



## Quarterly Newsletter 2023

Explore Milestones News and Notes

[advancingmilestones.com](http://advancingmilestones.com)



Milestones was very excited to be selected to host a musical duo “Recycled Percussion” and news team members from WCVB - Channel

5. “Recycled Percussion” has been featured on *America’s Got Talent*, and they have a mission to spread kindness through percussion and agility acts. They also host a television show entitled “Chaos and Kindness” that has been a Regional Emmy award winner.



We were delighted for our students and affiliated staff to participate as interactive audience members. Performers demonstrated how they could make impressive music through low cost items found throughout Milestones’ classrooms, and they shared experiences of how pursuing drumming helped them develop passion and focus when they were students.

**Recycled Percussion @  
Milestones**



# Dyslexia Awareness

## STAFF SHOUT OUT

# Julia Kimball

## Reading Specialist: Reading Department Head

Through my first job out of college, I was trained in the Orton-Gillingham methodology. As a dyslexic myself, I was astounded at how accessible reading and spelling could be if provided with the correct tools. Explicit phonics instruction was not available to me growing up. Instead, I made it through undergrad with a haphazard mix of compensatory strategies, tutoring, compassionate teachers, a whole lot of luck and stubbornness. After becoming a certified member of the Orton-Gillingham Academy, I moved back to Boston to attend graduate school. I earned a dual masters and licensure in Special Education and Social Work from Boston University and worked in a variety of roles in therapeutic educational programs and as an ABA therapist until I started at Milestones in 2011. Since then, the reading department has grown in scope and talent. There are many reasons I love working at MDS. Primarily though, I love that this school is truly dedicated to the concept of individualized education. When I am not teaching reading, I'm usually reading with my two young kids.



## Dyslexia Awareness Facts

### Reading has Significant Academic Benefits

- **5 minutes a day** → exposed to 282,000 words per year
- **20 minutes a day** → exposed to 1.8 million words per year
- Reduces stress
- Builds vocabulary
- Increases prior knowledge
- Builds visual comprehension
- Reinforces English syntax
- Strengthens fluency

**Resource: Improving Literacy**  
**Resource: Free Ebooks**

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## Reading Specialist Spotlight

Check out our talented staff on our social media

## I TEACH KIDS TO



Karen has been working at Milestones for 7 years as a Reading Specialist.

Karen is trained and certified in Wilson as well as *FOUR* other reading programs. She also completed an advanced graduate certificate in LBLD and Dyslexia through SNHU.

During Dyslexia Awareness Month, we celebrate Karen for all she has done to bring reading to the forefront of our community! She is respected for her ability to tailor her instruction to uniquely address the individual needs of each student and has built strong, trusting, relationships with her students. She has organized author visits to share their love of reading and stories with students, revamped our student library, and shared her knowledge of phonemic awareness.

Thank you, Karen, for all you do!

## PHONEMIC AWARENESS PHONICS FLUENCY VOCABULARY COMPREHENSION



Tanya has been working at Milestones as an SLP for 8 years. She became a part of the Reading Department 3 years ago after completing the Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study in Literacy and Language through Mass General Institute of Health Professions. Tanya is trained and certified in the structured literacy method and certified through Mass DOE. She is also a Certified Structured Literacy/Dyslexia Interventionist (C-SLDI) through the Center for Effective Reading Instruction.

Though officially she splits her time between the SLP and Reading Departments, her work fits comfortably within each realm. During Dyslexia Awareness Month, we celebrate Tanya for all she has done to promote language and literacy skills. She is uniquely qualified to understand the intersection between the development of reading and complex language skills. At each level of language, Tanya is able to provide individualized, prescriptive intervention.

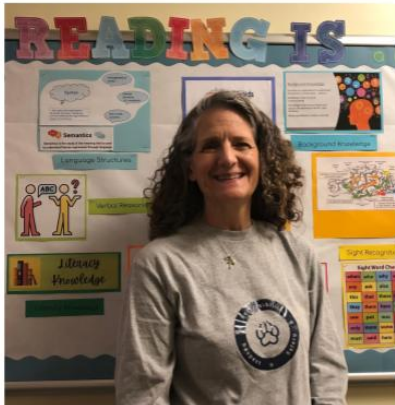
Thank you, Tanya, for all you do!



# Literacy & Justice For All

Joan has been a Reading Specialist with Milestones for over 4 years.

Joan is every bit a believer that Literacy is Civil Right. She was trained in Orton-Gillingham as well as certified in Wilson. As a Wilson Dyslexia Practitioner, Joan is credentialed to diagnostically teach students identified with a language-based disability. Training with Dr. Ilda Carreiro King became integral to making the Literacy Profile part of the Department screening process.



During Dyslexia Awareness Month, we celebrate Joan for all the work she does to raise awareness about dyslexia, help her students embrace the unique gifts and challenges associated with dyslexia, and help them achieve their academic and personal goals. Her students feel prepared for the challenges they face, including MCAS, graduation, college level classes, and life after Milestones.

Thank you for all you do, Joan!

# Reading Specialist because Miracle Worker isn't an official job title

Azeema has been a Reading Specialist with Milestones for 2 years. She was trained in the Orton-Gillingham Method at the Carroll School, where she spent 2 years working as a Teaching Aide & Cognitive Development Teacher.



During Dyslexia Awareness Month, we celebrate Azeema for her knowledge, compassion, and creativity! When teaching reading to our elementary classrooms, she brought books to life for our students - even recreating Willy Wonka's factory. In individual sessions, she is skilled with getting reluctant students to engage and make strong progress. She ensures her lessons are always meeting the O-G standards of individualized, prescriptive, and multi-sensory, while also making sure her students are comfortable, challenged, and thriving. This past year, Azeema won a Hero Award by a district SEPAC for her excellent work and dedication with a student.

