PASSING THE BATON

The Joint Educational Project (JEP) has always taken great pride in the quality and commitment of USC students and in our student staff. In fact, nearly all of our JEP programs are student-driven. Our JEP Program Assistants (PAs) are responsible for managing their own academic departments – training students, reading and responding to journals, evaluating students, and program development. Additionally, programs like Trojan Health Volunteers (THV), Peace Games, and Youth and Family Agencies (YFA) have student “directors” who manage the program with minimal support from our JEP full-time staff.

In following this trend and turning over leadership opportunities to our capable students, there has been a gradual release of responsibility of USC Readers Plus to our students. In early years, the program was “my baby”. I trained tutors, spent time monitoring and providing support to tutors at the school sites, reviewed lesson plans, managed pre- and post-test student evaluation and assessment measures, wrote program reports and proposals, and administered payroll – I basically ran the show from the central office while the coordinators handled things on site. However, over the years, as I have taken on greater responsibility in the administration of JEP and its wide range of educational outreach programs, we have added administrative staff to USC ReadersPlus, namely our Central Coordinator, Webmaster, and Grad students specializing in reading, math and science.

This year, we are fortunate to have Lauren and Kim, our two graduate students, and new “co-directors” of the program. They bring to you a wealth of experience, an amazing amount of creativity, and passion beyond measure. They’ve introduced some new ways of tracking student progress, created lesson plan binders from which tutors can draw ready-made lessons for individual sessions, and other fresh ideas while still learning the ropes of the program.

As a former classroom teacher, giving up control took some time (11 years!) but I have great faith in the students – both graduate and undergraduate – who are in the office supporting the work that you all do every day.

Thanks to all of you – for your tireless efforts working with our staff and with our neighbors to make our program such a success!

Peace-
Tina
Hi Readers and Math Mentors!

Here in the office, we planned our semester completely around you. We began with a broad vision for the ReadersPlus program, hoping to see it grow and improve in every way. However, we couldn’t hope to accomplish this vision from within the office, so our specific goals revolved around supporting and working for you - the tutors out in the school sites. Through these goals, we wanted to make sure that every tutor had the tools they would need, every site felt connected to the program and its mission, and that all that we do focused upon helping you help your elementary students. With the many changes brought about this semester, we hope that we can continue to keep our vision in mind as we move into next semester. We are so proud of everything you do and all of the hard work and dedication you bring to ReadersPlus!

Your Office Staff,

Lauren, Kim, Nikki, Caitlin, Vanessa, & Tina

A Message from your Office Ladies!

2008-2009 Office Goals

1) Establishing a system to effectively track student progress.

2) Increasing communication between the office staff and the five sites.

3) Implementing various workshops throughout the semester that will assist Readers and Math mentors with their mentees.

Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you’ll land among the stars.

- Les Brown

These changes are a work in progress and we will continue to strive to meet our office goals into the Spring semester.

As a valuable part of the USC ReadersPlus team, your comments and suggestions are ALWAYS appreciated.
Hi, my name is Kim Clayton and I am the Literacy Director for ReadersPlus. I am currently a Masters student in the School of Social Work. Working for ReadersPlus has been a great experience so far, as it has allowed me to provide the academic tools and direction I wish I had received as a child. It has also been a pleasure to watch our Math and Reading Mentors develop as empowered individuals in their pursuit to encourage our students to develop the skills and values necessary to achieve and grow. It has always been my goal to help students in inner city schools overcome social and academic obstacles by using their challenges as a motivator as opposed to a barrier to their success. Working for ReadersPlus has brought out an even deeper passion in me; one that I never knew existed. I am happy that former President Clinton planted the seed for this program. And, I look forward to new educational opportunities under President-elect Obama’s leadership.

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere“ - MLK
Welcome Fall 2008 New Readers!

Alia Alanizi       Nancy Godoy       Diana Nava       Jazmin Vidana
Sofia Barrett     Matthew Guichard   Briana Neveras    Bryan Wilbert
Kelsi Bohnen      Joanna Haffner     Joann Palma      Estefany Zendijas
Dominic Bristol-Samson Amanda Johnson Lauren Perez Will Evans
Kim Chan          Daniel Klein        Lindsay Plake     Paige Gatland
Timothy Chessher  Ashley Kuhnert     Amanda Prince     Lauren Mclaughlin
Eric Childs       Kelly Lawrence     Tessa Reed       Justine Mumma
Sydni Chiles      Herman Leung       Maria Teresa     Robert Talley
Rebeca Corleto    Pierre Liu         Sam Shon         Marysol Valle
Mallory David     Kristy Lucero      Chloe Stepney

Our Team of Coordinators

Norwood Elementary
Coordinator: Randi Thompson   Assistant Coordinator: Chelsea Snyder

Vermont Elementary
Coordinator: Angela Vimittian   Assistant Coordinator: Diana Coleman

Foshay Elementary
Coordinator: Lauren Middleton   Assistant Coordinator: Brooke Beverage

32nd Street Elementary
Coordinator: Eric Bruins       Assistant Coordinator: Erica Edwards

Weemes Elementary
Coordinator: Julia Payson      Assistant Coordinator: Karolyn Sanchez
Welcome to Norwood Elementary!

