Update from the Outgoing Co-Director

By Claire Brown, Math Director

As I close out my last semester with ReadersPlus, I am reminded of how much talent and commitment to the community we have among our staff. Just three weeks ago the University celebrated the community service achievements of undergraduate students and five USC ReadersPlus staff members were recognized. Tim Chessher, Stacey Chiu, Vanessa Cuarenta, Yesenia Cuarenta, and Chelsea Snyder were honored for the selflessness and ingenuity with which they have become involved in the University Park neighborhood. Like so many of our USC ReadersPlus Coordinators, Assistants, and literacy and math tutors, these five award recipients exemplify the personal commitment that USC students are making to our community. I am so proud of the work they are doing and of my opportunity to support them in doing it.

In addition to committing time and energy to our schools, our tutors are also committing to make an academic and personal impact on their students. ReadersPlus has entered into a new partnership with the Rossier School of Education this year in order to evaluate how tutoring affects the students with whom we work. For the first time, our elementary school students’ literacy assessment results will be reviewed by Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) students. We will be receiving meaningful feedback on how students’ achievement in reading has grown from the beginning to the end of the semester, while MAT students will have the opportunity to review achievement data from real students. The Rossier School of Education will also be reviewing literacy and math interest surveys from all of our students, as we highly value the personal impact that our tutors can have on children’s engagement at school. Here’s to many more semesters of collaboration!
The USC campus will be all abuzz on April 30th and May 1st as book lovers and readers from all over the city come to campus for a celebration of books and the written word. JEP and our very own USC ReadersPlus program is honored to have been invited to represent the Dana and David Dornsife College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences both days of the event.

For the past five years, USC ReadersPlus has partnered with Project Books and Blankies in presenting the annual “International Reading Festival” that typically takes place earlier each April. At the festival, JEP and USC ReadersPlus student staff will introduce children and families from our neighborhood schools to folk and fairy tales from around the world and engage participants in hands-on reading and math activities connected to the stories. This same format and focus will be brought to the larger city-wide event this year, taking children to ten different countries from around the world including Japan, Italy, Kenya, Guyana and Morocco to learn about the rich culture and storytelling traditions of the diverse lands. The various regions of the world will be scheduled in two-hour time slots, inviting festival participants to return to the JEP/USC ReadersPlus booth every two hours to travel to yet another part of the world and engage in a whole new set of stories and literacy activities.

Special additions to the booth will be two guest authors. Young adult author, Anna Carey, will read from her published books, The Sloane Sisters and Eve, talk about her writing craft, and engage participants in fun writing exercises. Ryan Lederer, a freshman here at USC, will read from and give away copies of his book, Captain Candy, which he wrote when he was only ten years old, and was published in 2007. Ryan will inspire young children from our neighborhood to believe in themselves as writers and to use writing as a tool to tell their own creative stories.

Free books donated by DK Publishing will be distributed to children attending our USC ReadersPlus partner schools who come to the festival sporting an International Reading Festival t-shirt. For those students at our schools who have never attended the event (or can’t find their t-shirt!), book coupons will be delivered to the schools one week prior to the event which will entitle them to a free book when presented at the JEP/USC ReadersPlus booth. We’ll be located on Trousdale Parkway not far from Tommy Trojan in booth 184. Come read with us! (See our schedule of events)

### Dana and David Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences

**JEP/USC Readers**<sup>Plus</sup> ‘International Reading Festival’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saturday, April 30&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Sunday, May 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Schedule of Activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Schedule of Activities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 12 USC Readers**&lt;sup&gt;Plus&lt;/sup&gt; Foshay team presents Asia -- Travel to Japan and India</td>
<td>10 – 12 Guest Author Anna Carey shares her craft – The Sloane Sisters and Eve.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 12 - 2 USC Readers**<sup>Plus</sup> 32<sup>nd</sup> Street team presents Europe -- Travel to Italy and Ger-
| 2 – 4 Project Books and Blankies – Quilting stories and activities | 12 – 1 Guest Author Ryan Lederer inspires young writers – Captain Candy |
| 4 - 6 USC Readers**<sup>Plus</sup> Vermont team presents Sub-Saharan Africa -- Travel to Kenya and South Africa | 3 – 5 USC Readers**<sup>Plus</sup> Norwood team presents the Middle East and North Africa -- Travel to Egypt and Morocco |
Tutoring is a fun job, but that doesn’t mean it’s always easy. That’s where Claire and I come in. As Math and Literacy Directors, we are constantly searching out new activities, dynamic lesson plans, and innovative tactics to make our one-on-one sessions stress-free for tutors and impactful for students. While we hold two formal trainings at the start of each semester, we provide opportunities for tutors to grab new resources year-round.

