



The Reading Center

DYSLEXIA INSTITUTE OF MN

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Announcing First Pat Lund Scholarship Recipients

On May 31, Reading Center alumni Hannah Higgins and Ryan Jirik became the inaugural Pat Lund Memorial Scholarship recipients.

Meet Ryan Jirik

Ryan Jirik is a 2023 graduate of John Marshall High School in Rochester. He will begin studies in Physical Education and Health at North Dakota State University this fall. Ryan says, "Having ADHD has taught me that my mental health is directly influenced by my level of physical health and physical activity. Getting out and getting moving is not only good for my body, it is also good for my brain."

Ryan was involved in The Reading Center's programming for 7 years. He has developed a positive attitude about his dyslexia saying, "**Academics are not easy for everyone, education does not come easy to everyone, but everyone is good at something.**"



Ryan Jirik, Eagle Scout and Alumnus

Ryan is an Eagle Scout and The Reading Center was the benefactor of his skills when he planned, fundraised and built our 8ft. x 10ft. yard shed to store our outdoor equipment.

Meet Hannah Higgins

Originally from Byron, Hannah Higgins enters her senior year this fall at University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point where she is studying Wildlife Education. Hannah submitted an impressive video with her scholarship application showcasing her communication and storytelling skills.

Hannah's love and passion for animals started at a young age. Growing up she cared for many pets and ended her high school career as an intern with Oxbow Park and Hollman Zoo. Following completion of college, Hannah plans to work in the natural resources area with the goal to "inspire other people to protect our natural world and find beauty in our wildlife." Hannah is a Dean's List student.

Continued on page 4

Reading Center Satellite Office Now Open in Woodbury



Ann Peterson, Board Chair

Hello Reading Center friends. I have the honor of serving as the Board Chair this year, and it truly is an honor. I greatly value the impact of The Reading Center. I learned that I was dyslexic as an adult, after which many puzzle pieces started to come together for me. Now I volunteer my time, talent and treasure with The Reading Center in order to give back to a great nonprofit that helps teach dyslexic children. Thank you for supporting our mission!

One of our Strategic Goals is to significantly increase the reach of The Reading Center, so that more students receive help. We have decided to expand our reach both in Rochester (SEMN) and in the Twin Cities. The Twin Cities is very under resourced for providing dyslexic people testing and OG tutoring. Toward this end, we opened a satellite Reading Center in

Woodbury, MN this summer. **In this space our staff have already been providing dyslexia testing, Reading Readiness screenings and professional development for our Twin Cities based Partnership Tutors.** As word spreads about our greater accessibility for the Twin Cities, in-person OG tutoring will occur in the satellite, as well as outreach efforts.

We will celebrate this milestone with a Grand Opening at The Reading Center Woodbury Satellite on October 17, from 5 - 7 p.m. We look forward to seeing many of you at the Grand Opening.

Finally, **I want to send a big Thank You to our donors who helped us to surpass our fundraising goal of \$105,000 for the 2023 Bright Futures Campaign.** Many thanks to the Carl and Verna Schmidt Foundation for providing \$15,000 in matching funds that got us over the finish line! We remain grateful to the Rochester Scottish Rite Children's Foundation and Ginger and David Holmes for giving matching funds early on in the campaign as well. We are thankful that you share and support our mission to ensure Literacy for All!

Updates from the Executive Director



Cindy Russell, Executive Director

Happy Fall! I hope you enjoyed some unscheduled time to recharge during the summer months.

There are changes and exciting developments at The Reading Center that I would like to share with you.

Barbara Zelinske, our talented and effective Director of Teacher Training is soon to retire from her role at The Reading Center. As a Fellow of the OG Academy, Barbara has been instrumental in ensuring that our Orton-Gillingham (OG) training program graduates well-trained adults, ready to teach dyslexic students to read using the OG approach. **During her tenure, she developed and taught a training course for classroom teachers called OG Infusion, from**

2007-2017. She designed and implemented our online Basic and Advanced Orton-Gillingham Institute training courses as well, making our rigorous training more accessible, yet maintaining its strong outcomes. If your life has been positively touched by Barbara Zelinske, send a retirement card to our Rochester office and we will present these to her in October.

October is Dyslexia Awareness month and The Reading Center marks the month with outreach opportunities. This year, a film called "Right to Read" was released, and it very well communicates literacy issues that especially impact children of color, with a focus on Science of Reading based solutions. We are proud to be partnering with the Rochester NAACP and Mayo Clinic's African Descendants employee group to show this film on **October 26** at 125 Live in Rochester, MN.

