I have the best job in the world. Honestly when I stop to think about what I get to do every day (and that I am paid to do it) I realize how lucky I am. Obviously things like the fact that I get to play with science experiments and help kids with homework make this job wonderful, but there are a few other reasons that are more surprising. One of those is the fact that I get to interact with some of the brightest and most motivated undergraduate students at USC. When I see you all at training or at your schools I am always impressed by how hard you work and how committed you are to your students. Another surprising thing is how much you all motivate me to grow and learn. And it is so exciting to watch as many of you start to think about what you will do next, and to see how much this experience has influenced the decisions you are making in the future. Because for as much as this program is about giving back to the kids, it is also important that we think about what we learn from them and use that knowledge to better our world. It makes me feel hopeful that you are going out into the world to make it a better place for everyone.

Thank you to all the tutors for giving your best everyday.

Thank you to all the coordinators for being amazing leaders.

Thank you to the office staff for working hard to improving our program beyond expectations.

It is truly an honor to be a part of the ReadersPlus family, I hope you feel the same.
Meet your Graduate Directors!

**Literacy Director**

Elizabeth Inglese

Hey Everybody! My name is Elizabeth and I’m thrilled to be the Literacy Director for USC ReadersPlus. I majored in English at Brown University and am now working toward my Masters Degree in Writing. ReadersPlus allows me to help students at the dawn of their education to discover the joys of reading and writing. This year, I want to help tailor lesson plans to students’ particular learning styles and encourage readers to infuse their sessions with creativity. I look forward to working with everyone in the JEP family and helping the program continue to grow and flourish.

**Math Director**

Lauren Middleton

Hello ReadersPlus Tutors and Friends! Since May my life has been full of changes, from graduating to beginning my Master of Arts in Teaching Program. Change is great, but I cannot tell you how happy I am to remain with the Readers Crew! Exploring the world of mathematics for the past semester has been an exciting experience. With so many jobs in our country that require innovation in technology, there has never been a more important time to encourage math in schools than today. Keep up the good work math tutors, you are doing an AMAZING job!

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**Fall 2009 Office Staff Goals**

1) **Organization**: Electronically transferring resources and paperwork, and simultaneously having activities readily available.

2) **Support**: Increase support and communication across all five sites through regular contact, site visits and documentation.

3) **Evaluation**: Ensuring that afterschool programming across all five sites is running effectively and has focused curriculum.
Norwood’s Afterschool Gains Momentum

The After School Program at Norwood has taken off this year thanks to the hard work and dedication of our Readers. This was a year of cementing all the excellent practices former Norwood Coordinators had initiated into one seamless system. Each week is themed and run by a different pair of Readers, who plan the week before. Also, each day we have a different “Poohbah” who runs the day, going over the warm-up and announcing when to change activities. Having each Reader up in front of the kids has not only been an incredible learning experience in classroom management but also has allowed each Reader to assume the role, gaining the respect from all our students who listen to each of us. It has been a great year so far and we are so excited to see how next semester goes!

Tutoring Update!

One-On-One Sessions have been very effective this year. Every week, the Readers spend their time planning their lessons on site, rather than at home. This proactive lesson planning approach, combined with a strong focus on strategic skill building, has significantly impacted the improvement in our students’ literacy and math skills.
Our staff has wonderfully collaborated with the K-5 teachers this fall. It truly feels like we’re one big Foshay family. For example, the teachers expressed a need for help with running the Foshay Elementary Carnival. Many of our staff showed up in full costumes to help run the booths and games so that the kids could enjoy all the festivities; the Carnival was a success and the fun kept on rolling with pumpkin decorating, limbo, and mummy races during afterschool. I am so proud of this year’s staff for the leadership, initiative, and commitment they have all demonstrated.

The USCD ReadersPlus program at Foshay Learning Center has developed and grown a lot during the Fall 2009 semester. With over half of our staff being new tutors, we have had the opportunity to bring a new perspective regarding the vision of our program. The 30 children in our afterschool program are benefiting from the many talents and creative energy of the 15 staff members that make up our Foshay Readers. Our staff has taken initiative to put in an extraordinary amount of time and effort to ensure afterschool is an interactive and fun learning experience for all of the children. So far this semester, our tutors have planned and implemented many after school enrichment activities based on many different subjects such as medicine, environmental protection, endangered animals, Halloween, music, and science. The kids have loved the new and exciting activities that have introduced them to such a wide variety of topics.

Teacher Support and Carnival Festivities

“Foshay is wonderful! I have been there for less than two months and I love it already! My fellow Readers are awesome, and of course, the kids are amazing! The children’s energy and spontaneity makes everyday special.”
- Karla Ramo (Fall 2009 New Reader)
Greetings from Julia & Michael!

