



United Jewish Federation®
OF GREATER STAMFORD, NEW CANAAN AND DARIEN

BETTER TOGETHER

Reading Partners

January 2015

Marlyn's Message

Happy New Year readers and supporters of Reading Partners!

This is our Sweet Sixteenth Year of bringing joy to countless children as we demonstrate our love of reading and desire to pass it along to them. By my estimates, we have impacted the lives of some 3000 Stamford school children these past 16 years.

Recently I visited the Boys and Girls Club in Stamford, where we now have 17 teens from Westhill High School and Greenwich Academy volunteering after school. Here's what teen Jenny Gorski found with the 1st and 2nd graders she is interacting with: *" Mostly I'm just shocked at the capability of some of the 1st or 2nd graders we've read with. Coming into this I didn't know what to expect in terms of the reading levels I'd be encountering. It is really interesting to see how each one progresses in their own way and opens up more and more each week."*



Children are naturally curious and want to understand the world around them. They have a lot of pride in their accomplishments and are grateful for those who support their dreams and desires. Jeff Pytlak, Director of the Stamford Boys and Girls Club commented that... *" in the past 3 or 4 years I have seen a positive impact on our students that have been a part of the program and it continues to get better and stronger every year."* Our program demonstrates that we are committed to helping these young people achieve their highest potential.

Thanks to you all for your participation and ongoing support of the program.

Sincerely,

Marlyn

If your student asks...

What Do I Need to Read For?

Ask them if they want to:

1. Read a knock-knock joke.
2. Read a bumper sticker
3. Read a letter.
4. Play a board game.
5. Understand a how-to article.
6. Order from a menu.
7. Use a recipe.
8. Learn the words to a song.
9. Understand a web-site.
10. Read a map.
11. Read road signs.
12. Read directions to fix a toy.
13. Read a movie review.
14. Understand their report card.
15. Understand a cartoon.
16. Read a CD cover.
17. Keep a diary.
18. Write a story about their life.
19. Read a sports story.
20. Read their religious book.
21. "Read" the TV commercials.
22. Read their birth certificate.
23. Learn to play an instrument.
24. Sell cookies for their school.
25. LEARN ABOUT LIFE!!!!

January Workshop Re-cap

"Getting to Know Our Kids"



Natalie Elder, M.Ed., Director of School Improvement and Professional Development for the Stamford Public Schools addressed a group of 44 Reading Partners. She focused on the different aspects of text and how we, as Reading Partners, can work with our emerging readers. We can assist by exposing new vocabulary, providing a balance to texts, (fiction and non-fiction), demonstrating fluency, and speaking the same language that is used in the classroom. She suggested we try and find each child's "desserts"--those topics that entice the child and stimulate their taste for learning more.

Welcome our New Teens from

Greenwich Academy



Nina Jordao (left) and Olivia Weiser are 2 of our newest volunteers.

We have started a new partnership with 7 teens from Greenwich Academy. They heard about the program from a friend in Stamford who has been a Reading Partner for a couple years. They go to the Boys and Girls Club in Stamford once a week to volunteer during the after school program. One new volunteer offered this: *"The children's enthusiasm to read and learn is infectious..."* Thank you to Greenwich Academy, whose motto of "Toward the building of character" is very evident in these students. Welcome aboard !

Communicating----It's a Back and Forth Thing

Recently, several volunteers have expressed concern about not hearing from their teachers, not getting feedback about their students or unsure about their students' appropriateness for our program. This is frustrating, a block to building better relations and feeling that we're being effective. Here are some suggestions to keep in mind when things aren't flowing as you'd like:



~ Talk with your Team Leader, your first link in our support system. Many of them are longtime volunteers in your school and may know the school environment and the teacher you're working with. They, in turn, can turn to the Staff Liaison at the school for more guidance.

~ We have "Teacher Guidelines" for the program and especially for new teachers, they may not have seen it or be aware of how we work. Ask your Team Leader to give one to the teacher.

~ Ensure you know the preferred method for communicating with your teacher: notebook left in the classroom, cubby in the school office, telephone call after hours, texting, quick conversation when you arrive or leave, email. There are many options and see which one works best for the 2 of you.

~ Make sure you give your teacher frequent feedback on your sessions with the students. Include specific examples of what you've been doing and how your student is progressing (or not.) Your reports reinforce your commitment and desire to get input from the teacher.

~ Any other ideas? Please pass them along to me at readingpartners@ujf.org.

Save these dates !

April 9, 2015. Our perennial favorite, Betsy DeSantis, is returning for a workshop. She is an award winning teacher whose forte is sharing with us her videos and tips on language to use when working with your students.

June 3, 2015. Annual Reading Partners Recognition Breakfast. We are delighted to announce that children's author Fran Manushkin (Katie Woo series), will be honoring us in talking about humor in children's literature. Her topic is "Enjoying Books with Children."

Invitations to follow. Committees are forming for both these events---
act now and join---meet new people, support this great program, and
have fun!

RSVP to Readingpartners@ujf.org or call Marlyn at 203-321-1373 x 115