Finally, this summer we had the privilege of the services of Jack Bieber as a Data Analysis Intern. I'll leave you with this encouraging factoid: **First-year students at The Reading Center more than doubled their single word reading skills over the course of one year.** 76% of these students gained two or more grade equivalencies in one year! Reading Center tutors make a real difference in the lives of dyslexic children. Thank you to all of our tutors!

Director of Teacher Training, Barbara Zelinske, Retires This Fall

Barbara Zelinske has been a central figure at The Reading Center for almost 30 years. Like many Reading Center tutors, Barb was the parent of a struggling student who, despite being a licensed teacher, did not know how to teach her child to read. She found her answers at The Reading Center when she met founder Jean Osman.

Barb started tutoring for TRC in 1995. She earned the distinction of Fellow of the Orton-Gillingham Academy in 2013. But **her seminal legacy will be in the role Director of Teacher Training, having directed our Orton-Gillingham Training Institutes since 2007.** Barb grew our Academy of Orton-Gillingham

accredited programs to what they are today, including leading their conversion to an online format well before the pandemic made online training popular!

Barb says, **"What a privilege it has been to work for such a vibrant and life-changing organization. Over the years, I have been fortunate to work closely with like-minded individuals who share the same passion for making a difference, many who have become life-long friends. I have also had the good fortune of being involved in countless opportunities, especially in connection with training."**



Barbara Zelinske

"Outstanding legacies are a tradition at The Reading Center. Barbara Zelinske will retire knowing that her legacy in training has changed the lives of countless dyslexic children, from Minnesota, from across the United States and abroad. These students can reach for the stars because of her leadership here," remarked Cindy Russell, Executive Director.

Best wishes in retirement, Barb!

The Reading Center is in the enviable position to have incredible staff who are learning new roles. **Fay Van Vliet** will be elevated to a new position, Clinical Director. As Clinical Director, she will direct the training program and provide oversight of the student programming. Our student program will now be co-managed by two incredible tutors. **Kristen Bieber** will take on the role of Director of Twin Cities Tutoring Program and **Evalina Day** will be Director of the Rochester Tutoring Program. Congratulations to these staff on their new roles!



Barb with Reading Center Cofounder, Jean Osman

Best of Basics Summer Program Impacts Students



For the fourth year, we held our annual summer program with both virtual and in-person class options. **We served 42 students, getting them ready for the school year by solidifying reading skills and cementing confidence.**

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

Program Coordinator Elena Walden says, "Our tutors are so generous with their time and always willing to take on an additional student. Their flexibility contributed to a smooth program, serving students who otherwise may not have received personalized instruction this summer."

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

Historic Reading Legislation Passes in Minnesota!

The Reading Center and other literacy allies worked to gain passage of the READ Act this past legislative session. **The READ Act does the following:**

- New state literacy goal: every child reading at grade level, every year from K-12
- Mandated teacher training in Science of Reading - courses approved by MN Department of Education (MDE)
- Mandated screening and progress monitoring - tool approved by MDE
- Districts must use evidence-based curriculum
- Money available to districts to purchase evidence-based curriculum from approved MDE list

These changes are monumental and represent a true shift in how our state approaches reading instruction. It will take some time for educators to be trained in evidence-based practices, and



truly make the shift away from balanced literacy.

The Reading Center's long-time motto, "Literacy for All," is becoming a motto across the state for this literacy movement.

As an organization, we have been using the evidence-based approach to reading instruction for 72 years. We know how impactful this approach is for dyslexic students. Now, more students will receive this type of instruction in their own classrooms. Congratulations Minnesota!



Hannah Higgins, Reading Center Alumna

Hannah reflects that her elementary years were "super frustrating" academically and her parents found she needed outside help. In 3rd grade Hannah began tutoring with The Reading Center which she describes as a "turning point in my life". **She says having dyslexia has taught her to "never give up no matter what or how big a challenge seemed," and that having a learning disability "makes me who I am."**

The Pat Lund Scholarship

Patrick "Pat" Lund (1963-2022) was a Reading Center alumnus who was a thirty-year fixture in the Southeastern MN sports reporting field. Most of his career was spent at KTTC-TV in Rochester. He had a legacy of mentoring younger television journalists and photojournalists and was the second inductee into the Tight End Hall of Fame in 2021. Despite being held back in 1st grade and struggling through high school and college, Pat persevered and worked in his dream career as a sports reporter. Pat didn't let his dyslexia stop him from achieving his goals.

