

Pilot Reading Program Implemented At Area Elementary School

By Francine Fulton

Kindergarten students at Sts. Phillip and James School have a jumpstart on reading thanks to a pilot program implemented at the Exton school earlier this year. The curriculum, titled "Easy Steps to Reading," was developed by teacher Karen Truncellito, who is also a youth minister at the parish.

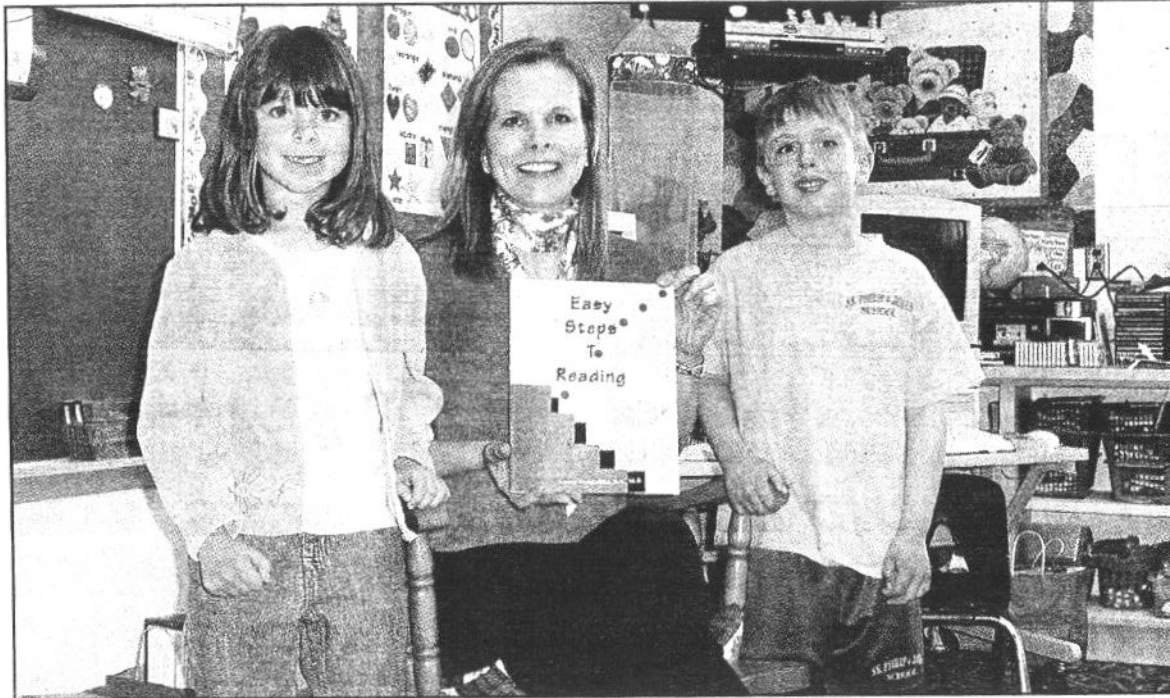
Truncellito, who has a master's degree in education and 30 years of teaching experience, including an assignment at an inner city New York school, developed a multi-sensory program to teach reading to dyslexic children. She adapted this program, which can now be used to instruct all children, including the learning disabled, giving them the ability to read before first grade.

Truncellito taught at Sts. Phillips and James, but she developed the program while doing private tutoring.

"I started working on my own tutoring children," she said. "The history of the program is that a woman came to me who had a child in second grade who wasn't reading anything at all. She asked me to help him."

While not a specialist in teaching learning disabled children, Truncellito decided to try teaching him with the method she developed, which asks children to sound out words from the middle, rather than from beginning to end.

"I tried working with him to learn a word from the inside out," she explained. "For example, if



Linda Valdiserri (center), kindergarten teacher at Sts. Phillip and James School in Exton, has been teaching her students, including Grace Heater (left) and Nick Villano (right), how to read words using a new curriculum, titled "Easy Steps to Reading." The program was developed by Karen Truncellito (not pictured), a former teacher at the school who is currently a youth minister at the parish.

Photo by Francine Fulton

you have a word like blend, you start from left to right, first learning the 'bl' and then the 'end.' But, by the time I got to the last part of the word, he had already forgotten the first part.

"Instead, I worked from the vowel out," she continued. "He started by leaning 'end' and then 'bl.' I used that method on every word, and he learned to read that way."

From that first child, Truncellito developed a formal curriculum.

"I refined it and self-published the material in 1993," she said.

Truncellito has spent the last 13 years trying to convince school systems to try out the free pilot program.

"This past November, I approached my parish Catholic school where I volunteer my time

as a youth minister. I was able to convince one teacher (Linda Valdiserri) to give me one hour per week in her classroom to prove the method and get the statistics on it," Truncellito said.

Truncellito started teaching 25 kindergarten children in mid-December 2005, and, she stated, 21 of them were sounding out one-syllable words within one week.

Continued on page 8

Forty Niners Chorus To Perform At Downingtown Church

By Francine Fulton

The Forty Niners Chorus will present a concert on Sunday, May 21, at 7 p.m. at Downingtown United Methodist Church, 751 E. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown. Featured will be "The Forty Niners Radio Hour," a 1940s radio show featuring music and old-time commercials.

