

Literacy Council for Josephine County

"Changing lives through learning since 1986"

FALL/WINTER, 2018-2019

132 N.E. B St. Room 23, Grants Pass, OR, 97526

Five years strong

The Literacy Council celebrates the fifth anniversary of its innovative program for dyslexic students, with a look at how it came about and where we're heading from here

In 2013, the Literacy Council for Josephine County launched a new learning program for students with dyslexia.

And in five years, it has become the fastest-growing and most successful area of the Council's tutoring.

"We consider our dyslexia program to have been transformational for the Literacy Council and our dyslexic students," says Dee Pierce, the council's vice chairman and an active tutor.

Over the past five years, between 15 and 20 people have entered the Literacy Council's dyslexia program and two have completed and graduated from the 10-lesson program.

The core of the Literacy Council's dyslexia program is the Barton Reading and Spelling System, a multi-sensory phonics program developed by Susan Barton in 1999 specifically for teaching people struggling with dyslexia to read, write and spell.

Dyslexia is a highly inherited learning disorder that muddles a person's ability to read, write and spell. It has nothing to do with intelligence. But it can make it difficult to get through school or hold down a job.

Dyslexia affects people of all ages. Between 15 and 20 percent of the US population, and more than 85 million percent of illiterate adults, fall into the dyslexia spectrum.

In late 2011, Dee began to suspect that two of her students might be dyslexic.

David had been with the Literacy Council for just a month when his tutor had to take a leave of absence; Dee took over his lessons.

"He was a very poor reader," she says, "struggling to pronounce almost every word. I knew I had to figure out what this guy's problem is."

After extensive reading and internet research, she learned that David showed signs of dyslexia.

The second time she met with him, she learned that his daughter, who was in the first grade, was also very slow in reading.

"She was at two words a minute, when she should be at 25 words per minute," Dee says. "Then I knew it was dyslexia, since it is an inherited disorder. David and his daughter were the clue to our finding out."

Dee's very next student was Luis, someone who had been an ESL student with the Council since early 2010, but had never made



From left, Sandra Peck, Maureen McCarthy and Dee Pierce are three movers and shakers in the Literacy Council's dyslexia program.

much progress learning to read English, even though his spoken English was good.

"He made all the same kinds of errors that David did," says Dee, who began researching ways to help dyslexic people learn to read.

She met Maureen McCarthy, a private tutor in Grants Pass, who has been a trained, licensed tutor in the Barton system since 2004.

"I went through (Southern Oregon University) in the late '90s and never heard one word about dyslexia," Maureen says. "It's been something that's been avoided and ignored for a long time."

In 2012, Susan Barton came to Rogue River to give a three-hour presentation on her innovative education system.

"I sent letters to schools and district offices and anyone I could think of from Yreka to Roseburg," urging them to hear Barton's talk, Maureen says.

Dee heard it. And became convinced that the Barton Reading and Spelling System was what the Literacy Council needed.

But, it was too expensive to buy without knowing whether it would work, so Dee ordered a free demo that showed some of the tools the Barton program uses.

"(Luis) is the guy we tested the basics of Barton on. I worked with him for eight months, using the demo DVD, snippets of several different tools," Dee says.

After eight months Luis showed clear signs of progress and improvement.

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132 N.E. B St., Room 23, Grants Pass, OR

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Find us online: literacyjoco.weebly.com and on Facebook

CALENDAR

Upcoming Board Meetings

Meetings are at 12:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month, at the Literacy Council office, 132 N.E. B St., Room 23, on the third floor of the Newman United Methodist Church offices.

The next meetings are:

Dec. 19	March 20
Jan. 16	April 10
Feb. 20	May 15

If you would prefer to receive the Literacy Council's twice-yearly newsletter via email, let us know, by contacting us at jocoliteracy@yahoo.com. Include your name and address as well as the email address we should send it to.

Meet new tutor Judith Czerniak

Q. TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL HISTORY, EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND CAREER PATH.

I've lived in Illinois, Colorado and now Oregon. The first half of my life was involved with raising three wonderful children and working as a musician. Playing the pipe organ in churches and teaching Suzuki piano lessons was a joy for me. My bachelor of music/music therapy degree was earned at DePaul University in Chicago. Then, I guess I had a mid-life crisis, (at least that is how a young piano student described it) and earned a bachelor of science in nursing degree from Regis University in Denver. Working as an infusion/vascular access nurse allows me to teach and touch people in so many ways.

