



# The Reading Center

## DYSLEXIA INSTITUTE OF MN

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## Partnership Tutoring - Reading Unlocks *Everything*

In Spring of 2021, The Reading Center (TRC) set a new strategic plan into action. All of our strategic goals fulfill our vision of “literacy for all”, and there is no doubt that the 2022-23 school year will be noted as the year we have quadrupled our impact within diverse communities. **Now, in addition to our partnerships with Rochester Reading Champions and Urban Ventures of Minneapolis, we have new partnerships with Gage Elementary and Jeremiah Program of Rochester, and The Journey School and College Prep Elementary School of St. Paul.**

Kristen Bieber, a licensed educator and former homeschooling parent, joined The Reading Center in 2019 after participating in our Basic Orton-Gillingham (OG) Institute. She is now working with small groups of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students and 1:1 with a 5<sup>th</sup> grader at College Prep Elementary (CPE) in St. Paul. CPE is a Title I public charter school with a diverse student body of 98% Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) youth, 69% of whom are Multiple Language Learners (MLL). Test scores indicate that at the start of this school year, only 29% of 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade were reading at a proficient level. The school and TRC joined forces to help struggling readers who exhibit markers for dyslexia, learn to read.

At the beginning of the year nearly all of Kristen's CPE students were nonreaders but they have made progress in learning how to blend sounds and learn skills that they are confidently putting into practice. Their classroom teachers are noticing and Kristen's 5<sup>th</sup> grade student recently exclaimed, “I am going to be able read so many more words!” after he learned about silent “e”.

*Continued on page 4*



Kristen Bieber working with a group of students at College Prep Elementary in St. Paul.

## The Science of Reading Before it was Cool!

Ilaya Rome Hopkins, Board Chair

It is fair to say that The Reading Center (TRC) has been part of my life for over 50 years. That is because as a young child I used to play in the legendary basement of the home of my grandparents, Paula and Howard Rome. These days, I can't help but notice how 'the science of reading' is being discussed. I recently asked former TRC Board Chair and my mother Sharon O'C Rome what she thought Paula, an early adopter of this approach, would think about this development. Here are some of her thoughts:

**The "science of reading," the consensus that systematic, explicit, cumulative phonics instruction, is the key to good reading for all students, is gaining support. Millions of dollars have been spent on research to discover and validate these findings. If only researchers had called The Reading Center first! We've been teaching that way for more than 70 years.**

Here's a bit of the back story: In the mid -1920's, Dr. Samuel T. Orton, a neurologist, was doing ground-breaking work on the study of individuals who had unexpected difficulty learning to read in spite of normal intelligence. Orton did not have access to modern brain scanning tools, but his theories about brain structure and organization have been confirmed by modern research. Using his understanding of brain function, Orton was aided by Anna Gillingham, an educator, to develop a multisensory, structured, sequential phonics instruction method to help students who were failing to learn to read. The approach has been used successfully for people with dyslexia since that time. Truly, Dr. Orton was a pioneer in the Science of Reading.



Ilaya Rome Hopkins



Sharon O'C Rome

In the 1940's, Paula Dozier Rome began work with her uncle, Dr. Paul Dozier, who was a colleague of Dr. Orton and Anna Gillingham. She soon became acquainted with Dr. and Mrs. Orton and Miss Gillingham, and she learned to teach students with dyslexia using the aptly named "Orton-Gillingham approach". She quickly recognized the effectiveness of this teaching method, and she became a life-long champion of "the science of teaching reading."

With her husband and young family, Paula moved to Rochester, MN in 1947. She continued to teach whenever possible. Initially, she helped the children of friends, working with them at a small table in the basement of the family home. Word spread, and Paula began to teach others how to help students with dyslexia. Her trusted colleague, Jean Osman, joined Paula in 1956, and they worked together for more than fifty years.

