

## Improving literacy one child, one family at a time.

3130 Rogerdale Rd. Ste. 180  
Houston, TX 77042

Email: [help@familyliteracy.info](mailto:help@familyliteracy.info)  
Phone: 713-784-7373 Fax: 713-784-7379

October 2010  
Volume 1, Issue 3

### Sharing stories: Student wins national debate title

Peter Oathout came to the Texas Reading Institute in 2003 as an intelligent, but frustrated, 8-year-old. Dyslexia made him a struggling reader despite his best efforts.

Through 10 months of tutoring at the Institute and hours spent working with his parents at home, Peter filled a toolbox with reading tools and strategies. He now uses those tools to build knowledge.

Mark Oathout, Peter's father, gave a positive update in August about Peter's reading.

"Peter has progressed and won a national title in debate this summer," he said.

Peter's speech and debate team from Houston Independent School District Lanier Middle School won the National Junior Forensic League championship in a national competition in June.

Peter, an 8<sup>th</sup> grader at Lanier, took first place in Congressional Debate.

Mark expressed his appreciation for the help his son received at TRI.

"Thank you for your fine work," Mark said back in August. "Peter will be entering high school within a few weeks. He enjoys reading and learning, among many other things."

This update is excellent to hear six years after the Houston Chronicle reported on Peter's hard work and his parents' dedication to supporting him.

"Peter's progress is a real tribute to a father's dedication to working with his son," said Dr. Eldo Bergman, Family Literacy Network/Texas Reading Institute director.

Mark recognized that his hard work and the support from Dr. Bergman and his team of clinicians paid off.

"The load of the effort pales in comparison to the bounty of the result," Mark said.

Read the story of Peter's debate triumph here: <http://www.examiner.com/young-leaders-in-houston/houston-isd-s-lanier-middle-school-debate-team-wins-8th-straight-national-championship>

To read about Peter's struggle, check out the Chronicle article here: [http://www.familyliteracy.info/resources/\\_\\_\\_HoustonChronicle2004r.pdf](http://www.familyliteracy.info/resources/___HoustonChronicle2004r.pdf)

### Parent participation boosts student reading progress

Peter's story is a testament to the vital role parents play in improving their children's reading.

Studies from the National Institute of Child Health & Human Development indicate that 60-80 hours of explicit instruction brings most children to grade level accuracy. All of those studies involved daily instruction.

Dr. Bergman recognizes that daily instruction is difficult to afford without participating in a study.

Parents, like Peter's father, who are willing to provide that day-by-day support themselves can help their child in three ways, Dr. Bergman said.

- Parents help build their child's motivation after his or her initial poor reading experiences.
- Parents provide emotional support and comfort as their child's stress grows when tackling the variances in written English.
- Students build fluency and confidence with daily support as they develop the processing skills necessary to read English.

In the home support program, FLN/TRI offers parents instruction, materials and mentoring by trained clinicians. Students and parents spend 2-4 hours per week with a clinician, learning strategies to practice the rest of the week at home. Parents also receive email feedback on work recorded at home weekly.

Contact us at [info@familyliteracy.info](mailto:info@familyliteracy.info) for more.

**If you have comments, questions, complaints, or stories you would like to share, please email us at [help@familyliteracy.info](mailto:help@familyliteracy.info)**

## New clinician looks to share excitement in learning

FLN/TRI welcomed a new clinician to its staff in August.

Emily Conn joins FLN/TRI with a master's degree in special education and a lifelong dedication to instructing children with special needs.

Emily began teaching children with special needs when she was in the 4th grade, while facing the challenges of her own learning disability. She looks forward to seeing her students' reading skills activate as she begins instructing here.

"I like the excitement when the kid first gets something," she said. "When you start seeing that light go on, it may take awhile, but that's one main reason I enjoy working with special needs kids."

Looking for a place to share that excitement, Emily chose FLN/TRI. Dr. Eldo Bergman founded the Institute to help children and parents through the reading struggle after his experience with his own son, who is dyslexic. That heart behind the work at FLN/TRI sealed the deal.

"I know what it's like to be frustrated and to struggle to have that light of understanding come on," she said. "I have patience because I've gone through it and know that it takes time."

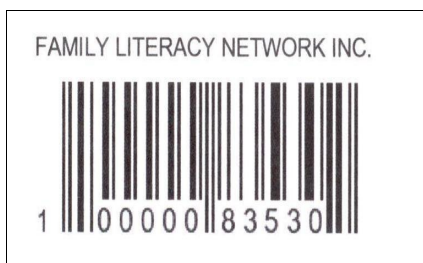
Dr. Bergman said that Emily's experience with and dedication to helping kids with special needs will have a positive effect on her students.

"It's a group of kids with meaning to her," he said. "I'm excited that she is joining us in this work."

### It's easy to boost scholarship

**When you shop at Randall's:** Ask to have your Randall's card linked to account #10358. When you use your Randall's card, Randall's will donate a portion of your purchase to the FLN scholarship fund. Randall's allows you to link up to three non-profit organizations on one card.

**When you shop at Kroger:** Present the barcode below with your Kroger*Plus* card to the cashier at checkout. When you use your Kroger card, Kroger will donate a percentage of your eligible purchases to the FLN scholarship fund for the remainder of that program year.



**Donate Online:** Any contribution to the FLN scholarship fund would help fund a scholarship for parents who lack the means, but not the heart, to help their child learn to read. Donate online at: <https://www.firstgiving.com/philipbergman>

### Announcements

#### **New schedule format receives praise**

The new schedule format is designed for parents' ease in tracking their child's sessions, knowing when the schedule is updated and matching their invoice to completed hours.

A number of parents have responded positively.

"I actually find the new format extremely efficient," said a parent from Katy. "I must admit when Presley was there, I had a difficult time keeping the hours straight in my personal calendar. I think this will be very effective."

For questions or comments about the new format, email Richard Treadwell at [schedule@familyliteracy.info](mailto:schedule@familyliteracy.info) or call 713-784-7373.

#### **Refund for recycled recorders**

Former TRI parents can receive a \$60 refund when they return the home support program recording equipment.

Bring or mail the recorder, headphones, timer and the rest of the kit to our office at 3130 Rogerdale Rd. Suite 180, Houston, TX 77042 from 9-6 Monday through Friday or 9-4 on Saturdays and we will mail you a refund check.

For questions about the recording equipment, email Dr. Bergman at [help@familyliteracy.info](mailto:help@familyliteracy.info) or call 713-784-7373.