

THE LITERACY TASK FORCE OF NORTHERN WISCONSIN

Promoting, providing, and developing literacy opportunities to serve children, adults, and their families in North Central Wisconsin.

BIANNUAL NEWSLETTER: FALL 2010

www.literacytaskforce.org

A Lasting Gift

Q: How many people did it take to transform a non-reading eleven-year-old into a successful sixteen-year-old high school junior?

A: How many people are members of the Literacy Task Force of Northern Wisconsin?

My grandson Sam's success story began with the first literacy training session the Task Force offered in the summer of 2005. Sam, the fifth of seven children, was home schooled along with the first four siblings all of whom learned to read and write with relative ease. By age five, Sam enjoyed listening attentively when his dad read classic children's literature to the children every evening, but did not show the eagerness to read that his siblings had. So, with the hope that he would soon show more readiness, his parents decided to defer his reading for a year or two.

Fast forward closer to his eighth birthday; Sam was still having difficulty learning the names of letters. After a vision exam determined he needed corrective glasses, his parents hoped that poor vision was the root cause of his problems with learning to read.

A year later, then about nine years old, Sam was quick to learn anything related to natural science and just about anything mechanical. He could easily grasp ideas explained or demonstrated to him. He could identify letters and print some of them relatively well; however, he struggled to understand initial phonics. He could get to the core of "what made things tick;" as long as he could see them in a way that didn't require reading.

In a family of readers and a house full of books, it was hard to accept that Sam might be "dyslexic". The medical connotations and the fact that there is no medication or any other quick fix to remedy it was in itself scary.

In the Spring of 2005, while working as a Public Health Nurse in the local Health Department, I happened to be the person available when a Literacy Task Force volunteer stopped by to promote the first series of Literacy Training Sessions which would be presented that summer. It seemed like a perfect fit for Sam and an opportunity to learn ways to help him begin to read. Following his testing appointment, his parents gave

permission for him to be one of the students to receive tutoring during the tutor's practicum experience of the Literacy Training Workshop.

About this same time, Bonnie Margitan, a woman who was to become Sam's reading tutor, was also looking forward to the Literacy Training. Recently retired from her teaching career, she had taught many young students to read, but was always concerned about those who couldn't grasp basic phonics. When the Literacy Training Workshop was offered, Bonnie thought it would be beneficial to acquire knowledge and supervised practice in methods to teach reading that went beyond those she was taught in her educational preparation. With retirement, she expected she'd have plenty of time to help those who had trouble learning to read.

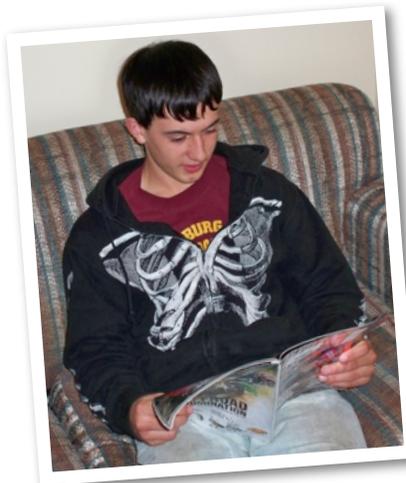
Sam Guzik was the eleven-year-old boy designated to be her practice student. While, some might say it was a randomly made match, it turned out to be truly life-enhancing for Sam. When his tutoring began, Sam knew many consonant sounds and could do some printing, but not much else. He had strong b-d confusion, plus an assortment of other problems.

Bonnie provided the first two weeks of tutoring beyond the training sessions without charge, according to the guidelines of the program, and then continued to provide tutoring to him twice a week for much of the next three years.

The travel distance and care of the younger children who had to ride along for Sam's tutoring sessions presented challenges for his Mom. By early spring of 2007, I had retired. So the twice weekly drives became the special time Sam and I shared as we'd take our round trip between Rhinelander, Harrison and Minocqua. There he would work for an hour with his favorite person, Mrs. Margitan. During the spring and summer of 2007, the three of us enjoyed working for a common cause: Sam's becoming literate.

At age thirteen, Sam began attending school. He was tested by his school district staff and found to be near the eighth grade level. His transition from home schooling to public school was difficult, but with his determination and Bonnie Margitan's continued tutoring, he mastered it. They continued to work together on his reading, writing and spelling through June 2008.

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Join us at 6:15pm on November 8th at MHLT for our Annual General Board Meeting to hear Marie Rippel speak on "Early Literacy Skills."

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Unfortunately, Bonnie had been matched with a family who couldn't afford to give her much in the way of token stipends, though there is no amount of money that could ever approach her value to Sam and his family. Her generous heart, keen mind, gentle wit and diligent learning of the Orton-Gillingham method are priceless and the special teacher-student relationship they developed is one that Sam will never forget. The only gift I could offer Bonnie Margitan was a promise that I would take the Literacy Training classes when next offered and become a tutor myself. In the summer of 2008, I kept my promise and took the Beginning Literacy Training Workshop. *I never worked as fervently on any other academic endeavor in my life!*

By September 2008, Sam started his high school career at age fourteen. He didn't need much reading tutoring early in the year, but during the second semester, writing compositions and term papers were an opportunity to use my tutoring skills. Early in his sophomore year, as he prepared to obtain a driver's license, I was again able to help him master his studies.