The Reading Center became a non-profit entity in 1989 and is legally known as the Dyslexia Institute of Minnesota. As the staff and the work grew, TRC moved out of the Rome's basement, and after a few stops along the way, into our current state-of-the-art facility. Throughout her long career, Paula continued to serve in national and international institutions and organizations that promoted the remedial answer to the problem of dyslexia. She was the recipient of numerous awards and accolades as people recognized her pivotal role in using the Orton-Gillingham approach to teach reading.

In addition to producing dozens of articles, leading workshops and seminars, and filling Board positions, Paula and Jean wrote and published "The Language Tool Kit", which is used by thousands of teachers throughout the United States, including in our OG Training Institutes. There is also a Spanish version of the tool kit. Their workshops on learning the Orton-Gillingham approach were attended by parents and teachers from far-flung places. The influence of The Reading Center and its dedicated staff is felt worldwide.

It's certain Paula and Jean, Dr. Orton, Anna Gillingham, and countless other teachers in the last hundred years would smile with pleasure if they could hear the excited interest in the Science of Reading. **They knew all along what works best to teach all readers, especially those special individuals with dyslexia!**

## Have an Emerging Reader?

Students entering kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade this fall can take parent/child "Reading Club" classes with our Director of Reading Readiness this summer. Check our website for dates and times for this group learning opportunity. Classes will be held in person at The Reading Center in Rochester, MN. [www.TheReadingCenter.org/reading-club](http://www.TheReadingCenter.org/reading-club)



## Lund Memorial Post-Secondary Scholarship

Patrick "Pat" Lund (1963-2022) was a Reading Center alumnus and 30-year fixture in the Southeastern Minnesota 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

**Applications accepted now until April 21, 2023. Decisions will be made in mid-May. Apply on our website!**

**[www.TheReadingCenter.org/lundscholarship](http://www.TheReadingCenter.org/lundscholarship)**



## Strong Momentum Toward Meeting our Strategic Goals

**Cindy Russell, Executive Director**

While we were socked in by "epic" snowstorms, we took stock of our progress toward our 2021 – 2025 Strategic Initiatives. Thank you for your strong support of our efforts to reach significantly more dyslexic students.

### **Goal: Scale our tutoring model to serve significantly more dyslexic students.**

In 2022, we served 828 students through all program areas, which is a 13% increase over 2021. More tutoring is shifting back to an in-person delivery model, but there is no denying that both parents and tutors enjoy the flexibility and convenience of online tutoring. We are making a concerted effort to provide more tutoring to struggling readers from the Twin Cities area as part of this goal, while we concurrently grow our southeast MN services. In 2022, we saw our Twin Cities students increase, from 7% in 2021 to 18% in 2022. When we are able to open our satellite in the Twin Cities, we project that the students and OG trainees/Tutors from this area will burgeon to better meet the unmet needs there.

### **Goal: Become more welcoming and increase our services to struggling readers of color.**

New in 2022 is our highly effective and popular Partnership Tutoring Program, a model supported by charitable funds that leads us into schools and organizations in lower income neighborhoods in both Rochester and the Twin Cities. Our highly trained OG staff served 54 students directly, providing free OG tutoring to struggling readers, 94% of whom are BIPOC, and a high percentage who are Multiple Language Learners. Through our indirect partnerships, we served another 94 very low income struggling readers, for a total of 112 students benefitting. All of our Partnership Tutoring locations have enthusiastically invited us back in the 2023-24 school year.

### **Goal: Increase training content offered to educators consistent with the science of reading.**

In 2022, 1,290 educators took our online trainings (free to MN educators), and we added two new courses that year. Since we first launched our highly popular Dyslexia 101 online course, over 7,500 educators learned how to meet the needs of their 38,700 dyslexic classroom students. MN educators taking our trainings hail from 75 of 87 MN counties, 17 states and 2 countries!

In order to meet the entire 5 year Strategic Plan, we need to raise \$1.6M. We've had wonderfully responsive individual donors and foundations step up to provide funding toward these initiatives. To date, they have pledged and donated \$1,008,692, which is 63% of our goal! Your donations, including to our annual Bright Futures campaign, also help us meet our mission and expand services to more dyslexic students. Thank you for your generous donations!