Thank you, Azeema, for all you do!

## Therapeutics Worth Noting



## Community Based Instruction

- Students continued their "Intro to Transportation" unit. They purchased Charlie cards and navigated the train to and from Newton Center.
- Students completed grocery shopping lists, conducted research, and filled out money management/budgeting worksheets as part of their "Friendsgiving" unit for the month of November. In doing so, they are developing meal preparation and executive functioning skills.



Our 12th grade students went out to eat at Jake and Joe's for a birthday celebration! Students had a great time socializing and practicing dining out skills: interactions with servers, working with a budget, tipping, and navigating an unfamiliar menu.

## Philanthropy



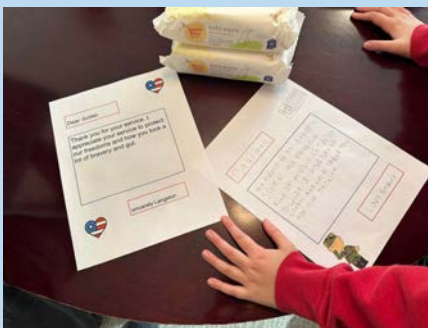
### MARCH A MILE

In the spirit of the holiday season here at Milestones, we carry on a charity tradition that has lasted over the past decade. Milestones works with **Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD)** from October to December to give back. ABCD's Adopt a Family program matches donors with families in the greater Boston



area who are working hard to improve their lives. Donors help the families they sponsor fulfill their wishlist (needs and wants) during the holiday season. Many of these donations will support families during the cold winter months ahead. Helping these families during this already difficult time can prevent a crisis and provide hope for a brighter future. The families struggle with the cost of heat, groceries, rent, proper winter clothing, and basic needs. These families could certainly use a little holiday cheer to lift their spirits – but we can help!

Milestones staff and students helped raise funds by participating in a walk-a-thon. There was a lot to be grateful for.



## Veterans Day Community Service

Students recognized this honored day creating care packages for active military members and veterans. The students asked the Milestones community for donations like coffee, diapers, deodorant, socks, baby wipes, and candy. They wrote heartfelt notes of appreciation for the brave individuals in our military. The students helped package these materials and sent them off. Milestones sends our thanks to all those who serve our country.



## Halloween Shenanigans





## Post High School Transition Program



**Gateway Student Store**



Students have been busy filling purchase orders from hoodies to Halloween treat cups.



## IT

IT student interns worked on both hardware and software, deconstructing some old computers to use their parts, and designing community signs using the Canva app.

**IT started a new service cleaning staff & student computers.**



## Travel Training in our Community



## JOB LAB

- Students participated in mock interviews, role playing both the interviewer and interviewee. Students also practiced working with challenging





customers. Students rotated through different roles in the mock cafeteria. Students also practiced different roles in the mock CVS setting, trying out being "store support" in locating different items, cashier, and bagger. Students discussed potential interview questions and practiced answering while role playing being in an interview.

- Students learned about an accessibility app called "Ahoi" and logged data about potential hazards on the street. Students then chose between working at the mock CVS or having a discussion about potential careers.



## Important Dates 2023-2024

- November 22nd: Noon Dismissal
- November 23rd & 24th: No school
- December 1st: Monthly Spirit Day: Flannel Day Theme
- December 13th: Noon Dismissal- Professional Development for staff
- December 22nd: Noon Dismissal
- December 22nd: Pajama Day
- December 25th- January 1st: School Closed for Winter Break
- January 15th: No School :MLK Jr. Day
- January 17th: Noon Dismissal: Professional Development for staff
- January 19th: Quarter 2 ends
- February 2nd: Monthly Spirit Day: Bulldog Pride
- February 6th & 7th: BIO MCAS retest
- February 14th: Winter Fest
- February 14th: Noon Dismissal Professional Development for staff
- February 19th-23rd: School Closed for Break

## Parent Support Group Offered

On the **1st Wednesday of each month**, Bill Salloway will be offering a Parent Support Group for the Milestones families. Bill is a clinical psychologist and serves as an Assistant Clinical Director at Milestones. The group is open to any parent of a Milestones student, from Elementary to Post High School. The meeting will take place in-person between 1:30-2:30, at the end of which parents will be free to dismiss their student and take them home if they wish to. The group is an opportunity for parents to connect with other parents, and to share concerns, insights and suggestions with each other. The format is open-ended, allowing parents to bring topics or questions that they would like to

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**Parent Advisory Group (PAG)**  
**2023-2024**

January 19th: Social Connections

March 15th: Transitions

May 17th: Community Based Instruction

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**Onsite Group Tour/ Info session:**  
Milestones' Head of Admissions, Sarah Folk  
(space is limited to 12 attendees)

10:00am to 12:00 pm  
**December 8th**  
&  
**January 12th**

explore.  
If you are interested in attending,  
please contact Bill at  
[wsalloway@advancingmilestones.com](mailto:wsalloway@advancingmilestones.com)

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**COME VISIT US AND LEARN  
MORE**

Informational tours are open to anyone looking  
to learn more about Milestones.  
Tours are not intended for students.

**[Website events link](#)**

**[RSVP.events@advancingmilestones.com](mailto:RSVP.events@advancingmilestones.com)**

410 Totten Pond Road in Waltham  
Please proceed to our lobby on the second floor.

**Visit Us!**



Milestones Day School and Transition Program | [advancingmilestones.com](http://advancingmilestones.com) | 781-895-3200 | [Privacy Policy](#)

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