A Tribute to Norwood Readers

Kara Dingboom has created a word bank system with her student where he can earn fake money in exchange for prizes!

Matthew Kaundart keeps detailed records of his sessions and also created the game, “Cranes & Crows” for the after school program.

Kelsi Bohnen is always enthusiastic and warm, and truly cares about all of her students!

Branche Foston created an extremely helpful dolch word board game.

Herman Leung and his student pretended to be Godzilla and tried to figure out how to save the most people.

Kevin Platt is a talented tutor, leader, and wonderful role model especially at the after school program!

Mallory David pushes her students to apply their learning and is patient with every single one of her students.

Emilia Sclafani is always on time and has never missed a paperwork deadline in the past two years!

Chloe Stephney teaches her students to comprehend and relate with literature by continuously asking various questions.

Daniel Klein is always thinking of innovative ways to teach math to his students and seems to always engage even his most distracted students.

Jonathan Arkin is the one Reader we can count on to make everyone laugh! The interaction with his students is always positive and comfortable.

Lindsay Plake is graduating this December! We want to thank her for always being so dedicated to her students. We will miss you!

Sofia Barrett seeks out shy students in the after school program and she always makes sure they are receiving the help they need.

Kim Chan teaches comprehension by making detailed books with her students!

Lorense Knowland teaches his students in an interesting and fun manner.

Teresa Rosales has made incredible progress with her kindergartener who can recite the alphabet!

Katrina Bouza is a gifted tutor who always gives excellent feedback!

Chelsea Snyder never ceases to amaze the entire Norwood staff with her fun and innovative lessons!

The mission of the Norwood school community is to educate our students to meet or exceed the state standards; to inspire in them an appreciation of learning and respect for diversity; to empower them to be able to participate successfully in a changing society. As Norwood USC Readers, we dedicate ourselves to finding fun and creative ways to explain difficult concepts and continuously strive to help our students gain confidence and develop intellectual curiosity.
A Message from Angela & Diana

The fall 2008 semester at Vermont has flown by! We're delighted with our new Readers and happy that they are now part of the Vermont family. In our after school program, we've been happy to see the return of our prior students and to welcome all of our new students—with 23 kids in the program, every day is an adventure but the kids definitely make all of our hard work worthwhile. As always, work at Vermont continues to be punctuated with unexpected events such as workspace changes and emergency drills but with the support of our teachers and school staff, we've done our best to make the most out of things. Kudos to everybody for all of their hard work—we hope you're all looking forward to the spring semester!

Jewel, Yocelyne, and Dulce take turns teaching each other how to solve long division problems during the after school program.

Kassandra Estrada has been a mainstay of the Vermont after school program. She joined up with us last year and has diligently attended the program since then. Serving as a superb role model to her peers, Kassandra has also taken up the mantle of tutoring by working with other students when she’s done with her own homework. With her quiet nature, she is one of those kids who may not always receive as much recognition as she deserves but we want her to know that she is never forgotten and that we truly appreciate all of her hard work. Once she opens up, Kassandra is one of those kids who asks all sorts of questions and truly has a thirst for knowledge. Interacting with students like her is what makes this job worthwhile. You’re awesome Kassandra—keep up the good work!

Student of the Semester: Kassandra Estrada
Congratulations!

Jeff is teaching Vanessa about the electoral college and going over the results of the 2008 presidential elections.

Jewel, Whitney as Willy Wonka, and Nataly

Christina is diligently doing her homework.
Our afterschool program is the biggest it has ever been with 30 kids!! The phrase ‘the more the merrier’ has certainly shown to be true in regards to afterschool, as this has been one of our most memorable groups yet. We spent much of the semester doing day-long Peace Games and team building activities which have helped to create a very positive environment amongst our kids. Other fun things we have done include making edible playdough, playing educational jeopardy, and having scavenger hunts. We also just finished our very first ‘detective week’ ever, in which our kids solved a mystery that was presented to them through a video that our staff made. We also had the USC club Tennis Team come to teach our kids drills and tennis basics. For the end of the year we plan to have a Holiday Musical for their parents and teachers. Afterschool has been amazing this semester!
Special Highlights from the After School Program

