



The Reading Center

Spring 2022

DYSLEXIA INSTITUTE OF MN

Founded in 1951

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High Impact Partnership Between The Reading Center and Urban Ventures: O-G for Diverse Developing Readers

The Reading Center is in its third year of a fruitful partnership with Urban Ventures, to resource the organization in order to provide effective Orton-Gillingham (O-G) instruction to developing readers in its programs.

Kendra Peterson's Reading Center journey began when her son was diagnosed with dyslexia. Kendra is the Director of Reading Plus at Urban Ventures, a nonprofit in Minneapolis serving youth and families. She is an experienced classroom teacher with a Master's Degree who felt she still needed more tools and training to help her son learn to read. She enrolled in TRC's Basic O-G Institute to train as an Academic Language Therapist, going on to complete our Advanced Institute as well. In 2018 Kendra pitched piloting the Reading Plus afterschool program at Urban Ventures, **utilizing The Reading Center's O-G teaching approach to provide high quality reading instruction to UV students who are developing their reading.** Urban Ventures provides cradle to career support for youth and families in one of Minneapolis' most underserved neighborhoods.

UV was willing to give it a try, so the program started with 12 students and 1 O-G tutor. **It has grown tremendously, now serving over 100 kids in just 3 years, with 5 UV tutors trained by TRC working with small groups.** Each student attends two-1 hour reading sessions a week after school at UV, or onsite at their partner school during the day. Scaling the program to meet the demand hasn't been easy, but Kendra shared that it is worth the work, and the support provided through the partnership with TRC has made it possible. Kendra has watched her students gain confidence and recently heard from one of her student's teachers that the developing reader just handed in the best essay in the whole class.

The Reading Plus program helps students in 1st-8th grade improve their reading. This year it was discovered that there were a handful of 5th and 6th grade students enrolled in the program who, despite their motivation and hard work, were nonreaders or were too far behind their peers to realize success in the small O-G groups. To help these students catch up, TRC tutor Jenna Bergendahl began 1:1 intensive tutoring for 3 students twice weekly for 1-hour sessions, beginning this January. Even after a short time the students

Continued on page 3

Andrena, Mike, Kendra and Shalom are four Urban Ventures staff who are making a difference in the reading skills of their program participants, through a partnership with The Reading Center



Strategy: Significantly Expand Our Reach



Carl Anderson
Board Chair

Spring greetings to our Reading Center supporters, families, friends, and staff! The Reading Center underwent a process last March and April, in 2021, to discern a new set of five-year strategic goals for this venerable, effective 70-year-old organization. We coalesced around four goal areas, and the staff began considering how they would go about implementing the strategic goals.

Those goals include:

Goal 1: Scale tutoring model to positively impact significantly more students with dyslexia

Goal 2: Increase the number of trainees using the O-G approach

Goal 3: Increase The Reading Center's reach to and impact in diverse populations

Goal 4: Promote dyslexia and literacy policies statewide and offer more training consistent with the science of reading

To move forward, we've conducted business planning and fundraising exploration. One way to expand significantly is to establish a physical footprint in the east metro of the Twin Cities area.

The Reading Center has a 70-year commitment to serving the Rochester and SE MN area and we continue to nurture growth here. **Over the course of 2022, you may see news of a satellite office in the east metro area of the Twin Cities.** We are working to expand our capacity to not only serve our SE MN students, but students in the cities and beyond.

One thing that the COVID pandemic taught us is that we can provide a significant amount of our services online. Because of that, already our reach has expanded to dyslexic students and O-G trainees across the state of MN and indeed all over the US. Yet, some students need in-person O-G tutoring and classes, and therefore we need to be able to provide some in-person services beyond our Rochester base.

Reading Center satellite office coming to the east metro of the Twin Cities

Because dyslexia is widespread and most dyslexic communities, including the east metropolitan area, are severely underserved, we aim to double our organization's tutoring capacity over the course of five years, so that more students who need our life-changing service

are able to access it. We hope that you, as our families and friends, will add your support behind this important effort. It is a big job, but together, we can achieve it!

Dyslexia 101 Course for Teachers is a Hit!

As a parent of three dyslexic children, I feel the urgency for classroom teachers to better understand dyslexia. After all, children spend six hours a day, five days a week in school. If their classroom teacher doesn't understand dyslexia, a child may struggle even more coming up against incorrect assumptions and come away feeling shame and failure.

To help more classroom teachers understand what dyslexia is and what it looks like in the classroom, as well as the proven educational instruction that heals many scars caused by untreated dyslexia, The Reading Center's Director of Teacher Training, **Barbara Zelinske, created an asynchronous online course for classroom educators called Dyslexia 101 for Classroom Educators.** This course provides teachers with five clock hours toward their re-licensure continuing education.