Sam continues to confront the challenges dyslexia presents to him. He is a fine young man with diversified interests and skills. He has good mechanical and technical aptitude. He is free to live in this world where the printed word is so important to a full life. Most importantly to me, Sam has witnessed first hand that giving of one's self can change another person's life. He was blessed with a tutor who did just that! Thank you, Literacy Task Force.

Written by Joanne "Grandma" Guzik

Donors Honor Role

We wish to thank the following individuals and organizations who supported the Literacy Task Force with donations from November 2009 to September 2010.

Individuals:

Emily Bodensteiner
Mary Buran
Bonnie Burguette
Laurel K. Collins
Kathleen Dyreby
Trish Ellis
Linda Feenstra
Sally W. Fitzpatrick
Marcia Hall
Carol J. Heffner
Marcia K. Henry
Amy Justice
Katherine Kerr
Sara D. Kozeluh
Dr. Cathy Reuter
Jean Sass

Organizations:

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Ministry Health Care-SSO
Rhinelander-Northwoods
Branch-AAUW
Rhinelander Rotary Club
St. Matthias' Thrift Shop
Wisconsin Literacy, Inc.

For a comprehensive list of donors since 2005, Please see our website.



6TH ANNUAL LITERACY TRAINING WORKSHOP

A SUCCESS!

Ten trainees spent two weeks in June learning in depth, research-based instructional interventions in reading and spelling and then practicing their new skills through hands on experience tutoring a child or adult with moderate to severe reading or spelling difficulties.



THE LITERACY TASK FORCE OF NORTHERN WISCONSIN

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK:

Dear Friends of Literacy,

It is hard to believe that fall is here. In the 6 months since our last newsletter quite a lot has been going on. We completed our 6th Annual Beginning Level Literacy Training course with ten participants from the area, eight were retired individuals and two were teachers. The new tutors learned how to use a multisensory, structured, language approach to teach those with reading difficulties or dyslexia. In the first week, the participants learned how to develop an Orton-Gillingham based reading lesson. During the second week, ten local individuals with reading difficulties, (ages 6-adult), served as students for the "new tutors." As always it was a challenging training, but the outcome is that at least five of the tutors are currently working with students in the area. Way to go tutors!



Over the summer, Le Ganschow (past president) and I continued our discussion with the University of Stevens Point. Last spring, the university approved the Beginning Level Literacy training course curriculum. We are encouraged that the university will accredit the training for the 2011 summer class. We look forward to partnering with the university and being able to share this curriculum with those from around the state.

During the summer, two strategic planning sessions occurred with the task force board. Discussion on future plans and collaboration with area organizations were discussed. Our focus for the next year will center around raising funds through grants and local contributions. Through this funding, trained tutors will be better compensated for their time and skills and local individuals in need of tutoring can be served. We hope for a WIN-WIN for all.

On October 29, 2011, Literacy Task force board member Trish Ellis and myself will be presenting at the International Dyslexia Conference held in Phoenix, Arizona. Our presentation, *A Community-Based Literacy Service Model*, will present our collaborative model that teams parents, teachers, neighbors, community organizations, and universities to provide literacy services to children and adults struggling to read right here in the Northwoods. We are so honored and proud to be able to present the work of the task force to hundreds of individuals from around the United States and internationally!

Finally, please plan on attending the General Meeting on November 8, 2010. Board member, Marie Rippel will present information on Early Literacy Skills. This meeting will be especially informative for parents of preschoolers and primary grade students. We look forward to seeing you at this annual event.

Respectfully,

Donna Hejtmanek
Co-President



The Literacy Task Force of Northern Wisconsin is a non profit organization dedicated to helping families and individuals in north central Wisconsin who struggle with reading and spelling. We are parents, educators and concerned citizens. We partner with the Wisconsin Branch of International Dyslexia Association (WIBIDA), Wisconsin Literacy, Inc., American Association of University Women (AAUW) and Nicolet Area Technical College.

Literacy Task Force
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Calendar

October 11, 2010

Executive Team Only

St. Matthias' Episcopal Church, Minocqua
5:45pm to 7:30pm

November 8, 2010

Annual General Open Meeting,

Speaker: Marie Rippel "Early Literacy Skills"

MHLT School, Minocqua

5:30pm Light dinner provided

6:15pm to 7:15pm Program and Meeting

Leonore Ganschow Wins Statewide Award from Wisconsin Literacy

Leonore (Le) Ganschow was presented with an Honorable Mention for Literacy Advocate of the Year by Wisconsin Literacy, a statewide coalition of 60 literacy agencies, on April 27th at Wisconsin Literacy's 8th Annual Celebration of Literacy at the Monona Terrace and Convention Center in Madison. Award-winning Wisconsin author Jane Hamilton delivered the keynote address and First Lady Jessica Doyle received a Lifetime Achievement Award for her efforts in promoting reading in K-12 schools and community-based literacy organizations.