On April 7th, we hosted “Extravaganza,” an open house training event complete with dinner, treats, and over 30 different educational resources. We were thrilled to see our tutors discussing their students’ goals and testing out new approaches to reaching them. Among the literacy resources were three mini-lessons on poetry in honor of National Poetry Month highlighting Haiku, acrostic poems, and role of the senses in poetry. Math resources incorporated kinesthetic, tactile activities to help kids engage with math concepts. In anticipation of the end of the semester, we also provided resources to help bring closure to sessions and help students see the progress they have made.

In fall 2011 we will hold an expanded Extravaganza, improved with opportunities for tutors to share their best practices and discuss issues that challenge them. Thanks to all our tutors who made the night such a success!

“Extravaganza” puts the Fun in Functional

By Elizabeth Inglese, Literacy Director

Congratulations 2011 Graduates!

David Bostrom  Jacquelyn Derian  Aaron James  Nicolette Ramirez
Claire Brown  Kristen Evans  Matthew Kaundart  Hestia Rojas
Brittany Burns  Lauren Garcia  Irma Lopez  Caren Scannell
Marissa Chavez  Michael Garcia  Kate Mason  Ali Stillman
Timothy Chessher  Joanna Haffner  Jane Park  Chelsea Snyder
Stacey Chiu  Michael Harkins  Kevin Platt  Jacqueline Tobin
Rebeca Corleto  Aja Heisler  Sarah Raffety  Ariel Willis
Did you know that the Joint Education Project is the oldest service-learning program in the United States? That’s because service-learning is at the core of the Trojan spirit. Our brand of service is not charity. We are engaging with our community in a mutually empowering exchange.

USC ReadersPlus tutors, who spend 8-20 hours per week in one-on-one sessions with a child, know the wealth of experience to be gained in the service of others. Patience, perseverance, and flexibility are among the skills tutors have acquired through their work. In addition to gaining more abstract skills they also have opportunities to hone their communication abilities in meeting with classroom teachers and school staff, witness the different learning styles individuals favor, and gain a deeper insight into the factors contributing to illiteracy and the educational system.

Their experiences in our public school classrooms have inspired many of our tutors to pursue careers in education and in the service of others. This year we are proud to see four USC ReadersPlus tutors—Ariel Willis, Brittany Burns, Chelsea Snyder, and Jackie Tobin—join Teach for America where they will carry on in the Trojan spirit to learn and serve.

Willis, who serves as Coordinator for James A. Foshay Learning Center says, “After tutoring and becoming a site coordinator, I have a greater understanding and appreciation of those who are dedicated to enhancing the educational experience and attainment of today’s youth.”

As these tutors go forth into classrooms across the country, they will taking the values of service-learning with them and sharing them with the children they meet.

---

**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

**Math Advocate**
*Who:* graduate student with at least one year (preferably two) to commit
*What:* responsible for training undergraduate students for tutoring, creating hands-on math lesson plans for one-on-one tutoring and group projects, making visits to the multiple partner schools, and serving as an academic resource for the undergraduate tutors. 15 – 20 hours per week; hourly pay rate of $20/hour; tuition remission in the amount of 3 units each semester.

If interested, contact Tina Koneazny at koneazny@usc.edu
On April 9th and 10th, 2011, USC ReadersPlus participated in the Relay for Life event, an annual tradition of fighting on against cancer. For 24 hours, the ReadersPlus and Joint Educational Project (JEP) team raised awareness about cancer by walking laps around Cromwell Field. The team also held a booth at the event to fundraise for the American Cancer Society. The ReadersPlus/JEP team chose childhood cancers as their theme and based their booth decorations on the book “Alex and the Amazing Lemonade Stand” by Liz, Jay and Alex Scott. They sold tropical lemonade to RFL participants walking around the track and also face painted.

Prior to Relay for Life, ReadersPlus held a team fundraiser on April 8th, 2011 at the USC Gateway Yogurtland. Team members canvased the campus with flyers and passed out coupons to customers. A portion of the sales made during the event will be donated to the American Cancer Society.