## Growing List of Online Professional Development Modules

Attention Teachers and Tutors! Check out The Reading Center's growing list of FREE professional development modules on our website. Current opportunities include the **Dyslexia 101** (5 hours), **Dyslexia in the Classroom** (1.5 hours) **The Scoop on Suffixes for Reading and Spelling** (2 hours) with more to come later this summer. These are excellent modules designed for classroom teachers to learn more about dyslexia and structured literacy instruction.

Thank you to the Carl and Verna Schmidt Foundation, Harper Family Foundation, and other donors for helping keep these opportunities free!

**Sign up on our website at [www.TheReadingCenter.org/onlinecourses](http://www.TheReadingCenter.org/onlinecourses)**

## 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.



**Chelsea** - Chelsea is a positive, creative and motivated student who loves to read and write. In almost 2 years she has moved on to the advanced deck. Chelsea loves to share and teach her skills to others. She also loves to learn, and will continue to grow as she navigates Grade 6 this year!



**Wren D.** - Wren is a caring, thoughtful and dedicated student who has moved on to the advanced deck! She shows mastery of the basic deck and applies her skills to decoding and spelling new vocabulary. Wren reads various texts with confidence, and shows comprehension of the material.

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*Continued from page 1, Partnership Tutoring - Reading Unlocks Everything*

**“Reading unlocks everything”** Kristen states, and she goes on to discuss how exciting it is to help kids unlock the reading code and to be a part of this barrier-free tutoring which is offered right on site where the kids already are, at no cost to the students’ families or the school. She also loves working with CPE staff who have been so accommodating and supportive of the partnership and to the teachers who have kindly shared space.

Similarly, Allison Benike joined TRC in 2019. Allison was a classroom teacher for 15 years, but felt discouraged when the curriculum wasn’t helping the dyslexic students in her class thrive. She participated in TRC’s O-G training and began tutoring students afterschool. She saw the huge difference she could make when she was allowed to use strategies based on the science of reading.



Alison Benike working with a group of students at Gage Elementary in Rochester.

Now she has the pleasure of returning twice weekly to her elementary alma mater, Gage Elementary School, along with two other tutors from TRC, to provide barrier-free small group tutoring. Gage is a diverse Rochester Public School whose school leaders recognized that TRC could offer the critical help their students needed.

When the students in the Gage afterschool program were pre-tested in the fall of 2022, 19 students were identified as being critically behind. Many of these 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students were reading and spelling at a kindergarten or 1<sup>st</sup> grade level. Though we do not have post-tests yet to show the full impact of a year of intervention, our tutors and school staff are seeing the difference. Students are learning to blend 2 and 3 sounds together and about tricky spellings like “igh” making the long /i/ sound. Like many dyslexic and struggling readers, a handful of these kids are also in the Gifted and Talented program now, thanks to the intensive interventions these leaders of tomorrow have received!

**In 2022 we reached over 180 low-income and diverse youth through our Partnership Tutoring and community partnerships. It is a huge investment in time and resources to provide these critical services and we couldn’t do it without the generosity of individuals as well as the following foundations and community organizations: Centerpoint Energy, Dollar General, Harper Family Foundation, Literacy Foundation, Mayo Clinic, Otto Bremer Trust, ProLiteracy Foundation, Risers Rotary Club of Rochester, Rochester Area Foundation, Rochester Scottish Rite Children’s Foundation, Rotary Clubs of Rochester, Sauer Family Foundation and St. Paul and Minnesota Foundation.**

If you are interested in supporting this amazing group of sponsors for our growing Partnership Tutoring Program please contact Jamie Schwaba at [jschwaba@TheReadingCenter.org](mailto:jschwaba@TheReadingCenter.org)

# Please Support our 2023 Bright Futures Campaign

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 so great that we provided over \$100,000 in need-based scholarships last year.** You are invited to help us reach more dyslexic students by making a donation or pledge during the 2023 Bright Futures Campaign.