We just want to say how awesome it has been to work with the office staff and the kids here at Weemes. We are so appreciative of all the Readers for doing such an awesome job helping the students, and all the teachers whose cooperation has made all of our jobs a lot easier. We are entering an exciting time here at Weemes. Our students in the Readers Plus After school program will be staging their very own production of a Thanksgiving day play for parents and friends of the community. They will be building sets, props, creating costumes, and becoming actors! We are very excited for what they will come up with. Also Michael will be leaving the program next semester to study abroad in London, but will be back next year as our new Coordinator! Hopefully we will continue to further our mission of helping students within our community achieve great things!

Gerontology Volunteers Visit!

"Recently, two volunteers from the USC School of Gerontology visited the Readers after school program at Weemes Elementary. Linda and Phoebe, the two volunteers, visited during our site’s unit on economics. Using a worksheet, the students compared the value of items, such as the price of an ice cream cone, when Linda and Phoebe were the students’ age to prices today. Both volunteers shared their experiences of changing prices and the students were able to ask them questions such as "how much was a TV when you were our age". This sparked an interesting discussion on how technology changes along with price. Overall the volunteers’ visit to the USC ReadersPlus after school program was a success and enjoyable for the students, Readers staff, and volunteers".

-Jacqueline Derian

A new reader’s connection to her roots:

"Working as a USC Reader at my old elementary school has been one of the most fulfilling things I have done at USC. Years back, I was sitting in the same classrooms as the students I work with, struggling with some of the same academic difficulties they face. I see myself in every one of the students that I tutor and I know they can achieve absolutely anything they desire".

-Jazmin Vidana
**After School Program Update**

Every week at the After School program there is a new enrichment theme. During “History week”, we had a special visit from senior citizens of the USC Gerontology Department. Students were able to ask questions about the past and about the senior citizens’ childhoods. For History week, students created skits with puppets to illustrate the American tales of the Gold Rush, the American Revolution, the Depression, and the Civil War! They awed us with their creativity and understanding of the past!

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**Halloween Celebration!**

This Halloween 32nd St. USC Readers After School Program had a potluck party – with costumes, cupcakes, and Hocus Pocus! Some Readers even took their USC Readers students trick-or-treating at USC’s Spirits of Troy event on campus!

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**Reader’s Corner**

“In the afterschool program one of the students was working on homework and as I turned around to help him, another student in their class had already come over to give him a hand. They figured out the problem together, without even needing my help!”

Emily Gee

“There are days when the kids won’t stop running around and are bubbling with energy, pulling my hair, tugging at my shirt, screaming in my ears…but there are also days when they are well-behaved, witty, and so wise beyond their years. This job has taught me to take each day as it comes and to embrace it…whether the day is stressful, tiring, or absolutely a blast! I have worked with some of these students for four years now, and have seen so much growth – in both their academics and emotional maturity. While they think I’m the “teacher,” they are the ones who teach me something new everyday – about life and about myself.”

Erica Edwards
Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator, Diana and Paige were so excited to welcome our six new Readers and Math Mentors to Vermont! They have been a great addition to our staff by contributing creative ideas and a positive attitude. We are excited to see our entire staff having a great time and acting goofy with the children!

After School on the Friday before Halloween was a blast. As the students walked into the classroom, they went through the “Monster Body Part Explore Station” where they had to feel different “monster body parts” such as eyeballs and brains (which were really olives and spaghetti). After they were sufficiently grossed out, the students enjoyed a performance from the Readers: a choreographed dance to Michael Jackson’s “Thriller”. For the rest of the time, the students chose from 3 stations to work at crafts, scary stories, and Halloween activities. All the students and the Readers had a great time!

Message from Paige & Diana

Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator, Diana and Paige were so excited to welcome our six new Readers and Math Mentors to Vermont! They have been a great addition to our staff by contributing creative ideas and a positive attitude. We are excited to see our entire staff having a great time and acting goofy with the children!
The Haunted JEP House opened its doors to all of the Readers and Math Mentors on October 26th for a night of trick or treating for lesson-plans. The USC ReadersPlus Graduate Directors divided three rooms into different subject areas including the spooky math room, haunted reading room and the mysterious science room. The lesson-plans focused on both lower and higher elementary grade levels. After the event, many of the readers and math mentors enjoyed apple cider and pumpkin carving!

Welcome NEW Fall 2009 Readers and Math Mentors!

Lauren Thomas
Maria Torres
Kristen Evans
Christopher Barunida
Jafet Santiago
Moeshe Williams
Brittany Burns
Karla Ramos
Julie Mech
Amanda Johnston
Rebecca Obasi
Molly Abrams
Michelle Lee
Matthew Seals
Emily Brooke
Michael Harkins
Ali Stillman
Mahjabin Tuheen
Miles de Mosch
Emily Kennan
Mindy Nguyen
Luis Ramirez
Silvia Castro
Alexandra Ruelas
Rudo Terry
Anne-Marie White
Miriam Choi
William Guglielmo
Veronica Estrada

Helpful Literacy Resource!

Literacy:

Having trouble coming up with Literacy strategies and activities? Subscribe to the Reading Rockets Newsletter! This monthly email publication includes tutoring strategies on reading comprehension and fluency as well as themed monthly lessons!

Link: www.readingrockets.org

Sign up today!