Le retired from a professorship at Miami University (OH) in 1998 and moved to the North Woods in 1999. She spearheaded the founding of the Literacy Task Force of Northern Wisconsin in 2004.

The Task Force and its members have received several past awards from state-wide organizations. In 2008 members of the Task Force received Outstanding Educator, Tutor, and Tutee Awards from the Wisconsin Branch of the International Dyslexia Association. Also, in 2008 Wisconsin Literacy awarded Honorable Mention for Outstanding Adult Tutee to an adult who received tutoring through one of our trainees. In 2006 and 2007 the organization received "Best Practices" awards by Wisconsin AAUW (American Association of University Women).

Become a Member or Donor:

The Literacy Task Force of Northern Wisconsin relies solely upon donations to support literacy needs in north central Wisconsin.

Your \$10 per person membership and other donations are used for workshops and presentations, informational literature, tutor training scholarships, tutoring materials and to support operating expenses for the organization.

Go to www.literacytaskforce.org for more information.

Literacy Task Forces's Goals:

The Literacy Task Force of Northern Wisconsin has set forth the following goals for the 2010-11 year:

1. Increase the number of referrals for students and adults in need of tutoring in reading.
2. Increase fundraising efforts to subsidize individual tutoring costs so as to increase tutoring services offered by newly and previously trained tutors.
3. Obtain a volunteer manager or business apprentice from Nicolet College that will aid in managing the day-to-day LTF operations.



Suggested Reading and Resources:

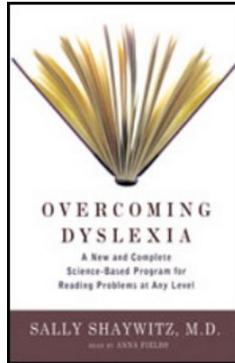
Originally published in 2003, Dr. Sally Shaywitz's book, *Overcoming Dyslexia* remains a hopeful and helpful book for those who have reading difficulties.

In her first pages she explains that she wrote it for the children effected by dyslexia and for the teachers and parents who question themselves and wonder what can be done.

Shaywitz offers her knowledge about the science of reading and show us how research, including brain-imaging, is leading to effective treatments. Says Shaywitz, "[It] is now possible with a high degree of accuracy to

identify children who have dyslexia early on and then treat and remediate their difficulties, helping them learn to read."

Overcoming Dyslexia provides the information, advice, teaching aides and valuable resources needed to overcome dyslexia.

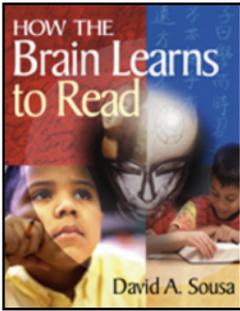


needed to overcome dyslexia.

Minocqua Library Houses Literacy Resources for Parents, Teachers and Tutors

By Le Ganschow

Over the past six years the Literacy Task Force has purchased a collection of resource materials on reading, writing, and spelling difficulties for interested parents, teachers, and tutors. The materials are housed on a bookshelf at the Minocqua Public Library and are available on two-week loan for public use. Resources include videos about dyslexia, books for parents who have struggling readers, and specialized teaching materials such as stories and exercises that are designed for a particular reading problem or for students at a particular reading level. Simply ask the librarian to direct you to the bookshelf of these resources or go to our website: www.literacytaskforce.org for a list of these resources.



One of David A Sousa's books focusing on how the brain learns, *How the Brain Learns to Read*, looks at brain research and provides practical reading strategies for use in the K-12 classroom.

It is a great source of information and ideas for teachers who want to have students who are successful readers.

WISCONSIN BRANCH OF THE INTERNATIONAL DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION (WIBIDA) NEWS:

October is Dyslexia Awareness Month. Please join WIBIDA on October 16 at 10:30 a.m. on the corner of King and Pinckney Streets in Madison to raise awareness for reading and dyslexia.

The WIBIDA Board held a three day retreat at the home of board member, Tammy Tillotson, administrator of the newly formed Masonic Learning Center in Eau Claire. Guest, Caroline Crozier, an educational consultant with CSC Language, presented an overview of Lexia and Reading Plus, two research based–web enabled academic interventions for RTI (Response to Intervention) levels 2 and 3. Caroline is authorized to offer a free evaluation pilot program to any interested school district.

“Experience Dyslexia.” WIBIDA will provide a hands-on simulation to any group for a small fee. The simulation helps others to better understand the struggles a dyslexic student might have in school.

C. Wilson Anderson will be presenting a two part workshop at the new Masonic Learning Center in Eau Claire on October 9. He is well known for his ability to translate theory into practical suggestions for teaching struggling readers. Geared towards teachers, he will address the topics of teaching and testing strategies that can be used with struggling readers. See the WIBIDA July newsletter for details.

--contributed by Jan Evans, WIBIDA Board of Directors

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