

Super Stars Literacy Newsletter

Winter 2009
Volume 1, Issue 2

Michael Mowery, Executive Director
Erin Drake, Program Director



Super Stars Literacy

Our identity is composed of a tree and stars. The tree signifies the foundation and commitment of education within the community, while the stars represent the individual students who flourish and benefit from our program. When you plant a seed to read, what grows is the opportunity for a bright future for all students in the Super Stars Literacy program.



How important is early childhood literacy?

Studies indicate that children who are not reading at grade level by the end of 3rd grade are at serious risk of never graduating from high school.

Program Director's Message

Greetings! As the new Program Director for Super Stars Literacy, it is my pleasure to share with you some of the exciting developments with our program this year!

The year started out with a bang as we expanded our student population by over 300%! We are now able to reach 270 students for strategic literacy skill building and social-emotional development in grades K-2. Based on the assessments that Super Stars has conducted program wide, the students have shown considerable growth in all their target literacy areas.

Our success is largely the result of the dedication from our 27 para-professional instructors. Their accomplishments are the product of the training and professional development program created and implemented by our Training Director, Rose Lynn Abesamis-Bell, who is profiled on page 2.



Of course, our program staff wouldn't be able to achieve the results we have without the assistance of dedicated volunteers who tutor, organize and chaperone field trips and other events, and provide organizational capacity support. In this issue we pay special tribute to volunteers Carla Koren, Michele Lundin and the members of the Junior League of Oakland-East Bay for their continued efforts in supporting and promoting Super Stars Literacy.

I hope you enjoy a closer look at our organization as we work towards creating Super Star Students. Thank you for your continued support and interest in our organization!

Best wishes,

Erin Drake
Program Director
Super Stars Literacy, Inc.

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Meet Our Training Director Rose Lynn Abesamis-Bell

Rose Lynn Abesamis-Bell is in her third year with Super Stars Literacy, but she has cultivated her ethic of service



and understanding of literacy over a lifetime. After earning a masters degree in education from Claremont Graduate University, she taught in multi-age settings for seven years in Pasadena public schools, teaching children from Kindergarten to

third grade. She is currently pursuing a Reading Specialist credential at CSU East Bay.

Founding Program Director, Marie-Eve Thomaes introduced Rose Lynn to Super Stars. Rose Lynn now serves as its Training Director specializing in curriculum development, program evaluation, and overseeing the staff development process. In this role, Rose Lynn merges her love for teaching reading, a desire to develop leaders, and an ambition to bring meaningful learning opportunities to all children.

She looks forward to furthering the work of providing quality reading instruction after school through highly trained staff equipped with both the knowledge and practices that make reading happen for young children. "I am inspired by the organization's growth, the drive of those pursuing the vision of reaching more children, and by the thoughtful and arduous work that our staff put in day after day."

School Spotlight: Think College Now

When faced with the alarming statistic that fewer than one in twenty Oakland high school students is academically eligible to attend a University of California college, David Silver and a group of dedicated parents founded Think College Now, a community-based public elementary school focused on closing the achievement gap. The school motto, "Together, Yes We Can", exemplifies the belief that ALL students must have the opportunity to attend college and pursue their dreams.



The majority of TCN's 255 K-5th grade students (91%) qualify for free or reduced price lunches due to their low income status, and 68% of TCN students are English Language Learners.

But thanks to a curriculum that is closely aligned with state standards, parent engagement, high-level assessments to determine each child's abilities and needs, and tutoring provided by teachers after school and during vacations, TCN students are making incredible educational strides, increasing the school's API score an astounding 170 points from 2005 to 2007.

One of only three Oakland schools to earn a 2008 "California Distinguished School" award, Think College Now has also received a "Title I Achievement Award" for outstanding academic growth and success in narrowing the achievement gap. TCN was recognized by Congresswoman Barbara Lee for "strength of parent involvement", and was praised by OUSD Executive Officer Bill Conrad as, "a model school...one of the top 5 schools I have seen in the country."

The staff's dedication is exemplified by Principal David Silver, who will do "whatever it takes" to see his students succeed. Each year, students are challenged with a reading goal, for which he rewards them with an outrageous stunt - singing and dancing on the school's roof, or taking a plunge in a dunk tank. This year's goal is to read a combined one hundred million words, to earn a school carnival - with a pie-throwing booth! You can bet that these bright and motivated students will meet their goal, and that Principal Silver will proudly deliver their reward.



The new partnership between Think College Now and Super Stars Literacy is producing outstanding results. Principal Silver stated, "Super Stars Literacy provides our students with the opportunity to attain their socio-emotional and literacy goals. I appreciate the SSL staff's constant work to integrate their program into the TCN vision and community. SSL has the building blocks of a strong literacy program based on assessments to guide instruction, a curricular map, and a strong rubric to provide a vision of quality learning."

At the recent Family Reading Night, Principal Silver asked, "What is the most important thing you must do to get to college?" Everyone called out, "READ!" Super Stars Literacy is confident that our TCN students will meet their goal of attending college, and is very pleased to be a part of their academic success.