We, at USC ReadersPlus, would like to give a big thank you to everyone who participated in this amazing event! Fight on! Fight back!

Cancer Awareness Week by Stacey Chiu

In conjunction with USC Relay for Life, ReadersPlus programs at the five sites — 32nd St. School, Foshay Elementary, Norwood Elementary, Vermont Elementary, and Weemes Elementary, held a cancer awareness week.

Lesson plans were created to teach students about cancer. Two books in particular, “Alex and the Amazing Lemonade Stand” by Liz, Jay and Alex Scott and “Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes” by Ronald Himler were highlighted. Activities also incorporated other subjects and ranged from art lessons on making origami cranes, science lesson plans on learning the chemical properties of lemon juice, and writing prompts on overcoming obstacles.

At Norwood Elementary, students participated in a full week of lessons about cancer and fundraised to help fight against cancer. On the last day, students in the after school program made purple cancer ribbons, wrote messages of hope to support cancer patients, and decorated bags for the luminaria ceremony.
Math Success with Miles and Jalen  
by Jackie Tobin

At the start of this school year, fifth grader Jalen Ashley was not a huge fan of math, self stating that he disliked the subject, especially division. Having now worked with math mentor Miles du Mosch for a year now, he has changed his attitude. “This has been my best year in math ever,” Jalen told Miles after the first ten weeks of school were coming to a close for winter break. This is in part because Miles tailor’s his lessons to his students’ individual interests. To keep Jalen engaged, Miles incorporates his interest in American history into his math lessons. For example, he uses the Zillio math manipulative in a WWII game where players answer math questions in “battles” to obtain game pieces to represent their victories.

Building Reading Skills with Dr. Seuss  by Jackie Tobin

This semester, second grader Justin Paredes made a great leap in his reading skills with reader Beca Corleto. He loves reading Dr. Seuss books, which he can now complete on his own. To help Justin with his reading skills, Beca used creative lessons to build fluency and comprehension. One of Justin’s great accomplishments was a lesson he did with Beca about the Dr. Seuss book “And To Think That I Saw It On Mulberry Street.” After reading the story, he wrote his own version about his life, “And To Think That I Saw It On 32nd Street!” Congratulations to Justin for his hard work on reading and writing!
Foshay Reader of the Year: David Bostrom! by Ariel Willis

David has been with USC Readers Plus since his freshman year and will be graduating in May. David is Foshay’s assistant coordinator, and he tutors in reading. One of his students is Jean Carlos Sanchez. One day, Jean Carlos came up to David during after school and said, “Mr. David, remember that time we were rhyming words together?”

David and Jean Carlos then went off for nearly five minutes rhyming words with "cat". Another reader, Misohn Kimble then jumped in and it was a "rhyming fest!" David's bond with his students is not only prevalent during his one-on-one sessions, but carries over and remains incredibly memorable to his students. David is engaging and an incredible tutor who embodies a strong presence in our USC ReadersPlus program.

Lesson plan highlight >>>

Teaching Synonyms and Antonyms

By Kate Mason

Veteran Reader and USC senior Kate Mason created an outstanding lesson plan geared towards synonyms and antonyms that provides students with a kinesthetic and visual learning experience.

Goal: 2nd Grade Standard 1.8 Understand and explain common synonyms and antonyms

Materials: Velcro display board, Velcro picture cards, handout, pencil

Description: Call out words that have the same basic meaning and call out words that have opposite meanings. Ask the student to listen for patterns and relationships among the words as you read them. Explain that you’ll be discussing synonyms and antonyms and give a definition of each. Have a display board with Velcro pictures. The middle column of pictures stays on the board and pass out the rest of the cards to the student. Say, for example, “I’m looking for the synonym for ‘smile’, if you think you have the synonym for ‘smile’, put it on the left side of the picture.” They will find the picture where someone is smiling and put it next to ‘smile’. Repeat until all synonyms and antonyms are found. To measure student’s knowledge, pass out a worksheet with synonyms and antonyms mixed in two columns and ask the student to match the synonyms and the antonyms.

