

Super Stars Literacy Newsletter

Fall 2008
Premiere Issue

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.



Year after year, a substantial majority, many times almost 100 percent, of Super Stars students who begin the school year struggling to read, end the year reading at, or near, the benchmark level for their grade.

Executive Director's Message

Welcome to the first Super Stars Literacy newsletter!

These are very exciting times for the award-winning early literacy program that the Junior League of Oakland-East Bay (JLOEB) developed in 2002 and has continued to support.

In the last two months alone, Super Stars Literacy has:

- Hired our first full-time Program Director, Erin Drake (read about Erin on page 2)
- Started programs at six Oakland schools this fall (up from two schools last year)
- Hired and trained 25 energetic program staff
- Received our 501(c)(3) nonprofit status and formally separated ourselves from JLOEB
- Launched our first ever Major Donor Campaign to build our sustainability.

All of these historic activities serve to advance our mission of building early literacy skills in primary grade children in communities with limited resources. We're thrilled that



we've been able to build our program so that, last month, we were able to welcome 270 new Kindergarten, first and second graders eager to become reading Super Stars.

I want to thank all of you, our funders, volunteer supporters, school leaders and collaborative partners, for helping Super Stars Literacy to make these connections with deserving students and give them the opportunity to enter third grade reading at grade level and with the self-confidence to continue to succeed in school and beyond.

Best,

Michael Mowery
Executive Director
Super Stars Literacy, Inc.

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Meet Our New Program Director Erin Drake

New Program Director Erin Drake will oversee the successful execution of Super Stars Literacy curriculum at its six school sites. She brings extensive knowledge of the needs of students and schools in underserved areas to this role. A Teach for America alumna, Drake continued working at Budlong Elementary School in South Los Angeles after completing her service year there. She spent a total of three years in this school teaching kindergarten and first



grade. She also served on the school's leadership council, earning valuable planning skills she will exercise in leading the growing Super Stars staff and implementing and further formalizing the Super Stars Literacy program.

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"After spending three years teaching five- and six-year olds in an underserved community, I understand how vital early literacy is to continued academic success," commented Drake. "I am thrilled to join a program like Super Stars that makes such a positive, lasting effect on the lives of students and their families and look forward to working with program staff and school-site classroom teachers to deliver curriculum that engages and educates our students."

School Spotlight: EnCompass Academy

In each issue of our newsletter, we plan to profile one of our school partners. For this issue, we are pleased to introduce EnCompass Academy Elementary School, one of the four new school sites at which Super Stars Literacy began offering its program this fall.



EnCompass Academy is located on 81st Avenue in East Oakland, and opened in 2004 as part of the Oakland Unified School District's New Small Autonomous School policy, which was designed to alleviate overcrowding at another large, underperforming elementary school. Of

the 198 students in grades K-4, 29% are African American, 3% are of Asian descent, 67% are Hispanic/Latino, and 1% are Pacific Islander. 97% of students are classified as economically disadvantaged, and 52% are English language learners.

This innovative and inspiring school was designed by East Oakland parents and public school educators, and the current Principal, Minh-Tram Nguyen, is a founding member of the school.

In its mere four years of existence, EnCompass' progressive mission and teaching methods have led to great success. Last year, they were one of only four District schools honored for Academic Excellence for Closing the Achievement Gap, for Absolute Performance, and for Student Growth. In 2005, EnCompass moved into a brand new campus, and was recognized by the district for top acceleration of students: over 40% of students grew by 40 points or more on CST ELA/CST Math, some increasing by more than 100 points. The school's API score has also increased over 100 points, credited to the school's adherence to a standards-based curriculum that emphasizes high achievement through a whole-child approach. EnCompass shares Super Star Literacy's emphasis on building resiliency through development of social/emotional skills, and is committed to closely monitoring individual student progress and offering integrated tiers of support to accelerate academic achievement.



Virgtrese McGee, the Super Stars Literacy Program Coordinator at EnCompass, is very enthusiastic about the way that the program has been received at EnCompass. "Super Stars Literacy has been welcomed by the

school with open arms. I see the program growing and being a part of the school for many years to come. Our goal is to improve the reading skills of our students so they become big fans of reading and won't be intimidated by having to read on their own or in front of a classroom. We want them to be fully engaged in reading for all the years to come, which will be of great benefit in their educational journey."

Plant a Seed to Read! 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.