Thanks to financial support from Mayo Clinic in 2020 and 2021, this course has been made available to any Minnesota educator, or teacher in training, at no cost to the educator. The response has been exciting! Over these two years, **6,255 teachers across Minnesota took this training! Based on expected rates of dyslexia, we estimate that over 26,000 dyslexic students have benefited because their teacher took this course.**

Thanks is also due to the Carl and Verna Schmidt Foundation in 2022. They are making our "group professional development" version of this, and the individual teacher version of the course, available free to MN teachers in 2022. The group version takes the content of this course and formats it so that a school building can take the online course as a group during their professional development time. Information about both the individual educator and the group professional development version of Dyslexia 101 for the Classroom Educator is available on our website under "Training." Please share this opportunity with educators. Educators outside of MN may take the course as well for a modest price, details on the website.

The interest in this course shows that educators want to know more about dyslexia, and better understand how to support dyslexic students in the school classroom. This is reason to celebrate!



Cindy Russell
Executive Director

6,255 teachers have benefited from Dyslexia 101 and we estimate over 26,000 dyslexic students have benefited because their teacher took this course

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have made great strides. For the first time, one of her students learned how to spell his last name and Jenna smiled as she heard him announce it to a teacher in another room. Another student took home a reading game to play with his dad and the third has been motivated by learning to read books about soccer.

Jenna was previously an early childhood educator at a dual language school. She enrolled in TRC's Basic O-G Training in 2020, shortly after her son was diagnosed with dyslexia. Now she is not only helping her son learn to read using the O-G approach, she is able to share her talents with her community. Jenna lives within biking distance of UV and is thrilled that her oldest son has even been able to participate in UV programs while she is tutoring.



Jenna Bergendahl tutoring a child at Urban Ventures to help him catch up with his peers

Jenna is hoping to work long term with TRC/UV's collaboration. She takes advantage of opportunities to attend ongoing professional development through TRC's Academic Language Therapist monthly meetings, Academy Track Study Group, and Equity & Inclusion Study Group. Additionally, she attends monthly tutor meetings at UV. This great support system helps her effectively reach the diverse group of students at UV who have a strong desire to read.

If you would like to learn more about our partnership with Urban Ventures or discover how you can support our important community partnerships, please visit: <https://www.thereadingcenter.org/urbanventures>.

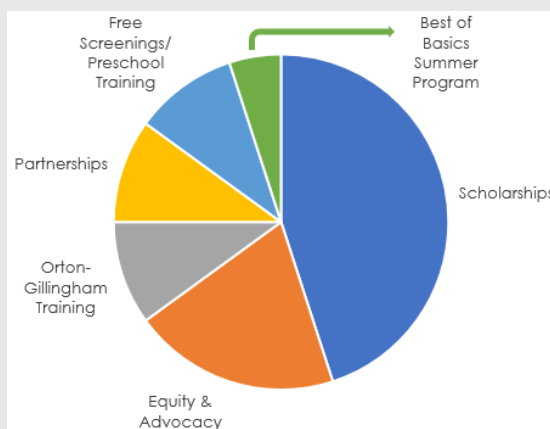
Please Support Our 2022 Bright Futures Campaign

Not only has COVID been hard on students academically, but it has been difficult for families financially. We have had more families in need of scholarships to keep their students in tutoring. Last year we awarded over \$100,000 in scholarships, nearly double the scholarship amount granted in 2019, thanks to generous donors. We are committed to continue this support in 2022 so that no student is turned away due to lack of family income; but we can't do it alone.

Did you know that TRC is the only dyslexia serving organization in Minnesota that provides scholarships for students to be tutored and tested? The need is great. We need your help to raise \$100,000 to support scholarships and programs through the 2022 Bright Futures Campaign to keep our students who need scholarships and programs on the path to skilled reading.

Please consider making a donation or pledge to The Reading Center in 2022 to support our scholarship program and all of the important work that we do year-round. A giving envelope is enclosed. You can also donate online at www.TheReadingCenter.org/donate. **Your donation will be doubled thanks to the generosity of the Rochester Scottish Rite Children's Foundation!**

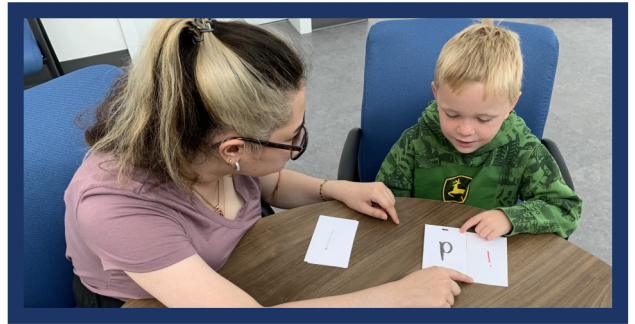
Thank you to our 2022 Bright Futures Leadership Team: Ginger Holmes (Campaign Chair), Carl Anderson (Board Campaign Chair), Lora Keller (Staff Campaign Chair) and Ann Peterson (Friends Campaign Chair).



Best of Basics - 4 Great Weeks of Learning!

Registration is open now for our 28th summer **Best of Basics program!** This four-week program runs July 11-August 5 and is for students entering kindergarten through grade 12.