Friday Funday

by Ariel Willis

Friday Funday started this past fall and incorporates fun, outdoor games every Friday. Tutors have planned science experiments, scavenger hunts, Olympic games, and relay races. This April, students are spending their Fridays preparing for our annual Talent Show. Original poetry, skits, dances and singing performances will be some of our main acts!
Cameron McCaa works with students with distinct learning styles and preferences and uses this knowledge to his advantage to make his lesson plans more effective. His fifth grader, Melvin Garcia, can read with ease, but has trouble with his writing mechanics. To improve his writing goals, Cameron uses a weekly journal and writes down a topic at the beginning of each session and has Melvin write three reflection sentences. They edit the journal together at the end of each session and every word that is misspelled is placed in his vocabulary word bank. Cameron says, “By Melvin editing his own writing, he can easily identify what he needs to improve upon. Any child can learn, but they learn much more effectively when their own learning style is catered to.”

Carly Woodworth meets twice a week with two bright young students, Alice Orantes-Chun and Cynthia Morales, as part of a new one-on-one program for kindergartners at Norwood and her lesson plans always steal the show in the USC ReadersPlus room. By playing interactive educational games, Carly is able to balance the needs of her students and keep them engaged in learning. A favorite game is the sight-word popsicle stick game, where her students compete to win as many sight word popsicle sticks as possible. As Carly says, “It was a great way to go over the sight words they have learned while interacting in friendly competition!”

A few weeks into the semester, Marissa Chavez realized that her second grader, Xayleen Comartio, could not recognize number patterns or count past 20. She refocused her lesson plans and dedicated the following sessions to counting by 1’s, 5’s, and 10’s. To reinforce her understanding, Marissa used a visual learning strategy and had Xayleen write numbers by ten vertically on construction paper and fill in the one’s horizontally so that she could see the pattern of the first digit of each number increasing by one and the second digit of each number staying zero. Soon enough, it was a delight to all in the USC ReadersPlus room to hear Xayleen confidently counting past 20. 

Keeping Weekly Journals: A Fun Way to Improve Writing Mechanics
by Chelsea Snyder

Teaching Visual Learners How to Count
by Chelsea Snyder

Success In New Kindergartner One-on-One Program
by Emily Brooke
This spring semester, there have been some leadership changes at Vermont. While I have filled the coordinator position, long-time tutor Caren Scannell has filled the role of assistant coordinator and is doing an amazing job! Caren spends the majority of her time working with students where she is an inspiration and an example for all of the staff members at Vermont. I love being in the classroom while she is tutoring because her energy with the kids is incredible. She really knows how to get to their level and gain their respect and trust which shows in her sessions and her students’ growth. Caren has also stepped up in helping to run the site. She makes sure that everything in the classroom is running smoothly and is always there when I need a helping hand. It has been such a privilege to work alongside Caren, and I know all of us have learned a lot from her.

Caren Scannell—Assistant Coordinator Extraordinaire

by Anne-Marie White

Most Improved Student: Evette Zapeta!

by Hestia Rojas

Evette Zapeta is a member of our after school program and one-on-one tutoring. Evette and I have been working together for the semester, focusing primarily on her reading fluency and comprehension. I knew Evette before I studied abroad last semester, when she could barely say a sentence in English. When I came back, she was not only speaking full sentences, but demanded that I speak to her in English, rather than Spanish. We have continued to work on her English language skills, reading books together and doing comprehension activities to make sure that she understands the main ideas. She is learning how to break down words, and has greatly improved both her pronunciation and understanding. She is an extremely motivated and hard-working student.

Tailoring Tutoring Sessions by Learning Styles by Caren Scannell

One-on-one sessions are a great way to get to know students and really focus in on their learning styles to help them succeed in the classroom. This is just what has happened with Matthew, one of my kindergarten students. He came in with knowledge of only part of his alphabet, a love of dinosaurs, and a quirky personality.

Throughout the semester he has made great strides and is even now starting to blend letter sounds to form words. Our lessons often revolve around dinosaurs and fun, get-up-and-go activities. One time as he was going through his alphabet sounds, he got to the letter “R,” said the letter sound, and started dancing the robot because of course robot begins with “R.” It is this enthusiasm that motivates me as a USC Reader and to see the students have fun while learning and building confidence is exciting to experience.
Recently, the After School program at Weemes participated in a Health and Exercise week. Among other topics, our students learned healthy eating habits, and the true value of exercise to a well-balanced life. Students first made posters about the exercises they wanted to do and then took turns leading the class in the exercises of their choice. We all enjoyed doing jumping jacks, cherry pickers, and running together. In addition, one day included a discussion on the topic of stress. Students were encouraged to vent about times they have felt stress, and draw out solutions to their stressful feelings. Issues that were discussed were boredom, bullying, and schoolwork. 

