Good-byes and Hellos - Elizabeth Inglese, Literacy Director

Well, it’s that time again! The end of a great semester and the dawning of a new year! There have been many exciting new changes taking place in the JEP House and in our five schools. We kicked off the Spring Semester by welcoming Claire Brown to the office as our new Math Director. Claire has put her experience as an educator and innovator to work, becoming a new asset to the USC Readers’ team. We proudly unveiled tutor resource guides: grade-specific collections of lesson plans paced according to the California Standards that we hope will revolutionize the way Readers and Math Mentors prepare for their sessions. Overall, we emphasized sustainability, taking efforts to make sure that what we do this semester will improve the experience of our current and future tutors and coordinators.

The end of the year approaches bittersweet as we celebrate the graduation of so many dedicated tutors and staff and wish them well on their new paths. USC Readers’ Director, Lauren Chianese, who spearheaded innovative projects such as our Resource Guide and reinvigorated the Young Scientist Program, will be receiving her Master’s Degree in Public Policy and moving on to inspire change in our education system. As the old gives way to the new, we reflect on the lasting legacy all our graduates have made to USC Readers’, and look forward to inspiration and anticipation to the new year to come.

Thank you to our graduating Readers and Math Mentors!

Erica Edwards  
Julia Payson  
Diana Coleman  
Brooke Beverage  
Mallory David  
Jarod Wunneburger  
Lexie Ruelas  
Caroline Ahn  
Justine Mumma  
Lauren Thomas  
Daniel Klein  
Lauren Chianese  
Nikki Sharma  
Lauren Middleton  
Amanda Peralta  
Danielle Acuna  
Elder Arreontua  
Bryan Wilbert  
Lauren Perez
This past fall semester, USC Readers™ was contacted by Jane Emerson, Vice Chair for Clinical Programs in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the USC Keck School of Medicine, with a generous offer to donate an innovative math learning tool to each of our five schools. Jane’s sister, Kay Emerson, is founder of Zillio - an educational product that teaches a wide variety of math concepts through fun, hands-on games and lessons. Beyond the generous donation of the five Zillios themselves (over a $500 total donation), Kay shared her time with our program coordinators at a staff meeting in February, presenting a ‘train the trainers’ workshop on specific ways of using the Zillio to nurture mathematical understanding.

“Children fall in love with Zillio at first sight. The large colorful rotating structure is not only beautiful and exciting, but it is a powerful model of math based on two critical math concepts: times tables and number lines.” - Zillio Website

Bill Guglielmo is a math mentor at Vermont who works with six different students at all grade levels. Here, he and Cecilia, a 4th grader, are practicing multiplication using the Zillio mountain. He explains that one of them chooses a step on any staircase of the mountain, and the other has to give the corresponding product. For instance, the product for the 4th step of the 6’s staircase is 24. As Bill quizzes Cecilia, she is experiencing success. Correct answers are filled in to Cecilia’s paper times table and are awarded as points. They also check their answers by skip-counting up the steps. Who will win, Bill or Cecilia? Below is an interview by Claire with both Bill and Cecilia.

Claire: What do you like about this game? Would you still like the game without the Zillio?
Cecilia: I'm multiplying! I would still like it, but it's more fun now.
Bill: We started with just the paper times table. This is a lot more fun, huh?
Cecilia: Yes!
Bill: Does this make it easier to learn multiplication?
Cecilia: Yes!
Bill: This really helps us visualize what we're doing.

Many thanks to Jane and Kay for thinking of USC Readers™ and the children in our USC community!
Welcome to Norwood!

Coordinator: Mallory David  Assistant: Jarod Wunneburger

U-N-I-T-Y in Afterschool!

This semester the USC ReadersPlus program at Norwood decided to collaborate with other After School Programs, such as World Fit for Kids and Parent’s Neighborhood Youth Program in order to assist the students with homework help and reinforce lesson plans that were developed by our Readers. We saw an opportunity to share our knowledge and resources with each other. We are building lasting memories and partnership that will benefit us in the future.

The kids of Norwood After School

Outstanding Tutors

As a freshman, we have seen Emily Brooke grow as a Reader. She has gone out of her way to ensure that she is making an impact on her students’ education through constant communication with teachers and consistent dedication to lesson-planning. Her passion for this program has truly inspired others.