Q. HOW AND WHEN DID YOU COME TO GET INVOLVED WITH THE LITERACY COUNCIL? WHY DID YOU WANT TO TUTOR?

Early this summer, a Literacy Council brochure at the Grants Pass library described the volunteer opportunity I was looking for in Grants Pass. I was trained in the Barton system and paired with a student — the process was efficient and painless. Tutoring reading skills is satisfying because I can change an individual's quality of life. Learning to read can open so many doors!

Q. WHAT HAS THE TUTORING EXPERIENCE BEEN LIKE SO FAR?

My student is a 73 year old gentleman and a pure joy — we have so much fun! With happy eyes, he knows he is moving forward and actually learning to read! We meet for an hour twice a week in a comfortable space at My Bookstore on Rogue River Highway. (This space is graciously donated by the owner for the tutoring experience.) The Literacy Council is well organized and led by professional, intelligent and caring individuals. I just wish I could retire from working and volunteer tutoring more hours of the week.

Q. WHAT TECHNIQUES DO YOU USE TO CONNECT WITH YOUR STUDENT AND MEET HIS GOALS?

Establishing trust and friendship with an individual is important to connect. Also, making the experience positive, supportive and building off of small successes are key elements for learning to happen. The Barton system is very easy to use, as a tutor and as a student. I found my student quickly picked up on the hand signals that are used.

Q. WHAT'S THE BEST BOOK YOU'VE READ LATELY?

"The Postmistress" by Sarah Blake; historical fiction

Q. WHO ARE YOUR FAVORITE AUTHORS?

There are so many — a few of them are John Steinbeck, Ernest Hemingway, Joyce Carol Oates, Pearl S. Buck

Q. IF YOU WERE STRANDED ON A DESERT ISLAND, WHAT ONE BOOK WOULD YOU WANT TO HAVE WITH YOU?

A good survival skills book.

Q. IF YOU COULD HAVE ONE SUPERPOWER, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

The power to stop evil.

Q. WHAT ONE THING DO YOU WANT TO DO THAT YOU HAVEN'T DONE YET?

Become fluent in speaking another language.

Q. ANY IDEAS OR SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW THE LITERACY COUNCIL CAN BE MORE EFFECTIVE IN THE COMMUNITY?

The quality of the tutoring program and materials offered at the Literacy Council surpass what I've used in the past at other organizations. I hope more people discover the Literacy Council, either as students or tutors. I am grateful for the opportunity to tutor reading skills. It is definitely a win-win situation for those who want to learn and those who wish to teach!





Make end-of-year contribution to support our programs

Dear Literacy Council Supporter...

In this season of giving and thankfulness, we extend our heartfelt thanks for your ongoing support of the Literacy Council for Josephine County.

Through the contributions of individuals, foundations and businesses, the Literacy Council, for more than 30 years, has been able to help people learn English, become American citizens and improve their reading and writing skills, free of charge.

With one-on-one tutoring in literacy, GED, English as a Second Language and citizenship, our goal is to help people achieve and maximize their contributions to our community.

Because of you, our accomplishments this year include helping a single dad with dyslexia caring for two teenage girls

study for his Oregon Contractors License test and helping another student become a U.S. citizen.

Please help us continue our important work by making an end-of-the-year donation or make a new year's resolution to show your support.

Your donation today will enable us to continue our student successes in 2019, and beyond.

Use the envelope enclosed in this newsletter to send in your donation. Or, go to our website, www.literacyjoco.weebly.com, to make a

secure online one-time gift, or a recurring monthly donation.

To those of you who have already given, we extend our warmest thanks.

Sincerely,

The Literacy Council Board of Directors



Dyslexia program celebrates five years... Continued from Page 1

When we started, he could not read single three-syllable word. After six months he could do four- and five-syllable words," Dee says. "Lack of native English was not his problem, it was dyslexia."

It seemed likely that David and Luis were not the only Literacy Council students affected by dyslexia. Dee suspected that many of the Council's Adult Basic Education students and at least some of its English as a Second Language students were likely dyslexic.

"I wish the Literacy Council had known about (Barton) a long time ago," Dee says.