32nd St. USC READERS-PLUS program has been very busy over the last few months! During After-school, we have studied science, played games from different countries, and created our own stories which were performed in skit and song. Along with after school tutoring and homework help, we have definitely incorporated Fun and Excitement. This year, Halloween was especially great due to the introduction of Peace Game. Here are a few photos from the event! Not only were the activities wonderful this year, the costumes were even better! The students also had an excellent time at the College’s Good Neighbor’s Campaign BBQ on October 30. They felt so special being presented in front of all those people!
Congratulations to Bryan for demonstrating extraordinary commitment, reliability, and enthusiasm as a new Reader at Weemes.

New Outstanding Reader: Bryan Wilbert

In after school our students participated in a week of Olympic Games, learned about the presidential election, and created masterpieces during Art Week. We worked with fourth graders and saw marked improvement in the homework habits and attitude of our after school program participants. Weemes was especially lucky to have the help and dedication of twins Cynthia and Jazmin Vidana, who attended Weemes for elementary school and are now giving back to their community as USC students and ReadersPLUS tutors.

Student Recognition

4th grader Victor Ascencio increased his fluency by 30 words per minute working with Julia Payson.

1st grade teacher Mr. Ramos marveled that Donte Williams is now excited to do math after working with Joanna Haffner.

5th grader Edgar Fuentes has dramatically increased his reading comprehension and attitude after working with Karolyn Sanchez.

1st grader Iris Ochoa mastered her sight words and can now independently read grade appropriate books after working with Kristy Lucero.

Semester Highlights

This semester at Weemes, USC Readers worked with over fifty one-on-one math and reading students and almost forty after school students. Our Readers shared their time, energy, and passion with these kids, and an unprecedented number of teachers have requested to work with our program next semester.
The Good Neighbors Campaign

Campaign Priorities:

- To provide special educational, cultural and developmental opportunities for children and families living in USC’s immediate neighborhoods.
- To work with our neighbors, city and county officials, and the Los Angeles Police Department to provide safe streets in areas surrounding the university’s two campuses.
- To encourage more entrepreneurs, especially minority entrepreneurs, to establish businesses in the immediate vicinity of our campuses.

The Good Neighbors Campaign started in 1993 when the University of Southern California decided to make the community surrounding the USC campus one of their first priorities. The Campaign specifically focuses on enhancing the quality of life within the nearby neighborhoods. This year, an anonymous alum has challenged the College to raise its participation rate in the Campaign to 50%. If we meet the challenge, the donor will give one million dollars to JEP’s endowment! Thank you to faculty, staff, students & alumni for donating funds to the campaign and to our community. ReadersPlus is proud to be a recipient of a University Neighborhood Outreach (UNO) grant provided through the Good Neighbor’s campaign.

It's not too late to give! The JEP Challenge continues through December 31st.

PEACE GAMES!

Who: All Reading & Math Tutors
What: All five USC ReadersPlus schools unify and engage in “Peace Game Fridays” during after school programming.
Where: Weemes, Norwood, 32nd Street, Foshay, & Vermont
When: One Peace Game Friday each month
(December 5th, February 27th, March 27th, April 24th)

Mission of Peace Games:
“Peace Games empowers students to create their own safe classrooms and communities by forming partnerships with elementary schools, families, and young adult volunteers.”

“The Power of Peacemakers”
**Special Thanks to:**

The Metropolitan Water District

Barbara Grub from the USC Geology Department

The Natural History Museum

The Tennis Club especially Katie Pruitt

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**Share these USC ReadersPlus Opportunities!**

Check out our website for applications for the positions below:

**USC Reader/Math Mentor**

*Who:* undergraduates with work-study

*What:* mentor kids at local elementary schools eight hours a week in math or reading development

**Literacy Project Volunteer**

*Who:* alumni, faculty, graduate & undergraduate students

*What:* mentor kids at local elementary schools 1-2 hours a week in literacy development

**Webmaster**

*Who:* undergraduate or graduate student with work-study

*What:* manage USC ReadersPlus website and data collection

[www.usc.edu/readersplus](http://www.usc.edu/readersplus)
“Education is the movement from darkness to light”

~Allan Bloom

How we started: Recognizing the importance of literacy and math, President Clinton and the federal government devised a way to serve the dual purpose of developing children’s reading, writing, and math skills, while funding college students eligible for work study. The America Reads and America Counts program attempts to serve both purposes by employing students as mentors who promote education and literacy in neighborhood schools. Specifically, the University of Southern California’s America Reads program cooperates with the “Family of Five” schools surrounding USC.