Best of Basics (known affectionately as BOB) helps students in a way that a regular summer school cannot. BOB is designed for students with dyslexia or characteristics of dyslexia. A typical BOB student has difficulty with reading fluently, spelling, writing legibly, and/or math. For students with multiple diagnoses, we find that students have success in BOB when reading presents as their primary difficulty. Our small group classes and 1:1 options focus on building skills using the multi-sensory Orton-Gillingham Approach. This is a great opportunity to see if O-G is a good fit for your student!



Damask, BOB Assistant provides a child with 1:1 skills reinforcement.

For class times and to register, visit our website www.TheReadingCenter.org. Class sizes are limited so register early!

Join us at our Spring Open House on April 26th to learn more about this program! Registration for this online meeting can be found on our website or by calling us at (507) 288-5271.

Rochester (in-person) Options

- Reading Club parent/child class for students entering kindergarten and grade 1
- Small group Language Arts classes for students entering grades 1-5
- Small group Study Skills class for students entering grades 7-10
- 1:1 Language Arts tutoring sessions for students entering grades 1-5
- 1:1 Math tutoring sessions for students entering grades 6-8

Online Options

- 1:1 Language Arts tutoring sessions for students entering grades 1-12
- 1:1 Math tutoring sessions for students entering grades 1-5

Legislative Update — Expanding Teacher Professional Development in the Science of Reading

The Reading Center is pleased to continue our work advocating for dyslexic students at our state capitol with our coalition partners: Decoding Dyslexia Minnesota, International Dyslexia Association, Upper Midwest Branch and Groves Learning Organization (formerly Groves Academy).

In the 2021 session, we were successful in advocating for a \$3 million grant program to enable licensed teachers in Minnesota to take LETRS training for free. LETRS is a robust professional development training in the science of reading and its application in the classroom. This funding is enabling more than 2,000 licensed Minnesota teachers to take LETRS for free and bring their knowledge back to all students in their classrooms. This grant program had bipartisan support and gained the support of both the Minnesota teacher's union and Minnesota School Board Association.

With a historic budget surplus this year, **we are asking the legislature to add \$30 million to this grant fund, enough money for every K-5th grade teacher in Minnesota to take the training.** The bill was heard in both the Senate and House in February and received favorable testimony from teachers, school administrators, and professors of higher education. We are hopeful that legislators will keep momentum going and add funds to this program in the 2022 session.

Please reach out to your state legislators to urge their support for LETRS training for teachers. Your voice at the capitol matters on this issue!

Mrs. H Changed Lives!

After 16 years with The Reading Center, Jan Hagedorn, known to many students and families as “Mrs. H,” retired this past November. She was celebrated at an open house on November 5, 2021 where many current and former Reading Club and tutoring families thanked her.

Jan took Orton-Gillingham training at The Reading Center to help her dyslexic son, Sam, learn to read. With her training and enthusiasm for teaching, she became a tutor for TRC in 2005. Since that time, she used her passion for the youngest learners to develop and later become the first Director of our Reading Readiness program – a program for families and students ages 4-6, based on the principles of Orton-Gillingham. This program has helped hundreds of families over the years to support their emerging readers in a fun, structured way. For many of her students, they entered the group class nervous and guarded, and emerged with newfound confidence and skills to make them successful in the classroom.



Jan sharing a special moment with one of her students at her retirement open house

New Staff to The Reading Center



From left to right; Jamie Schwaba, Ashley Lund, Evalina Day, Suzanne Sedlmajer, Jenna Bergendahl, and Elena Walden

We welcomed new **Development Director, Jamie Schwaba**, in October. Jamie comes to us from the Minnesota Conservatory of the Arts in Winona.

Following the retirement of Jan Hagedorn in November, Staff Tutor, **Ashley Lund**, became our new **Director of Reading Readiness**. Ashley is a former elementary school teacher and reading interventionist.

As our tutoring program grows, we continue to add tutors to our ranks. Last year we added 4 new staff tutors bringing our total to more than 55 tutors working for us full or part time! **Evalina Day** and **Suzanne Sedlmajer** work with students in Rochester and online. **Jenna Bergendahl** works with students in our partner program Urban Ventures in South Minneapolis. In addition to working with students 1:1, **Elena Walden** is our summer Best of Basics Coordinator.

Meet Our Outstanding Students



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

Marik Their, 2nd Grade, Worthington, MN (left)
Marik's tutor, Jenny Zweber, says he is a hard worker and shows a positive attitude during lessons.

Elliott Ray, 8th Grade, Rochester, MN (right)
Elliott's tutor, Suzanne Sedlmajer, says he has achieved impressive progress in standardized testing and is truly a joy to work with.

Newsletter Donor List

July 1, 2021 - December 31, 2021

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 the wrong giving level, please contact Jamie Schwaba, Development Director, 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.

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The Reading Center

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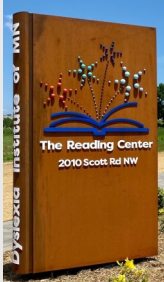
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(online)**
April 26, 2022 at 7pm

**28th Annual Best of Basics
Summer Program**
July 11 – August 5, 2022

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and Reading Club Classes**
Ongoing, call for times

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Training Institute**

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our Orton-Gillingham Training
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Remember The Reading Center and its mission in your will, and ensure that children with dyslexia get the help that they need into the future.