The Bright Futures Campaign is a once-a-year opportunity that enables donors to help The Reading Center to serve our growing number of struggling students coming through our doors. **Over half of the money raised goes to fund scholarships for students whose parents cannot afford the transformative services that we provide.** Your donation also supports our other life-changing programs that 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 Partnership Tutoring, and our free educational outreach events.

**We need your help to raise \$105,000 to support scholarships and programs throughout 2023. Please consider making a donation or pledge to The Reading Center in 2023 to support all of the important work that we do year-round.** You can donate today by sending in a check or by donating online at [www.TheReadingCenter.org/donate](http://www.TheReadingCenter.org/donate). Your donation will be doubled thanks to the generosity of Ginger and David Holmes and the Rochester Scottish Rite Children's Foundation!

Thank you 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).

## 2023 Bright Futures Needs

Scholarships – 62%	\$65,000
Equity, Inclusion & Partnerships – 12%	\$13,000
Science of Reading Content & Advocacy – 11%	\$12,000
Free Screenings & Testing Scholarships– 10%	\$10,000
Best of Basics Summer Program – 5%	\$5,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$105,000</b>



## Literacy Coalition Update: Will the legislature pass important literacy legislation?

The 2023 Legislative Session began in January and will end the third week of May. This is our fourth session working with the Dyslexia/Literacy coalition to advocate for stronger state policy that will support struggling readers in our schools.

Before the end of May, the legislature will craft a state budget for the next two years. The good news - the state of Minnesota has a multi-billion budget surplus. We are advocating for a substantial investment of some of those dollars into teacher professional development in the science of reading. Some good ideas have been introduced so far.

- Representative Edelson (DFL-Edina) has been a long-time advocate for kids who struggle with reading. She was a struggling reader and watched her two children struggle with reading as well. She is working on a bill that would help school districts pay to change curriculum to better align with the science of reading.
- Governor Walz's "BOLD Literacy Plan" would require elementary teachers, special education teachers and literacy specialists to take a robust training in the science of reading. The Governor's plan would also require school districts develop student literacy plans for all kids not reading at grade level from kindergarten to twelfth grade!

We will keep you posted on how these ideas move through the legislative process. It is ALWAYS a good idea to connect with your own state representative and let them know you support using state funds to support teachers and districts in moving toward evidence based, structured reading instruction.

Join us  
April 18 at the state  
capitol in St Paul for  
Literacy Rally Day. The  
rally will start at 10am  
in the capitol rotunda.  
We hope to see you  
there!

# Newsletter Donor List July 1, 2022 - December 31, 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](mailto:jschwaba@TheReadingCenter.org)

If you would like to make a contribution, please use our secure online server at [www.TheReadingCenter.org](http://www.TheReadingCenter.org), contact us at 507-288-5271, or use the enclosed envelope.

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registration links on our website

<b>4 to 6 Year-Olds</b>	FREE Screening & Reading Club Classes Ongoing, call for times
<b>April 18</b>	Rally for Literacy Day at the State Capitol in St. Paul, MN
<b>April 21</b>	49th IDA-Upper Midwest Branch Conference Begins
<b>May 30</b>	Summer Basic Orton-Gillingham Institute Begins
<b>May 30</b>	Summer Advanced Orton-Gillingham Institute Begins
<b>July 10</b>	Best of Basics Summer Program Begins
<b>August 28</b>	Fall Basic Orton-Gillingham Institute Begins

Registration is open now for our 29<sup>th</sup> summer **Best of Basics Program!** This four-week program runs July 10-August 4 and is for students entering 2<sup>nd</sup> grade to grade 12. We have small group and 1:1 options, as well as online and in-person classes.



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 OG is a good fit for your student!

For a complete list of class offerings, times and to register, visit our website [www.TheReadingCenter.org/best-of/basics](http://www.TheReadingCenter.org/best-of/basics) Class sizes are limited so register early!