

EDUCATION

RAI seeking reading volunteers

If you are looking for a way to interact with kids in a meaningful way that could potentially change their lives, consider becoming a Reading ASSIST Institute (RAI) volunteer reading tutor. RAI is currently training volunteers in their phonetic, multisensory reading curriculum to serve schools in both Sussex and Kent counties. To become a volunteer, call 425-4080 or email smcgrath@readingassist.org. Below, a Q & A with Georgetown Elementary School RAI tutors Gary Reddick and Gary Lippe.

Why did you initially decide to volunteer for RAI?

Reddick: My granddaughter was diagnosed with a reading problem recently. As result, I thought that I would like to learn how to help her and at the same time help other children who also suffered with reading deficiencies.

Lippe: I was informed by [Gary's wife] Linda Reddick (another volunteer) and since I previously taught at an adult school, plus I am retired so had the time and interest to volunteer.

What is the biggest challenge working with the kids?

Reddick: The challenge for me is and internal one. I want to make sure every day that I meet with the students that I am as prepared as I can be. I want to be sure that I have the required multisensory training aids for the day's lesson plan to facilitate making our short time together useful, meaningful and the best learning experience that I can provide.

Lippe: Linda, her husband Gary and I went through a 12 week regimen of training which was more rigorous that I had expected and taught me a new set of skills to work with children.

How are you able to connect with the kids and keep their interest?

Reddick: It is not difficult to pique the students interest. We learned from our RAI training class how to use the many multisensory training aids that are at our disposal. Additionally, the lesson plan always requires a review of the prior week's lesson in a game format and is the first task of the morning. It creates a stimulating challenge and prepares and motivates the student for the tasks to follow.

Lippe: Connecting with the kids was easier that I expected. I felt that they were reaching out to me as much as I was to them. Once we had the opportunity to work with them they seemed eager to participate and enjoyed working with us. Keeping their interest was at times challenging because they sometimes came to school tired or preoccupied with their own problems. The Reading ASSIST organization gave us training that allows these children to have fun while learning.

What has been the most rewarding part of your work with RA'I?

Reddick: Every day we meet with the students is rewarding as they greet us with warmth and an eagerness to learn. Our tinme together is exciting, but at the end of the day incredibly fulfilling. One day I was introducing a beginning blend concept which in prio lessons had been a struggle. On this day, the student got it! The student's pride in his accomplishment and his expressions of joy are the essence of my reward.

Lippe: It is most rewarding to see themn grow in their skills, and we greatly appreciate comments from their teacvhers that attest to their improvement in the regular curriculum. Some of the teachers hoped that we could have more volunteers because there were other students wthey wished us to help.