In 2013, two major grants — \$6,000 from the Carpenter Foundation in Medford and \$3,650 from the Chaney Family Foundation — helped the Literacy Council purchase the 10-level Barton Reading and Spelling System.

Barton, a multi-sensory phonics program, uses a series of color-coded letter tiles that help dyslexic students break words down the sounds within a word, and teaches rules of spelling and pronunciation.

"Reading is about sounds. Knowing the sounds the letters make," Maureen says.

Barton has 10 levels, each one building

one on the other.

"It's very structured. It teaches the students how to figure things out for themselves," says Dee. "There are other programs that work, but Barton was only one designed for volunteer tutors without trained teachers."

People with dyslexia have a different way of seeing words, a different way of processing what they see.

"Dyslexics don't use some part of their brain for reading. They have no good retrieval system for information," Maureen says. "It's like a file cabinet just stuffed full of information but with no order to it."

"But they're also usually very intelligent, artistic, creative," says Literacy Council tutor Sandra Peck. "They just have a different way of learning."

Sandra came to the Literacy Council because of its dyslexia program, looking for a tutor for her grand nephew. She now tutors two dyslexic students.

"I was a teacher in the early '90s, and never heard the word dyslexia," Sandra says. "I even took a lot of special ed courses. Dyslexia was never mentioned."

Dyslexics, she says, are often labeled as underachievers or unmotivated, told they are stupid and lazy.

"Because they spent their entire life not reading, their lives are very different from ours," she says. "They often suffer from low self image, low self confidence, often turn to drugs and alcohol."

In the winter of 2015, the Literacy Council graduated its first Barton student, who successfully completed all 10 levels. A second student graduated in mid-2018.

In the past two years, the Literacy Council has expanded its dyslexia program with the purchase of Foundations in Sound, a pre-reading program that improves discrimination, memory and sequence of sounds.

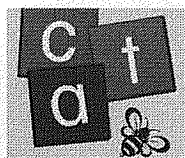
"I call it pre-Barton," Dee says. "It teaches the students what their tongues and lips are doing when they make various sounds. It's no words, just sounds. It's already helped one student with severe speech problems."

The challenge in further developing the Literacy Council's dyslexia program is identifying adults who are likely dyslexic and finding more volunteers who are interested in becoming Barton tutors.

The Literacy Council encourages anyone who shows the warning signs of dyslexia (see page 4), or who knows someone showing the warning signs, to contact us.

"You do not have to be formally diagnosed to get help. Actual testing can be very expensive," Dee says. "And you don't have to have dyslexia for this to help you."

As far as we know, the Literacy Council for Josephine County is the only adult literacy program in Oregon with a program for working with dyslexia.





Warning Signs of Dyslexia

If someone has three or more of the following warning signs, encourage that person, their parents or teachers to learn more about dyslexia and to contact the Literacy Council

In preschool

- delayed speech
- mixing up the sounds and syllables in long words
- chronic ear infections
- severe reactions to childhood illnesses
- constant confusion of left versus right
- late establishing a dominant hand
- difficulty learning to tie shoes
- trouble memorizing their address, phone number or the alphabet
- can't create words that rhyme
- a close relative with dyslexia

In elementary school

- dysgraphia (slow, non-automatic handwriting that is difficult to read)
- letter or number reversals continuing past the end of first grade
- extreme difficulty learning cursive
- slow, choppy, inaccurate reading:
- terrible spelling
- often can't remember sight words (they, were, does) or homonyms (their, they're and there)
- difficulty telling time with a clock with hands
- trouble with math, such as memorizing multiplication tables, memorizing a sequence of steps or directionality
- when speaking, difficulty finding the correct word
- extremely messy bedroom, backpack and desk
- dreads going to school; may have nightmares about school

In high school

All of the preschool and elementary school symptoms plus:

- limited vocabulary
- extremely poor written expression
- discrepancy between verbal skills and written compositions
- unable to master a foreign language
- difficulty reading printed music
- poor grades in many classes
- may drop out of high school

In adults

Education history similar to pre, elementary and high school, plus:

- slow reader
- may have to read a page 2 or 3 times to understand it
- terrible speller
- difficulty putting thoughts onto paper
- still has difficulty with right versus left
- often gets lost, even in a familiar city
- sometimes confuses b and d, especially when tired or sick

Source: Susan Barton

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