New Reader Spotlight: Julie Gu
by Michael Garcia

One of our newest Readers is Julie (Yuan) Gu. She is a freshman majoring in International Relations and Global Business. She is very involved on the USC campus including volunteering for the American Red Cross. We are so glad to have her this year. She has shown great promise as both a leader at Weemes and has been an asset for our program. Her innovative lessons are fun and inspiring. For example, Julie uses the popular board game Candyland to help teach math. Instead of using the spinner to determine how many spaces to move, they use multiplication flashcards. This is just one of the many ways that Julie is making learning fun! David Nicholson, a 4th grader from Ms. Oneill’s class, is a student that Julie has been tutoring who has shown tremendous growth. They have worked on complex fractions all the way up to long division and other number sense problems. We are so glad to have Julie working with us this semester. 

Message from the Coordinator by A’aron Heard

Entering USC as a freshman I was excited to find a home at USC Reader’s Plus program. College is a whole new experience and can be intimidating at times. When I was searching for work study jobs, I was looking for places to not only earn money, but a place to learn how to be a leader and make a difference; USC Readers Plus has turned out to be that place. Coming into this program as a new tutor I felt extremely welcomed. I knew I wanted to help children in the community, but I was apprehensive about having such a large responsibility. Now, almost a year later I’m in line to be the new coordinator when our current coordinator Michael Garcia, graduates. I’m excited to start this position with all the knowledge and advice from Michael and the assistant coordinator Jacqueline. They are full of support and words of wisdom. Michael never hesitated to offer advice and tips about managing the students after school or communicating with Weemes faculty. I look forward to the challenges and fun of being the new program coordinator at Weemes.

Health and Exercise Week Activities
by Michael Garcia

Recently, the After School program at Weemes participated in a Health and Exercise week. Among other topics, our students learned healthy eating habits, and the true value of exercise to a well-balanced life. Students first made posters about the exercises they wanted to do and then took turns leading the class in the exercises of their choice. We all enjoyed doing jumping jacks, cherry pickers, and running together. In addition, one day included a discussion on the topic of stress. Students were encouraged to vent about times they have felt stress, and draw out solutions to their stressful feelings. Issues that were discussed were boredom, bullying, and schoolwork.
Welcome Spring 2011 New Readers!

Jennifer Choi          Julie Gu          Drew Matsuda          Dimiana Saad
Karalee Ensign        Derrick Hong      Cameron McCaa          Pooja Shah
Cheryl Goetz           Irma Lopez        Gabriela Moriarty      Meghan Smith
Wenlei Gu              Cesar Magdaleno    Akshay Mote            Carly Woodworth

Our Spring Team of Coordinators

Norwood Elementary:
  Coordinator: Chelsea Snyder
  Assistant Coordinator: Emily Brooke

Vermont Elementary
  Coordinator: Anne-Marie White
  Assistant Coordinator: Caren Scannell

Foshay Elementary
  Coordinator: Ariel Willis
  Assistant Coordinator: David Bostrom

32nd Street Elementary
  Coordinator: Jacqueline Tobin
  Assistant Coordinator: Rebeca Corleto

Weemes Elementary
  Coordinator: Michael Garcia
  Assistant Coordinator: Jacquelyn Derian and A’aron Heard

The Office Staff

Tina Koneazny
  JEP Associate Director, Administration and Educational Outreach

Elizabeth Inglese
  Literacy Director

Claire Brown
  Math Director

Stacey Chiu
  Central Site Coordinator
about us...

USC ReadersPlus is a literacy and math tutoring program under the USC College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences. The program is administered by the Joint Educational Project and funded in part through the Good Neighbor’s Campaign. Our mentors work with the “Family of Five” schools surrounding USC.

In 1997, President Clinton launched legislation that would provide additional work-study money to colleges and universities with the condition that a large portion of it go to one-on-one literacy programs for children grades K-6. The JEP version of America Reads was the first in the nation to begin working under these guidelines, launching on May 19, 1997. In May of 1999, America Counts was added to include math education and it was at this time that the USC Readers program name was changed to USC ReadersPlus.

Contact us phone: 213-740-1834 fax: 213-750-1825

Visit our website>>> Wwww.usc.edu/readersplus
Volunteer opportunities
Work-study jobs
Upcoming events

USC ReadersPlus

801 West 34th Street
Los Angeles, CA 90089-0471
Phone: 213-740-1834
Fax: 213-740-1825