

Spring 2015



The LINC Letter

When a Child Reads, a Community Succeeds!

LINC Staten Island Program Featured on NY1

Ask 110 Staten Island kids what they did every Saturday during December and January and you will learn about a great combination: books and basketball. LINC's Staten Island Community Coordinator Rosalind Diaz and her husband, Ray, conducted a free youth program at Stapleton's Gerard Carter Center. The kids, ages 8-16, participated in literacy workshops and reading activities at the start of each program, and ended the day with a rousing basketball game.



NY1 cameras captured the program in action. The kids were excited to showcase what they learned on the court, as well as the reading skills they gained off the court.

Messiah Vizcarrondo (Left) reads a book with another LINC participant.

"I like to read because it inspires me," said Messiah Vizcarrondo, a LINC participant. "Once you start reading, you're going to get better at it."

2015 LINC Gala Monday April 27th

LINC is thrilled to honor Board Member Deborah Lans as it celebrates a year of accomplishments and raises support for the year ahead. A founding partner of the legal firm Cohen Clair Lans Greifer & Thorpe, Deb has served as a Director for nine years, and will be speaking about what being a part of LINC means to her.

"LINC champions children living in poverty and improves their lives with opportunities to acquire literacy skills and a love of reading," said Deborah.

The Gala will take place at the Metropolitan Club on Monday April, 27 at 6:30 pm cocktails, 7:30 pm Dinner and Awards.

If you would like purchase tickets, please visit LINC's website: www.lincnyc.org and click on "Fundraising Events" on the left side of the page.



Target Corporation will receive LINC's Corporate Leadership Award for 2015 at the Gala. LINC has been the beneficiary of generous financial contributions from Target but the support Target provides extends beyond its donations. Target team members have volunteered at LINC programs in Kingsbridge, Brooklyn and Harlem. Also Target is sponsoring LINC's Executive Director at Georgetown University's intensive "New Strategies Program" to develop LINC's capacity for growth and success. Thank you, Target!

LINC's TIGER Promotes Reading



LINC students in Inwood, Harlem and the Bronx are "roaring" to read this spring. Going into its 13th year, T.I.G.E.R. (Together In Getting Everyone Reading) consists of "Read-A-Thons" at LINC's partner schools and culminates in a celebration for each school's top reader at the Bronx Zoo. T.I.G.E.R. increases independent reading time, helps parents and teachers to support out-of-school reading, builds a culture of reading within the school community, and promotes conservation awareness.

This year, LINC is working in 19 schools with more than 2,000 second graders. After kick-off assemblies, the students log the amount of time they spend reading throughout the month of March. In April, LINC works with the schools to create T.I.G.E.R.-themed celebrations for all of the students who participated and in May these students take a class trip to the zoo. The student who logged the most reading hours at each school is then invited to a special recognition ceremony held at the Bronx Zoo in June.

"We go all out for T.I.G.E.R.," said Cathy Revellese, Librarian of PS 382X and PS 386X. "Our T.I.G.E.R. kickoff involves hosting a T.I.G.E.R. themed read-a-loud, and then making T.I.G.E.R. masks. The kids really love T.I.G.E.R., so we try and make it very special for them."

Staff Spotlight: Natalie Madrigal



After graduating from Boston University, LINC's South Bronx coordinator Natalie Madrigal knew she wanted to start her career doing something she believed in. A native of the South Bronx, Natalie began working for LINC last September and believes that LINC is helping children in her community to grow up with a love for reading, just like she did.

Q: How does the LINC program impact children?

A: Reading should be a priority, and making it happen everywhere is something New York really needs. In an era where technology is so prominent, LINC creates opportunities to read that lead to better comprehension, larger vocabularies and, most importantly, instill a desire to read – all leading to a very positive cycle of improvement resulting from the habit of reading.

Q: What are some exciting projects you are working on?

A: I am holding a huge literacy fair for the South Bronx on Saturday May, 9th. Right now I am preparing for that by reaching out to other organizations to partner with us, and gathering volunteers to host activities and read different books. We are expecting 300 attendees so it's going to be a great event that spreads the word about LINC and the importance of reading.

Q: What is something you love about being a LINC coordinator?

A: I love people in the South Bronx recognizing me when I'm out and about. Kids come up to me on the street saying, "You were reading in the library" or "You read at my school." Parents are always stopping me and thanking me. It's really gratifying to know that I'm making an impact on the people in my community.

Making an Impact



Every week for the past twelve years, LINC's Reading Partner Program "Great Grand Readers" has paired second grade students from PS 207 with seniors from the Marble Hill Community Center for an hour of reading. "The program is wonderful," said 2nd year, senior participant, Anna. "Last year the kids made us Christmas cards, and LINC brought the seniors books so we could wrap them and hand them out to the kids as little holiday presents. You really get attached to these kids. On the last day of the program, they came and spent the day with us. We ate lunch together and participated in sing-a-longs. It's a lot of fun, and being a part of the program makes me feel young again."

Senior member Sally, has been a committed participant in the program since the beginning. "I like when the kids read to me," Sally said. "Sometimes they might not know the words, but after I help them sound them out, we practice together until they get it right." Inter-generational programs benefit both participants. For the seniors, such programs enhance socialization and provide mental stimulation. In addition to improvement in their reading skills, children experience enhanced social skills and decreased negative behavior plus increased stability from the consistent partnership. Overall, Great Grand Readers is the kind of collaboration that not only builds literacy skills but builds a "Great" community.

Book Donors

We would like to thank these donors for the thousands of books contributed to LINC this school year:

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* If you are interested in organizing a book drive for LINC, please contact Indiana Baldera, ibaldera@lincnyc.org.

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