevin Kvale
Tony Love
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Deborah and Fletcher Miller
In memory of Kevin Miller and his tutor, Faye Waldo

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 In memory of Jean Osman
 Alison Nelson
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 In memory of Agnes Priebe
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Your gifts can change the life of a struggling child.



The Reading Center

DYSLEXIA INSTITUTE OF MN

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Save the Dates!

SEPT 30

Dyslexia Awareness
Month Kick-off
Family Event
(Rochester, MN)

OCT 4

Dyslexia Simulation
(Rochester, MN)

OCT 11

Mical film screening
and panel discussion
(ONLINE)

NOV 12

Shining Stars Event
(Rochester, MN)

NOV 17

Give to the Max Day

NOV 28

Basic Orton-
Gillingham Institute
begins (ONLINE)

Reading Readiness Program

Reading Club starts October 5
Call for times for 4-6 year old free screenings

