



Develop meaningful relationships with children to increase reading skills

Chris Flippo, Executive Director

Though it was still snowing this past April, spring was in the air at all five East Side Learning Center locations. As I visited ESLC's tutoring rooms, I listened as children read books with pride. Many practiced the high frequency words to earn a "Super Reader" cape. The "buzz" of children eagerly participating was energizing. The tutors' commitment to the children was evident in every interaction.

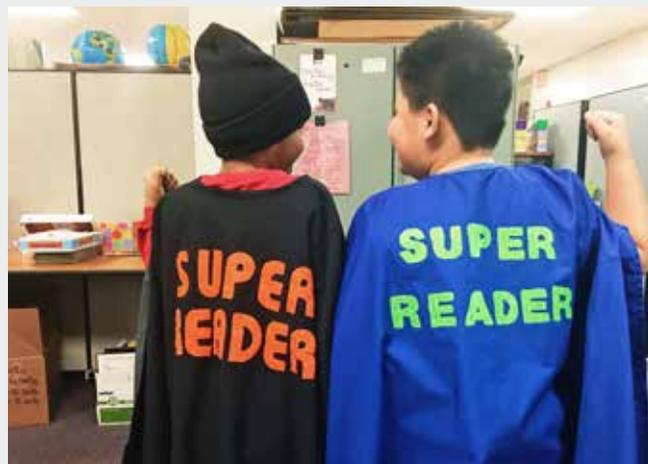
As I reflect on this past year, the many strengths of ESLC come to mind. One of the greatest strengths is the welcoming culture created based on the values of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Tutors warmly welcome every child by name with correct pronunciation, encourage each to do his or her best, and give each child plenty of positive feedback! ESLC has also been enhancing lessons with activities and books reflective of the students' diverse cultures. At

ESLC we strive to incorporate multi-cultural concepts into instruction. If children recognize their own cultural experiences in texts, comprehension will go up.

Yet, even as we celebrate our successes, we are always looking to do even more to partner with children to improve reading skills.

The board and staff adopted strategic directions several years ago to guide program improvements and long-range planning. For the 2018-19 school year, ESLC is focusing on the following goals aligned to the strategic plan.

1. **Prevention.** Data suggests that



children who start school without certain pre-literacy skills struggle throughout their education (Lynn Fielding, 2016). Thus, ESLC devotes at least 50% of its services to early childhood literacy programming. In support of this preventing this, in partnership with Community of Peace Academy, ESLC will pilot Pre-K tutoring during 2018-19. This builds upon ESLC's outstanding Summer Jump Start Literacy Camp outcomes.

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ELSC Celebrates superheroes making a difference

On April 26, the East Side Learning Center (ESLC) celebrated its superhero donors, staff, readers, and tutors. ESLC Executive Director Chris Flippo welcomed and recognized the children who participated in the program and became Super Readers. Flippo also acknowledged those who worked with the children, and said, "Tutors, you are the Superheroes who live and work among us to teach the children to read." Tutors provide one-on-one literacy tutoring

to carry out the organization's mission of, "Unlocking each child's potential through the foundation of reading." The evening also included the inaugural presentation of three ESLC awards: The ESLC Partnership Award, the Theresa Gerhardinger Award, and the Mary Riehle Service Award.

Sister Sharon White, OSF, ESLC's Program Director, announced the nominees and recipients of the [Superheroes continued on page 2](#)

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ESLC launches annual service award in honor of Mary Riehle



Mary Riehle (right) tutors an ESLC child while training a new tutor.

During the Superhero celebration, Sister Sharon White, OSF, paid tribute to Mary Riehle prior to the presentation of the first award named in her honor.

A staunch supporter of literacy, Mary was one of ESLC's first tutors in 2001. Sister Sharon recounted, "Mary volunteered to tutor after school twice a week. This was over and above her day job at St. Pascal's where she taught first grade." After Mary retired from her full-time teaching career, she volunteered as a tutor every day. "Even facing cancer and struggling with six years of chemo and radiation treatments she continued to tutor because she said that tutoring was her best medicine."

Sister Sharon recalled the traits that made Mary such an outstanding educator:

What put Mary in a league of her own was an unmatched level of kindness, deep respect, a loving spirit, and a BIG heart. Mary had a deep conviction that she could make a difference in the lives of children. She had the ability to motivate and inspire.

She could calm a struggling reader with her gentle presence and words of encouragement. She could instill confidence in those who had little to no confidence.

During her years with ESLC Mary reached out with unparalleled kindness and consideration to everyone she met—children, families, peers, friends, and strangers.

She had a ready smile, cheerful disposition, and she always displayed an attitude of gratitude.

Summing up the qualities that made Mary so special, Sister Sharon noted that the words of the Superhero Wonder Woman could easily have been Mary's, "If you're still feeling a little less-than-capable of saving the world remember this: 'It's about what you believe. And I believe in love. Only love will truly save the world.'"

Please read Sr. Sharon White's, OSF, full speech honoring Mary Riehle at www.eslcmn.org/blog.

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ESLC Partnership Award. The three nominees with exceptional service to the children in ESLC's reading tutoring program were: Experience Corps, which provides volunteer tutors through the American Association for Retired Persons Foundation (AARP), Edmentum, Inc. which supported ESLC with tutors and a book drive, and the Wilder Foundation Achievement Plus program, which partners with ESLC at two schools.

The Partnership Award was given to Craig Sweet (Wilder) for going above and beyond in his work with ESLC at two schools to enhance partnerships and communicate with ESLC staff regarding important information.