The Lund family is celebrating Pat by helping others with dyslexia to reach their goals. The Lund family, in partnership with The Reading Center, has created an annual scholarship in his honor to help dyslexic students reach their post-secondary education goals.



Pat Lund, Reading Center Alumnus

This opportunity is annually open to Reading Center alumni up to age 30 who are currently enrolled or have confirmed plans to continue their education through a university, technical school or other training program. Scholarship awards are for up to \$1,000 per year, will be paid directly to the school and are renewable for up to 4 years if studies are continuing. The application period for the 2024 Pat Lund Scholarship will run February - April 2024. For more information visit:

www.TheReadingCenter.org/lundscholarship

Thank You to New and Retiring Board Members

The Reading Center welcomed four new board members this year: **Zeb Dudek, Opal Richards, Jennifer Yerhot** and **Jennifer Gowin**.

Thank you to these four outgoing Board Members for their outstanding commitment and service to The Reading Center: **Ginger Holmes, Greg Nesler**, and former Board Chairs **Carl Anderson** and **Chuck Brust**.

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

Thanks to 183 generous donors, we raised \$112,447, surpassing our goal of \$105,000! This new height would not have been possible without matching funds provided by the Carl and Verna Schmidt Foundation, Ginger and David Holmes, and Rochester Scottish Rite Children's Foundation. Donations help provide scholarships for students whose parents cannot afford the transformative services that we provide, ensure there are enough Orton-Gillingham trained adults to help dyslexic students, as well as provide support for our Best of Basics Summer Program, our Reading Readiness Program for emerging readers, underserved students in our community collaborations, and our free educational outreach events.

Special thanks to our 2023 Bright Futures Leadership Team: Ginger Holmes (Campaign Chair), Joel Traver (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!

Dyslexia Awareness Events!

Dyslexia Simulation, 6:30 - 8 p.m., October 3, 2023: Immersive, in-person experience that allows participants the opportunity to experience the struggles that students with dyslexia face each day in a school setting. This event is free and open to the public. Registration required.

Twin Cities Satellite Grand Opening, 5 - 7 p.m., October 17, 2023: The Reading Center is opening a satellite office in Woodbury, MN to serve Twin Cities students better. The public is invited to celebrate our new facility, 7650 Currell Blvd., Woodbury, MN.

Screening "The Right to Read" 6 - 8 p.m., October 26, 2023: In-person screening of the movie "The Right to Read", followed by a discussion. This event is in partnership with Mayo Clinic's African Descendants MERG and the NAACP chapter of Rochester and will be free and open to the public at 125 Live in Rochester.

Dr. Dyslexia Dude Superhero Appearance, 10:30 a.m., November 4, 2023: Meet Dr. Dyslexia Dude, Shawn Robinson, and get a signed copy of one of his books about a dyslexic superhero. This event is open to the public at the SPARK Children's Museum of Rochester.

Annual Shining Stars Event, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., November 4, 2023: Come witness the inspirational induction of 12 new dyslexia champions and successful dyslexic individuals into our Reading Center Hall of Fame, screen parts of the film "Right to Read", and celebrate 72 years of service. This is a ticketed event for Hall of Fame nominees and Reading Center stakeholders.



Shining Stars

Attention Teachers! Check out The Reading Center's growing list of professional development modules on our website. Dyslexia 101, Dyslexia in the Classroom, The Scoop on Suffixes for Reading and Spelling. These are free to MN educators, and more courses will be added!

Newsletter Donor List January 1, 2023 - June 30, 2023

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.

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The Reading Center

DYSLEXIA INSTITUTE OF MN

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November

October

November 4

Dr. Dyslexia Dude Book Reading
(Rochester, MN)

October 3

Dyslexia Simulation (Rochester, MN)

November 4

Shining Stars Event (Rochester, MN)

October 4

MetaStudying Class Begins
Grades 10-12 (online)

November 16

Give to the Max Day

October 17

Twin Cities Satellite Grand Opening
(Woodbury, MN)

November 27

Basic Orton-Gillingham Institute
Begins

October 26

"Right to Read" Film Screening
(Rochester, MN)