Emily Brooke with her student during their one-on-one session

Being a new reader this semester, Blake Byfuglin has gone above and beyond by having a one-on-one session with a student during after school hours. She has dedicated so much to her student that she even came during her Spring Break to do a lesson plan with him. This is the type of dedication that defines the USC Readers™ program. Keep up the great work! Remember, every lesson you plan and book you read to your student, goes a long way in increasing student achievement within our community schools!
The Vermont clan was out in full force for this year's Relay For Life. Many of our staff participated through donations, walking during the actual event, and making inspirational puzzles for local children cancer patients. The kids at Vermont even got involved by learning about cancer and how to stay healthy. We're already looking forward to next year's Relay!

GREEK THEME IN AFTERSCHOOL

This semester, the USC Readers have been learning all about Greece! The kids have had a great time learning about Greek mythology, ancient history, and modern life. We also learned how the Olympics started in Greece, which fortunately coincided with this year's winter Olympics! Not to be outdone by the Olympic Athlete, the USC Readers decided to host our own Olympics, with events including the Three-Legged Race, Basketball Hoops Shoot-Out, and the Amazing Collapsing Cup Race! Congrats to Russia, the overall gold medal winners!

Peace First Corner

"Peace" was the word of spring for us here at Vermont. Both our kids and the Readers participated in peace building activities every week. These varied from contemplative Peace Poems to team building games, such as everyone's favorite, A Moose, A Seal, and An Elephant!
Foshay’s afterschool program is flourishing!

The Foshay afterschool program dedicated the first four Fridays of their Spring semester to cultivate a garden. With the guidance of Lauren Middleton, the fourth and fifth graders planted their first water-wise garden. Five succulents were planted and are maintained by USC Readers and students. The Foshay kids were briefed on how plans thrive, how the environment is involved, and what it means to be water-wise. The Foshay garden is located in the Village where all the elementary grades can visit and check on the garden.

Come check out our talent show!

At the conclusion of both the Fall and Spring semesters, the Foshay afterschool program puts on a performance for parents and teachers. The Fall consists of an original holiday performance, and in the Spring a talent show is coordinated. The students take only two weeks to prepare for their performances. Our holiday performances have ranged from fully scripted plays in which students memorized lines, to small groups singing and dancing to a holiday jingle.

Foshay has adopted a new regimen for daily after school activities upon the conclusion of allotted homework time. Each USC Reader signs up for a week, and constructs a series of themed activities. Some of our themes have consisted of poetry week, career week, human anatomy week, music week, and science week to name a few. Students explored these various subjects throughout the week, and engaged in a presentation or game on Friday wrapping up the activities.
Our lovely Reader, Emily Gee, created a wonderful environment lesson plan for our afterschool program! She showed how pollution affects our Earth and our water supply. She also interviewed the students about their thoughts on saving our environment and recycling. Emily interns at the Los Angeles mayor’s office and showed the children’s responses to the mayor’s assistant, who suggested that the video be placed on the mayor’s website! The students also learned about the three Rs: “Recycle, Reduce, Reuse!” They even posted up signs around school that encouraged recycling, composting, and cleaning up after one another.

Stacey Chiu, another wonderful Reader, invited her friend, Phyllis Sun from USC to lead a lesson about photography! Each student was allowed to hold different types of cameras, take snapshots both outside and inside, and look at the artist’s portfolio. The students became very engaged in the artistic aspect and even became little directors – placing people in poses and telling them how to smile! The kids love art and have been asking to do creative projects more often. We always encourage drawing, photography, crafts, and painting – anything that allows the kids to express themselves!

Congratulations to Erica Edwards for receiving the 2010 Extraordinary Community Service Award! “I have dedicated the past four years of my life to bettering the educational experiences of students at 32nd St. Elementary School through one-on-one tutoring and afterschool mentorship. Throughout my time with USC Readers**, I have tutored over ten 1st and 2nd graders in English, working fervently to help them reach grade level in order to increase their chances for academic success and opportunity. I have known some of these students for four years now and have become a constant figure in their young lives, a positive role model who they look to for advice, comfort, and academic aid. I have found that these young people have so many dreams and ambitions, which, I hope, will one day come to fruition. I hope that my advice, my mentorship, and my academic tutoring works as fuel to their fire, illuminating the many wonderful possibilities that lie ahead for each of them if they study and work hard. My experiences with USC Readers** and USC Troy Camp have positively affected my life, as well as those I serve. They have led me to realize my true calling in life: teaching. I have been accepted into the Teach For America organization and will begin teaching Pre-K in San Francisco in the fall. Not only has my community service propelled me onto an unexpected career path, but it has also shown me the beauty of human kindness and tolerance. My community service is based on a genuine desire to spread compassion and to better our world one act at a time. I can truly say that serving the USC Community has been both a joy and an honor.” - Erica Edwards

**32nd Readers, our program would be nothing without you...literally. It is your time, dedication, heart, commitment, and patience that make this program so successful and enjoyable. When times get stressful, even when midterms and papers weigh you down, we know that you always put the kids first! So THANK YOU! Be proud of all the amazing things that you do - for USC, for this community, for your world!