The History of the Super Stars Literacy Program

The Super Stars Literacy program began as a project of the Junior League of Oakland-East Bay, Inc., (JLOEB) an organization of women committed to promoting



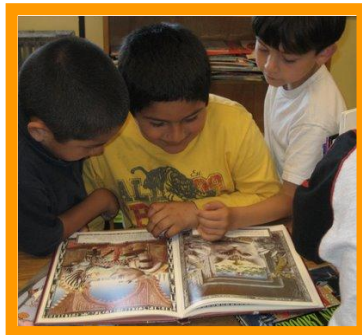
volunteerism and improving communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Since 1935, JLOEB has focused its efforts on improving conditions for underserved children throughout Oakland and the East Bay Area by collaborating with other community-based organizations and social service agencies to develop sustainable and creative solutions for areas of need; providing start up funds or funds to help bridge critical program shortfalls; building organizational structures; obtaining nonprofit status; recruiting and providing volunteers to implement programs for up to five years.

To date, JLOEB has committed more than 7 million volunteer hours and approximately \$3 million to efforts aimed at improving the lives of children and their families in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. The core values and beliefs that guide the motivation and actions of JLOEB include our belief that children should have equal opportunities in life for health, safety, education and training.

In 2000, the membership voted to focus its efforts on the education of K-8 children who are economically and/or socially

disadvantaged. After two years of community-wide needs assessments, research and collaborative program development with the Oakland Unified School District and several key community-based organizations, the Super Stars Literacy program was born. Super Stars began services in 2002, at one of Oakland's most economically and socially disadvantaged elementary schools, Hoover Elementary in West Oakland.

Following upon the success of Super Stars Literacy in improving the reading and socio-emotional skills of Hoover Elementary School students, and the successful launch of the program at a second Oakland site (Parker Elementary) in February, 2007, JLOEB undertook a "needs assessment" of other underserved East Bay schools and districts to gauge the interest and support for expanding the reach of our early literacy intervention program. The results were overwhelming. East Bay Principals and District leaders voiced a strong desire for the addition of Super Stars Literacy



as an after-school complement to their classroom literacy curriculum. Even several organizations outside California expressed interest in implementing such a program and asked for our assistance.

In order to facilitate the expansion of Super Stars Literacy, JLOEB membership

voted to establish the program as a separate nonprofit. JLOEB will continue to provide Super Stars Literacy with a volunteer committee to assist with fundraising, marketing, and volunteer tutor coordination during the 2008-09 school year, and Super Stars Literacy is in the process of hiring additional administrative staff to replace the valuable volunteer support. Several key JLOEB members will remain on the Super Stars' Board of Directors, and the Junior League's strong public affairs and advocacy voice in



Sacramento will ensure that the issues that Super Stars Literacy confronts (including school readiness, state testing issues and the plight of children in poverty) will continue to be voiced at a statewide level.

During its years as a project of the Junior League of Oakland-East Bay, Inc., Super Stars Literacy was recognized with several awards honoring the quality of its programming and the positive impact it has had on the community: a Certificate of Recognition from the California State Assembly in 2004, the national AJLI (Association of Junior Leagues International) /Crest Whitestrips Community Smile Award from AJLI in 2005, and the Diablo Magazine "Threads of Hope" Award presented in 2005 to Carla Koren, the JLOEB member who was most instrumental in founding Super Stars Literacy and continues as its Board President.



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We're on the Web!

www.superstarsliteracy.org

Super Stars Salutes: Dreyer's Grand Ice Cream Foundation

The results that Super Stars Literacy is achieving in improving the educational opportunities for East Bay students would not be possible without the dedicated support of our key funders. In future editions of our newsletter, we will continue to profile our financial supporters. Today, we start with a funder that has been a dedicated supporter of Super Stars Literacy since the Junior League of Oakland-East Bay launched the program in 2002: Dreyer's Grand Ice Cream Foundation.

In 1987, Oakland-based Dreyer's Grand Ice Cream, Inc. established the Dreyer's Foundation to give young people a better chance to achieve their potential. The mission of the Dreyer's Foundation is to promote family, school and community environments that build skills and foster talents in young people.

In making its most recent grant, Dreyer's Foundation observed that it was "impressed with the work of the Super Stars Literacy Program in addressing the literacy needs of at-risk Oakland students." Dreyer's commended our "organization, the clearly structured program at the school sites, ... [our] long range vision, and consistent monitoring of students' progress towards their literacy goals."

We are proud of the trust that Dreyer's Grand Ice Cream Foundation has placed in Super Stars Literacy and we take seriously our responsibility to uphold that trust by continuing our success in building the literacy and social development skills of more and more deserving students.

Dreyer's Foundation is a constellation in our galaxy of Super Stars!



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