Volunteers Making a Difference

Voluntarism is built into the DNA of Super Stars Literacy, Inc. We began as a project of the Junior League of Oakland-East Bay (JLOEB), an organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women and improving communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers.

Volunteers have since played key roles as program tutors, field trip chaperones, event organizers, fundraisers, IT support, and, in fact, the editors and contributors to the creation of this newsletter. Since the Super Stars Literacy program was developed in 2002, a

JLOEB committee has provided the administrative and organizational support needed to incubate and expand our after-school programming.

Led by Co-Chairs **Carla Koren** and **Michele Lundin**, committee members have helped raise funds, plan field trip and parent events, organize other volunteers, develop marketing materials, and establish relationships with schools, after-school collaboratives, and college work-study programs.

In 2007, the Committee, working with the JLOEB Board of Directors, undertook a strategic analysis that led to the decision to establish



JLOEB's Super Stars committee Co-Chairs **Carla Koren (L)** and **Michele Lundin (R)**

Super Stars Literacy as an independent nonprofit organization and expand it to reach hundreds of additional Bay Area children.

The Board and staff of Super Stars Literacy wish to recognize the efforts of these women who have – and continue to – contribute to our success. Our students and their families who have experienced the joy of reading are the beneficiaries of this true *Volunteer Spirit*.

Our Newsletter Needs a Name!



We are very proud and excited to have launched a quarterly newsletter for Super Stars Literacy, but we still haven't decided on a title for it. We need your help!

So far, we've come up with:

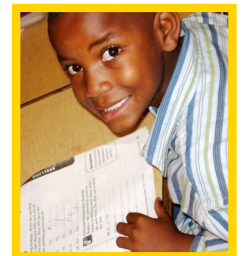
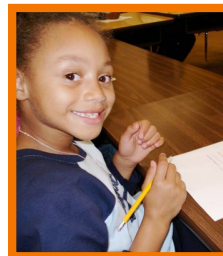
- The Super Stars Literacy Gazette*
- The Super Stars Literacy Journal*
- The Super Stars Literacy Reader*
- The Super Stars Literacy Carrier Pigeon*

If you like any of the above suggested newsletter titles, or have your own ideas or suggestions, send an email to info@superstarsliteracy.org and be automatically entered in a drawing to win two tickets to an upcoming Super Stars Literacy special event. The winner will also be featured in the next issue of our newsletter, which will bear the new winning newsletter name! Please send us your ideas – good luck!

Our Beliefs

At Super Stars Literacy, we believe:

- ★ Every child deserves equal access to resources and opportunities to achieve.
- ★ Every child has the potential to learn and achieve.
- ★ Families and caregivers are integral to children's literacy development.
- ★ Learning should be filled with joy, fun and friendship.
- ★ Literacy and academic achievement are enhanced through group learning and social development.
- ★ Early literacy development is critical to success in school and life.
- ★ We believe in fostering children's confidence, self-esteem and creating safe learning environments.
- ★ We believe in building a network of support for each child.



Support our Super Star Students

Super Stars Literacy not only helps children increase their reading proficiency, but also helps build self-confidence, communication and social skills that serve these youth well into adulthood. To make an investment in their future – and ours – please send your tax-deductible donation to: Super Stars Literacy, Inc., 675 Hegenberger Rd., Oakland, CA 94621 or make an online gift at www.superstarsliteracy.org.



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Super Stars Literacy, Inc. is a 501(c)(3)
nonprofit organization.
Federal Tax ID #51-0666163

We're on the Web!
www.superstarsliteracy.org

Super Stars Salutes: East Bay Community Foundation

"We will have economically healthy communities only when we have economically healthy adults and families." This was the conclusion reached by the East Bay Community Foundation (the Foundation) following a year-long strategic planning and community needs assessment process, which led the Foundation to focus its future grantmaking on two areas: 1) promoting economic independence for families and 2) educational success for children.

The Foundation recognizes that in order for children to achieve academic success, "the primary school years of kindergarten through third grade mark the key window for children to develop competence in and a love for reading. Children who are reading at grade level by the end of third grade have the core foundation of literacy they will need to succeed in school and life for the long-term."

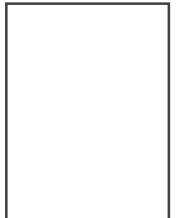


Super Stars Literacy drew from the same body of research when it created in 2007 its Vision that "every child will read at grade level or above by third grade and be eagerly engaged in learning."

The efforts of Super Stars in pursuing the same vision the Foundation has prioritized resulted in a recent grant of \$15,000 from the Foundation. Additionally, because of this alignment of our goals, the Foundation chose to highlight Super Stars Literacy in the Foundation's recent annual report as its grantee preparing young children to succeed.

We greatly appreciate their support and look forward to continue working with the East Bay Community Foundation and its dedicated staff to help close the achievement gap for even more East Bay children.

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