The Theresa Gerhardinger Award was named for the foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. The Sisters established ESLC in partnership with the East Side Neighborhood Development Company, some of whom were present, including Jim Fennel. Executive Director Flippo described the Sister's work this way: "Blessed Theresa started schools in the 1800s when leaders believed that girls and the poor should not learn to read and write. ESLC would not be here without their vision."

The 2017-18 Theresa Gerhardinger Award

honorees were: Alyssa Hamel, Rita Jirik, SSND, Cindy Mullan, Lizz Paulson, Sharon White, OSF, and Jane Thibault, SSND.

Sharon White, OSF, received the award, because she is a clear, effective role model and leader in promoting ESLC's mission, instructional philosophy, and core values. In presenting the award, Flippo said, "Sister Sharon has given life and meaning to the words and wisdom of Theresa Gerhardinger."

The final award, the Mary Riehle Service Award (see story at left) recognizes individuals who embody

"Mary could instill confidence in those who had little to no confidence."

Mary's spirit of service, kindness, respect, and a loving heart. The honorees were: Dean

Andrew, Lois Charboneau, Jean Fenstad, Sharon Johnson, Ann Marie Schaffhausen, and Mike Stuhl.

The Mary Riehle Service Award was given to Sharon Johnson, whose commitment focused on building relationships with each student. Sharon worked hard to adapt lessons and make them interesting and effective for each child. Her willingness to help in any way that improves student confidence in reading exemplifies all that Mary Riehle represented.

Watch for the annual report to learn more about the award recipients.

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Meet ESLC's newest staff member



Erin Koegel

Erin joined ESLC in June. Koegel recruited, trained, and facilitated volunteers at Community Action Partnership of Ramsey & Washington Counties. Executive Director Chris Flippo said: “We are very lucky to have Erin’s strategic planning and volunteer recruiting expertise. More importantly, she brings a passion for literacy and children.” Please join us in welcoming Erin. Contact her: erin.koegel@eslcmn.org or (651) 793-7364.

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2. Maximize tutoring impact. Rather than focusing on serving more children in 2018-19, staff will deepen services to increase ESLC’s impact. First, we are strengthening partnerships with teachers and school literacy experts. Second, Site Coordinators will spend extra time coaching tutors, monitoring student progress, and personalizing lesson plans to address specific reading needs.

Finally, to maximize tutoring impact, the ESLC Board of Directors created, approved, and adopted this diversity, equity, and inclusion commitment statement:

“East Side Learning Center is committed to being reflective of the community we serve and building equitable partnerships those communities; and celebrating, honoring and respecting the richness of

all races, ethnicities and cultures, ensuring that they are *not* predictors of student achievement and success.”

To illustrate what this means in practice, consider this true ESLC student story:

Juan speaks Spanish at home. He also knows some Spanish letters and is learning English. Juan’s tutor, Ann Marie, and Juan were working together on a new word. Ann Marie asked Juan how to say the word in his own language.

He gazed into her eyes as he thoughtfully connected the dots for the meaning in both languages. He stated the word aloud in Spanish.

“What a beautiful sounding word, and you say it so well,” Ann Marie responded. She added, “Will you teach me how to say it in Spanish?”

He proceeded to teach the word in his native language, carefully correcting her pronunciation. She accepted

his feedback gracefully, thus affirming his intelligence, and building his confidence.

This is a powerful example of “responsive education,” which aims to affirm each child’s strengths.

In 2018, staff and tutors also participated in training to learn about and avoid well-meaning racial and ethnic biases that might impact the students. This year, we will continue to focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

As we plan for a bright future, please join ESLC to help children dream of all the places they can go with a solid foundation in reading.

Volunteer. Give. And remember Sr. Audrey Lindenfelser’s, SSND, words: “It’s all about the children.”

Who made all those capes?

Thank you for donating fabric, cutting out, and sewing 280 capes for the children of ESLC!

- » Janine Almquist
- » Ann Billeadeau
- » Rita Bubany
- » Jean Fenstad

- » Catherine Manning
- » Grace Bergstrom
- » Becca Hilgendorf
- » Mary Hill

- » Margie Kangas
- » Shoua Khang
- » Colleen Mahady
- » Linda Quast

- » Mary Peltier
- » Marylee Stabenow
- » Ann Wruckle
- » Mary Zadach

Ignite your passion...

“...enlighten us, strengthen us, so that we may comprehend our divine call and recognize what we are, what we should be, what we must and really want to do in order to reach this goal.” -Theresa Gerhardinger, SSND Foundress

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East Side Learning Center

"Unlocking each child's potential through the foundation of reading" since 2001

An educational partnership with the School Sisters of Notre Dame

ESLC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that relies on the generous donations of individuals and foundations. For the sake of children who could benefit from one-on-one reading tutoring with a caring adult, please consider becoming a monthly supporter.



Ways to give a child a world of opportunities

Fall Tutoring: Save the Dates!

This fall, tutor orientation will be on Sept. 18, 9-11 a.m., and Sept. 20, 1-3 p.m. Each site will also host a two-hour site orientation between Sept. 20-24, 2018.

Tutoring begins Monday, Oct. 1, 2018. Tutoring schedules for each location will be posted online by mid-September.

Other ways to volunteer

Help build upon ESLC's strengths and increase long-term impact for children who need support by providing other volunteer services:

- » Take photos at schools or events.
- » Invite friends or family to tutor or volunteer in another manner.
- » Design and layout print newsletters.
- » Interview tutors, staff, and participants for stories.
- » Serve on an event or fundraising committee.

- » Join the Board of Directors.
- » Serve on a board committee: Governance (policies and procedures), Finance, Development and Communications. This is often a way to see whether serving on the Board of Directors is a fit for you.
- » Assist with administrative projects.

If interested in volunteering, please contact Erin Koegel at erin.koegel@eslcmn.org.