“Don’t blow it-good planets are hard to find.”
- Time Magazine

Estephanie showing her Trojan spirit!

Erica Edwards with her student, Anthony
We asked students at Weemes why they loved USC Readers, and here were some of their responses!

**Danielle Acuna** is a senior majoring in Classics and Music

"The most meaningful part of working at Weemes for me this semester was seeing the one-on-one student improvement. My student Linda is a first grader who could barely read, and she didn’t know any of her sight words. Now she’s just flying through material, and it’s great to see how much her confidence has increased. I also love the energy of After School. Whenever I’m tired or having a rough day, the students and my fellow Weemes Readers completely help turn things around!"

**New Reader Corner!**

**Student Spotlight**

**After school Update**

The Weemes students who participate in After School enjoy the benefits of extra homework help and fun enrichment activities. This semester, each USC Reader created a week long lesson theme reflecting their own unique interests in order to expose the students to a variety of topics. Michael Wood (upper left), a sophomore majoring in Cinema, had students analyze various elements of plot, character, and setting within the movie Toy Story II during Film Week. Jacquelyn Derian (second from right), a junior majoring in Occupational Therapy, taught students about how the functions of the human body and different ways to stay healthy during Health Week. According to fourth grade student Keniya, "After School is fun because we get to do our homework, we get to go outside, we get to do art projects, and we get to eat and play. The tutors are funny and make me laugh! They always check our work when we’re done, so we learn a lot. I love the activities we do."

Tyreon, third grade - "The USC Readers help make sure I get good grades. They always say hi to me and help me."

Asia, fourth grade - "USC Readers are the best! My favorite is Marssia cause she’s nice and pretty and always helps me."

Derrika, fourth grade - "I love the USC Readers because they are nice and help me with stuff I don’t understand. For fractions, they showed me how to do it with a Hershey’s chocolate bar. Now I love math."
Welcome new Spring 2010 Readers and Math Mentors!

Saloni Parikh
Denise Rick
Eusong Do
Vanessa Rivera
Danielle Acuna
Jenny Nguyen
Lauren Garcia
Jesus Escobar
Francisco Diaz
Elder Arreortua
Blake Byfuglin
Jessica Niemeyer
Isaac Hainley
Hyngju Kim
Claire Cho
Kevin Moon
Milica Tasic
Jennifer Lee

This year, Readers and JEP raised over $1795 for Relay for Life! Great job Abhinay for raising over $1000!

The 24-hour relay was held on April 11 and 12th! Special thanks to Diana Coleman for dedicating her time to organize the team and encouraging everyone to raise funds for such a great cause!

A message from the Central Coordinator: Nikki Sharma

There are very few jobs that truly have the ability to change your life and shape your future aspirations and goals. USC Readers is one such program. When I first came to USC, I declared Political Science as my major; however I quickly realized that my true passion involved reforming policies rather than defending them. As I worked at USC Readers, I learned about the drastic inequities that exist in public education and the lack of basic skills such as reading and math amongst elementary school kids. Quality education is a right for every student and I have now dedicated my career to the field of education policy to ensure equal opportunities for all. I see new opportunities for these children arise everyday through the work done by USC Readers staff. They are the vehicle of change and equality in this organization. The coordinators and assistants play an integral role in connecting with children and organizing both the one-on-one and afterschool programs. Readers inspire students through mentorship and individualized assistance while simultaneously establishing strong bonds of friendship and support. This year, the office staff drastically changed the program through the implementation of electronic and organized math/reading resources for each specific grade level which not only assist readers in more individualized sessions but also build the foundation of the program. While math and reading concepts come easy to many of us, it is our responsibility to pass on those skills and assist those who will ultimately influence the future of our country. As I wrap up my last newsletter, I want to end by saying thank you to USC Readers for igniting a passion in me and for tirelessly fighting for the academic success of students throughout Los Angeles.