"It is a radio hour set before the end of the war," said Linda Husband, chorus president. "It's actually like listening to a radio show and being in the audience. We have a lot of comedy numbers and heart-tugging numbers. It's a really good show."

Songs will include "In the Mood," "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" and "Me and My Shadow."

"It also has commercials from the era which are hysterical," Husband said.

The second part of the show will feature songs from the chorus' repertoire.

"We're doing songs that you don't commonly hear - the theme song from the movie '9 to 5' and a song from the new musical, 'Wicked,'" Husband said. "We will do seven or eight repertoire songs."

The Forty Niners Chorus of Chester County, now in its 55th year, began when a couples' group at First Presbyterian Church in West

CSBank
www.coatesvillesavings.com

CD
SPECIALS

4.40% APY
3 month

4.67% APY
6 month

Member FDIC Equal Housing Lender
9429221

Reading Program

Continued from page 1

"It is now May, and they are all working on two-syllable words, while the average kindergartener is still learning letter sounds," Truncellito said. "Some of the children are sounding out words from the SAT list."

Or a recent visit to the school, Valdiserri was teaching the children special hand motions for various word blends. For "cr," children would pretend to cry. For "qu," they would quack like ducks and for "kn" they would pretend to knock on the door. They also played various games reinforcing what they had learned.

Valdiserri was also teaching them special little poems to help remember sounds. For example, a word like bow, which has two

sounds, she taught them the verse, "I wear a bow for my bow." For the boys, the verse stated, "I wear a bowtie for my bow."

Valdiserri described the reading program as "remarkable."

"This program not only helps those who are struggling but inspires those who can read words" she said. "This is such an advantage for the children."

"They get so excited when they read the high school words. They just pull the words apart and they get it," she added.

The curriculum is so successful, Truncellito noted, that the school has invited U.S. Congressman Jim Gerlach to visit the classroom and observe the progress of the children. He is scheduled to visit later this month.

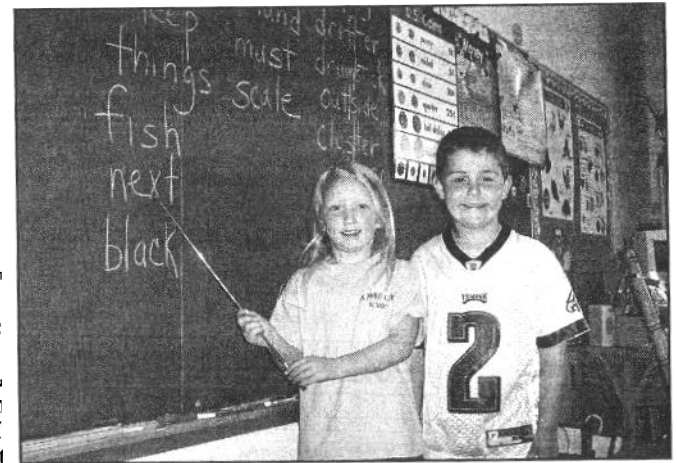


Photo by Francine Fulton
Destiny Todd (left) and Kurt Pollard (right), kindergarten students at Sts. Phillip and James School in Exton, are learning to read words thanks to a new curriculum developed by teacher Karen Truncellito (not shown).

CCIU To Conduct Parent Internet Safety Seminar

The Chester County Intermediate Unit (CCIU) will host a free, i-Parent safety seminar on Thursday, May 18, from 7 to 8 p.m. at its educational service center in Downingtown. Topics to be presented include Internet safety and personal safety, Internet predators, cyber bullying, cyber security and how parents can get involved.

The CCIU i-Parent training seminar is free to parents and educators. However, due to the limited number of seats, parents who do not register cannot be guaranteed a seat. i-SAFE Inc. is the world-wide leader in Internet safety education. Founded in 1998 and endorsed by the U.S. Congress, i-SAFE is a non-profit foundation dedicated to protecting the online experiences of youth everywhere. i-SAFE incorporates classroom curriculum with dynamic community outreach to empower students, teachers, parents, law enforcement and concerned

Camp Tweedale Will Turn 75

On the weekend of Aug. 18, readers may enjoy a weekend away and have a good time at a 75th birthday bash for Girl Scout Camp Tweedale in Oxford.

Festivities will include food and activities like swimming, hiking, workshops, campfire sing-alongs, and a birthday party lunch. There is a fee; part of the fee will benefit the Scholarship Fund for Girls.

To learn more about the event, readers may

WE TAKE PRIDE IN "PAINLESS" DENTISTRY



Tickle Tooth Dental

.....a caring touch for kids 2 to 21

THE MIRACLE OF LASER DENTISTRY

• No Needles For Numbing • No Drilling
• No Scary Sounds • No Extra Charge

YOUR COMFORT IS OUR FIRST CONCERN

- TVs in every exam room
- Reception room filled with toys & activities for younger kids
- Video games for bigger kids
- "Treasure Box" rewards at the end of each appointment

